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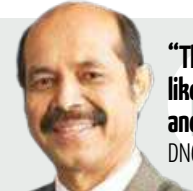
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"The time has come to reduce the Covid-19 patient. There is no longer any scope to increase beds in hospitals."
HEALTH MINISTER ZAHID MALEQUE



"If the lives of children are at risk, what will we do with education?"
AWAMI LEAGUE GENERAL SECRETARY
OBAIDUL QUADER



"Those who would submit unused items like flower pots, tyres, chips packets and coconut shells will be awarded."
DNCC MAYOR ATIQUUL ISLAM

MASS VACCINATION TRIAL RUN

Into a mire of mismanagement

The govt's good initiative ends up being a probable superspreading event

STAR REPORT

There were just way more people than vaccine doses available.




Many vaccination centres across the country ran out of doses two or three hours after the so-called mass vaccination began.

People stood in mile-long queues on roads, crowds jammed themselves into vaccination centres and brawls broke out, turning into potential superspreading events. As the day progressed, thousands returned without jabs.

But the sheer number of angry crowds fighting to get the shot made it clear that vaccine hesitancy is not an issue.

A private service holder Syed Bin Amir narrated how he was turned away from two centres -- the former for not having an SMS, and the latter because the facility ran out of shots while he was waiting in queue.

"I went to the ward office of Dhanmondi number 15, where I was asked to provide a photocopy of my NID by a volunteer. I went off to get a photocopy, and by the time I came back, they said they had only 300 doses and that I would not get the job," he described. This was at 10:40am, just an hour and a half after vaccination started.

-  Vaccine doses inadequate compared to number of people
-  Protests at several centres demanding vaccines
-  Mishaps led to a few being given two doses

Similarly, Kohinur Khyum Tithila went to Khilgaon Tilpapara Nagar Matrisadan and came back home without a sore arm. "A fight broke out at the centre, and it was so crowded I could not manage to get in. I don't understand why the vaccination programme of a contagious disease would be like this," she said.

In Rangpur, officials ran out of vaccine doses at every single booth at all the 83 unions in eight upazilas, said Civil Surgeon Hirambo Kumar Roy.

Only 250 doses of Sinopharm had been allocated for each booth, which was not enough for the people who gathered to get

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Hospital employees tackle a man, desperate for the coronavirus vaccine, trying to enter the Chattogram City Corporation General Hospital. Hundreds of people began to arrive in front of the facility at daybreak yesterday and around noon, police charged truncheons to control them. Hospital employees said they vaccinated nearly 1,500 people, about half of those who gathered there.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

CASES AGAINST PORI, OTHERS

Big fish under scanner: CID

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least half a dozen people, including high officials of two private banks, are on the list of those who had "close contact" with film actor Pori Moni, now behind bars in a narcotics case.



The Criminal Investigation Department of police, which has been tasked with investigating seven cases against the actor, two models and their associates, yesterday said no matter how influential they are, no one will be exempted from the investigation.

In a span of just three days, the CID has been put in charge of investigation as the fourth agency after the Rapid Action Battalion, Detective Branch and local police.

The DB is currently investigating the cases against Pori Moni, models Faria Mahbub Piasha and Moriom Akter Mou, their associate Mishu Hasan, producer Nazrul Islam Raz and expelled Awami League leader Helena Jahangir.

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Hospital beds won't increase, do your part

Health minister asks citizens amid Covid surge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is not possible to increase the number of beds in hospitals any further, so the ordinary citizens must do their part to bring down the infection rate of the coronavirus, which is galloping away, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday.

In the past two months, the number of patients has increased seven times, he said while inaugurating a Covid-19 treatment facility at the convention centre of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital.

"We have been setting up more field hospitals and increasing the number of beds. But, that has a limit too."

There is no bed vacant in hospitals' Intensive Care Units (ICU), while almost all of the 17,000 general beds countrywide are occupied, according to Maleque.

As of noon yesterday, 87 percent of the 1,335 ICU beds for Covid-19 patients in the country were occupied, according to data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The occupancy rate was 88 percent against 887 beds in case of the beds in High Deficiency Units (HDUs).

The occupancy rate was 68 percent for the beds that have High Flow Nasal Cannulas (HFNC) and 62 percent for the general beds.

The time has come to bring down the infection rate, Maleque said, adding that the recent Dengue outbreak has created another pressure on

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COVID-19 SITUATION

Country records deadliest week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh yesterday recorded 261 deaths from Covid-19 to cap the deadliest week, ending yesterday, since the first confirmed cases of the coronavirus were announced on March 8 last year.

This is the second-highest number of deaths from Covid-19 as the most virulent Delta variant of the coronavirus, first detected in the country on May 8, continues to wreak havoc.

On Thursday, the country had recorded the highest number of deaths: 264.

In the week, a total of 1,726 died from Covid-19, up 5.3 percent from a week earlier, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

On the bright side, the number of new cases has decreased 2.3 percent despite a 3.5 percent increase in tests.

The DGHS data, however, showed the infection trend was on the up in 21 districts and stable in five districts across the country as of yesterday. In the remaining 38 districts, the infection trend was downward.

Besides, the number of recoveries has

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MEHENDIGANJ KILLINGS

4 lives lost to bloody rivalry

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and SUSHANTA GHOSH, from Barisal

Four killings in 10 days -- first two on April 11 and then again on April 20. Feuds, especially over the Ullania Union Parishad election and control of illegal toll collections at fishery ghats, led to the bloodshed in Mehendiganj upazila of Barisal.

The election, scheduled to be held on December 10 last year, was postponed following a series of clashes, but the rivalry continued and resulted in the killings.

Police and locals say rebel chairman candidate Ruma Begum and her son first plotted the murder of Saiful Islam Mistry to frame their archrival, Awami League-nominated candidate Abdul Halim Milon Chowdhury.

Saiful, a day labourer, was an easy target as his father was paralysed and his wife was helpless with two little kids. His stepmother Kohinur Begum took part in the murder conspiracy in exchange for Tk 40,000.

After the killing around 1:00am on April 11, Ruma's followers announced from a local mosque's loudspeaker at 3:30am that Milon's supporters had attacked Asha village and committed a murder, police and local sources said.

Hearing the announcement, Milon's supporters came out with sticks to protest this, and got locked into a clash with their rivals, which left a man named Sayed Chowdhury badly injured.

Sayed, who was a supporter of Milon, breathed his last at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital later in the day, said a senior official of the district police.

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Australia scrape to first victory

NABID YEASIN

Batting proved to be Bangladesh's downfall as the Tigers lost the fourth T20I against Australia by three wickets at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, giving up their rare chance of completing a first-ever clean series sweep against the Aussies.

The hard-earned win for Australia was their first in a five-match series that has already been clinched 3-1 by a dominating Bangladesh.

After a compact bowling display, led by leggie Mitchell Swepson, saw Australia restrict Bangladesh to a paltry 104 for nine, the visitors hobbled but eventually managed to chase down the low total with six balls to spare.

Australia had made a clear change to their approach in this game and it was made apparent with them sending Dan Christian at No. 3, ahead of Mitchell Marsh after

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Australia batsman Dan Christian slogs one over midwicket region during his 15-ball 39 against Bangladesh in the fourth T20I at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The whirlwind knock ensured the visitors got over the line with three wickets in hand in a chase of 105 runs to register their first win of the tour.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Red Gold sparks hope

Prof Jamal Uddin grows saffron inside greenhouse at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University

MAMUNUR RASHID

It has a history stretching back millenniums. Emperors have patronised it, poets have romanticised it, monks have used its colour in their robes and worshippers have adored it. Popularly known as "Red Gold", the crimson hue saffron has been used for culinary, medicinal and aesthetic purposes.

Poet Jibanananda Das had compared the stunning colour of saffron with the setting sun of an autumn evening.

Saffron, one of the most prized and coveted condiments on the planet, had never been a major produce of a warm country like Bangladesh as it is mostly cultivated in cold environment.

But a teacher and researcher of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka has created a scope for growing the spice in the country.

AFM Jamal Uddin, a professor of horticulture at the university, has managed to flowering saffron plants in a temperature-controlled room. He successfully collected red coloured stigma from the flowers. This stigma, the distal ends of the plant's carpels, is separated from the petals by hand and dried to make saffron spice.

"Saffron cultivation is expensive in its usual habitat -- an

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BANGLADESH UPDATE



4,136
New cases in 24hrs



13,43,396
Total cases



22,411
Deaths



11,88,820
Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE

4,296,361
Deaths



202,733,416
Total cases

Bangladesh sends Covid meds to Indonesia

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has gifted emergency Covid-19 medicines to Indonesia, which has become Asia's new coronavirus epicenter reporting more than 3.57 million cases and more than 102,000 deaths as of yesterday.

On behalf of the government of Bangladesh, Air Vice Marshal Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman, Bangladesh ambassador to Indonesia, yesterday formally handed over the medicines to Wiendra Waworuntu, director (public medicines and health supplies management) of the Ministry of Health Affairs, Indonesia.

"This is a symbol of goodwill gesture for the people of Indonesia, a friendly country of Bangladesh," the ambassador told this correspondent.

The medicines have been provided as per the directive of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, according

to Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Bangladesh remains committed to standing beside Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries," the ministry said in a statement.

Beacon Pharma, a leading pharmaceutical company of Bangladesh, provided with the emergency medicines.

Indonesia and Bangladesh enjoy a friendly relation, especially relating to the Rohingya crisis, in the international arena.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh High Commission in the Maldives yesterday organised a blood donation campaign at the high commission premises on the occasion of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The high commission thanked all who participated in the campaign.



Despite the lockdown to curb the transmission of Covid-19, heavy traffic is seen on Airport Road near Banani around 6:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Big fish under scanner

FROM PAGE 1

CID sources said they conducted special drives at six houses yesterday and seized electronic devices, including mobile phones, and passports.

The investigators also spoke to high officials -- one chairman and one managing director -- of two private banks, who were close to Pori. One of them gifted her a luxury car, sources said.

"If the investigation reveals the names of anyone associated with them, the person, no matter how influential, will be brought to book," CID Additional DIG Sheikh Omar Faruk told reporters at the CID headquarters in Malibagh.

He, however, did not name anyone when asked about the bank officials.

"We have already received the case documents. The arrestees are already in custody and being questioned as part of the investigation."

Investigators said they would conduct forensic tests on the phones of Pori Moni and others in custody to scrutinise their communications between them and other suspects.

Sheikh Omar said the CID has a variety of expert systems, such as a DNA lab, forensic lab and chemical lab so that it can carry out investigations thoroughly and efficiently.

"However, it will take time for us to complete the investigation."

About Pori Moni's interaction with a DB official, he said, "We will enquire into these matters thoroughly and find out the facts. No one is above the law. Whether he is the investigating supervisor or whoever, we want to find out the truth through an impartial investigation."

Pori was arrested at her Banani residence on August 4 and was placed on a four-day remand.

Police, during a raid, claimed to have seized a huge stash of narcotics from her house.

Meanwhile, Golam Saklain Shithil, an additional deputy commissioner (DB Gulshan Division), was withdrawn from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's DB, following allegations of unprofessional conduct with the actor.

"ADC Golam Saklain has been restrained from all activities of the DB. He has been posted at the DMP's Public Order Management [west]

division," said a message sent by the DMP's media wing.

DMP Commissioner Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star he has spoken to the Inspector General of Police Benazir Ahmed over this matter and that the Police Headquarters will probe the incident.

Officials at PHQ said no probe committee was formed yet as of 8:30pm yesterday.

When Shithil's government phone was contacted, another person picked up and said, "He [Shithil] is on leave. He has turned in his phone to the authorities."

Several media outlets reported that ADC Shithil had engaged in unprofessional conduct with Pori Moni while supervising a case filed by her in June.

In the case, she accused five persons, including Nasir U Mahmud, former president of Uttara Club Limited.

Shithil, however, refuted the allegations when speaking to reporters earlier.

Meanwhile, Pori Moni's membership of the Film Artist Association has been suspended yesterday, said Misha Sawdagor, president of the association, yesterday afternoon.

In another development, a Dhaka court yesterday placed Junayed Karim Jimmy, costume designer and one of Pori's associates, on a three-day remand in a case filed against him with Banani Police Station under the Narcotics Control Act.

Earlier on June 13, Pori Moni at a press conference alleged she had been a victim of attempted rape in Dhaka Boat Club by Nasir and his cohorts.

Film Producer Chayanika Chowdhury, who was interrogated by the DB officials on Friday, was seen at the press conference. Jimmy was seen accompanying Pori during the Boat Club incident in CCTV footages.

Jimmy was detained from Gulshan Shooting Club on Friday evening. Police also claimed to have recovered 225 pieces of yaba from his possession, court sources said.

Another accused in the case is one Sazzad, who is absconding.

In the ongoing week-long arrest spree, at least eight people, including Pori Moni, two models and Jimmy, were held.

Australia scrape to first victory

FROM PAGE 1

the visitors lost skipper Matthew Wade to a Mahedi Hasan delivery in the very first over.

Christian made his intent clear, smashing 30 runs off Shakib Al Hasan in the fourth over as he hit the premier all-rounder for five massive sixes, making the challenge even steeper for the home side.

The Tigers, however, did spark a turnaround when Mustafizur Rahman, Nasum Ahmed and Mahedi picked up five quick wickets -- including those of Christian after a 15-ball 39 blitz and in-form Mitchell Marsh for a 15-ball 11 -- for just 18 runs at one stage of the game, reducing the visitors to a vulnerable position of 65 for six after 10.2 overs.

Bowling very economically, Mustafizur, Mahedi picked up two wickets each while Nasum and Shoriful Islam had one scalp each to their names but that could not stop Australia as a 34-run seventh-wicket stand between Ashton Agar (27 off 27) and Andrew Tye (4* off 7) eventually saw the visitors home.

Earlier, Bangladesh's troubles with the bat, a constant feature of the team throughout the series but never highlighted due to the bowling prowess taking them over the line each time in the first three T20s, were laid bare.

Opener Soumya Sarkar's misery continued as he once again threw his

wicket away after a single-digit score, a 10-ball eight, for the fourth successive time in the series.

Experienced Shakib's arrival at No. 3 was supposed to bring stability to the Tigers' batting line-up. However, the all-rounder had his worst day of the series with the bat, departing to Hazlewood after a stuttering 26-ball 15, that included 18 dots and a solitary boundary which the all-rounder had to manufacture with a scoop shot past the wicketkeeper.

A slow Mirpur pitch that had a lot of zip in-store soon turned out to be the doom for the Tigers as Swepson's googlies had both skipper Mahmudullah Riyad and Nurul Hasan trapped in front in back-to-back deliveries, leaving Bangladesh reeling at 51 for four after 11 overs.

Swepson kept troubling the Bangladesh batters with his wrong ones, making Naim Sheikh (28 off 36) his third victim after the left-hander tried forcing a slog-sweep but ended up slicing it up and into the hands of the wicketkeeper. The leg-spinner finished with impressive figures of three for 12 in four overs.

With the pressure mounting due to a scoring rate below five, Bangladesh never looked on top while batting, but a cameo of 17-ball 20 from in-form Afif Hossain and Mahedi's quick-fire 16-ball 23 at the death somehow helped them past the three-figure score.

Into a mire of mismanagement

FROM PAGE 1

upazila's Krishnanagar Abdul Jabbar School and College, people without masks crowded around the booths crying for vaccines after 12:00pm.

But there was none to go around, said Assistant Health Inspector Monirul Islam Bhuiyan.

At Bijoyagar upazila's Paharpur union parishad complex, Monju Akhter lamented how she stood in a line for 4 hours but was left without the jab. "People are standing chest-to-back without masks. This is going to further spread infection," she said.

At the vaccination points in Dinajpur's Birail upazila's Forkabad and Dhamoil union, vaccines ran out within two hours of starting.

Abu Sahadat Ripon, the secretary

of Farkabad Union Parishad, said that around 800 people registered to get the vaccines on Saturday morning, but only 266 could be vaccinated.

Our Gazipur correspondent reported a similar situation where many booths had to close shop in two hours.

At Sreepur's Pilot Girl's High School centre, people were told that the centre was out of vaccines at noon.

In Munshiganj's Louhajang, Upazila Health Officer Nur-e-Alam Khan told our correspondent that 5 unions out of 10 saw a shortage of doses. Meanwhile at Sirajdikhan, two out of nine unions saw a similar shortage.

CONFUSION AND PHOTO-OP Even though he is not trained for it, lawmaker Enamul Haque administers

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CONFUSION AND PHOTO-OP

Even though he is not trained for it, lawmaker Enamul Haque administers

a shot to a person at Baghmara of Rajshahi yesterday.

The photo of him giving the jab made the rounds in social media.

This paper could not reach the MP for Rajshahi-4 constituency for comments.

Dhamrai city mayor seemingly took the opportunity to administer a vaccine dose on a citizen himself according to a photo that went viral on social media, and caused an outcry.

Mayor Golam Kabir Mollah, who is also the chairperson of the poura Awami League, is not medically certified to push vaccines.

Contacted, said he was just posing. "I was simply pretending," he said.

In several places, certain individuals were mistakenly given two shots back

to back.

In Brahmanbaria's Sarail upazila a 38-year-old woman named Rozina Begum got two jabs in 30 minutes. Her husband told journalists that she had taken the jab and was waiting for her vaccine card, when a health worker approached her and gave her another shot.

A similar incident happened in Rajbari where a woman got two doses. This happened in Baliakandi upazila's Narua Union.

Thirty-one-year-old Ismat Ara had taken the jab and was waiting for the designated half-an-hour to observe side-effects when a health worker came by and administered a second dose.

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Even though he is not trained for it, lawmaker Enamul Haque administers a shot into an elderly person at Baghmara of Rajshahi yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Red Gold sparks hope

FROM PAGE 1

open terrain. And producing it in a temperature controlled room is expected to be even more expensive. But the chances of losing a yield is little in this process. And saffron can be harvested multiple times in a year in this method," Jamal Uddin told The Daily Star.

Considering its huge global demand and high price, he said, saffron can be produced commercially in Bangladesh if appropriate support is provided.

The scientific name of saffron is Crocus Sativus. It's a lily herb belonging to the Iridaceae family. The golden spice, which is called zafran in Urdu, kesar in Hindi, has a worldwide fame as an expensive cooking ingredient widely used in a variety of kitchens, starting from the Mughals and lavish hotels.

It is also one of the most revered ingredient used in beauty care. Its distinctive aroma, flavour and colour are also used in dyes and perfumes.

According to industry insiders, more than 90 percent of saffron used in Bangladesh is imported from Iran and the rest from Kashmir, Spain and Morocco.

The reason it's so expensive is that it needs intensive harvesting of tiny stigmas that are extremely delicate and require hand extraction. Here manual labour plays a bigger role than machines.

A large number of crocus flowers is needed to produce a significant amount of saffron. In the international market, each gram of saffron is sold for about \$4, meaning each kilogram of the spice costs over Tk 3 lakh.

Jamal Uddin said the popular method of cultivating saffron in wintry countries is to plant it on open terrains.

However, the same method cannot be adopted in Bangladesh, because heavy rainfall can cause the bulbs to rot easily. Also, due to the humidity



factor of the soil, even if the plant grows well, the flowers won't bloom as per expectations, he said.

The researcher brought more than 500 saffron bulbs from Japan last year.

"Initially, those were frozen at a specific temperature in order to get them prepared for sowing. Later, they were sown in trays made of plastic and tin and preserved indoors. Finally, flowers bloomed in almost all the plants," Jamal Uddin said.

"Usually, saffron cultivation requires a vast swathe of land, but we have examined that if we adapt the aeroponics procedure, we can produce enough saffron equivalent to the amount grown on a hectare of land in a small room. As the plant trays used in this method are arranged vertically, much less space is required," said the researcher.

Aeroponics is the process of growing plants in an air or mist environment without the use of soil or an aggregate medium.

PRODUCTION OF SAFFRON Jamal Uddin said each flower usually yields 30 milligrams of saffron, which weighs only around seven milligrams once dried.

Therefore, at least 150 flowers are required to get one gram of saffron and for one kg, 1.50 lakh flowers are required.

Once the bulbs become matured, each plant provides one flower in the

first year which rises up to seven or eight in subsequent years.

"In Iran and Kashmir, around two-kg of saffron are being yielded from a hectare of land. But it is possible to produce the same amount of saffron in a 100 square feet greenhouse or a temperature-controlled room," said the researcher.

LIMITATIONS Jamal Uddin said costs and collecting bulbs are the major challenges facing saffron cultivation in Bangladesh.

In order to get one kilogram of saffron, stigmas of around 1.50 lakh flowers are required. For sapping, each bulb costs at least Tk 60, so the cost of 1.50 lakh bulbs would be Tk 9 lakh, he said.

Besides, two air conditioners, lights and a person will be required for monitoring the production round the clock.

He, however, said the cost can be cut by collecting bulbs once and then making seedlings by tissue culture.

"Another benefit of cultivating saffron indoors is that we can get its yield throughout the year," Jamal Uddin said.

He said given the success achieved so far, they can easily go for commercial production if they have a sponsorship. DEMAND IN BANGLADESH There is no available data on the amount of saffron being imported to Bangladesh and how many people consume it.

Enayet Ullah, chairman of Wholesale Spice Traders Association, said because of its high price, the number of saffron consumers in Bangladesh is very low.

The import is also less for the same reason, he told this newspaper.

The quality of saffron imported is not high, he said, adding that some people sell the spice by mixing it with lower quality of saffron.

Israel strikes Gaza after incendiary balloon launches

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel conducted overnight air strikes against Hamas targets in Gaza in retaliation for the launching of incendiary balloons from the Palestinian enclave that caused fires in southern Israel, the country's military said early yesterday.

"In response to continual launches of incendiary balloons from Gaza into Israel throughout the day, a short while ago IDF fighter jets struck a Hamas military compound and a rocket launching site," the Israeli army said in a statement.

"The rocket launching site was located in close proximity to civilian surroundings, once again emphasising how Hamas continues to endanger Palestinian civilians."

There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Incendiary balloons caused four fires on Friday in the Eshkol region near Gaza, Israeli firefighters said.

The last time such an attack took place, on July 25, the Israeli army retaliated with air strikes on targets of the Islamist movement Hamas, which rules the Palestinian enclave.

There have been sporadic incidents, including a series of incendiary balloon launches, since a May 21 ceasefire ended 11 days of deadly fighting between Israel and Hamas.

That conflict killed 260 Palestinians including some fighters, according to Gaza authorities.

In Israel, 13 people were killed, including a soldier, by projectiles fired from Gaza, the police and army said.

Friday's balloon launches come after the Israeli army carried out retaliatory shelling in Lebanon in response to a volley of rockets fired by Hezbollah, a Hamas ally.

New Asean envoy to Myanmar says he wants full access when he visits

REUTERS, Bandar Seri Begawan

The Brunei diplomat appointed by a Southeast Asian regional bloc as its special envoy to Myanmar yesterday said he should be given full access to all parties when he visits the strife-torn country, where the military overthrew an elected government.

Speaking days after his appointment by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), Erywan Yusof gave no date for his visit to Myanmar, whose civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other officials have been detained since the Feb. 1 coup.

Hospital beds

FROM PAGE 1

the hospitals as the same doctors, nurses and other health staffers are treating all types of patients.

But the transmission of the coronavirus does not take place in hospitals or clinics.

"You know where it happens -- out in the streets, in shops, in ferries, in factories, in villages markets by those who are not wearing masks and not maintaining the social distance."

Maleque went on to call for people's cooperation in flattening the curve of coronavirus.

BSMMU FILED HOSPITAL

About the newly inaugurated field hospital, Maleque said: "This hospital has all the necessary treatment arrangements for Covid-19 patients. However, only new and critically ill patients will be treated here."

Those whose oxygen saturation level will be 80 or below will be treated at the facility, said Debabrata Banik, coordinator of the hospital.

"If other patients come, we will also provide them with primary care, but will send them back to their homes after that," he told The Daily Star.

At present, the facility has 357 beds, which will be increased to 1,000 in phases, according to the BSMMU officials.

Of the 357 beds, there are 20 ICU and 20 HDU beds; the general beds have a central oxygen supply.

Country records

FROM PAGE 1

also increased by more than 23 percent during the period.

In the 24 hours to 8:00am yesterday, the country registered 8,136 new cases after testing 31,714 samples.

The positivity rate was 25.65 percent yesterday, a continuous downward trend since Monday when a positivity rate of 30 percent was reported.

On the previous day, the positivity rate was 26.25 percent.

With the latest count, the total number of fatalities from Covid-19 rose to 22,411 and the total confirmed cases to 13,43,396.

The Dhaka division saw the highest number of deaths yesterday (101), followed by Chattogram (62), Khulna (45), Mymensingh (16), Barishal (12), Rangpur (10), Rajshahi (8) and Sylhet (7).

ANTI-AEDES DRIVE

DNCC announces monetary incentive to clean up houses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday announced monetary rewards for cleaning coconut shells, unused toilet fittings, plastic bags and discarded tyres.

"We will give Tk 50 for unused commode and discarded tyres and will give Tk 5 for each coconut shell, pots and chips packets. Anyone can collect money by submitting it to the councillor office or zonal offices," said the DNCC mayor at a press conference at Nagar Bhaban at Gulshan.

Urging people to come forward to clean their house at least for 10 minutes every Saturday, the mayor said cleaning activities will have to be sped up to control Aedes mosquitoes and everyone will have to take part in cleaning their own houses.

He said everyone will have to be careful so that water cannot remain stagnant for more than three days at different pots, flower tubs, rooftops, or any other containers.

The mayor said they will also award whoever will give the highest number of information about Aedes mosquito larvae using their Sobar Dhaka app.

He said they have ensured facilities of dengue virus test free of cost at their 54 health centres in 54 wards.

Meanwhile, mobile courts of two city corporations yesterday fined owners of different under-construction buildings, houses and other establishments Tk 6 lakh.

Twelve mobile courts of DNCC fined Tk 2.20 lakh against the owners of different establishments, while mobile courts of Dhaka South City Corporation slapped fines of Tk 4.29 lakh to a hospital and diagnostic centre, and under construction buildings after finding mosquito larvae there.



A motorbiker attempts to cross over from one side of Chittagong Road illegally through a broken part of the road divider, while his pillion gets off the bike and helps him. On a wide road where vehicles often ply at high speed, such attempts can be very dangerous. The photo was taken near Matuail yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

204 dengue patients hospitalised in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 204 people with dengue fever were admitted to different hospitals of the country in 24 hours till 8am yesterday.

Only 10 of them are from outside Dhaka, said Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With them, a total of 4,319 patients have been hospitalised with dengue this year, with 157 from outside the capital.

Among 4,319 infected, 1,661 were diagnosed during the current month till yesterday morning, which indicates the fast-rising trend of the disease.

At least 2,286 people were hospitalised across the country in July, while 272 were hospitalised in June and 43 in May.

Although most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 997 are still undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka and 39 outside the capital, the DGHS data shows.



Although cars and CNG autorickshaws plied the streets of the capital rather freely yesterday, the lack of public transport meant long-haul commuters had to find alternative modes like pickup vans to get to their destinations. The photo was taken from Shonir Akhra area.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

EXTENDED LOCKDOWN

Vehicles aplenty on Dhaka streets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The second day of the latest phase of ongoing nationwide lockdown yesterday saw significant number of vehicles plying on the capital's different streets.

Despite it being a weekend, cars were seen waiting at traffic signals in the city's different parts including at Bijoy Sarani, Karwan Bazar, and Moghbazar as vehicular movement increased yesterday, compared to the previous day.

Rickshaws, CNG-run auto-rickshaws, motorcycles and private cars were seen on the roads, plying of public transports remained closed.

Besides, city dwellers were seen coming out of their residences without much reservation.

A rush of vehicles of different vehicles including private cars, CNG-run autorickshaws and motorcycles was seen at Mirpur-10 intersection around 11:30am.

At the intersection, on-duty traffic sergeant Rafiqul Islam also said there was pressure of vehicular movements in the intersection.

Many people came out of home as garment factories and other businesses kept open their activities, he said.

The traffic sergeant said they had questioned many commuters to know reasons behind their coming out of home.

Rafiqul said they filed at least four cases for violating rules and realised monetary fine of Tk 5,000 from those who came out of home unnecessarily as of noon.

Rickshaws were seen carrying passengers and plying on several of the main roads including in Nayapalton, Shantinagar, Gulistan and Mahakhali areas.

Roadside shops inside different alleys were also seen open.

Meanwhile, a fair number of people were found enjoying the afternoon out in the open in Suhrawardy Udyan. Friends in groups, couples and cyclists were seen roaming around, while hawkers sold peanuts, tea and fried snacks.

The latest shutdown, first imposed for 14-days until August 5, has now been extended till August 10 across the country.

'Even crematoriums are being grabbed'

Sultana Kamal tells webinar on indigenous issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted rights activist Sultana Kamal yesterday at a webinar said indigenous people are not only losing their homesteads, gardens, trees, forestlands and lakes, but their crematoriums are also being grabbed by the state or people patronised by the state.

"And there is no solution to this grabbing from the state's side, while those who are losing land are being evicted and forced to migrate elsewhere," she said.

The webinar titled "Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in Sustainable Development and Realization of Rights: Responsibility of State and Citizens", was jointly organised by Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) and Bangladesh Indigenous People Forum, in

collaboration with The Daily Star.

The webinar was organised to mark International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (August 9), with the theme "Leaving No One Behind: Indigenous peoples and the call for a new social contract".

Barrister Raja Devasish Roy -- Chakma circle chief, Chattogram Hill Tracts -- presented the keynote in the webinar. He said although Bangladesh has ratified International Labour Organization Convention 107 in 1972, and signed the historical Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord (CHT Accord) in 1997, the scenario of deprivation and distress of indigenous people is largely seen even today.

They have been facing various political, social, and economic challenges, he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

BANGAMATA AWARD

Five nominated for special contribution



STAR REPORT

Five women have been nominated for the newly introduced "Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Award" for their outstanding contributions in different sectors.

They are freedom fighter from Brahmanbaria Prof Moutaz Begum (posthumous) in Independence and Liberation War category; Tangail's Joya Pati (posthumous)

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

PROTESTING DRUG PEDDLING

Aimed at teacher, gunshot by JU BCL leader hits own associate

Accused on the run; injured hospitalised in police custody

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH and MD ASADUZZAMAN

A Chhatra League leader of Jahangirnagar University allegedly fired several rounds of bullets targeting a college teacher, as he protested his peddling drugs in the area. Meanwhile, the teacher was able to save himself and one of the bullets hit an associate of that BCL leader.

The incident took place around 6:30pm on Thursday near the residence of Dr Monsur Ali, the college teacher. Dr Ali filed a case with Ashulia Police Station on Friday night over the incident against seven persons.

He is a lecturer at JU School and College in Pandhooa Purba Para area, right behind JU campus, said police and local sources.

The accused BCL leader is Shamim Osman Gani Mollah, a student of history department at JU and organising secretary of the university unit of BCL.

The injured is his associate Abul Hossen, who is now undergoing treatment at a hospital under police custody, said law enforcers.

According to locals and police, a gang, led by Shamim and one Hassan (a JU student), has been involved in peddling drugs in the area for a while. Locals often protested it but to no avail, they said.

On Thursday evening, Shamim, Hassan and their five associates gathered near Dr Ali's house and parked their four motorbikes there. When he asked them to move those, they allegedly misbehaved with him.

As he protested, Shamim fired three rounds of bullets at him and one of the bullets hit his associate Abul Hossain's right hand, Dr Ali told The Daily Star.

"I was lucky that it [the bullet] did not hit me,"

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Four teen gang members held in capital: Rab

UNB, Dhaka

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel yesterday arrested four members of a teen gang from the capital's Mohammadpur area.

Rab recovered sharp weapons from their possession, along with sharp weapons, said a press release.

Tipped off, a team of Rab-2 conducted a drive at Basila Tin Rastar Mor area around 1:15pm and arrested the four along with four knives and a phone.

According to the investigation of Rab, the group members were involved in mugging, extortion and other crimes in the area.

Rab sources said the arrestees have many injury marks on their bodies which they sustained during clashes with other teen gangs.

Process is underway to take legal action against them, said the release.

INDIAN PM'S GIFT 30 ambulances reach Benapole

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A total of 30 ambulances from India, gifted by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, have arrived in Bangladesh yesterday.

The ambulances are being transported to Dhaka from Benapole, Dr Neyamul Islam, additional commissioner at Benapole Customs Check Post, told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

Earlier on Thursday, the ambulances had arrived at Petrapole.

The vehicles, which provide life support facilities, are part of 109 ambulances being gifted to Bangladesh as per Narendra Modi's announcement made during his visit to Bangladesh in March this year.

The gift is meant to further enhance healthcare, especially in the shared effort to contain Covid-19 pandemic in Bangladesh,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Although the government has extended the current lockdown till August 10, the increasing number of people getting out of the houses have rendered it somewhat ineffective. Small traders such as roadside hawkers -- who have been some of the worst-hit due to the economic shutdown -- are venturing out to resume their businesses. The photo was taken from Gulistan area in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Govt shut down schools to save students' lives

Quader tells discussion

Bss, Dhaka

Awami League general secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said in order to save the lives of students, the government has shut down the educational institutions amid the ongoing pandemic.

"If the lives of children are at risk, what will we do with education? That's why the government took the decision to save lives," he said.

Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, made the remark at a discussion marking the National Mourning Day at IDEB in Dhaka. He attended the event virtually.

Institute of Diploma Engineers Bangladesh organised the programme -- "What to do to implement Bangabandhu's Philosophy on Vocational and Technical Education" -- and to distribute relief among the poor.

Quader also criticised BNP for saying that the government is allegedly destroying the country's education system through conspiracy. "BNP even smelt conspiracy with vaccines earlier. Their habit is to see conspiracy in everything," Quader said.

Their [BNP] political programme is only to spread rumour and falsehood against the incumbent democratic government, he added. Quader also urged BNP to specify the irregularities without throwing stones in the dark.

At the meeting, Quader also said the plotters, who wanted to erase the name of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from history, themselves are being erased from history at present.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Khulna grapples with spiraling Covid cases

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

The number of death and positive cases of Covid-19 has been spiraling in Khulna division, turning the situation bad to worse.

As of yesterday, only three ICU beds out of 50 were vacant at two government hospitals -- including Khulna Medical College Hospital -- and two private hospitals, according to the hospital sources.

In July, 1,513 people died in the division while 202 in the first six days of August, said sources at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

A total of 36 deaths were reported in Khulna division yesterday and 34 on Thursday, according to DGHS.

Of the deaths, 10 were in Kushtia, nine in Khulna, six in Jhenaidah, five in Jashore, four in Meherpur, one each in Bagerhat and Narail, said DGHS.

The first infection in the division was detected on March 19 last year in Chuadanga. Now, total infections since the beginning in the division has crossed 98,000, said DGHS.

Analysing the data, it was found that the Covid-19 situation was relatively stable from the beginning of this year till March. However, since Eid-ul-Fitr, the infection rate has been increasing rapidly.

The highest 666 deaths in the division have been reported in Khulna district till yesterday since the pandemic started. Kushtia has the second highest tally of 608. Some 389 died in Jashore, 223 in

Jhenidah, 172 in Chuadanga, 130 in Bagerhat, 154 in Meherpur, 85 in Satkhira, 97 in Narail and 76 in Magura, said DGHS.

As of yesterday, 19,510 people tested Covid-19 positive in Khulna division. Of them, 1,262 were hospitalised and the rest are at home isolation, sources said.

In the last 24 hours till yesterday, 818 positive cases were reported from 3,246 samples in the division, putting the infection rate at 23.44 percent.

The total number of Covid infections in Khulna district stood at 24,690, signalling that the district is going through its worst Covid-19 situation till date, said Khulna Civil Surgeon Niaz Mohammad.

People from Bagerhat, Jashore, Narail, Meherpur, Chuadanga, Pirojpur, Gopalganj and other nearby districts throng Khulna city for better treatment, he said.

Contacted, Jashim Uddin Hawlader, health director of DGHS in Khulna, said, "The overall situation is still under our control; we are trying our best to provide services."

"Without active participation of all, it is not possible to curb Covid-19 infections," he said.

The city has 565 Covid-dedicated beds in three government and two private hospitals. As of yesterday, 305 were receiving treatment there, said the hospitals concerned.

The civil surgeon said in July, 358 people died including 220 at Khulna Medical College Hospital.

No safari park in Lathitila forest: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) on Friday called upon the government to revoke its plan to establish a safari park in Lathitila reserve forest in Moulvibazar.

Besides, the anti-graft watchdog urged the government to ensure accountability and exemplary punishment of those who threaten journalists for publishing news reports on the issue.

In a press release, TIB said Lathitila tropical evergreen forest is one of the country's significant forests, which is full of biodiversity. It questioned the rationality of undertaking such an environment-degrading plan in the name of tourism.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said the plan to build a safari park inside a reserve forest -- based on a survey conducted under the leadership of a former forest conservator who was arrested on allegations of corruption -- has put the overall objective of the initiative into question.

"Despite having a national forest and several eco-parks in Moulvibazar, to what extent is it necessary and rational to build a safari park in the tropical evergreen forest?" he asked.

Iftekharuzzaman said concerns that wildlife and environmental experts have raised is not unreasonable. If a safari park and various infrastructures are being built inside the forest, it might lead the wildlife to extinction and damage the biodiversity.

The entire forest could be destroyed in the long run, he added.

Moreover, if the safari park is established there, about 300 families of six villages and other locals who are dependent on the forest might be evicted, the anti-graft watchdog said.

TIB urged authorities concerned to evaluate opinions given by experts and locals.



Former IGP Hadis Uddin dies of Covid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Hadis Uddin, former inspector general of police (IGP), died of Covid-19 while undergoing treatment at the ICU of Rajarbagh Central Police Hospital at 12:30pm yesterday. He was 72.

Hailing from Netrakona, Hadis left behind his wife, two sons and many relatives and admirers.

An officer of 1973 batch, he served as police chief from April 7, 2005 to May 7, 2005 with honesty, efficiency and reputation, said a statement of Police Headquarters.

His funeral was held at a mosque in the capital's Bashundhara Residential Area after Asr prayers.

He was buried at Banani Cemetery after the namaz-e-janaza.

IGP Benazir Ahmed expressed grief and sorrow over the death.

Five nominated

FROM PAGE 3

in Education, Culture and Sports; Pabna's Nurunnahar Begum in Agriculture and Rural Development; freedom fighter from Cumilla Principal Jobeda Khatun Parul in Politics; and Netrakona's Nadira Jahan (Surma Jahid) in Research.

The award giving ceremony will be held at the capital's Osmani Memorial Hall at 10:30am today, on the occasion of Bangamata's 91st birth anniversary. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs will organise it, where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will join virtually as chief guest.

Begum Fazilatunnessa, PM's mother and wife of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, embraced martyrdom along with Bangabandhu and other family members in a brutal attack by some army personnel on August 15 in 1975.

She was born in Tungipara village of Gopalganj on August 8, 1930 and struggled for an independent Bangladesh alongside Bangabandhu.

President Md Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday paid glowing tributes to Bangamata Fazilatunnessa, reports BSS.

"Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Mujib is a pride of the Bangalee nation and a source of inspiration for womenfolk. She became Bangamata because of her sacrifice, compassion, cooperation and prudence," said President Hamid.

In her message, the PM said the nation has genuinely bestowed the Bangamata title on Fazilatunnessa Mujib because of her unparalleled sacrifice, cooperation and prudence. The ideology and examples set by her will remain as a source of inspiration for the Bangalee women throughout the ages.

Each awardee will get a medal made of 40 grammes of 18-carat gold, a replica of the medal, a cheque for Tk 4 lakh and a certificate of honour. The award will be considered as the highest state award for women in the "Ka" category, according to the women and children ministry.

Marking the birth anniversary, two e-posters have been released to be used in print, electronic, online and social media. The National Committee celebrating the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has released the e-posters, said a press release.

Aimed at

FROM PAGE 3

he said. "I've been living in this area for a long time. It's a family neighbourhood and we try to keep it safe for our children."

"But I've been noticing presence of drug peddlers here, and had been protesting that." Later, the matter was reported to police, he added.

Dr Ali further alleged that Shamim and Hassan, a year ago, misbehaved with his neighbour Prof Habibullah as he too protested their drug peddling.

This newspaper also spoke with Prof Habibullah, who is currently working at National Curriculum and Textbook Board.

He said a group of youth led by Shamim and Hassan wanted to beat him with a stick in front of his house. "We did not say anything about it and kept quiet," he added.

The Daily Star could not reach Shamim or Hassan for comments as both of their mobile phones were turned off. Police said both are on the run after the incident.

Contacted, Harun-ur-Rashid, a sub-inspector of Ashulia Police Station, who visited the spot after the incident, said

Abul Hossen is being treated at Savar Enam Medical College Hospital under police custody.

Quoting locals, the SI said, "We heard that JU BCL leader Shamim Mollah fired the shots. There were seven of them in total."

"Abul Hossen is an associate of Shamim and Hassan. We got to know the names of five people. Efforts are on to arrest them and to know about the source of the weapon," said Rashid, also the case's investigation officer. "We are also quizzing Hossen."

He did not elaborate further. Asked, Jewel Rana, president of JU unit of BCL, admitted that Shamim is a BCL leader.

Regarding the incident, he said, "I'm yet to know the details. Organisational action will be taken against him if he's involved in the incident."

Meanwhile wishing anonymity, several students of JU alleged that besides being involved in drug peddling, Shamim often used to threaten journalists at the university, beat students and brandish firearms on the campus.

Journo Shakir Ahmed no more

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Shakir Ahmed, a journalist of Sylhetview24.com, died at Sylhet MAG



Osmani Medical college and Hospital on Friday night. He was 32.

He was a former correspondent at daily Bangladesh Today.

He left behind his wife, son, and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

Family sources said he breathed his last at 9:30pm while undergoing treatment, due to heart and diabetes related diseases.

He was buried at his family graveyard in Madhabpur village.

Even crematoriums

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"Bangladesh's eighth five-year plan mentioned the development of the marginalised population, including the hill tracts population. The provisions of this plan need to be reinterpreted and implemented in line with the provisions of SDGs," he said.

BIPF General Secretary Sanjeeb Drong highlighted the importance of inclusive development for indigenous people, saying that inclusive development does not always mean increasing per capita income or financial development.

It also means ensuring their safety and security, recognising their self-identity along with constitutional and legal identity, the guarantee of traditional land rights, and the establishment of their educational and cultural rights.

"We are saying that the country's per capita income has increased to

USD 2,227, but this doesn't register with indigenous people. Why do they lose their land or migrate to India? And why do indigenous women not get justice? Answers to these questions are equally linked with inclusive development," he said.

Advocate Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad, joined the webinar as a panellist. He talked about the constitutional rights of indigenous people.

He said just like indigenous people, religious minorities are also lagging behind and facing an identity crisis.

Shamsul Huda, executive director of ALRD, said numerous sections have been implemented since the signing of the historic CHT Accord two decades ago. However, the major issue -- the land commission that was formed -- has not been implemented yet.

The commission lacks adequate workforce and budget. Those must be ensured for it to perform its duties, he said.

Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir said numerous indigenous people fought for independence in 1971, and there was no discrimination back then. "Then why don't we respect them now?"

Rajshahi lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha, convener of parliamentary caucus on indigenous peoples and minority issues; Justice (ret'd) Mohammed Nizamul Huq, former justice of Supreme Court's Appellate Division and chief legal advisor of BLAST; Prof Sadeka Halim, dean of Dhaka University's (DU) Faculty of Social Sciences; Prof Rubaet Ferdous of DU's Department of Mass Communication and Journalism; indigenous rights activist Meinthin Promila, among others, also spoke at the event.



Once part of Jatrabari's Kutubkhali canal, this waterbody has been turned effectively into a large gutter due to construction work around it and then filled up with waste to the point no water passes through it. Only a few months ago, Dhaka South City Corporation had cleaned it up, but that effort has gone down the proverbial drain, judging by the looks of it. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Invitation to Bid (ITB) for IT and Office Equipment

Tender Ref. No. icddr,b/SCM/OTM/2021/36 Date: 08 August 2021

icddr,b leads the four-year TB implementation project titled "USAID's Alliance for Combating TB in Bangladesh (ACTB) Activity". icddr,b invites renowned equipment manufacturers and authorised agents/distributors of IT and office equipment to participate in a bidding process for supplying and installation of IT and office equipment for USAID's ACTB.

Interested participants can download the ITB document from the web address below: <https://www.icddr.org/work-with-us/tender-notices>

(Supply & Installation of IT and Office Equipment)

Pre-bid meeting will be held on 12 August 2021 at 12:00 p.m. through Microsoft Teams. Interested bidders should notify icddr,b about their interest in participating in the pre-bid session through an email to supplychain@icddr.org. The email must be sent by 11 August 2021 by 5:00 p.m. Please mention 'Bid reference' and 'Interested in Pre-bid participation' in the email subject.

Offerors shall submit password protected Technical and Financial offers through email to supplychain@icddr.org. Offers must be received no later than 22 August 2021 by 3:00 p.m. (BST). Bid opening session will not be conducted as a Public Opening. Please see the bid document for details.

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



Senior Manager, Procurement
Email: supplychain@icddr.org

30 ambulances

FROM PAGE 3

according to the Indian High Commission in Bangladesh. The remaining ambulances are expected to arrive in batches by the end of September.

"The ambulances are intended to support the government of Bangladesh's extensive effort to combat the Covid pandemic. They underline India's continuing and long-term commitment to partner the fraternal people of Bangladesh," the Indian High Commission said.

Govt shut

FROM PAGE 3

Noting that the prime minister has been working relentlessly to address many challenges the country is facing due to the pandemic, he said during this crisis, all political parties should be involved in saving lives and standing by the needy.

Quader called upon all to follow the health rules and help motivate people to get vaccinated.

He also emphasised on building a workforce suitable for the international labour market.

AL relief and social welfare secretary Sujit Roy Nandi, office secretary Biplob Barua and IDEB general secretary Md Shamsur Rahman, spoke at the event, chaired by IDEB president AKM Hamid.

Oxygen for people in remote areas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

With an aim to help people in rural areas, a welfare organisation on Friday distributed 8 oxygen cylinders and other medical equipment in Moulvibazar.

Hazipur Society handed over the equipment to local volunteer groups in post office area of Kulaura's Hazipur union.

Previously, they distributed seven oxygen cylinders, nebulisers and oximeters, among other equipment, said organisers.

"We are planning to increase our efforts to help people in need," said Maj (ret'd) Nurul M Chowdhury, president of the organisation.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Public Health Engineering
Office of the Superintending Engineer
Sylhet Circle, Tophkhana, Sylhet

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গাম শহরের উন্নতি

Invitation for Enlistment & Renewal of Enlistment (2021-2022)
Memo No. 46.03.9100.013.07.41.15-55 Date: 04/08/2021

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh		
1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Local Govt. Rural Development & Co-operatives, Local Govt. Division.
2.	Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE).
3.	Procuring entity name	Superintending Engineer, Sylhet Circle.
4.	Procuring entity district	Sylhet.
5.	Invitation for	Enlistment & Renewal of Enlistment.
6.	Invitation Ref. No.	CE, DPHE Office Memo No. 46.03.0000.001.35.001.13-234.
7.	Date	03/08/2021.
KEY INFORMATION		
8.	Procurement method	Limited Tendering Method.
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
		Date
		Time
9.	Application closing date and time	01/09/2021 5.00pm
10.	Name & address of the office(s)	
	-Application form availability	Office of the Executive Engineers, DPHE, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Habiganj and Moulvibazar.
	-Receiving application form	Office of the Superintending Engineers, DPHE, Sylhet Circle, Tophkhana, Sylhet.
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT		
11.	Eligibility of applicant	a. Must have valid trade licence. b. Must have TIN. c. Must have bank solvency certificate. d. Others document as mentioned in Application Form.
12.	Price of application form (Tk)	500.00 (non-refundable).
13.	Enlistment/renewal fee (Tk)	New enlistment fee 5000.00+15% VAT and renewal fee 2000.00+15% VAT. Must be submitted in the form of Pay Order/Demand Draft in favour of Executive Engineer, DPHE, Sylhet Division. Two separate POs/DDs to be submitted -- one for Enlistment/Renewal Fee and another for 15% VAT of Tk 750.00/300.00 respectively. If application is not accepted, the PO/DD will be refunded.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
14.	Name of official inviting application	M. Shaikh Sadi Rahmatulla.
15.	Designation of official inviting application	Superintending Engineer, DPHE, Sylhet Circle, Sylhet.
16.	Address of official inviting application	DPHE, Tophkhana, Sylhet.
17.	Contact details of official inviting application	0821727461 se.sylhet@dphe.gov.bd
18.	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all applications.	

M. Shaikh Sadi Rahmatulla
SE, DPHE, Sylhet Circle

GD-1424



While unauthorised dredging continues unabated in the Kaliganga river, its bank in Joynagar area under Manikganj municipality keeps on eroding away. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ZAHANGIR SHAH

Illegal dredging blamed for Kaliganga erosion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Locals in Joynagar area of Manikganj municipality are speculating that the unusual erosion of hundreds of bighas of croplands in the area along the Kaliganga river is a result of illegal and indiscriminate dredging in the river by unscrupulous sand traders.

As the illegal sand lifting continues without any action from law enforcers or the administration for long, nearby Beutha bridge on the river, hundreds of houses and croplands in a larger area are now under erosion threat, they said.

The 'Balu Mohal O Mati Babosthaponia Ain (Sand Fields and Soil Management Act), 2010' prohibits the extraction of sand or soil within one kilometre of a bridge, culvert, dam, barrage, embankment, road, highway, forestland, rail track, and other important government and non-government establishments or residential areas.

As the illegal sand lifting continues without any action from law enforcers or the administration, nearby Beutha bridge on the river, hundreds of houses and croplands are now under erosion threat.

While the illegal sand extraction continues, Joynagar and its adjacent areas -- Andharamanik, Char Beutha, Bandutia and Pauli -- have been witnessing severe erosion of the river.

Aside from Joynagar, the densely populated area between Beutha bridge and Tara bridge is also within close proximity of the illegal sand extraction site.

Although the authorities concerned had been informed multiple times of the illegal activities that had been putting public and private properties at risk for years, they never took any action, alleged locals, adding that the dredger operators even issued threats on anyone who had dared to raise objection against the unauthorised dredging in the river.

Requesting anonymity, a number of locals alleged that influential activists of the political party in power have been causing damage to the area and the river for their personal gains.

Since many locals faced repercussions before, no one nowadays dares to protest or even talk to journalists regarding the unlawful activities, they also said.

On behalf of the locals, Manikganj town Mayor Ramzan Ali on July 7 petitioned the Manikganj Deputy Commissioner to stop the dredging in the Kaliganga river and build embankments on its banks to save the area from erosion.

Many important structures and establishments including Beutha bridge, Joynagar Government Primary School, Joynagar High School, Municipal Water Pump, Dr Joseph Memorial Hospital and various businesses including a good number of restaurants along the river bank -- in Joynagar, Andharamanik, Char Beutha and Pauli areas under Manikganj municipality -- are now under erosion threat due to the lifting of sand from the river.

Unless the sand extraction is stopped urgently, the establishments as well as properties and livelihoods of 25,000 residents of these areas will be lost to the river, he also said in the petition.

Contacted, the newly appointed Deputy Commissioner in Manikganj Muhammad Abdul Latif said no one can do dredging in the river by harming the area and violating the law. "I've already instructed the upazila nirbahi officer to do what is necessary in the public interest."

Students' bridge on Chitra river connects 7 villages in Jhenidah

AZIBOR RAHMAN

Recently an association of college and university Student based in Kaliganj upazila has built a wooden bridge voluntarily over the Chitra river for the greater benefit of the villagers and students.

A total of 45 students of College and University Students' Association (CUSA) at Ekartpur, Gayashpur and Debrajpur villages have built the bridge for two months at their sweet will.

Rabiul Islam Toha, secretary of the association, said that considering the misery and sufferings of the commuters, villagers and students they formed an association with 45 interested students titled 'CUSA'.

They collected around 500 bamboos and Tk 70,000 from the nearby villagers, service holders and businessmen in order to build the bridge.

The length of the bridge is 283 feet and its breadth is 6 feet. It has become possible for the pandemic because all the students of university and colleges are staying at home due to Covid-19, he said.

He added that the commuters, villagers and students had to cross more than five kilometers additional road due to the want of this bridge. They are now happy for the ease of movement over the river.

The bridge, which is west facing, has connected seven villages on both the side of the river.

Gayashpur, Parkhirda, Shatbaria, and Bashundhara are on the East side of the river while Ekartpur, Jatarpara and Debrajpur are on West side.



The bamboo and wooden bridge has connected seven villages in Kaliganj upazila of Jhenidah easing the movement of the villagers.

PHOTO: AZIBOR RAHMAN

Ekartpur Secondary School is at the West side of the bridge while Shatbaria Hukkul Huda madrasa is located at the East side.

Ekartpur Secondary School teacher Md Hafizur Rahman said, "We have been greatly benefited for the bridge. The farmers are now able to carry their vegetable to Shatbaria market. Besides, the bridge has facilitated the movement of 150 students of the school and madrasa."

A village doctor Hafizur Rahman Hafiz of Debrajpur village said that this bridge has developed a friendship among the villagers. Now the local bazar is buzzing with crowd.

Female patients have also able to consult with the local doctors for the building of the bridge thanks to the initiative of the students.

Raigram UP chairman Ali Hossain Apu said that the students deserve praise for building this bridge. All sections of people including farmers, and students including are highly glad for the noble initiative of the students.

Set on fire by husband, woman dies from burns

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A housewife, who was set afire by her husband allegedly over a family feud in Joypurhat's Khetlal upazila, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) on Friday after 11 days of the brutal incident.

The deceased, Monjila Khatun, 28, was daughter of Abdus Sabur of Baniyapara village in Joypurhat Sadar upazila.

Meanwhile, following a case filed by the victim's father, police arrested Monjila's husband Sharful Islam, 35, son of Rafiqul Islam of Boar village in Khetlal upazila.

Later, police produced the arrestee before a court that sent him to jail.

According to the case statement and neighbours, the couple almost regularly used to quarrel with each other over family issues since their marriage five years back.

On July 26, they locked in an altercation

over a trivial matter, and, at one stage, angry Sharful poured kerosene on Monjila and set her on fire, before fleeing the spot.

Hearing his cry for help, people nearby rushed to the house, rescued burnt Monjila in critical condition and rushed her to the burn unit at Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital.

But, doctors at the hospital referred her to Sheikh Hasina Burn Unit in the capital as her condition deteriorated.

Monjila died while undergoing treatment at the hospital on Friday afternoon.

Officer in Charge (OC) of Khetlal Police Station Nirendranath Mondal said victim's father Sabur filed a case with the police station on July 27.

Monjila was admitted to the hospital with burns on 80 percent of her body, the OC added.

Journalists of different print and electronic media in Pabna held a protest rally in the town yesterday and then announce a three-day agitation program, demanding withdrawal of the case filed against Pabna Press Club Secretary Soikot Afroz Asad under the Digital Security Act (DSA). Former Awami League Lawmaker from Pabna-2 constituency Azizul Haque Arzu filed a case with the Cyber Tribunal in Dhaka on June 9 for publishing a news.



PHOTO: STAR

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Gaibandha

Invitation for e-Tender (IFT) (OTM)

Tender Notice No. e-GP-01/XEN/EED/Gai/2021-22/ Date: 04/08/2021
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. The tenderer who have registered in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is eligible to participate in this tender. The fees of downloading the e-Tender documents of following packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to the following date and time.

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID	Last date & time of selling documents	Last date & time of submission documents
1	EED/GAI/ICT College/2020-21/Mohipur	Construction of 4-Storeyed Academic Building with 4-Storeyed Foundation in/c Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Mohipur Bazar College Sadullapur, Gaibandha.	587870	01/09/2021 Time: 17.00	02/09/2021 Time: 13.00
2	EED/GAI/ICT College/2020-21/Chandia	Construction of 4-Storeyed Academic Building with 4-Storeyed Foundation in/c Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Chandia Molila College Fulchari, Gaibandha.	587871	01/09/2021 Time: 17.00	02/09/2021 Time: 13.00

a) Tender publication date on live: 10.00am on 08/08/2021.
b) This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
c) To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.
d) The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of following packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 17.00 on 01/09/2021.
e) Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Asaduzzaman
Executive Engineer

GD-1422

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
National Board of Revenue
Rajaswa Bhaban
Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000
www.nbr.gov.bd

Ref. No. 08.01.0000.003.22.001.20.479 Date: 05 August 2021

e-Tender Notice
Tender Notice No. 02/2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of 100 mbps Dedicated Internet Broadband Connection in NBR (01 Year). The Tender ID Number is 594410 and method of tender is OTM. Only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration is required in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd). The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal has to be deposited online through any registered bank. Tender documents publication date is 04 August 2021 at 12.00pm.

Md. Abu Musa
Deputy Commissioner of Taxes
Second Secretary (Board Administration-3)

GD-1423

MIGRANT TRAGEDY
About 40 feared dead as boat capsizes off Western Sahara

REUTERS, Madrid

About 40 migrants were feared dead after a boat carrying about 50 people travelling from Western Sahara to Spain's Canary Islands capsized, a Spanish non-governmental organisation, said on Friday.

"Tragedy: forty-two people, among those thirty women, eight children and four men, died when a boat capsized off the coast of Dakhla," tweeted Helena Maleno of Caminando Fronteras, which monitors migratory flows.

Official sources, quoted by the Spanish newspaper El Pais, said the number of people feared dead was 30. Maleno said 10 people survived and were picked up by fishermen.

The accident happened when the migrant boat set out in bad weather on Tuesday but details had only emerged on Friday.

Fronteras claims during the first six months of 2021 2,087 migrants died or disappeared as they tried to make the perilous voyage by sea to Spain from Western Africa.



Flames rise near a house as a wildfire burns in the village of Kirinthos, on the island of Evia, Greece on Friday. Thousands of tourists and residents were evacuated and a thick cloud of smoke and ash hung over Athens as "nightmarish" forest fires raged in Greece yesterday, while heavy rains brought some relief to neighbouring Turkey. Greece and Turkey have been fighting devastating fires for more than a week as the region suffers its worst heatwave in decades. The fires have killed two people in Greece. In Turkey, eight people have been killed.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS
IN brief

Japan commuter knife attacker wanted to kill 'happy women'

The man alleged to have wounded 10 people in a knife attack on a Tokyo commuter train late on Friday told police he became incensed when he saw women who "looked happy" and wanted to kill them. Japanese media reported yesterday. Police arrested the 36-year-old man in another part of Tokyo after he slashed and stabbed people in the attack at about 8:40 pm (11:40 GMT) on Friday on a train on the Odakyu Line in the western part of the city, media reported. One victim, a female university student, was seriously wounded, while the rest suffered less severe injuries. The Sankei newspaper reported that suspect told police: "I began feeling like I wanted to kill women who looked happy about six years ago. Anyone was fine, I just wanted to kill a lot of people." Other media outlets, including NHK, in Japan reported similar quotes.

US charges two in plot to attack Myanmar's anti-junta UN envoy

US prosecutors said Friday they had charged two Myanmar citizens in a plot to attack the country's UN ambassador, Kyaw Moe Tun, an outspoken supporter of the democracy movement who has refused junta orders to quit. In an alleged conspiracy foiled by US investigators, the pair spoke of hiring hitmen who would force Kyaw Moe Tun to resign or, if he refused, to kill him, officials said. FBI said law enforcement acted "quickly and diligently" after receiving a tipoff on the hit mission on Tuesday, according to court documents. Suspects Phyo Hein Htut, 28, and Ye Hein Zaw, 20, were being charged in a federal court in Westchester on counts for which they could be sentenced to up to five years in prison. Prosecutors said Phyo Hein Htut had been in touch with an arms dealer in Thailand who had dealings with the military in Myanmar. The arms dealer spoke to Phyo Hein Htut about hiring assassins for the plot, the criminal complaint said.

Two plead guilty to assaulting cops in attack on US Capitol

A New Jersey gym owner pleaded guilty Friday to assaulting a policeman in the January 6 attack on the US Capitol by supporters of then-president Donald Trump. Scott Fairlamb, who is 44 years old, faces up to just more than four years in prison for joining the attack, which sought to prevent Congress from certifying President Joe Biden's defeat of Trump in the November 2020 election. In a hearing in Washington federal court on Friday, the former mixed martial arts fighter was the first out of hundreds charged in the attack to plead guilty to assaulting a police officer. Videos taken of the melee showed him shouting and blocking a police officer as he waved a collapsible baton. Fairlamb shouted to "patriots" to disarm the police and storm the building. A second man, Devlyn Thompson of Washington state, also pleaded guilty Friday to assaulting police on January 6. Thompson, 28, was among a group that threw objects at police and took their riot shields.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Iran defiant as West ups ante

Tehran blasts accusations as G7 blames it for the attack, US releases 'evidence'

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday rejected Western allegations its drones were used in a deadly tanker attack, while accusing Israel of concocting the "scenario" in a bid to undermine the Islamic republic.

The MT Mercer Street, an oil products tanker operated by Israeli-controlled Zodiac maritime, was struck last week off Oman's coast, killing two crew members -- a Briton and a Romanian.

The incident on July 29 upped the stakes in what analysts have called a "shadow war" that has seen a spate of attacks on vessels linked to Iran and Israel.

G7 foreign ministers on Friday pointed the finger of blame for the latest attack at Iran, as the US military released the findings of an investigation alleging the drones were made in the Islamic republic.

Iran dismissed the allegations.

"We strongly condemn the baseless statement by the foreign ministers of the G7 and the European Union's high representative for foreign affairs in which they have directed baseless accusations at the Islamic Republic

of Iran," foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said.

The tanker attack and the accusations against Iran were a "scenario" concocted with "notable" timing, he said, as they came days before Iran's new ultraconservative President Ebrahim Raisi took the oath of office.

Raisi was inaugurated on August 3 by Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and sworn in by parliament two days later, taking over from moderate president Hassan Rouhani.

ISRAELI-LINKED TANKER ATTACK

"For experts and those who know the history of this region, it is not a new thing that the Zionist regime (Israel) would design such conspiracies," Khatibzadeh said.

Citing the results of a probe, the US Central Command said on Friday that remnants from one of three explosives-laden drones that targeted the Mercer Street indicated it was produced in Iran.

"This was a deliberate and targeted attack, and a clear violation of international law..."

There is no justification for this attack," the foreign ministers of the world's seven most developed nations (G7) said in a statement.

Iran's military spokesman denied the US allegations. "This is the Americans' method, to weave stories and use it to accuse Iran... this is the method they have chosen to pressure Iran," Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi was quoted by IRNA news agency as saying.

On Tuesday, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said his government was "working on enlisting the world" in response to the attack but warned "we also know how to act alone".

Iran on Thursday warned its arch-foe not to take military action against it.

"We state this clearly: ANY foolish act against Iran will be met with a DECISIVE response," Khatibzadeh said.

"Don't test us," he added.

There have been several reported attacks on Israeli and Iranian ships in recent months that the two have blamed each for.

Iran has also accused Israel of sabotaging its nuclear sites and killing a number of its scientists.

UN: North Korea developing nuke missile programs

REUTERS, United Nations

North Korea continued developing its nuclear and ballistic missile programs during the first half of 2021 in violation of international sanctions and despite the country's worsening economic situation, according to an excerpt of a confidential United Nations report seen by Reuters on Friday.

The report by a panel of independent sanctions monitors to the UN Security Council North Korea sanctions committee said Pyongyang "continued to seek material and technology for these programmes overseas."

"Despite the country's focus on its worsening economic travails, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued to maintain and develop its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes," the sanctions monitors concluded.

North Korea has been subjected to UN sanctions since 2006 over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Security Council has steadily strengthened sanctions in a bid to cut off funding for the programs.

The monitors said they were continuing to investigate North Korea's involvement in global cyber activity. The UN sanctions monitors have previously reported that North Korea has stolen hundreds of millions of dollars using cyberattacks.



THIS DAY IN HISTORY

AUGUST 08

1786 - US Congress unanimously chooses the dollar as the monetary unit for the United States of America.

1919 - Treaty of Rawalpindi, British recognise Afghanistan's independence.

1945 - USSR declares war against Japan in WWII.

1945 - President Harry Truman signs the United Nations Charter.

1949 - Bhutan becomes an independent monarchy.

1974 - Forced by Watergate scandal, US president Richard Nixon announces he will resign at 12pm the next day.

SOURCE: WEBSITES

Brazil has near-record year for Amazon deforestation

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon reached near-record levels for the 12 months through July, according to figures released Friday, the latest bleak news for the world's biggest rainforest under President Jair Bolsonaro.

A total of 8,712 square kilometers (3,364 square miles) of forest cover -- an area nearly the size of Puerto Rico -- was destroyed from August 2020 to July 2021, according to satellite data from Brazilian space agency INPE's DETER monitoring program.

That is the second-worst year on record for the program's August-July reference period, behind only the 9,216 square kilometers deforested the previous year -- the worst for the Brazilian Amazon since the monitoring program was launched in 2015.

The latest annual figure is an increase of more than 90 percent since 2017-2018, the last full year before Bolsonaro took office.

The far-right president has slashed environmental protection programs and pushed to open protected lands to agribusiness and mining.

Environmentalists say that is having a disastrous impact on the Amazon, a critical resource in the race to curb climate change.

"The rainforest's future is currently in the hands of land speculators, illegal loggers and gold miners," said Marcio Astrini, executive secretary of the Climate Observatory, a coalition of environmental groups.

"The Amazon has become a free-for-all for environmental crime, in partnership with the current government," he said in a statement.

Facing international pressure to improve his administration's environmental record, Bolsonaro accepted the resignation in June of environment minister Ricardo Salles.

The regulation-slashing Salles, who was one of Bolsonaro's most controversial ministers, is under investigation for allegations of involvement in a timber trafficking scheme.

The Climate Observatory said the new minister, Joaquim Leite, "has not yet made a single move to undo his predecessor's policies."

Two recent studies have found heavily damaged portions of the Amazon are now emitting more carbon than they absorb, a worrying sign the rainforest may not act as a curb on global warming much longer.

The DETER figure is for the period through July 30, meaning the final number is likely to be slightly higher.



PHOTO: REUTERS

A demonstrator uses a slingshot during clashes with police in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday. Inset: A police officer fires a weapon during the clashes. Thai police fired tear gas and rubber bullets yesterday at hundreds of protesters in Bangkok demanding political reform and calling for a change to the country's coronavirus vaccination programme.

An election without opposition!

Nicaragua's electoral council on Friday disqualified the country's main opposition party, from upcoming presidential polls, in which it headed an alliance against the reelection of President Daniel Ortega. According to the statement, the president and legal representative of the Citizens Alliance for Liberty (CAL) holds dual United States-Nicaraguan citizenship "in clear violation of the law," AFP reported. The move is the latest in an escalating political crackdown in the Central American country, with critics accusing Ortega's government of trying to prevent any meaningful opposition from standing in the November 7 election. Ortega, in power since 2007, is standing for a fourth consecutive term with his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, once again as his running mate. Authorities have already arrested seven presidential hopefuls ahead of the vote. The United States has in recent weeks announced visa restrictions on Nicaraguans linked to Ortega in response to



the crackdown. EU has also slapped sanctions on the country and its ruling elites including Ortega's wife. A former leftist guerrilla, Ortega also governed Nicaragua from 1979 to 1990 when the United States backed armed opposition to his Sandinista movement. Ortega later rebranded himself as a business-friendly pragmatist, but Western nations and the opposition say he is increasingly turning into a dictator, as he seeks a stranglehold on power.

Sexual harassment: Cuomo accuser files criminal complaint

A woman who says New York Governor Andrew Cuomo groped her breast has filed a criminal complaint against the politician, US law enforcement said Friday, increasing the possibility he might be charged. The woman, who has not been named but who works as an aide to Cuomo, says the three-term governor assaulted her at his executive mansion last year. Her allegation formed part of an explosive report released this week that said Cuomo sexually harassed 11 former and current state employees. The veteran Democrat, 63, has repeatedly denied ever touching a woman inappropriately. US media said the complaint was made by a woman referred to as "Executive Assistant #1" in the report made public by New York state Attorney General Letitia James on Tuesday. At least five district attorneys have since opened inquiries into Cuomo's behavior. Legal

experts have suggested that Cuomo could face forcible touching misdemeanor charges. James's report also accused him of presiding over a toxic workplace for women and of taking retaliatory action against at least one of his accusers. Cuomo has rejected calls from President Joe Biden and other leading Democrats to quit and state lawmakers are moving to impeach him. He has been given a deadline of August 13 to submit evidence in his defense to their impeachment investigation. Cuomo was initially praised for his handling of the coronavirus crisis before he was engulfed in accusations that he covered up the scale of deaths in nursing homes. He is believed to have long coveted winning a fourth term as governor in elections scheduled for November next year but a poll released Friday suggested he might have trouble winning.

Dixie Fire becomes third-largest in California history

A huge wildfire tearing through northern California became the third-largest in the state's history Friday, and looked set to continue growing. A long-term drought that scientists say is driven by climate change has left the western United States parched -- and vulnerable to explosive and highly destructive fires. The Dixie Fire, which this week razed the Gold Rush town of Greenville, has torched more than 1,700 square kilometers (650 square miles) since it erupted in mid-July. Authorities said there were no injuries so far from the huge blaze, but stressed it was vital that people in the path of the fire heed evacuation warnings. More than 5,000 personnel are battling the blaze, which is sending enormous clouds of smoke into the air that are easily visible from space. The Dixie Fire added around a fifth to its area overnight, making it larger than the Bootleg Fire that has



laid waste to a swathe of Oregon over the last month. Thousands of square kilometers of the western United States have burned this year, an alarming result of the warming planet that has affected weather patterns. By late July, the number of acres burned in California was up more than 250 percent from 2020 -- itself the worst year of wildfires in the state's modern history.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Treatment facilities for brain tumours available locally

PROF DR KAZI MANZUR KADER

Brain tumours are the most typical type of solid tumours in children. Also, they affect many adults each year in our country. This disease can affect anyone at any age. So far, we don't know the cause for most brain tumours. This disease and its treatment may result in physical and emotional suffering for the affected and the family.

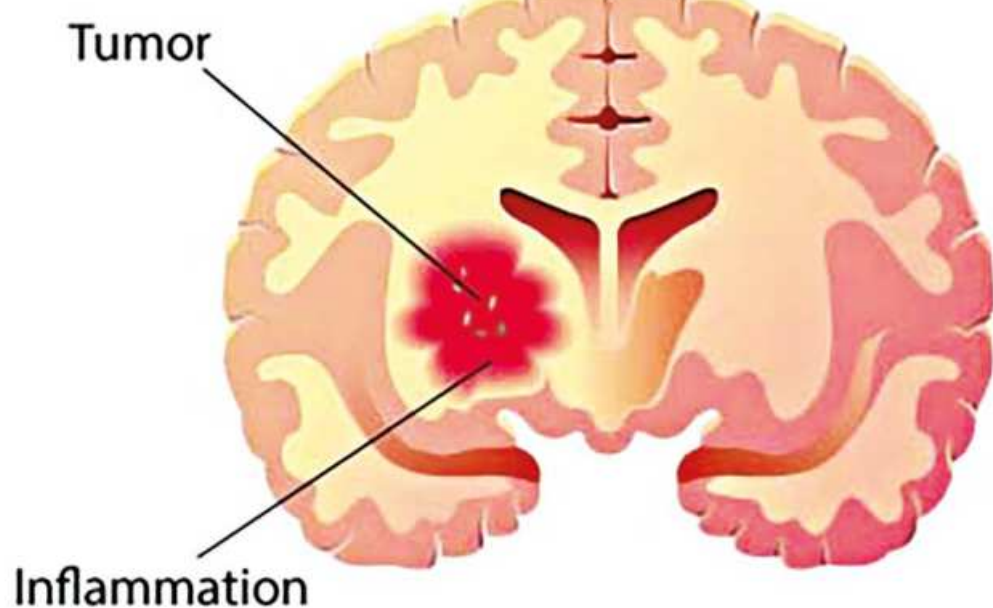
This whole experience of being diagnosed with a brain tumour and then undergoing the treatment is often challenging for the entire family.

Modern management can cure this tumour in some patients and relieve the suffering in most patients.

A mass of abnormal tissue growing in any part of the brain is called a brain tumour. For some unknown reason, some brain cells multiply in an uncontrolled manner. These tumours can arise from any part of the brain, the spinal cord or the nerves.

Broadly these tumours can be divided into benign and malignant tumours. Benign tumours grow slowly and do not spread to other parts. But as they gradually increase in size, they can cause pressure on the normal brain and interfere with mental and body function.

Malignant tumours or cancers are aggressive tumours that grow fast and infiltrate the surrounding brain. Sometimes they spread



to other parts of the brain or spine. With aggressive and timely treatment, some of these can be cured.

Brain tumours cause headaches with or without nausea and vomiting due to the tumour growth within the tight space inside the skull. It causes swelling in the surrounding brain and can cause block the free flow of cerebrospinal fluid. Thus it results in the dilatation of the ventricles - a condition called Hydrocephalous.

Seizures or epilepsy or fits can be caused by the treatment in certain parts of the brain.

A seizure is a sudden jerky movement of one part of the body or a brief loss of consciousness lasting from a few seconds to a few minutes. Limb weakness and abnormal sensation can be a symptom of a tumour in certain part of the brain, especially in and around the motor or sensory cortex. Generally, the opposite side is affected, i.e. right-sided weakness by a tumour in the left motor cortex. Other symptoms are unsteady walking or imbalance; vision may be blurred or lost if the optic nerve is compressed. Recent or long

term memory may become weak, speech problems, changed behaviour, lethargy, drowsiness and loss of consciousness are other symptoms of brain tumour.

Diagnosis can be made by detailed history, medical examinations, CT scan, MRI of Brain, angiogram, CSF test, hormone and blood test, EEG may be done.

Then the tumour tissue removed by surgery or biopsy is processed and stained with special chemical dyes and then carefully examined under the microscope.

Treatment modalities are

1. Surgery, 2. Radiotherapy, and 3. Chemotherapy. Radiotherapy plays a vital role in all malignancies to prevent or delay recurrence; stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS) or stereotactic radiotherapy (SRT) is a specialised type of radiotherapy treatment. This treatment is used for some small tumours at a critical location to give high radiation doses precisely.

To achieve such high precision, a special head frame is fitted on the patient's skull. Then CT, MRI scan and computer planning is done. This treatment is sometimes given as a single treatment (stereotactic radiosurgery) or multiple treatments over many weeks.

Radiation complications are generally mild and manageable - hair fall, loss of appetite or tiredness may occur one to three months following radiotherapy. Many patients feel very lethargic and sleepy due to the radiation. This gradually improves within few months. Suppose a high dose of radiation is given to a large area. In that case, there is about a 5% risk of brain damage (necrosis) due to radiation itself.

Excellent news that all diagnostic and treatment facilities in our country are available. Standard and quality radiotherapy treatment for brain tumours are possible.

The writer is the Head of the Department of Oncology, Delta Medical College and Hospital, Bangladesh. E-mail: manzur2001bd@yahoo.com

DID YOU KNOW?



Fasting may help ward off infections

Fasting before and during exposure to Salmonella enterica bacteria protects mice from developing a full-blown infection, in part due to changes in the animals' gut microbiomes, according to new research published in PLOS Pathogens by Bruce Vallance and colleagues at University of British Columbia, Canada.

When people or animals develop an infection, they often lose their appetite. However it remains controversial whether fasting protects a host from infection, or increases their susceptibility. In the new study, mice were fasted for 48 hours before and during oral infection with the bacteria Salmonella enterica serovar Typhimurium, a common cause of foodborne illness in people.

Fasting decreased the signs of bacterial infection compared to fed mice, including nearly eliminating all intestinal tissue damage and inflammation.

When fasted animals were re-fed for a day after their fast, there was a dramatic increase in Salmonella numbers and invasion into the intestinal walls, although the associated inflammation was still attenuated compared to normal.

"These data suggest that therapeutic fasting or calorie restriction has the potential to beneficially modulate infectious and potentially non-infectious gastrointestinal diseases," the researchers conclude.

The researchers add, "Our research highlights the important role that food plays in regulating interactions between the host, enteric pathogens and the gut microbiome. When food is limited, the microbiome appears to sequester the nutrients that remain, preventing pathogens from acquiring the energy they need to infect the host."

HEALTH bulletin



Diabetes is associated with a significant increase in the risk of hospitalisation and mortality

A new study published in *Diabetologia* (the journal of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes [EASD]) finds that individuals with diabetes are significantly more likely to be hospitalised and have a greater risk of dying from infections, and this elevated risk is more pronounced in younger adults with diabetes.

The research was conducted by Dr Michael Fang and colleagues at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, Maryland, USA.

Diabetes is widely thought to increase an individual's susceptibility to infection by reducing the effectiveness of the body's immune response. Consistent with this hypothesis, there is an increased likelihood of both common and rare infections in people with diabetes, and more recently the disease has emerged as an important risk factor for adverse outcomes in cases of COVID-19.

The authors conclude that infection prevention and management has become especially important due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the general trend of rising rates of hospitalisation due to infection: two factors which have both disproportionately impacted individuals with diabetes.

Watch for puberty signs in your child and help them out!

DR BEDOWRA ZABEEN

All human beings go through puberty, and no one's experience is exactly alike. During puberty, your body will grow faster than any other time in your life.

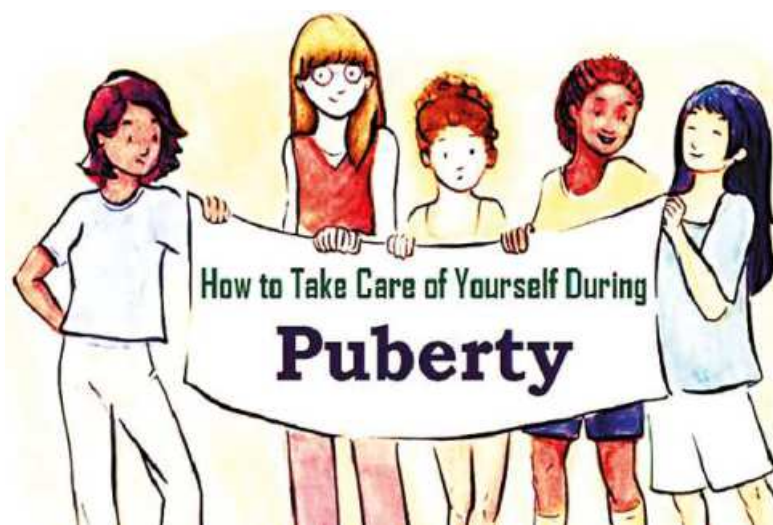
Puberty is the time in life when your child's body becomes sexually mature and transitioning from child to adult. It is when you start to change from being a child to a young adult. It causes physical changes and affects males and females differently. So, how do you know your child is going through puberty? The changes during puberty are physical, sexual, social and emotional. Puberty starts when changes in your child's brain cause sex hormones to be released.

Puberty usually starts around age 10 to 11 (range from 8 to 14 years) for girls. But it can begin as early as age 8; and puberty usually begins around age 11 to 13 (range from 9 to 16 years) for boys. It can start as early as age 9.

Your child will experience many changes in their body over the years.

In girls, the first sign of puberty is usually breast development; then, hair grows in the pubic area and underarms. They may develop acne and eventually experience menstruation (period).

In boys, puberty usually begins with enlargement of the testicles and penis; then, hair grows in the pubic area and underarms. They may develop acne, muscle growth, voice deepening, and facial hair develops as puberty continues.



Your child may experience increased sweat and body odour and a growth spurt (around 11 cm a year in girls and up to 13 cm a year in boys). They also experience sudden mood changes.

How can you help?

Adjusting to puberty can be difficult for both parents and young people. With good communication and support from family and friends, most young people can make this experience more manageable.

Let your child know the changes are normal and help them come out of this different but important time in life. Make your child comfortable enough to share with you when they notice any of the above changes.

As a parent, you can help your child go through puberty by being reassuring, talking positively to

them about what changes are expected.

When to see a paediatric endocrinologist?

Puberty may start earlier or much later. Premature puberty is when physical changes of sexual maturation appear before eight years in girls and nine years in boys. In contrast, delayed puberty is when physical changes of sexual maturation do not appear at 13 years in girls and 14 years in boys.

Remember, puberty is a normal phenomenon that every child goes through. As a parent, you should help them out to sail through puberty without any concern.

The writer is a Consultant Paediatric Endocrinologist at the Department of Paediatrics and CDIC Paediatric Diabetes Centre, BIRDEM 2, Diabetic Association of Bangladesh. E-mail: bzabeen@hotmail.com

FIFA launches #ReachOut campaign for better mental health

FIFA has launched #ReachOut, a campaign designed to raise awareness of the symptoms of mental health conditions, encourage people to seek help when they need it, and take actions every day for better mental health. With the support of past and current football players, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), FIFA is underlining the importance of greater awareness around mental health.

In launching #ReachOut, FIFA President Gianni Infantino, said: "This campaign is very important in raising awareness about mental health conditions and encouraging a conversation which could save a life. ... Depression and anxiety affect rising numbers of people worldwide, and young people are among the most vulnerable. Having a conversation with family, friends or a healthcare professional can be key."

Depression affects more than 260 million people in the world while around half of all mental health conditions start by age 14. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death in young people aged 15-29. Among active football players, 23 per cent report sleep disturbance, while 9% have reported depression and a further 7% suffer from anxiety. Among retired players, these figures increase, with 28% struggling to sleep and depression and anxiety affecting 13% and 11% respectively (source: FIFPRO)

Working from home, unemployment, school closures and social isolation have affected people around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic; the challenges for people with mental health conditions, for whom access to treatment has, in many cases, been disrupted, are even greater.

"As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, it is as important as ever to look after our mental and physical health," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organisation. "WHO is delighted to support the #ReachOut campaign, spearheaded by FIFA to encourage people to talk about their mental health."

Source: World Health Organisation

[f](#) [b](#) /StarHealthBD



Breastfeeding is the cornerstone of infant and young child survival, nutrition, development and maternal health

The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life, followed by continued breastfeeding with appropriate complementary food for up to 2 years and beyond

WHO further recommends that mothers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be encouraged to initiate or continue to breastfeed. Mothers should be counselled that the benefits of breastfeeding substantially outweigh the potential risks for transmission

Protect Breastfeeding: A Shared Responsibility

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The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA SUNDAY AUGUST 8, 2021, SRABAN 24, 1428 BS

Series win against Australia

Let's keep our heads cool

A series win against Australia in cricket sounds almost unbelievable, no matter in what format of the game. Australia took us for granted and suffered from overconfidence which is known to have played havoc with leading teams especially when they are playing with opponents known for their vulnerabilities. They imposed very harsh conditions for visiting Bangladesh compelling BCB to enforce unusually strict measures including forcible exclusion of our star T20 batsman, Mushfiqur Rahman and Liton Das due to health guideline issues.

However, that does not take anything away from our historic and exceptional performance so far. In a low-scoring wicket to hold the Aussies down on three consecutive occasions speaks volume of our bowlers led by Mustafizur, who has kept the visitors guessing as to how to read him. All through the series he was principally responsible for the host team's as-many-dot-balls-as-possible strategy, with his cutters keeping the visitors bewildered. The last match's penultimate over by him was a master display of thoroughly outwitting the batsmen.

As we celebrate, and there are plenty of reasons to do so, we cannot but point out that our top order batsmen have consistently under-performed in this series and there is very little evidence that they are learning from their mistakes. Some shots of seasoned batsmen looked down right infantile coming at moments when the team needed them to score most. Even our middle order batsmen, as a whole, cannot be said to have risen to the occasion. It was the lower-middle order that came together and saved the day.

Mahmuddullah Riyad, provided low key but effective leadership in maintaining high energy level, discipline and overall grip on the game. His timely bowling change decisions were superb.

Perhaps the real good news of the day is the coming together of several youngsters that is changing the face of the Bangladesh team. They are a fresh bunch, unencumbered by the weight of legacy teams nor burdened by the thought of maintaining their own image. They are highly skilled, confident, free-wheeling and dashing players who are out there to enjoy the game as they bring in results. They have outdone themselves and must now show in maturity and temperament what they have shown in skills and tenacity.

The most important takeaway is that no team is invincible if challenged with hard work, justified confidence and a well-entrenched desire to win based on intelligent strategy and preparation. For Bangladesh, the just concluded Zimbabwe tour provided a much needed confidence booster which may become a game changer if we can build on our learnings. However, unlike in the past when we allowed some historic and really significant victories to get into our heads and thus take our eyes off the task of maintaining our form, fitness and regime, we must not get carried away and treat our series win with maturity and circumspection. But for now, we savour the series win.

Vegetables retail for high prices, farmers get nearly nil

Why are the poor not prioritised in govt's lockdown planning?

A RECENT report by this daily revealed how, despite a 10.7 percent higher yield than last year, vegetable farmers are having to bear the brunt of selling their produce for tragically low prices while urban kitchen markets collect hefty profits for the same. Lakhs of farmers up north are bracing themselves to suffer losses amounting to tens of thousands to even one lakh taka. The reason for such huge losses to vegetable farmers is the reason now familiar to all in business: the lockdown and its impacts on supply chains.

Before the lockdown brought about by the Covid-19 second wave, Hashem Ali from Bogura was selling his courgettes for Tk 25 per kilogramme. Now the best he can get for the same quantity is Tk 7. Similarly, Jashore's Jasim Uddin has to now sell a kilogramme of his pointed gourds for at most Tk 5 and each bottle gourd for Tk 10-12. This used to be Tk 25 and Tk 30-40, respectively, before the lockdown set in and affected his earnings. The scenario is the same for all vegetables in the north, where farmers are having to sell them off for at least 50 percent less than what they would get before. Many farmers fear that they may not be able to cultivate vegetables in the winter season either, due to these losses which are making it difficult for them to pay their labourers and maintain their land.

Meanwhile, countryside movement restrictions have driven up the prices of vegetables in city kitchen markets, which is a burden on the already hard-hit consumers of the middle and poorer classes. Though wholesale traders are able to buy vegetables from farmers at dirt-cheap prices, transporting them to the capital costs around three times more, resulting in sky-high retail prices. The number of vegetable-laden trucks coming into the city is also down from 50 to 10 daily, according to the president of South Bengal Vegetable Traders Cooperative Society.

Certain decisions made by the government as of late (such as the one regarding the reopening of export-oriented factories) has sadly made it abundantly clear where on its priority list workers of poorer classes fall. The Department of Agricultural Extension estimates there are at least 80 lakh vegetable farmers in Bangladesh, working through the seasons to ensure the country has healthy food to put on all its tables. Yet, from these farmers to migrant workers, we have a tendency to neglect the ones who do the most for our economy and wellbeing through their work.

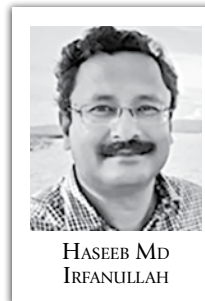
Vegetable farmers should not have to suffer the brunt of supply chain disruptions. We believe they should not only be compensated duly for their losses, they must also be protected from similar losses during any future lockdowns. We would urge the government and concerned authorities to prioritise the survival of those who are most vulnerable to lengthy lockdowns.



A view of Bay of Bengal from Sandwip, Chittagong.

PHOTO: HOSSAIN TAREQUE/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Can we be bold enough and integrate Nature-based Solutions into Blue Economy?



HASEEB MD
IRFANULLAH

BEFORE answering the question in the title, let's look into Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and Blue Economy. Over the last couple of years, NbS as a concept has received global attention, especially in climate change discussions. NbS are actions we take to protect, sustainably manage, restore, even create, a wide range of ecosystems—from hilly forests to freshwater wetlands to coastal mangroves, for example—to tackle one or more big challenges of our society, such as climate crisis, food insecurity, environmental degradation, and poverty. A crucial aspect of such ecosystem-based actions is they directly support human wellbeing in terms of nutrition, income, health, and safety. But at the same time, they increase biodiversity, maintain ecosystems' integrity. This "dual benefit" separates NbS from hardcore biodiversity conservation and conventional community development through agriculture, aquaculture or animal husbandry.

Blue Economy, on the other hand, is the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources for economic development. It encompasses all established sectors, such as oil and gas extraction, shipping, and industrial fishing, as well as emerging sectors, such as marine energy, blue health, and marine biotechnology. Although human civilisation and prosperity are built on maritime transportation and oceanic resources, Blue Economy—with present global worth USD 3 to USD 6 trillion per year—has renewed our attention to the untapped riches and opportunities of our seas for a climate resilient future.

Although we rarely discuss NbS and Blue Economy together, they do have some similarities. First, maintaining socio-economic development under constant socio-political and environmental changes is a critical challenge for all nations, especially in on-going climate crisis. NbS can tackle such societal challenges by sustainably managing marine and coastal biological resources, which is also a core component of Blue Economy. Second, NbS have strong economic element within them:

when we design an NbS intervention, we calculate its economic feasibility to make it implementable, acceptable, and sustainable. Similarly, economic analyses of maritime sectors are essential to identify viable options for investment. Third, once we find an NbS intervention working well in certain context, the next logical step is to scale it up in other suitable locations by mainstreaming it into policies, plans, and projects. Likewise, elements of Blue Economy which embrace sustainability and resilience, such as coastal rehabilitation for climate change adaptation or ocean finance and insurance, need to be integrated into a country's sustainable and resilient development pathways.

Although Blue Economy in Bangladesh involves a wide range of ministries and divisions, our conversation is often dominated by exploration of oil and gas, development of shipping industry, and establishment of new sea-ports

is praised as evidenced-based fisheries management; in 2019, Bangladesh was ranked 47 among 152 countries given the occurrence of illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing in its waters and the country's response to it. Even if we talk about developing non-extractive eco-tourism as a part of Blue Economy, St Martin's Island alone shows how badly we have failed to save it from destruction despite declaring it an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) 22 years ago.

On a positive note, Bangladesh is effectively protecting the Sundarbans, in recent years, through participatory management and SMART patrolling. Bangladesh Forest Department created green belt on more than two hundred thousand hectares of coastal land since 1966. Together with UNDP, the Department improved the resilience of coastal communities through afforestation and reforestation programmes since 2008. In June 2019,

To integrate NbS into Blue Economy, first, we need to shift our mindset and start seeing our coasts and seas as thriving ecosystems made of biodiversity, not as commodity. Taking this first step is crucial.

along with improving the existing ones. In January 2017, the government established the "Blue Economy Cell" under the Energy and Mineral Resources Division to explore, conserve, and sustainably collect and manage natural and mineral resources. Over the last four years, however, the Cell offered limited leadership to advance Bangladesh's Blue Economy agenda.

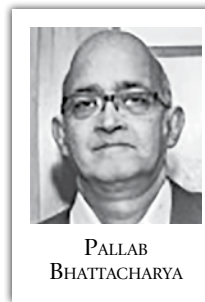
In terms of marine biological resources, ilish, which is 12.15 percent of our total fish production, often dominates our discussion on fisheries. Shrimp and other coastal aquaculture make up a significant portion of our coastal economy. These, however, underscore the exploitative and intensive nature of our fisheries management and are often criticised for not thinking of biodiversity conservation as they destroy non-targeted species due to unsustainable practices. While 65-day fishing ban on the Bay of Bengal

the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock declared 3,188 square kilometres of the sea on the south and south-west of the Nijhum Dwip as a marine reserve or marine protected area (MPA). All these actions are NbS, if both human wellbeing and biodiversity benefits are ensured, and can effectively contribute to Blue Economy.

To integrate NbS into Blue Economy, first, we need to shift our mindset and start seeing our coasts and seas as thriving ecosystems made of biodiversity, not as commodity. Taking this first step is crucial to transform our extractive and exploitative approach to Blue Economy into sustainable and resilient approach.

Second, Bangladesh's 8th Five Year Plan (2020–2025), Prospective Plan of Bangladesh 2021–2041, and Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 sufficiently talk about Blue Economy as well as ecosystem-based approaches to sustainable development.

Breaking fast and bread: Rahul Gandhi style



PALLAB
BHATTACHARYA

to discuss a joint strategy against the Modi government for the monsoon session of Parliament on the issues of the Pegasus spyware row, controversial farm laws and a sharp surge in fuel prices. On the table was a "sumptuous" platter. No less substantive was the political agenda at the meeting.

It was the third time in just about a week that Rahul chaired such meetings with like-minded opposition parties. The brief of the August 2 outreach exercise was not confined to firming up a common strategy against the government in Parliament. It went beyond that—how to unify the opposition against Modi for the next parliamentary elections in 2024.

The Congress Party's media managers lost no time to mount an exercise to project Rahul as the leader of a combined opposition who is ready to step up and take on the role of a unifier-in-chief in the fragmented opposition camp. The party took to Twitter to describe the August 2 meeting as "historic" and "this is the trailer for 2024."

The party's carefully-crafted image-building exercise for Rahul was supplemented by the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty's scion when he put out a video prepared by the party team of his meeting with the opposition leaders. It was a script for creating a perception that Rahul has found his mojo as the face of a joint opposition. It also aims at countering criticism both within the Congress and

outside that Rahul shies away from challenges and responsibilities, particularly when the party is in dire straits. A few days before August 2, Rahul had chaired two meetings with opposition leaders and the Congress had sought to project such exercises as part of "project-Rahul-at-the heart of opposition unity."

Most importantly, the August 2 meeting is supposed to carry the message that Rahul is ready to take over from her aging and ailing mother Sonia Gandhi, the interim President of the Congress, not only as the head of the party, but also as the undisputed leader of the entire opposition.

him the most. According to *India Today*, Rahul's attendance in the budget session of Parliament was 54 percent, compared to the average of 80 percent for all Lok Sabha MPs. He did not attend a single sitting of the Lok Sabha last monsoon. But this monsoon sitting, he has not only been leading his party's charge against the government on the Pegasus snooping, but also on farm laws and fuel price issues. On the symbolism front, Rahul drove a tractor to Parliament in a show of solidarity with the agitating farmers protesting against the farm laws and then cycled his way from the Constitution Club



The August 2 meeting is supposed to carry the message that Rahul is ready to take over from his aging and ailing mother Sonia Gandhi.

PHOTO: IPS

A notable fact about the August 2 meeting is that it saw Rahul breaking bread with the opposition without the presence of Sonia for the first time. Rahul himself quit as vice president of the party soon after the Congress' debacle in the 2019 parliamentary polls and has since then refused to reconsider it.

Not so long ago, the same Rahul was often criticised by the media for his not-so-infrequent "disappearing" acts during parliament sessions and the party's crises when the Congress needed

to parliament after the breakfast meeting along with some other opposition leaders to protest against the fuel price hike.

Will Rahul be acceptable to the entire opposition like Sonia? That question remains to be answered. Unlike in the past, the Trinamool Congress, the fourth biggest party in the Lok Sabha with 22 lawmakers, attended the August 2 meeting, just a few days after Mamata Banerjee had met Sonia and Rahul in Delhi. It is an open secret in political circles that a number of veteran leaders

We have heard of a Blue Economy Action Plan supposedly drafted as a comprehensive planning document. While this action plan needs to be aligned with the above short- to long-term national plans, it is also important to make it public to gather peoples' opinions and start an inclusive planning process. Besides, the on-going formulation of the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan 2030 still has the opportunity to embrace Blue Economy and NbS to make Bangladesh a "resilient delta".

Third, our maritime policies and practices, and changes in them, should be based on evidence. If we want to build a strong deep-sea fishing fleets, for example, we should know how much fish could be harvested annually to making fishing sustainable. While glorifying the positive impacts of fishing ban, we should know how the fishers of Moheshkhali survived 130 days' lockdown (March–May) and fishing ban (May–July) last year and how they are doing this year as the lockdown and ban overlapped.

Fourth, when it comes to climate finance, Bangladesh not only created a trust fund with about USD 450 million and implemented about 800 projects in the last 10 years, it has also mainstreamed climate budget into all relevant sectors. The Bangladesh Biodiversity Act, 2017 has a provision for "Biodiversity Conservation Fund", which is yet to be created. This biodiversity fund, along with the climate trust fund, can be a dual funding source for supporting NbS as a part of Blue Economy.

Fifth, in the wake of the Covid-19, NbS and Blue Economy should be part of our economic recovery plan. We need to appreciate that NbS can create jobs, diversify livelihoods, and offer business opportunities through restoring degraded coastal and marine ecosystems, sustainable fishing, following ecosystem approach to aquaculture, managing and sharing benefits from MPA, and combining conventional coastal protection infrastructure with NbS as a means of adaptation.

The initial enthusiasm built around Blue Economy, soon after the resolution of the maritime boundaries with our neighbours, lost its way in recent years. By integrating NbS into Blue Economy, we can regain our lost momentum.

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like Mamata, Nationalist Congress President Sharad Pawar and Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav have remained uncomfortable with sharing the dais or table with Rahul largely due to the generational gap and had been more at home with Sonia. Interestingly, Pawar, Mamata and Mulayam were not present at the August 2 meeting. Instead, their parties' representation at the meeting was downgraded by the presence of lower rung leaders. Even TMC floor leaders in the two Houses of parliament were not present in that meeting. Besides, Congress' political rivals like Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh, Aam Admi Party in Delhi and Janata Dal (Secular) (Congress former ally) in Karnataka stayed away from the August 2 meeting.

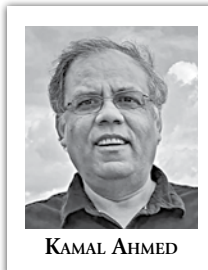
The Congress and the TMC have sought to project Rahul and Mamata respectively as occupying the pole position in an anti-BJP alliance. Both the parties face, in much starker forms, the onerous task of expanding their footprints across India that could give them an acceptable pan-India determining role in politics and bring the opposition parties together. The contours of opposition unity seem to be emerging after the Mamata-Sonia-Rahul meeting in Delhi recently. Close on the heels of that meeting, TMC leaders visited Agartala and poached on seven Tripura Congress leaders as part of the efforts by the Mamata-led party to spread its wings beyond the borders of Bengal with an eye on 2024.

Media reports also have it that some dissident leaders of CPI(M), which had ruled Tripura for years before being voted out by the BJP in 2018, are also eyed by the TMC as its potential recruits in Tripura in the run up to the 2023 assembly polls in that state.

Pallab Bhattacharya is a special correspondent for The Daily Star.



Shattered dreams of a UK degree and quest for justice



YEARS of campaigning and legal challenges have finally given some hope to thousands of international students, including Bangladeshis, subjected to historical injustices since 2014 over a wrongful allegation of cheating in

English tests. The language test was conducted by a non-profit organisation—Educational Testing Services (ETS). A first tier Appeal Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) in its verdict issued on June 18 concluded that “the generic evidence is not reliable because a number of students have been identified by ETS as having cheated but who did not in fact cheat.” A UK-based rights group, Migrant Voice, which has been supporting the victims of this injustice, has now signed a partnership with the law firm Bindmans LLP to launch a group compensation scheme against the Home Office. Due to the huge number of victims, it has been likened by many as being similar to the Windrush scandal.

In 2014, acting on a BBC investigation that unmasked some colleges in England facilitating foreign students to use proxies to cheat and other means of fraud in their Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), the UK Home Office concluded that about 34,000 of them had definitely cheated. They were among 58,458 students who had taken the test between 2011 and 2014. The Home Office decided that only 2,000 had not cheated and a further 22,000 had questionable results. Most of these students were told to leave the UK and were unable to challenge this wholesale stigmatisation. But, some of them were determined to not accept such collective criminalisation and punishment and started their vigorous campaign on many fronts—lobbying MPs and human rights groups, and mounting legal challenges.

The latest judgement came in the appeal lodged by Wahidur Rahman, a Business graduate from Sylhet International University, who stayed back in London with support from relatives and the local community to fight for justice and to clear his name. Wahid was not alone in this fight. A few others, including fellow Bangladeshi Amin Sheikh, Rony Mondol from India, Mohammad Naved from Pakistan, with the support from Migrant Voice, have successfully overturned the Home Office's decision. Amin Sheikh, another Business graduate who was meant to pursue his Masters at the University of London in 2012 won his case last year. But, he told me that it cost him more than 15,000 pounds.

While victims of this terrible injustice were living in fear of immigration raids and uncertainties, some languishing in detention centres, the Home Office suffered serious embarrassment following a report produced by the government's National Audit Office (NAO). The report, published in May 2019, said that

cheating had been “large scale”, but innocent people may have been deported. The head of the NAO, Sir Amyas Morse, said the Home Office “should have taken an equally vigorous approach to protecting those who did not cheat but who were still caught up in the process, however small a proportion they might be”. The NAO said, as of March, 11,000 people who had taken the English tests had left the country after an accusation was made against them.

With the assistance from Migrant Voice, both Wahid and Amin and a few other Bangladeshi students took the lead in organising a multinational student campaign against the unfair victimisation, seeking their right to prove their innocence. Migrant Voice helped students in their campaign to get justice by training them on techniques of an effective campaign, how to speak to the press—with some going on live television to tell their story and contact their MPs.

Their representations to local MPs resulted in drawing support from all the parties in the House of Commons. Among them, Stephen Timms, MP from East Ham, one of the London

stressed that it must be brought to an end. *The Guardian* reported that the public accounts committee, too, in a report concluded that the Home Office's “flawed” handling and “rush to penalise” the students caused “injustice and hardship for many thousands of international students”. The newspaper also added that the Home Office, however, was still reluctant to revisit the issue.

Apart from renewal or reissuance of visas, whether students can now expect any other forms of compensation such as financial or mental health support from the Home Office still remains unclear. Cameron Ball, Campaigns Organiser at Migrant Voice says, as we understand, there has yet to be any compensation issued by the Home Office. But, he referred to TOEIC Justice Project launched by the law firm Bindmans following a recent partnership with his organisation Migrant Voice. Bindmans says, “It is a fact that many people were unjustly accused: over 4,000 people have so far been vindicated by challenging the Home Office in the tribunals and Courts. We know that many more will be found innocent in the future.” He added that, exoneration is an immense relief, but it is not a remedy for the six years of lost youth, damaged relationships, and mental health damage that the victims of the TOEIC scandal have experienced. Some may also have been detained pending deportation when there was no legal basis for this action. It is not known how many Bangladeshis have succeeded in clearing their names, but estimates suggest up to one thousand victims are still facing serious difficulties due to not being able to submit their appeals, expiration of visa and not being able to work or access state-run health services.

While British MPs, jurists and rights activists have been trying to pursue their government to change its course and allow the accused foreign students to clear their names and pursue their academic dreams, Bangladeshi students allege they felt abandoned by their own government. Wahid recalled his frustrating experience of writing emails and calling officials at the Bangladesh High Commission, but failing to find any sympathetic ears. Another student, on condition of anonymity, told me that one official at the High Commission informed him that the Foreign Ministry in Dhaka refused to own them when the British government sought Bangladesh's help in removal of those accused students following the revocation of their visas. Our request for an official narrative about the subject has not been met by the High Commission.

Any reluctance or refusal on the part of the Bangladesh government to intervene in aid of fee-paying students in distress abroad is a matter of grave concern. It can be hoped that it will now make a representation for compensations to be paid to the victims of this gross injustice and assist others who are fighting to clear their names.

Kamal Ahmed is an independent journalist. His Twitter handle is @ahmedka1.

Apart from renewal or reissuance of visas, whether students can now expect any other forms of compensation such as financial or mental health support from the Home Office still remains unclear.

constituencies having a large number of Bangladeshis, had diligently pursued the issue in parliament asking questions at different occasions and securing a special debate on the subject on July 24, 2019. He argued that it is “implausible” that more than 90 percent of those who took the Home Office test were involved in cheating. Many of his constituents have been affected by the allegations and he sought a reconsideration system for those wrongly accused.

According to the official record of the parliamentary debate, Hansard, Stephen Timms told the house that a professor of digital forensics at Birmingham City University told the all-party parliamentary group on TOEIC last month (June 2019) that it was “unsafe for anyone to rely upon computer files created by ETS...as a sole means of making a decision”, but those files were the only basis for the cheating allegations. Calling it a grave injustice, he noted that appeals were not allowed in the UK. 10 other MPs representing constituencies with large immigrant communities took part in the debate and voiced their support and

Should Bangladesh consider a way around lockdowns?



SUDIIPA SARKER

BANGLADESH is currently going through a 2nd wave of Covid-19 with the Delta variant causing havoc mostly in the rural areas close to the border regions. To curb the spread of the disease,

Bangladesh entered into a strict lockdown on July 23 and consecutively extended the lockdown. However, is the lockdown helping or harming?

The infection rate and the death toll are not only higher this time than during the last wave of Covid, but the rates are high outside the big cities, and many deaths are happening in the rural regions. But the lockdown measures have mostly been applied to cities.

Even with the lockdown restrictions on movement, it was impossible to stop people going from one place to another during Eid. Those who left the big cities for Eid did not get enough time to return safely to their city homes and workplaces. Moreover, though many factories are closed, people still need to

other events till the beginning of next year. No mass gathering should be allowed until next year. Restaurants can only open at 50 percent capacity. Shopping centres should also run only at 50 percent capacity. Not all shops should be allowed to open on the same day.

TRANSPORT: We should have more (not less) public transport to ensure that people can have a safe journey from one place to another. Buses, trains, and ferries should run at 50 percent of their capacity. Factories and offices should provide transportation for office and factory employees. No transportation means no employees on the premises.

VACCINATION: Prioritise vaccinating people in the rural region and from the vulnerable groups of the population. People who are around the age of 25 years, in most cases, are not the most vulnerable people. Also, the government can introduce a vaccine passport. Positive campaigns promoting vaccination should be launched in the rural areas.

ICT FOR ENSURING SAFETY AND MONITORING OF THE SPREAD:



What can countries like Bangladesh do to avoid present and future lockdowns?

PHOTO: STAR

move for essential services. With public transport remaining inaccessible, there is a massive demand for whatever mode of transportation is available, increasing the risk of the virus spreading.

As a result, the current lockdown is hardly helping to bring down the infection rate and death toll. The failure of lockdowns to curb the disease demonstrates that they are not adequate to reduce the spread of the disease, especially for developing countries like Bangladesh.

So, what can countries like Bangladesh do to avoid present and future lockdowns? The following strategies can be considered:

OFFICES AND WORKSPACES: No sector other than the essential ones should open at 100 percent capacity after the current lockdown. The other sectors can open only at 50 percent capacity for the employees that need to be present at the office/factory premises. Work from home should be mandatory for all office workers.

TESTING: Increasing the testing capacity of rapid antigen tests and bringing the cost of testing down to a reasonable level is crucial. It will allow many people to test at least twice a week before going to office, visiting a hospital, visiting a close family member.

PUBLIC GATHERING AND SPACES: There should be no parties, weddings, or

Parks and other open spaces can stay open, but can only be visited for an hour a day. People can do grocery shopping physically only for one hour. A digital app should be used to manage and monitor. A nationwide antibody test should be run to understand how much of the population is already infected with the virus. Such a test will help to know how far Bangladesh is from achieving herd immunity. Running a nationwide survey online to understand how many people have tested positive with Covid-19, how many people experienced symptoms of it, how many people in the close family tested positive, died, experienced signs of Covid, etc. could be helpful.

SUBSIDISING HEALTHCARE: When most people are not vaccinated, only having frequent tests can keep the country open and safe. However, testing at private hospitals is very expensive. Also, private hospitals do not do a rapid antigen test. Bringing the cost down of the test can encourage people to do the test more often and enable tracking and tracing of the real spread of the disease.

There have been enough lockdowns and consequently enough infections since March 2020 to understand that in a densely populated country like Bangladesh, lockdowns can only do so much.

Sudipa Sarker is Assistant Professor of Business Development and Technology, at Aarhus University in Denmark.

QUOTABLE Quote

ADLAI STEVENSON I
23rd Vice President of the USA (1835 – 1914)

A hypocrite is the kind of politician who would cut down a redwood tree, then mount the stump and make a speech for conservation.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Long-eared hound
- 7 Robust
- 11 Statue setting
- 12 Shortly, in poems
- 13 Sluggish
- 14 Basic idea
- 15 Disney princess
- 16 Circus worker
- 17 Choreography bit
- 18 Sentence part
- 19 Bassoon's kin
- 21 Tell tales
- 22 Warhol, for one
- 25 Golf goal
- 26 Antlered animal
- 27 Brightens
- 29 Misses

DOWN

- 1 Soothing ointments
- 2 Alaskan native
- 3 Deli fixture
- 4 Fizzy quaff
- 5 Smooth
- 6 Top rating
- 7 Viking of the comics
- 8 Zoo residents
- 9 Wigs out
- 10 Menu choice
- 16 Letter before iota
- 18 Harbor cities
- 20 Diamond features
- 22 Bad boxer
- 23 Grove yield
- 24 "Lust for life" singer
- 25 Confined
- 28 BLT base
- 30 Isolated
- 31 Bottle size
- 32 Canary chow
- 34 Green Hornet's valet
- 36 Lot sight

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

C	O	S	T	S	S	I	G	M	A
A	P	O	R	T	S	E	R	R	O
B	E	L	I	E	W	E	A	V	E
E	N	D	A	C	E	P	E	R	
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BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

THE KIDS WANT TO MAKE YOU BREAKFAST ON SUNDAY. THAT'S SWEET! I'M NOT SURE WHAT THEY'RE PLANNING TO MAKE. ANY REQUESTS? HOLD THE PLAY-DOH.

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

THAT'S ALL, MISS BUXLEY. I'LL BE IN HERE WORKING ON MY "TO-DO" LIST. THE TROUBLE WITH HIS "TO-DO" LIST IS IT'S ALWAYS A "MISS-BUXLEY-DO" LIST.

'Robber' killed

FROM PAGE 12

recovered from the spot after the "shootout" was over.

A few firearms and sharp weapons were also recovered from the spot, the OC added.

Later, the body was sent to Chattogram Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

On July 16, a group of robbers killed truck driver Abdur Rahman after failing to loot his cow laden truck at Bridge-4 on Bayezid-Foujderhat Link Road area.

Later, a relative of the driver filed a case with Sitakunda Police Station making Kajol the prime accused.

So far, the law enforcers have arrested eight persons in connection with the case and four of them gave confessional statements where they mentioned that Kajol shot the driver, police said.

Jubo League

FROM PAGE 12

All five cases against Bashirur were filed in Dhaka, said police.

Contacted, lawmaker Shimul said he did not know Bashirur was an absconding accused.

Yahya speaks

FROM PAGE 12

Within less than two hours after his arrival, Gromyko and Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh started official talks. Problems arising out of the Bangladesh movement and Pakistan's attitude cropped up during their 65-minute talk.

US DONATION FOR RELIEF WORK IN EAST PAKISTAN

The US Secretary of State William P Rogers met for four hours with Secretary General Thant to discuss ways the United States and the United Nations could cooperate in aiding the millions of East Pakistanis left destitute by cyclone and war.

Both sides in the talks stressed that they felt that humanitarian efforts must take priority over politics. Earlier, Thant had warned the member states that he saw a grave threat to peace in the tensions along the Pakistani-Indian frontier.

Rogers presented Thant with a check for \$1 million, which a United States spokesman described as "the first million". The spokesman said another million would follow and that both contributions were to be used to finance United Nations efforts to aid the destitute and hungry in East Pakistan.

KABARI SENTENCED BY PAK AUTHORITIES

Leading Bangladesh actress Kabari was tried in absentia and sentenced 14 years' rigorous imprisonment by the Pakistani Martial Law Authorities. They also confiscated all her properties in Bangladesh.

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

India okays J&J's

FROM PAGE 12

brutal two-month wave up to mid-June.

"India expands its vaccine basket! Johnson and Johnson's single-dose Covid-19 vaccine is given approval for Emergency Use in India," the minister said on Twitter.

No indication has been given as to when the US company's doses will reach India.

The nation of 1.3 billion people has administered 500 million vaccine doses so far, but barely eight percent of the population has had two shots.

Johnson and Johnson's vaccine is the fifth to be approved after Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield, the home developed Covaxin, Russia's Sputnik V, and the US-made Moderna jab.

India remains the second worst-hit nation after the United States, with more than 32 million confirmed cases and 427,000 deaths. Because of under-reporting experts say the real toll is much higher.

Meanwhile, Australia saw a record daily number of new coronavirus cases this year yesterday, with the country's most populous states of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland recording a total of 361 cases of the highly infectious Delta variant.

With about 15 million people in the three states, or 60% of Australia's population, under a strict lockdown, the country also reported five coronavirus-related deaths, one of the highest this year.

With just over 36,000 COVID-19 cases and 937 deaths, Australia has avoided the high caseloads of other developed countries, but its vaccination figures are among the lowest, with only 20% of people aged over 16 fully vaccinated.

The coronavirus pandemic has killed at least 4,275,868 people worldwide since the virus first emerged in late 2019, according to an AFP compilation of official data.

The pandemic is accelerating almost everywhere, most markedly in the US and Canada which saw a jump of 44 percent in average daily cases over the past week. Cases increased by 20 percent in Oceania, 11 percent in the Middle East, six percent in Asia, three percent in Europe and one percent in Africa.

This week the only region that did not record an uptick in cases was Latin America and the Caribbean, which saw daily infections decline by 13 percent over the previous week.



Coronavirus skeptics protest after a death of a protestor during a demonstration last week in Berlin, Germany, yesterday. Protesters took to the streets across Germany for the fourth weekend in a row against a new coronavirus health rules despite rising cases. PHOTO: REUTERS

4 lives lost to bloody rivalry

FROM PAGE 1

While police were probing the incidents, two others were killed in Shouldi village under the same union on April 20. This time the victims were two AL activists -- Siddiqui Rahman and Abdus Sattar Dhali.

A district police official, earlier involved in the probe, said these two killings were also plotted by Ruma's family "just to divert attention".

Four separate cases were filed with Mehendiganj Police Station over the killings.

The Daily Star, on a four-day visit to the upazila late last month, tried to dig deep into the rivalry, which started in 2018 after the passing away of Ruma's husband Altaf Sarder alias Altu Sarder, also a former AL-backed chairman of Ulania Union Parishad.

Milon, a member of Ulania union AL, took over most of the fishery ghat toll collections earlier controlled by Altaf, and secured the party ticket to contest the election.

Altaf's son Tareq Sardar, who had taken the helm of his father's group, started campaigning for his mother Ruma, contesting as an independent candidate.

On December 4 last year, a clash between the two groups left at least 33 people injured and three days later, four AL men came under machete attacks, according to local sources.

The next day, 19 houses were demolished, two shops vandalised, and 20 people hurt in another clash, leading to postponement of the polls.

But the feud was far from over.

On the night of April 10, Sarder family's hitmen Jamal and Jashim

forced Saiful to Kaliganj Bazaar canal. Saiful's stepmother Kohinur was also present there, police sources said.

About seven to eight men killed Saiful by drowning him in the canal, took the body to a nearby forest and made some cuts all over it with a sharp weapon, a high official of district police told this newspaper.

The body was then dumped in a vegetable field and the announcement from the mosque's loudspeaker came, leading to a clash and the killing of Saiful.

Police said Saiful's stepmother Kohinur filed a case on April 13 against 44 people, including Milon Chowdhury, while Kazi Abdul Alim Chowdhury, a cousin of Saiful, filed a case against 39 including Tareq Sarder.

Police say Kohinur's initial statement was "confusing" and she also went into hiding after filing the case.

Later detained and interrogated, Kohinur admitted that she was involved in her stepson's murder for personal gains, according to a high official of Barisal district police.

Kohinur, then shown arrested in the very case she herself filed, gave a confessional statement.

Md Mominuddin, the then investigation officer of the case, now an inspector of Ujirpur Police Station, said the Sarder family was involved in the killings of Saiful and Saiful.

"Kohinur admitted her involvement in Saiful's murder. She also mentioned that the Sarder family was behind it," he added.

Mominuddin further said Tareq Sarder and his cadres Jashim, Miraz,

Jamal, Kamal and Chunnur were accused in different cases filed with Bhola and Mehendiganj police stations.

Based on Kohinur's information, police arrested Jakir and Miraj last month and all three are now in jail.

"We have arrested three including Saiful's stepmother. We found involvement of around 18 people," Shajahan Hossain, additional superintendent of Barisal police, told The Daily Star.

He said the cases have been transferred to the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) and the probe is on.

Contacted, Tareq Sarder trashed the allegations and said, "It is a conspiracy against me and my family. If a fair investigation is done, the truth will come out."

This newspaper tried to reach Ruma but Tareq said his mother was sick and not in a position to talk to the media.

This newspaper failed to contact Saiful's wife Khadiza Begum as she, along with her two kids, have been missing since the incident.

A month back, Khadiza gave her statement under Section 164 and claimed the Sarder family offered her Tk 10 lakh and a job at the union parishad office to make a deal in exchange of her silence, said police.

KILLINGS, AGAIN

Around 10:00AM on April 20, AL supporters -- Siddique and Sattar -- were killed in an attack at a wedding party in Shouldi village of Ulania.

Besides police officials, at least ten locals of the village confirmed to this newspaper that the killings were

plotted by the Sarder group.

Abul Kalam, officer-in-charge of Mehendiganj Police Station, said they arrested nine people after the incident. Three of the arrestees -- Sohel, Sohag and Joynal -- also gave confessional statements to the court, he said.

"The cases are now under investigation by the PBI," he added.

Sources say the three in their confessional statements mentioned Sarder family's links with the killings.

Humayun Kabir, special superintendent of PBI, told The Daily Star a few days back, "We have received the dockets of four murder cases. We need some time to say something on the matter."

Talking to The Daily Star, Milon Chowdhury said, "The Sarder family killed their men and then tried to put the blame on us -- which came out in the police investigation and arrestees' confessions."

Asked about his rivalry with Ruma over the fishery ghat toll collections, he said the Sarder family resorted to criminal activities to ensure their control over the ghat business.

Local sources said there are at least 50 fishery ghats in Mehendiganj and over Tk 100 crore is collected as "commission" from these ghats every year.

Contacted, Talukder Mohammad Younus, general secretary of Barisal district AL, said it was the flow of illegal money that led to such fierce rivalry and the murders.

"It has embarrassed the party. We have informed the central committee about the situation and requested action," he told The Daily Star.

Remains

FROM PAGE 12

Identities of six victims, who were burnt alive being trapped on the third floor of the building with its only exit locked, were yet to be confirmed through DNA profiling. The bodies will be handed to family members following the confirmation, CID Inspector Ataur Rahman, investigation officer of the case filed over the incident, told The Daily Star.

Officials and representatives from Criminal Investigation Department, deputy commissioner of Narayanganj and Narayanganj police, among others, were present during the handover of the bodies.

"The identification of the six other victims through DNA tests is under process," Ataur said while talking to this newspaper.

The deceased whose bodies were handed over yesterday are: Mahmuda Akhtar, Santa Moni, both 13; Mahbubur Rahman, 28; Kompa Rani Barman, 14; Zihad Rana, Rahima Akhtar, Mina Khatun, Md Noman Amena Akhtar, Rabeya Akhtar, Rahima, Akash Mia, Nazmul Hossain, Swapan Mia, Shefali Rani Sarkar, Amrita Begum, Md Shamim, Selina Akhtar, Taslima Akhtar, Fakima Akhtar and Md Hossain.

A CID official said family members of the deceased won't be able to unwrap the bodies since they were in a bad shape.

Families of each of the dead were given Tk 25,000 for funeral costs by the Narayanganj deputy commissioner's magistrate's office.

While receiving the body of Santa Moni, her mother Shimu Akhtar said Santa had taken a job in the factory just two days before the fire incident.

"It is not an accident. It is a cold blooded murder. We want punishment of the killers," she said.

"She was a class four student of a madrasa in the same area. As the madrasa was closed for a long time due to the pandemic, we told her to work in the factory," Shimu said and broke into tears.

28,000-yr-old

FROM PAGE 12

The Siberian Simba, nicknamed Sparta, was one of two baby cave lions -- extinct big cats that used to roam widely across the northern hemisphere -- found in 2017 and 2018 by mammoth tusk hunters on the banks of the Semyuelyakh River in Russia's Far East.

Initially, it was thought the two cubs were siblings, as they were found just 15 meters (49 feet) apart, but a new study found that they differ in age by around 15,000 years. Boris, as the second cub is known, is 43,448 years old, according to radio carbon dating.

"Sparta is probably the best preserved Ice Age animal ever found, and is more or less undamaged apart from the fur being a bit ruffled. She even had the whiskers preserved. Boris is a bit more damaged, but still pretty good," said Love Dalen, a professor of evolutionary genetics at the Centre for Palaeogenetics in Stockholm, Sweden, and an author of a new study on the cubs.

Both cubs were just 1 or 2 months old when they perished, the study said. It's not clear how they died, but Dalen and the research team -- which includes Russian and Japanese scientists -- said there were no signs of them being killed by a predator.

Computed tomography scans showed skull damage, dislocation of ribs, and other distortions in their skeletons.

Hundreds

FROM PAGE 12

burnt over the same period between 2008 and 2020 was 1,700 hectares.

"When this nightmarish summer ends we will reverse the damage as soon as possible," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis pledged on Saturday.

In Pefkofyto, in the north of Athens, pensioner Tasos Tsilivakos struggled to contain his tears.

"This is a horrible disaster," he told AFP.

"I'm really afraid that maybe only our great-grand children will have the chance to walk again in these areas."

Greece and Turkey have been fighting devastating fires for more than a week as the region suffers its worst heatwave in decades. Officials and experts have linked such intense weather events to climate change.

So far, they have killed two people in Greece and eight in Turkey, with dozens more hospitalised there during 10 days of the blazes.

A UN draft report seen by AFP labelled the Mediterranean region a "climate change hotspot", warning that heatwaves, droughts and fires would become more fierce in the future, supercharged by rising temperatures.

But the weather gave Turkey some respite yesterday. Officials in the Turkish coastal city of Antalya said the blazes were under control in the southwestern province after rainfall there.

And heavy rainfall was expected to continue until the afternoon in areas including Manavgat, one of the most affected by the fires.

The situation remained serious however around the tourist hotspot of Mugla, where at least three neighbourhoods have been ordered to evacuate.

Poor deprived as graft rules

FROM PAGE 12

when work opportunities are thin and food falls short in rural homes.

The correspondent recently visited at least 56 such project sites in Natore Sadar upazila and found multiple evidence of corruption and irregularities.

A project initiated to convert a piece of land into a playground at Chandpur village in Kafuria union, with Tk 3.28 lakh allocated, was supposed to employ poor people for the work.

But the project authorities simply brought soil from elsewhere in trucks and dumped it to fill up the site. No poor were able to get work there, said locals and the contractor.

Locals also alleged that the site the project authorities filled up was a pond, though the project guidelines strictly prohibit the filling up of any wetland.

Ananda Biswas, a local who is also a member of the project implementation committee, said, "There was an old pond here. But we are now filling it up to create a playground for children."

Palash Baroi, president of the project implementation committee, said 100 trucks of soil were required to fill it up. "We have already dumped 70 truckloads of soil and the remaining 30 truckloads will be dumped later."

Palash said a man named Tusher, who was nominated by the UNO and project implementation officer, has got the contract to complete the project.

Contacted, Tusher claimed that he

had done everything as per these two officials' directives.

Natore Sadar's UNO Jahangir Alam, however, said he doesn't know any Tusher and that Palash Baroi was mistaken.

Soil trader Abdul Gaffar, who supplied the soil for this project, said, "I have sold each truck of soil at Tk 1,200. They [the project authorities] asked me to provide 100 trucks of soil."

As per Gaffar's estimate, the soil he supplied cost Tk 1.20 lakh against the project's allocation of Tk 3.28 lakh.

Another project undertaken to repair a graveyard at Chandrakola Purbopara village in Tebaria union was allocated a total of Tk 2.60 lakh for implementation, according to the project documents.

"But the committee's president told us that only Tk 1 lakh has been allocated for it. He provided us with 7,000 bricks, which might have cost around Tk 70,000," said villager Moksled Ali.

"We don't know how the rest of the money was spent," said Moksled, who is the president of the graveyard management committee.

Contacted, the project implementation committee's president, Anwar Hossain, however, said the graveyard's repairs were still going on.

"More money will be given there, if necessary," he said.

In another project, undertaken at a cost of Tk 5 lakh to repair a road at Pashchim Haguria village in

Dighapatia union, local labourers were overlooked and heavy machinery was brought in.

The president of the project implementation committee and a member of the local union parishad, Nadiuzzaman Mridha, said the road was repaired by using an excavator.

Around Tk 1.5 lakh was spent on this project, said Mridha, who added that everything was done following the instructions of Dighapatia UP Chairman Khandaker Omar Sharif Chauhan.

A similar picture was observed in another project to repair an earthen road at Sutradhapara in Dighapatia union.

A project initiated to restore a canal at Ward 9 in Dighapatia union was supposed to be completed by June 30. But the work only started on July 1.

Interestingly, the Natore Sadar upazila's project implementation officer sent a report to the higher authorities claiming that the project works had been fully completed by June 30, according to documents seen by this correspondent.

Around Tk 5.81 lakh was allocated for the project and poor people were supposed to be employed for the work. But the project authorities used an excavator instead.

Local people alleged that a maximum Tk 1 lakh might have been spent for the project.

Contacted, Dighapatia Union Parishad Chairman Khandaker Omar Sharif Chauhan admitted that some corruption took place in a few

2nd provincial capital falls to Taliban

FROM PAGE 12

who only returned to Afghanistan this week from medical treatment in Turkey, but is currently in Kabul.

Aides said he was meeting with President Ashraf Ghani yesterday in an attempt to persuade the country's leader to fly in reinforcements.

"We have demanded the

government deploys at least 500 commandos so we could work to retake the city," said his party's spokesman, Ehsan Niro.

The Taliban have taken control of vast tracts of rural Afghanistan since early May when they launched a series of offensives to coincide with the start of the final withdrawal of foreign

troops.

Afghan government forces largely abandoned the countryside to the insurgents, but are now scrambling to defend a string of cities.

The war has also returned to the capital, with a senior government information official shot dead in the street Friday, three days after the

defence minister survived a brazen assassination attempt involving a car bomb and Taliban hit squad.

Qader Malia, deputy governor of Jawzjan province, told AFP Sheberghan had "unfortunately fallen", but interior ministry spokesman Marwaiz Stanikzai insisted the insurgents held only parts of the city.

Soumya fluffs another chance

SPORTS REPORTER

After Bangladesh managed to secure the five-match T20I series against Australia with two games in hand, it was expected that the hosts would make some changes to the team to test and test their depth in the fourth game. Instead, the Tigers went for the will and kept the winning combination intact.

However, one area that most assumed Bangladesh would need to change was in one of the opening slots, with Soumya Sarkar looking no way near to his best.

The idea from the team

Sheikh and Soumya, could lay a stable foundation, but the latter failed to make an impact yet again.

Soumya looked to have no control as he went to pull Josh Hazlewood and ended up edging the ball to cover. The 28-year-old had a good outing in Zimbabwe with two fifties in three games and also ended as the player of the series, but Soumya simply could not continue that fine run against the Aussies.

In fact, he showed a clear lack of composure when asked to face a superior bowling attack against the Aussies. The manner of his dismissals in the three previous T20Is saw his questionable approach come under a magnifying

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH

104 for 9 in 20 overs (Naim 28, Shakib 15, Afrif 20, Mahedi 23, extras 5; Hazlewood 2-24, Agar 1-22, Tye 3-18, Swepson 3-12)

AUSTRALIA

105 for 7 in 19 overs (Christian 39, Marsh 11, Agar 27, extras 3; Mahedi 2-17, Shakib 0-50, Nasum 1-17, Mustafizur 2-9, Shoriful 1-8)

Result: Australia won by three wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Mitchell Swepson.

ball onto his stumps after scoring two runs off one ball.

His dismissal in the second game was even worse. He went for a big cross-batted heave facing just his second delivery of the innings from Mitchell Starc, who fired in a fuller length delivery, and was bowled for a duck.

Soumya was caught plumb in front in the third T20I while going after a rather fuller delivery from leg spinner Adam Zampa. He had faced 11 deliveries and made two.

Despite the Tigers finding a lot of positives from the series so far, Soumya's lack of form and approach remain the biggest area of concern for Bangladesh as they move ahead.

glass.

He made an ugly decision as an opener in the first T20I when he tried to make room for Hazlewood and ended up only dragging the



Mystique around Mustafizur continues to grow

KHALID HOSSAIN

Mustafizur Rahman may have gone wicketless in the third T20I between Bangladesh and Australia on Friday, but the wily left-arm pacer was the player that took control of the most important stage of the game.

With Australia requiring 24 runs from 12 balls with 7 wickets in hand, Mustafizur single-handedly ended up deciding the outcome of the match by pulling off a one-run over.

The Fizz was equally impactful in yesterday's fourth T20I, with Australia chasing a meagre 104. His first over yielded a wicket maiden, while he gave away just two runs in his second over.

"Mustafiz's spell today [Friday] was as impactful as a five-wicket haul, if not more. Especially the way he bowled his last over, giving only one run away and bowling five dots. That mattered a lot," skipper Mahmudullah Riyad said after a third consecutive T20I win against Australia sealed the five-match series 3-0.

Mahmudullah's words might make one ponder whether statistics should include more variables to provide a better perception of performances as impactful as Mustafizur's in the third game.

Can his spell and its impact be quantified with trivial stats like 'number of wickets taken', 'economy rate' or 'strike rate'? How do we quantitatively measure, or at least approximate, the impact of Fizz's flurry of dot deliveries, that too in the 19th over?

Cricket is, more often than not, a game of partnerships. However, when we think of partnerships, the batting side of things grabs our attention. The impact of bowlers, bowling in tandem, from two ends, remains largely underrated.

Much like a football playmaker like Lionel Messi, whose scores and assists cannot alone justify the impact he has had on a game. Since we are talking about team games, how one player affects the "measurable" success of teammates -- what further statistical variable can be integrated in cricketing analysis -- could be food for thought.

One such variable could be the bowler's assist, in the spirit of football. With wickets tally and run-rate, it would

be interesting to see who had bowled the previous over that led to the fall of a wicket.

Coming back to the third-game of the series, Mustafizur's second over, Bangladesh 13th, saw him bowl five dot balls in succession to an in-form Mitchell Marsh. That created pressure and brought success for Shakib the following over. Mustafizur's third over, the 17th of the innings, cost just four runs and Shoriful claimed the prized wicket of Mitchell Marsh the following over.

These two 'assists' definitely led to the dismissal of two of the best Aussie batsmen in the context of the game. Australia ended up with six wickets in hand but unfortunately for them, they were 10 runs short of their target at the game's conclusion. Again, those two 'assists' can be argued to have had more impact than two wickets in an average game.

He has been the source of Australia's biggest headache on tour. After all, three of their recent innings against Bangladesh happen to be Australia's top-ten lowest-ever scores in T20I history. They have played 144 games in total.

However, following the second game, the Aussies demonstrated praiseworthy sporting attitude, fit for a successful cricketing nation, when they spoke about Mustafizur. Ashton Agar urged aspiring Australian cricketers to observe Mustafizur, someone the likes of whom 'they didn't see before in Australia'. Moises Henriques, told Australia media: "I think he bowled 23 slower balls. The amount of revolutions he gets even on a good wicket, is hard to play, let alone on something like that."

Prior to the series, the Aussies would probably not have banked on the Fizz to be this lethal or this intimidating, bordering unplayable at times. Instead of having a clear idea of how to negotiate his deliveries with relative ease, the men from Down Under entangled themselves in a further web of confusion.

Former Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, under whom Mustafizur made his international debut, summed up the jubilant feelings of Bangladesh fans on Facebook, writing: "First-ever series win against Australia! What a spell, "Fizz"! 7 dots in his last 12 deliveries! Unbelievable!"

"It was always difficult to chase, but we didn't assess the wicket well enough batting first. It was a 120-target wicket. Having said that bowlers did a good job to take it to the 19th over. But as batters we need to be cautious and sensible."

MAHMUDULLAH RIYAD

management to include Soumya for the fourth T20I despite his scores of 2, 0, and 2 in the first three games was supposed to give the left-hander assurance and confidence. But unfortunately, Soumya failed to grab that chance for the fourth consecutive time.

The left-hander once again lacked confidence and was tentative right from the start against off-spinner Ashton Turner. And although he struck a six to him the next over, he had his heart in his mouth at one point when his chip went just narrowly past the fielder at long-off.

The team management would hope that both openers, Naim



Bangladesh opener Soumya Sarkar walks back to the pavilion after making only 8 runs. Bangladesh batsmen cut forlorn figures, scoring only 104 for nine in 20 overs, to suffer a three-wicket defeat against Australia in the fourth T20I of the five-match series in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Neeraj creates history for India

REUTERS, Tokyo



OLYMPICS

Neeraj Chopra won the men's javelin on Saturday with a best throw of 87.58 metres to claim a historic first Olympic athletics gold medal for India.

Neeraj created history by becoming the first Indian to win an athletics gold medal at the Olympics by winning the men's javelin throw and he is only the second Indian ever to win an individual gold -- shooter Abhinav Bindra finished on top of the podium in 2008.

The Czech Republic's Jakub Vadlejch won silver with 86.67 metres and Vitezslav Vesely claimed the bronze with 85.44.

Chopra, the 2018 Commonwealth champion, seized the lead with a throw of 87.03 on his first attempt, a distance no other competitor achieved during the final, winning India's first gold of the Tokyo Games as his overjoyed team mates and coaches watched from the stands.

With medals assured, Vadlejch and Vesely attempted to reach the top of the podium on their final throws but each fouled. Chopra became only the second Indian to win an individual Olympic gold medal after Abhinav Bindra. "Your performance has further elevated what has been evident throughout the Games - that our athletes are not only capable of going toe to toe with the best, but are firmly establishing ourselves as the favorites," Bindra, who won the 10-metre air rifle event at the 2008 Games, wrote on Twitter. "Our first individual Gold might have taken over a century to come, but the comparatively minuscule time taken for you to bring home the second is a solid indication that we, as a sporting nation, are on the rise."



OLYMPICS MEDALS TABLE (TOP FIVE)

COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
China	38	31	18	87
USA	36	39	33	108
Japan	27	12	17	56
ROC	20	25	23	68
G. Britain	20	21	22	63



BRAZIL RETAIN OLYMPIC FOOTBALL TITLE

Brazil retained their Olympic football title with substitute Malcolm scoring an extra-time winner in a 2-1 victory over Spain in Saturday's men's gold medal game. After the game ended 1-1 following normal time, Malcolm raced onto a diagonal ball from Antony and got the better of the hesitant Jesus Vallejo before driving the winner into the far corner to clinch gold for Brazil after their Rio 2016 triumph.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Israel's Linoy Ashram won the individual all-around rhythmic gymnastics gold medal on Saturday, breaking a Russian stranglehold on the Olympic title that stretched back to 2000. The Israeli ended the competition with 107.800 points, narrowly beating three-time all-around world champion Russian twins Dina and Arina Averina, who took the silver with 107.650. Belarus' Aina Harnasko bagged bronze with 102.700.

PHOTO: REUTERS



England captain Joe Root hit his 21st Test century during the penultimate day of the opening Test against India yesterday. Root made 109 as England scored 281 for 7 in 82 overs.

PHOTO: REUTERS

বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা-২০২১

সূত্র নং-বিসিবি / এজিএম-২০২১ / ৪৬১ তারিখ : ০৮ই আগস্ট, ২০২১

এতদ্বারা বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ডের সম্মানিত কাউন্সিলরবৃন্দের সদয় অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বর্তমান কোভিড-১৯ মহামারি পরিস্থিতিতে গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার কর্তৃক কঠোর লকডাউন-এর সিদ্ধান্তের কারণে গত ০৭ই জুলাই, ২০২১ তারিখের স্থগিত হওয়া বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ডের বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা-২০২১ নির্ধারিত তারিখ, সময় ও স্থানে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে :

দিন ও তারিখ : বৃহস্পতিবার, ২৬শে আগস্ট, ২০২১।
সময় : দুপুর ১২ঃ০০ ঘটিকা।
স্থান : গ্যাব বরকম, রেভিন্স নতুন ঢাকা ওয়াটার গার্ডেন, এয়ারপোর্ট রোড, ঢাকা।

উক্ত সভায় সাধারণ পরিষদের সকল সম্মানিত সদস্যদেরকে (কাউন্সিলর) উপস্থিত থাকার জন্য বিনীতভাবে অনুরোধ জানাচ্ছি।

পরিচালনা পরিষদের নির্দেশক্রমে -
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NATORE 'WORK FOR MONEY' Poor deprived as graft rules

BULBUL AHMED, Natore

A government scheme aiming at generating income and ensuring food security for the rural poor has plunged into corruption and irregularities in Natore.

Around Tk 2 crore was allocated in the 2020-2021 fiscal year to implement 71 small projects in Natore Sadar upazila under the "Kajer Binimoye Taka" or "Work for Money" scheme.

However, depriving the poor of income, money has allegedly been embezzled with no concrete evidence of where a majority of the funds were spent and no hiring of locals in many project areas. In some cases, machinery was used at the expense of labourers.

Locals raised allegations that such corruption took place through underhanded dealings with some peoples' representatives and government officials, who deny any wrongdoing.

The authorities concerned turned a blind eye to the misdeeds, saying only now they will investigate allegations of corruption.

Usually, a committee is formed at the upazila level to implement such projects. Locally influential people and politicians along with members and the chairman of the local union parishad are included in the committee.

The committee oversees the work under the supervision of the project implementation officer, local upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), lawmakers, and the upazila parishad chairman.

The programme, under the disaster management and relief ministry, was originally undertaken to create jobs for villagers during the traditionally lean monsoon season.

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Standing near her mother's coffin, seven-year-old Shoma stood staring into space with glistening eyes. Her mother was a victim of the Hashem Foods factory fire in Narayanganj. The child came to DMCH with her father as the CID was handing over the bodies of some of the victims yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

N'GANJ FACTORY FIRE Remains of 21 victims handed over to families

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bodies of 21 workers, killed in the fire in Narayanganj's Hashem Foods factory last month, were handed over to family members yesterday. With them, remains of 45 workers, who died in the incident, have been handed to family members.

On August 4, 24 bodies were received by family members.

Coffins with the 21 bodies in them were received by family members at the Dhaka Medical College morgue. Sajeb Group, which owns the factory, arranged ambulances to carry the bodies to the victims' village homes for burial.

A total of 51 people were killed in the fire that ravaged through the factory in Narayanganj on July 8. Three of them died after jumping off the six-storey factory building to escape the flames.

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Jubo League leader on the run seen with MP

Cops eventually arrest him; gets bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A Jubo League leader absconding in four loan defaulter cases was arrested, and later bailed out, after he was seen accompanying a lawmaker in Natore yesterday.

The accused is Bashirur Rahman Khan Chowdhury, acting president of Natore Jubo League.

He was seen with Shafiqul Islam Shimul, Awami League MP of Natore-2, at a mass Covid-19 vaccination programme at Kafuria High School in the district's Sadar upazila around 11:00am yesterday.

After several media reports, police arrested Bashirur around 5:00pm the same day from his residence in the district headquarters.

He was then produced before Natore's Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court, said Liton Kumar Saha, said the district's superintendent of police.

After a hearing, the court granted him bail and directed him to surrender before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka in 15 days, said Sirajul Islam, public prosecutor at the Natore Judge's Court.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Yahya speaks of mediation

AUGUST 8, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

YAHYA SEEKS BRITISH SUPPORT

Pakistan President Yahya Khan said that he would like British mediation between India and Pakistan. "But," Yahya continued, "I do not want it if she [Britain] remains much less than neutral."

In an interview with The Sunday Times, the general said, "The risk of war with India had grown. There are skirmishes daily. ... continuous statements from the Indian leaders that they will do this or that against Pakistan have justified me in stating there is real danger if this is allowed to continue."

THANT'S HELP SOUGHT FOR MUJIB'S RELEASE

The Bangladesh Central Action Committee appealed to the UN Secretary General U Thant for his personal intervention in saving the life of the Bangladesh leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In a cable to U Thant, the convener of the committee, SK Day, said any secret trial of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman or his execution by the West Pakistan rulers would be contrary to the rule of law and human rights charter and would start a fresh conflagration.

GROMYKO MEETS SWARAN SINGH

A crowd of about 4,000, mostly members of India's pro-Moscow Communist party, gave Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko a tumultuous welcome at New Delhi's Palam Airport today. Many carried Soviet flags and banners with slogans supporting the Bangalee independence movement in East Pakistan.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



'Robber' killed in 'gunfight'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A suspected robber was killed in a "gunfight" with the members of Rab in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila early yesterday.

The dead is Mohammad Kajol, 49, the ringleader of a local robbers' gang named Kajol Bahini, claimed Rab.

According to the law enforcers, he is also the prime accused in a case filed over the murder of a truck driver named Abdur Rahman.

Abul Kalam Azad, officer-in-charge of Sitakunda Police Station, said a Rab team conducted a raid in the upazila's Bayezid-Foujderhat Link Road on information that a robbers' gang was preparing for a robbery at midnight.

Reaching the spot, Rab got engaged into a "gunfight" with the robbers, he said, adding that Kajol's body was

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

28,000-yr-old lion cub found frozen in Siberia



CNN ONLINE

Found frozen deep in the Siberian Arctic, the cave lion cub looks like she's asleep and one touch might awaken her.

The cub's golden fur is matted with mud but otherwise undamaged. Her teeth, skin, soft tissue and organs are mummified but all intact. Some 28,000 years since she last closed her eyes, her claws are still sharp enough to prick the finger of one of the scientists who are studying this remarkable -- and unprecedented -- permafrost-preserved specimen.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

India okays J&J's shot

Australia suffers worst Covid day this year

AGENCIES

India yesterday gave emergency approval to Johnson and Johnson's single-shot coronavirus vaccine to ramp up its flailing immunisation campaign as new wave of infections fuelled by Delta variant of coronavirus continues to spread across the globe.

India's Health minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the approval will boost the fight against the pandemic in India, where at least 200,000 people died in a

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 8

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

GREECE WILDFIRES Hundreds of families left homeless

AFP, Pefkiofyo

Hundreds of firefighters yesterday fought wildfires and flare-ups that have devoured record numbers of woodlands in Greece and left hundreds of families homeless, but heavy rains brought some respite to hard-hit Turkey.

More than 1,450 Greek firefighters backed by at least 15 aircraft were battling the fires, with reinforcements arriving from other countries, the fire service said.

The blazes in Greece are set to continue, with strong winds and temperatures of up to 38 degrees C (100 F) forecast in some regions yesterday.

This year's fires have been far more destructive than in previous years.

In the last 10 days, 56,655 hectares (140,000 acres) have been burnt in Greece, according to the European Forest Fire Information System. The average number of hectares

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



"Open your eyes, son. Look at your mother," she was wailing, to her 22-year-old Covid-infected son whose condition started deteriorating from yesterday morning. The photo was taken at DMCH. The patient was taken there from Munshinganj yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

2nd provincial capital falls to Taliban

Britain tells its nationals to leave country immediately

AFP, Kabul

The Taliban seized the stronghold of a notorious Afghan warlord yesterday, officials said, the second provincial capital to fall to the insurgents in under 24 hours.

The deputy governor of Jawzjan province told AFP he was with government forces who had abandoned Sheberghan city and retreated to the airport on its outskirts, where they were preparing to defend themselves.

The city is home to warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

আমরা শোকাহত

শোক সন্তপ্ত পরিবারের প্রতি গভীর সমবেদনা জ্ঞাপন করছি

হাসেম ফুডস্ লিমিটেডের রূপগঞ্জ কারখানায় অগ্নিদুর্ঘটনায় ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত অধিকাংশ পরিবারকে ইতোমধ্যে আর্থিক ক্ষতিপূরণ প্রদান করা হয়েছে। আহত কর্মীদের আর্থিক ক্ষতিপূরণ প্রদানের পাশাপাশি চিকিৎসা ব্যয় বহন করা হচ্ছে। আহত কর্মী ও ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত প্রতিটি পরিবারের পাশে সর্বতোভাবে থাকতে আমরা অঙ্গীকারবদ্ধ। যেকোনো প্রয়োজনে সংশ্লিষ্ট পরিবারের সদস্যদের নিম্নোক্ত নম্বরে যোগাযোগের জন্য বিনীত ভাবে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছেঃ ০১৭১৩০৫৮৯০১।

হাসেম ফুডস্ লিমিটেড