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"The [Covid] situation will be grave if [virus] transmission can't be controlled. The death toll will rise."



"The vaccination campaign has been a complete mess... The government has failed to tackle the pandemic."



"Today we had to come out here to speak to you (the media) as we are not allowed to speak inside parliament... This is the murder of democracy."



Taliban close in on Kabul

Capture Ghazni, Herat; Afghan gov offers to share power with insurgents, say media reports

AGENCIES

The Afghanistan government has made a power-sharing proposal to the Taliban in exchange for a halt in the escalating violence in the country, media reports said yesterday, as the insurgents seized the strategic cities of Ghazni, just 150 kilometres from Kabul, and Herat, the country's third-largest city.

A senior security source from Herat told AFP that government forces and administration officials had retreated to an army barracks outside the city.

"We had to leave the city in order to prevent further destruction," he said.

A Taliban spokesman, however, tweeted "soldiers laid down their arms and joined the Mujahideen".

Herat -- about 150 kilometres from the Iranian border -- is home to veteran warlord Ismail Khan, who for weeks has been rallying his forces to make a stand against the Taliban.

The Taliban also appeared close to capturing Kandahar, the second largest city and the spiritual home of the Taliban, which now control about two-thirds of Afghanistan.

Earlier, the interior ministry confirmed the fall of Ghazni, which lies along the major Kabul-Kandahar highway and serves as a gateway between the capital and militant strongholds in the south.

The capture of Ghazni is their most important strategic gain in a lightning offensive that has seen them overrun 10 provincial capitals in a week.

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- Pakistan PM says insurgents won't talk peace unless Ghani goes
- US intel report warns Kabul may fall in 90 days
- US, UK to send troops to evacuate officials, citizens



VACCINE RECEIVED
SINOPHARM 70 lakh (Procured)
11 lakh (Gift)
34.70 lakh (Covax)

PFIZER 1.06 lakh (Covax)
MODERNA 55 lakh (Covax)

ASTRAZENECA 70 lakh (Procured)
33 lakh (Gift)
16,41,980 (Covax)

TOTAL 2,91,17,980

VACCINE ADMINISTERED
Sinopharm 71,94,872

AstraZeneca 1,05,90,918

Pfizer 82,734

Moderna 22,20,583



VACCINATED PEOPLE
1,50,23,162 (First dose)

50,65,945 (Second dose)

Mass vaccination began on Feb 7, suspended on Apr 25

Vaccination resumed on July 7

Special campaign began on Aug 7

Total registration - over 3 crore

GOVT RECRUITMENT Proposal for raising age limit by 21 months

UNB, Dhaka

The ministry of public administration proposed increasing the maximum age limit for entering government jobs by 21 months from the current 30 years due to prolonged academic life caused by Covid-19 restrictions.

The proposal was sent to the prime minister, State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain told reporters at the Secretariat yesterday.

He said, "We have taken several initiatives for people of different classes and professions to make up for the loss caused by the coronavirus. A new proposal for government job seekers has been sent to the prime minister.

"We did the same last year. We relaxed the age limit allowing candidates who turned 30 after March 25 to apply for government jobs."

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Everything open from Aug 19

Govt decides to lift curbs on social gatherings, tourist spots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is lifting most of the coronavirus restrictions from August 19, even as the number of deaths reported daily from Covid-19 continues to be over 200.

Social gatherings will be allowed and tourist destinations will reopen on the condition that they operate at half their capacities.

The Cabinet Division in a circular yesterday said all public transport will be allowed to operate on the roads, railways and waterways maintaining health guidelines from August 19.

Transport companies are currently allowed to operate 50 percent of the buses on the roads.

From August 19, community centres, tourist attractions and recreational facilities will reopen and operate at half of their capacities.

However, the authorities have not specified how crowds will be controlled at places like sea beaches.

The decision was based on discussions at an inter-ministerial meeting on Covid-19 on August 3 and the overall situation of the country, the circular said. It said everyone must wear a mask and follow the other health rules.

If any of the conditions are violated, the authorities concerned will be held responsible, it added.

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VIRUS TRANSMISSION

If not checked, situation may turn grave

Warns health minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday said the Covid-19 situation in the country will turn grave unless the transmission of the virus is controlled.

"Unless we can control corona [novel coronavirus infection], the situation will become even tougher," he said while addressing a seminar -- "Challenges of Covid Pandemic and Dengue Outbreak" -- as chief guest.

The event was organised by Bangladesh Society of Medicine in association with US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in Dhaka.

"The transmission has declined a little bit in recent days; but the number of deaths is still higher. We have to keep this transmission under control. For this, we have to adhere to health rules.

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COVID-19 VACCINATION

Next drive likely to begin Tuesday; target 20 lakh

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government plans to inoculate at least 20 lakh people against Covid-19 in another special vaccination drive expected to begin on Tuesday.

The drive's duration will depend on the availability of the shots, said health officials, adding that only Sinopharm jabs would be administered as first dose during the campaign, which has been planned mainly to vaccinate the elderly and those living in rural areas.

The plan was outlined as a six-day special vaccination piloting ended yesterday. Around 48 lakh people received their first shot during the drive, said officials.

The government had targeted to vaccinate 32 lakh people in the piloting, launched on August 7 on the sidelines of the regular vaccination campaign. It had to raise the number in the face of huge demand and massive response from people across the country.

The special drive, however, was mired by irregularities. Vaccine seekers were seen standing in mile-long queues on roads, crowds jammed themselves into vaccination centres and brawls broke out, turning into potential superspreading events. Besides, thousands returned without jabs due to shortage of vaccines.

"We are planning to launch a similar drive on August 17. The length of the drive will depend on the availability of vaccines. If we get a small number of vaccines, the drive may run for even a single day," Prof Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of the DGHS, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Earlier, the government had planned to launch a special drive on August 14-19 but backtracked due to vaccine shortages.

Sources in the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said they have a plan in place to start a countrywide campaign with fresh consignments of vaccine doses arriving in the country.

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THE THIRD VIEW



MAHFUZZ ANAM

"DECISION GAMES" that we play with our people

SEE PAGE 8

ATTACK ON 2 BANKERS

Dhaka court clears Sikder brothers of charges



COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday cleared Ron Haque Sikder, managing director of Sikder Group, and his brother, of the charges of abducting, torturing, and opening fire on two Exim Bank officials.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Rajesh Chowdhury passed the order after complainant of the case Exim Bank Director Lt Col (ret'd) Serajul Islam told the court that he had no objection if the court accepted a police final report.

During the hearing on the probe report, Ron was present in the court. He had obtained bail.

His brother Dipu Haque Sikder, now abroad, was shown as absconding.

On July 29, investigation officer Md Ripon Uddin, a sub-inspector of the Detective Branch of police, submitted the report to Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court of Dhaka mentioning that an out-of-court settlement had been reached.

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A man takes a nap and another sits nearby while waiting for free food distributed by police in Paribagh area of the capital yesterday. Unable to endure the sun, many left sandals, as placeholders, in the circles drawn on the street to ensure physical distancing.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

MACHINE-READABLE PASSPORTS

No explanations yet on 1.5 lakh pending requests

PORIMOL PALMA and SHARIFUL HASAN

When over 1.5 lakh applications for machine-readable passports are pending for some two months, the authorities have yet to come up with any official explanations about what led to this situation and when and how it is going to be addressed.

Bangladesh missions from different countries over the last months wrote to the Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP), describing the problems they were facing as passport processing was either delayed or not delivered to Bangladeshi migrants.

Migrants said they were becoming undocumented or failing to apply for renewal of work permits due to the delay in getting passports. They also said they were facing trouble accessing healthcare at a time when the pandemic is causing havoc to the migrants through joblessness and infections.

Some officials also said it might lead to a security breach that so many passport applications have been pending for so long. They questioned why the DIP did not take actions to upgrade the software system well ahead of the time when the 30-million limit of the MRPs was crossed in early June.

The Daily Star published a report on Wednesday, quoting officials, that the MRP

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BANGLADESH UPDATE

10,126
New cases in 24hrs

13,96,868
Total cases

23,613
Deaths

12,62,065
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

4,342,452
Deaths

205,820,906
Total cases

ROHINGYAS IN BANGLADESH

Canada to provide CA\$ 288m as humanitarian aid

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Canada has earmarked 288 million Canadian dollars (around Tk 1,951 crore) to provide humanitarian assistance to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh for the next three years.

Besides, 45 million CAD (around Tk 305 crore) has been allocated for the marginalised people over the next five years.

It has also assured Bangladesh of its support in areas of vaccination, climate change, and LDC issues.

The announcements came from Karina Gould, Canada's Minister for International Development, separately in two virtual meetings -- one with Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen on Tuesday and the other with Brac Executive Director Asif Saleh yesterday.

During the meeting with Momen, Gould said the Rohingya issue remains a foreign policy priority for Canada. She urged Bangladesh to facilitate education for Rohingya children.

Gould said Canada will consider financial support for the Rohingya genocide case at the International Court of Justice.

Momen urged Canada to take a leadership role in the Rohingya repatriation process, saying investments in education, health and pathway to citizenship for the Rohingyas in Rakhine would encourage displaced Rohingyas in Bangladesh to return to their homeland.

The foreign minister also requested the Canadian government to extend preferential trade access for graduating LDCs, including Bangladesh, till 2030 in order to help address the post-pandemic scenario.

To Momen's request for vaccine, Gould said Canada has so far contributed 545 million dollars and 30 million surplus doses to the COVAX and ensured that Canada would give due consideration to the

request.

She noted Canada's support of medicine and oxygen concentrator to Bangladesh through the UNICEF and some NGOs and said such support may come in future.

Momen sought Canada's support in ensuring that the international community begins operations in Bhashan char soon.

Gould appreciated Bangladesh's decision to not build any more coal-based power plants, citing climate change risks as a global existential threat. She also said she would visit Bangladesh in person in the near future.

Meanwhile, during the virtual visit with Brac's Executive Director Asif Saleh, Gould said Canada's CAD 45 million support will fund Brac-led multi-sector initiatives, including programming in skills and vocational training, and public health outreach tailored to reach children and families that are unable to access the services they need.

In a statement, Brac said that with the funds, Canada joined the Strategic Partnership Agreement, a long-term tripartite partnership with Brac and the Government of Australia, which is closely aligned with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy.

"Our local, experienced partners know all too well the disproportionate impact the Covid-19 crisis has had on the world's most vulnerable. Together, we must continue to push forward and seek out those hardest to reach, including marginalised women and children," said Gould.

Saleh said Bangladesh needs resources to combat the impact of this pandemic and sustain the momentum of socio-economic growth.

"This partnership will help us keep the country on the growth trajectory and continue our efforts in the pandemic response and recovery process."

If not checked

FROM PAGE 1

Crowded buses and trains will only worsen the situation," the minister said.

However, the country yesterday recorded the lowest Covid-19 deaths -- 215 -- in the past 10 days.

Since August 2, the positivity rate has been declining steadily.

Yesterday, the positivity rate was 22.46 percent while it was around 30 on August 2.

A total of 10,126 Covid-19 cases were detected yesterday -- the lowest since Monday.

In the seminar, the health minister also said the government is trying to vaccinate everyone gradually.

"We cannot vaccinate the entire population at once. People need to be patient," he said, adding, "We are gradually vaccinating everyone. Millions have already registered."

Bangladesh can neither obtain nor store all the vaccines needed to inoculate 80 percent of the total population at once, he said.

"In order to vaccinate 80 percent, 26-27 crore doses will be required. We are trying to bring in whatever quantity of vaccine doses available.

"The world's largest countries have developed and stockpiled on vaccines. They have stocked four to five times more than they need, while many countries are yet to receive vaccine

doses."

He further said, "Those who are always criticising ask where vaccines are when we don't have enough. When we do, they ask why so many people turn up to get jobs. It seems, either way, they have problems. It's very easy to criticise."

About vaccine supply, Zahid Maleque said, "54 lakh more vaccine doses will reach within next one week and around one crore in total by this month. The vaccination programme will continue."

Speaking at the seminar, Prof Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said, "If the infection rate further rises, it cannot be tackled. We have already increased hospital beds, but that has a limit too. It is not possible to increase them further."

Other speakers stressed on preventive measures against Covid-19 and dengue to reduce pressure on hospitals.

Prof Md Billal Alam, president of Bangladesh Society of Medicine, presided over the event, while Dr Mohammad Shahidullah, president of the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19, Dr Nazmul Islam, line director (Communicable Disease Control) of the DGHS also spoke at the event among others.

Next drive likely to begin

FROM PAGE 1

The government received more than 34 lakh Sinopharm doses this week and is expecting another 20 lakh doses by August 15.

"We have planned to start a countrywide campaign. Once we receive the 20 lakh doses, we will start sending the doses to different centres across the country," a DGHS official said, adding that since they have got only Sinopharm vaccines in hand, those would be administered in vaccination centres in rural and city areas.

The government has already suspended administering the first dose of Moderna vaccine saying the rest of the shots in its stock would be used as second jobs.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque told reporters yesterday that the country was expected to receive over one crore Covid-19 vaccines this month.

Health experts said the special campaign, which ended yesterday, enabled the government to create awareness among the people, especially those in the rural areas.

"People were registering for the jobs and local level representatives and field level health workers were engaged in the campaign, which was a success of the government," said Prof Be-Nazir Ahmed, former director

(disease control) of the DGHS.

"The move was very good but what we found was a serious lack of coordination in the national level. Conflicting statements from various government officials on vaccination confused people," said Ahmed.

He also said it was seen that hundreds of people stood in queues for taking the jabs and many returned home without getting it.

Ahmed said had the government prepared a list in advance, engaging the rural level healthcare workers, the chaos and sufferings of people could have been avoided.

"A system must be in the place so that people don't have to suffer this year. Such gathering also increases chances that the virus may spread further," he said.

One of the top officials of DGHS said they found some chaos vaccination booths in the city.

"We are planning to increase the number of booths to reduce people's hassle," said the official, preferring not to be named.

The DG of DGHS also admitted some faults in the piloting campaign.

"There were some faults from our part and there were some faults from the peoples' parts in the special drive. Those will be addressed in the next drive," he said.



Syeda, a critical coronavirus patient, on oxygen support inside an ambulance in front of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital around noon yesterday. She was brought there from her home in Keraniganj after her condition worsened earlier in the day. Later, she was admitted to the Covid-19 unit of the hospital. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Taliban close in on Kabul

FROM PAGE 1

The conflict has escalated dramatically since May, when US-led forces began the final stage of a troop withdrawal due to end later this month following a 20-year occupation.

As security forces retreated across the country, Kabul handed a proposal to Taliban negotiators in Qatar offering the power-sharing deal, according to a member of the government's team in Doha who asked not to be named.

A second negotiator, Ghulam Farooq Majrooh, said the Taliban had been given an offer about a "government of peace" without providing more specifics, reported AFP.

The proposal has also been reported by Afghanistan's local media and Al Jazeera yesterday.

However, the presidential palace in Kabul did not confirm the development, saying there has been no change in its plan.

Abdullah Abdullah, chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, is meeting with officials from the United States, China, Russia and Afghanistan's regional neighbours in Doha.

Yesterday, Abdullah said the government's peace plan has been shared with the Qatari government, without referring to the reported offer to the Taliban.

"We have presented our scheme to the host nation and you will also be provided with one," Abdullah said at yesterday's gathering with foreign diplomats.

However, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday claimed that Taliban leaders would not negotiate with the Afghan government as long as Ashraf Ghani remains president.

Khan said a political settlement was looking difficult under current conditions.

"I tried to persuade the Taliban... three to four months back when the Taliban senior leadership came here," Khan told foreign journalists at his home in Islamabad.

"The condition is that as long as Ashraf Ghani is there, we (Taliban) are not going to talk to the Afghan government," Khan said, quoting the Taliban leaders as telling him.

The Pakistani prime minister said he

felt the Afghan government was now trying to convince the United States to come back and intervene again.

Khan said Pakistan had "made it very clear" that it does not want any American military bases in Pakistan after US forces exit Afghanistan. He also claimed that his country remains neutral in the Afghan conflict.

The developments came after a US defense official told Reuters on Wednesday that the Taliban could isolate Kabul in 30 days and potentially take it over in 90 days. A senior EU official said the insurgents now control 65 percent of Afghanistan.

Despite the ongoing Doha talks, US State Department spokesman Ned Price yesterday acknowledged that "all indications" point to the Taliban seeking a "battlefield victory."

The White House on Wednesday confirmed that, despite the Taliban's military gains, the United States would complete its troops withdrawal by end of August.

Signaling the worsening situation on the ground, US Embassy in Kabul yesterday urged US citizens to leave Afghanistan immediately using available commercial flight options.

The Pentagon later said that it was deploying around 3,000 troops to Afghanistan immediately to evacuate US embassy employees securely as the threat grows from the Taliban insurgency.

The UK government also said it was sending troops to help its embassy staff leave Afghanistan.

US President Joe Biden on Tuesday said he does not regret his decision to withdraw troops, noting that Washington has spent more than \$1 trillion over 20 years to strengthen Afghan forces and lost thousands of its own troops. He said the United States continues to provide significant air support, food, equipment and salaries to Afghan forces, but the fight is their own.

"Afghan leaders have to come together," Biden told reporters at the White House, saying the Afghan troops outnumber the Taliban and must want to fight. "They've got to fight for themselves, fight for their nation."

Authorities in Kabul have now effectively lost most of northern and

western Afghanistan and are left holding a scattered archipelago of contested cities also dangerously at risk of falling to the Taliban.

The insurgents have also encircled the biggest city in the north, the traditional anti-Taliban bastion of Mazar-i-Sharif. Fighting was also raging in Kandahar and Lashkar Gar -- pro-Taliban heartlands in the south.

An official in Lashkar Gah said Taliban fighters were inching closer to government positions after a massive car bomb badly damaged the city's police headquarters Wednesday evening.

Meanwhile, Al Jazeera, citing residents, yesterday reported that Taliban had entered Kandahar city.

Al Jazeera's correspondent Charlotte Bellis, reporting from the capital, Kabul, said the Taliban claimed on social media to have taken over the strategic city.

"The Taliban has just tweeted that they have taken Kandahar City. We don't understand that to be entirely true, but we do understand that there is intense fighting happening in Kandahar city right now," she said.

Hundreds of thousands have been displaced by the fighting that has enveloped the country.

In recent days, Kabul has been swamped by the displaced, who have begun camping out in parks and other public spaces, sparking a fresh humanitarian crisis in the already overtaxed capital.

The United Nations yesterday said it is particularly concerned about a shift in fighting in Afghanistan to urban areas, warning that if a Taliban offensive reaches the capital Kabul it would have a "catastrophic impact on civilians."

"It is clear that urban fighting in the city of the size of Kabul would have catastrophic impact on civilians and we very much hope that this does not happen," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters.

In the first six months of 2021, the United Nations said 5,183 civilians had been killed or injured, blaming the Taliban for 39% - 699 deaths and 1,345 wounded - and Afghan government forces for 23% - 378 deaths and 828 wounded.

No explanations yet on 1.5 lakh

FROM PAGE 1

server capacity exhausted its 30-million limit and that the software system, which is operated by the Malaysian company IRIS Corporation, could not accept any more applications.

On August 8, DIP Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Ayub Chowdhury said they upgrade the software system of MRP from time to time and that steps were already being taken to upgrade it and a new agreement will be signed at the soonest.

Asked about the upgradation of the software system on Wednesday, Home Ministry's Security Services Division Secretary Mokabbir Hossain said, "Who has spoken about the upgradation? I have no idea about it."

As this paper said it was the DIP DG who spoke about it, Mokabbir said, "You rather speak to the DIP DG."

This newspaper called DIP DG Maj

Gen Ayub Chowdhury several times yesterday and the day before to know the updates, but found his phone switched off.

Abdullah Al Masud Chowdhury, additional secretary (security and immigration wing) at the home ministry's security services division, said, "The upgradation has been done. The printing of MRP began yesterday afternoon [Wednesday]. It will be in full speed in three to four days."

"Just know this," he said as this paper wanted to know the number of MRPs being printed.

One official from the DIP told The Daily Star on Wednesday that the agreement with IRIS Corporation was inked and the upgradation of Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) was going on. It would take a few days for the DIP to start printing MRPs in full swing, the official added.

Another DIP official said the printing of MRPs began on Wednesday and initially the pending passports applied from Washington were being printed. It would take a few days for the DIP to print passports in full swing.

Contacted by The Daily Star, an official of IRIS Corporation in Bangladesh said he could not make any comments on the issue.

"I'm out of the office. I cannot make any comments on MRP issue. Please contact IRIS Malaysia office," he said.

Migrant rights activist, Mohammad Harun-Al Rashid, who lives in Malaysia, said people have the right to know what is happening within the DIP and when they are going to get their MRPs.

"This is very surprising that the passport department has yet to come up with any explanations."

UK judge backs US appeal in Assange extradition case

AFP, London

A British judge on Wednesday gave the US government extra grounds to appeal a refusal to extradite WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, after it argued the initial ruling relied on a witness who misled court.

District Judge Vanessa Baraitser in January refused to grant a request by Washington for Assange to face trial in the United States on spying charges, admitting to misleading the court by "concealing" that his client had

fathered children while holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

"She really needed to interrogate why he was willing to mislead her," Dobbin told judges Timothy Holroyde and Judith Farbey during a preliminary appeal hearing.

"Experts aren't allowed to mislead for any reason."

Holroyde ruled that the United States' claims gave them two more grounds for appeal, making five in total.

Train carrying 186.29mt liquid oxygen arrives from India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Oxygen Express, a freight train of tanker cars, arrived in Bangladesh yesterday from India for the seventh time with 186.29 tonnes of liquid medical oxygen.

The special train that departed from Tatanagar reached Bangladesh around 9:00pm, said Saiduzzaman, assistant station master at Benapole Railway Station.

A total of 1,402 tonnes and 290 kg of liquid oxygen has been imported using the special train service.

Belarus tells US to cut diplomatic presence after sanctions

AFP, Moscow

Belarus on Wednesday ordered the United States to reduce its embassy staff after Washington imposed a fresh round of sanctions on the regime of President Alexander Lukashenko.

"The American side was suggested to reduce the number of staff in its Minsk embassy to five people by September 1," foreign ministry spokesman Anatoly Glaz said in a statement.

Proposal

FROM PAGE 1

Farhad also said those who turned 30 on March 25 last year would also get the benefit.

"It's a big deal. If the prime minister approves, we will issue a notification in this regard."

At present, the age limit for entry into government service is 30 years, which is 32 years for the children of freedom fighters.

The government increased the age limit by five months amid the pandemic last year.

Everything open

FROM PAGE 1

Professor Muzaherul Huq, former adviser, South-East Asia region of the World Health Organization (WHO), said the government's decision was not based on science.

"The infection rate is dropping due to vaccination and the casual lockdown, but it may rise again," he said, adding that a lockdown can be considered successful when the infection rate of an area drops to five percent through proper contact tracing and isolation measures.

People are in the dark about the government's plan, he said, adding that the authorities should specify the sectors that will reopen after the infection rate drops below 20 percent and those that will reopen after it drops below 10 percent. This would also ensure people's participation.

At a programme yesterday, Health Minister Zahid Maleque urged people to avoid crowding while commuting. "The transmission has dropped a bit, but the death toll is still high. We must keep transmission under control. Travelling on crowded buses and trains will increase infection," he said.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain said the government might impose another lockdown if the Covid situation deteriorates.

"If infections continue to rise and people do not follow health guidelines, the lockdown will be enforced once again. There is no alternative to it," he said.

Dhaka court clears

FROM PAGE 1

In the report, the IO said both the complainant and the accused signed an agreement on July 8. The case had "factual error" as the ballistics report said the shots were not fired from the firearm concerned, it added.

Upon receiving the copy of the agreement and the ballistics report, the IO submitted the final report before the court with pleas to clear the brothers of the charges.

Ron was arrested after he landed at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on February 12. He had returned from Dubai after his father's death. He, however, was given an ad-interim bail soon after he was produced before the CMM court the same day.

On May 19 last year, a case was filed against Ron and his brother Dipu for torturing and trying to kill the Exim Bank's managing director Mohammed Haider Ali Miah and additional managing director Mohammad Ferz Hossain.

According to the case statement, the two top officials were attacked after they refused to inflate the value of the brothers' property enabling them to use that as collateral for a Tk 500 crore loan.

The brothers tortured the two officials while confining them to a house in Banani and forced them to sign on a blank paper at gunpoint, read the case statement.

Another 242 hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 242 people with dengue fever have been admitted to hospitals in the country during 24 hours, till 8am yesterday. Of them, 21 are from outside Dhaka.

With them, a total of 5,434 patients have been diagnosed with dengue this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the total infected, 260 are from outside Dhaka.

Among the total infected, 2,776 were diagnosed during the current month.

At least 2,286 people were hospitalised across the country in July and 272 in June. In May, 43 people were infected with dengue.

Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 896 are still undergoing treatment at hospitals across the country, the DGHS data shows.

Meanwhile, ABM Khurshid Alam, director general of DGHS, at a programme on "Challenges of Covid Pandemic and Dengue Outbreak" at a city hotel yesterday

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

With the lockdown lifted, many have taken the opportunity to get a quick haircut and beard-trim, and these barbers stationed on the footpath in front of the capital's Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital are ready with their scissors. This makeshift barbershop, complete with barber chairs, mirrors and grooming products, are a great choice for those looking for a cheap option. This photo was taken on Wednesday.

'Repatriation is our main agenda'

JS body opposes WB proposal of integrating Rohingyas into Bangladesh

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary body yesterday strongly opposed the World Bank's reform proposals, including the inclusion of Rohingya refugees in the host country.

The parliamentary standing committee on foreign affairs ministry has asked the ministry concerned to be vigilant in this regard, citing the proposal as an intention to allow Myanmar's displaced Rohingyas to settle permanently in Bangladesh.

The meeting was held in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Muhammad Faruk Khan, chief of the parliamentary body, said, "We have told the ministry that the World Bank wants to make permanent arrangements for the Rohingyas by making such proposals. All these proposals for the settlement of Rohingyas cannot be accepted. We have clearly opposed it. We have said very strongly that we should not fall into the trap of the World Bank."

"We have also told the foreign ministry that statement in this regard will be clear that we have given them temporary shelter. You [World Bank] should make arrangements for their return to Myanmar. We will not accept such proposals to construct buildings for them and giving them opportunities for work and to buy land," he added.

Faruk Khan, also a ruling Awami League MP, said they have told the foreign ministry that their first agenda while discussion with the World Bank will be how to send Rohingyas back to Myanmar.

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SC upholds status of 196 freedom fighters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld the High Court orders that stayed the government decision for cancelling freedom fighter status of 196 retired members of army, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Bangladesh Air Force (BAF), and also directed the government to give them benefits as freedom fighters.

A five-member bench of the SC's Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain dismissed five appeals filed by the government, challenging the HC orders.

Lawyers Ahsanul Karim, Sabrina Jerin and Abdul Qaim appeared for the freedom fighters while Additional Attorney General SK Md Morshed represented the state during the virtual hearing.

Following the five petitions, the HC on September 21 last year stayed the government decision of cancelling the freedom fighter status of 196 retired members of Army, BGB and BAF, and also directed the government to give them benefits as freedom fighters.

On June 7 last year, the Liberation War affairs ministry issued two gazette notification cancelling freedom fighter status of 1,134 retired BGB personnel and 47 retired BAF personnel, including the 196 petitioners, on charge of obtaining the status by placing forged documents.

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Third death anniversary of Golam Sarwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the third death anniversary of veteran journalist and freedom fighter Golam Sarwar.

Sarwar died of old-age complications at a Singapore hospital in 2018 at the age of 75.

He was the editor of Bangla daily Samakal and president of Editors Council of Bangladesh.

Although different organisations including Golam Sarwar Foundation arrange commemorative programmes marking the day, this year there will be no such programme amid the pandemic, the



SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S ANCENSTRAL LAND

Seized in name of dev: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ancestral lands of indigenous people, both in hilly areas and plains, are being seized for constructing hotels, eco-parks, and security camps, in the name of different development projects.

Speakers made the remark yesterday at a virtual webinar titled "Protection of the lands of indigenous peoples and our duties".

Despite repeated promises from the government to stop land-grabbing and attack against indigenous groups, the reality is quite the opposite, they said.

Various major incidents of land grabbing within just one year indicates that land grabbing and violence against indigenous communities have increased during the pandemic.

Sohel Chandra Hajong, executive member of Bangladesh Indigenous People's Forum, presented the concept note, where he talked about major incidents of land

grabbing in the last one year.

Evicting Mro people from Bandarban to construct a luxurious five-star hotel, destroying betel leaf plantation and ancient orchards of Khasi people to evict them from their villages, declaring indigenous lands as reserve forest in Madhupur and Tangail, land acquisition to construct eco-park, and grabbing Rakhine temples and their assets in Kuakata were mentioned in the concept note.

Sohel said, "The government's initiative to prevent such incidents is not satisfactory at all. Although it has formed a land commission for Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), the commission has no visible activity. Although promised a long time ago, a separate commission for indigenous peoples of the plains has not been formed yet."

Echoing the concept note, Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'Vaccination drive a complete mess'

Says Mirza Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday alleged that mismanagement centring the government's Covid-19 vaccination drive has jeopardised lives of the people.

"The vaccination campaign was a complete mess due to the government's failure to tackle the pandemic," said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

He made the remarks while visiting the capital's Banani Graveyard to place wreaths and offer prayers at the grave of Arafat Rahman Koko, the youngest son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, marking his 52nd birth anniversary.

Fakhrul urged the government to collect adequate vaccines immediately, work sincerely for people and announce a roadmap to deal with the pandemic.

He alleged that the government has totally failed to manage Covid-19. "It shouldn't be in power any more for its ill-planned lockdown and mismanagement of the vaccination drive. This government should go right away."

The BNP secretary general paid tribute to Koko and recalled his role in the development of sports organisations and cricket.

BNP leaders Aman Ullah Aman, Abdus Salam, Fazlul

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

PATURIA, SHIMULIA ROUTES

High currents in Padma disrupt ferry services

STAR REPORT

Ferry services on two major river routes were facing trouble yesterday due to huge currents in Padma river.

The ferries were taking extra time to cross the river, resulting in fewer trips. Consequently, a long queue of vehicles waiting to board ferries was noticed at the terminals.

The routes are Paturia-Daulatdia and Shimulia-Banglabazar. Paturia is located in Manikganj, while Daulatdia is in Rajbari. Shimulia is in Munshiganj and Banglabazar in Madaripur. The two routes are considered gateways to 21 southern districts of the country.

At Paturia terminal, over 500 goods-carrying trucks, and 70 long-distance and 80 small buses were seen stuck yesterday evening, as ferries were moving slowly.

Normally, a ferry takes around 30 minutes to cross the river, but now it requires around 45 minutes, said ferry operators.

Drivers and their helpers were facing immense difficulties, as they had to wait for a long time. The situation may remain the same amid high currents.

Traffic flow increased in the last two days, after withdrawal of the lockdown, but ferry trips were fewer. That is why congestion was created, said Md Zillur Rahman, deputy general manager (commerce) at Manikganj's Aricha zone office of BIWTC.

A similar situation was noticed in Shimulia terminal.

Normally, it takes around one hour and 20 minutes to cross the river on the route. But each of the ferries took over two hours to cross the river yesterday, said BIWTC officials.

Around 600 vehicles were seen waiting at both Shimulia and Banglabazar terminals.

Passenger vehicles had to wait five to seven hours to board ferries, while cargo-laden vehicles had to wait more, said Md Faysal, BIWTC's manager at Shimulia terminal.

RAPE, MURDER OF UNIV STUDENT

Apex court stays bail of accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed a High Court order that granted six weeks' bail to Mortuza Raihan Chowdhury, an accused in a case filed over the rape and murder of a private university student in the capital, in January this year.

Justice Obaidul Hassan of the Appellate Division passed the order following a petition filed by the state seeking a stay on the HC order.

Deputy Attorney General Amit Dasgupta stood for the state. He argued that the accused had already confessed his involvement in the murder and rape to a magistrate.

"Mortuza was granted bail in the case on July 19 following a petition," Amit told The Daily Star.

Mortuza (21) and Nuhut (21), students of the same university, were arrested on January 31 following a case filed by the victim's father where he accused five persons for rape and death of his daughter, with Mohammadpur Police Station. According to the documents, Mortuza, the victim and another accused Arafat went to a restaurant at Uttara and had alcohol on January 28. Later, they all went to a friend's house in Mohammadpur where Raihan and another friend of the victim raped her.

The victim later fell sick and died on January 31 while undergoing treatment at a city hospital.

MINI BYTES



Samsung teams up with Google to challenge Apple Watch

NAVEED HUSSAIN

While the rate of development in phones appears to be slowing lately, the rate of development in wearables has the potential to accelerate. In the wearables arena, nothing in the Android ecosystem compares to the Apple Watch in terms of quality and utility. So without a viable alternative for Android users, Apple is increasingly likely to continue gaining users.

But finally, Samsung appears to be ready to make a serious attempt to re-enter the wearables market, teaming up with Google. Samsung is expected to unveil two new smartwatches on August 11th: the Galaxy Watch 4 and Galaxy Watch 4 Classic, both of which have been widely rumored. And with this new release, the wearables war between Samsung, Google and Apple takes a new shape as the company that stands to gain the most from the success of these watches is Google, not Samsung.

Despite its purchase of Fitbit and rumors that Google is working on a Pixel watch, Samsung will be the first to release Wear OS 3 smartwatches. They'll be based on Google and Samsung's collaboration, which was announced at Google IO earlier this year.

In other words, Samsung is abandoning its own Tizen watch OS

in favor of contributing parts of it to a resurrected version of Google's dormant Wear OS. Both companies claim to have improved battery life, software experiences, and third-party app support.

Making a smartwatch that is better than the current Wear OS watch options, on the other hand, is embarrassingly simple. For years, Samsung has been doing it with its Tizen watches, which only work with Samsung devices and have been hampered by poor third-party app support.

It's not just a matter of raising the bar for Wear OS or Tizen. For Android users, there are low bars everywhere. OnePlus, Realme, Oppo, Fitbit, and others have turned to proprietary, simplified platforms that lack the features you'd expect in a smartwatch today as Wear OS has stagnated.

As a result, the pressure is on both Samsung and Google to deliver a pair of smartwatches that are good enough to keep Android users who want a smartwatch from feeling left out. It's unlikely, however, that Samsung's first round of Wear OS 3 watches will be able to match the Apple Watch's ecosystem or integration.

Samsung, like Apple, will surely be attempting to develop an entire ecosystem of Android-related products and services. We don't know how tightly these watches will be tied to Samsung's ecosystem just yet, but it's possible that non-Samsung Android users will be turned off.



A fine arts student, sitting under a canopy of Chattogram city's CRB area, is busy with his brushes, finishing a painting that will express his protest against the plan of building a hospital there. It's not just him; many others gathered at the area yesterday, under the banner of "People's Voice", to demonstrate by creating works of art, inset.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Seized in

FROM PAGE 3
Indigenous People's Forum, said, "It has been proven that protection of land rights of indigenous peoples is not possible with the existing land laws of the country. The government should empower and mobilise the CHT land commission, and establish the commission for indigenous groups of the plains, which authorities promised 13 years ago."

The discussants also criticised the government's role in not recognising the country's indigenous peoples as "indigenous". Instead, it still uses the term "ethnic minorities" or "small ethnic groups".

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association, said, "There is a political goal behind such land grabbing and eviction. The government does not recognise them as indigenous communities and even ordered NGOs not to use the word 'indigenous'."

"We need to focus on this political motive and build a political discourse of our own to protect land rights of these groups," she added.

Fazle Hossain Badsha, lawmaker and secretary general of Bangladesh Workers' Party, said, "It is really alarming that oppression of indigenous people is continuing even in this pandemic. National Human Rights Commission is supposed to submit a report on the protection of their land rights this month."

"We shall then take this report to the parliament and emphasise mobilising and empowering the CHT land commission, which is currently non-functional. We should also form a separate ministry for indigenous peoples of the plains, otherwise they will always remain excluded from the national budget," he said.

Man, son held for beating up relatives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police yesterday detained a man and his son over beating up two of their relatives after tying them up to a pipe at their house in Shadapur area of Savar.

The victims are Abdul Mannan (55), grandfather-in-law of Kalam; and Shahid Mollah (53).

Abdul Mannan's son Faridur Rahman Joy told The Daily Star that the incident occurred due to family altercation.

Contacted, Kamal Hossen, inspector (investigation) of Savar Model Police Station, said filing of a case over the matter was underway.



A rickshaw-puller, engulfed by the black smog emanating from a nearby bus, tries to sneak through oncoming traffic in a bid to save a bit of time, but risking his and the passengers' lives in the process. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Vaccination

FROM PAGE 3
Haque Milon, Syed Emran Saleh Prince, Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas, Aminul Haque and Rafiqul Alam Majnu; Jubo Dal leaders Saiful Alam Nirob and Sultan Salauddin Tuku; Swechchasebak Dal leaders Mustafizur Rahman and Abdul Kader Bhuiyan Jewell; and Chhatra Dal leader Fazlul Ramna Khokon were, among others, present.

On January 23, 2015, Arafat Rahman Koko died of cardiac arrest in Malaysia at the age of 45.

SC upholds

FROM PAGE 3
Petitioners' lawyer Abdul Qaium told The Daily Star that the government had taken the decision without giving his clients any scope to defend themselves.

They had been included in the gazette notifications of the list of freedom fighters after scrutinising their relevant documents and papers, the lawyer added. The move was reportedly taken following Jatiya Muktijoddha Council's 66th meeting on December 10, 2019.

Another 242

FROM PAGE 3
said they have already informed all the city corporations and municipalities to take necessary steps in destroying breeding grounds of Aedes mosquitoes.

Prof Dr Mohammad Shahidullah, president of the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19, said amid the ongoing pandemic, dengue has emerged as an additional pressure for them.

Repatriation

FROM PAGE 3
Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen recently said the government had rejected the WB proposal in which it called for giving refugees all kinds of legal rights, including birth and death registration, working, buying land, education, employment and engaging in business.

Meanwhile, a report issued by the foreign ministry said improving the living standards of Rohingyas would encourage them to settle in the country permanently.

The report, which was also placed in the parliamentary committee, said bypassing the issue of Rohingya repatriation, western countries and relevant UN agencies have long been interested in taking up long-term projects to improve the living standards of Rohingyas in the camps.

The international community is becoming more active in increasing the quality of life and facilities for the camps, providing Rohingyas with formal education, technical training, job creation through social business and various development projects.

Such activities, especially the continuous improvement of the quality of life in the camps, could encourage the Rohingyas to settle permanently in Bangladesh and severely hamper the repatriation process, the foreign ministry said in its report.

In this regard, the prime minister has approved the proposal of the foreign ministry to take a policy decision to keep the living standards and facilities of the Rohingya camps at a reasonable and limited level in the interest of repatriation.

Among others, committee members Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen; State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahrir Alam; and lawmakers Nurul Islam Nahid, Golam Farooq Khandaker Prince, Abdul Majid Khan and Habibe Millat took part.

Meanwhile, the World Bank has clarified that the proposals made in its Refugee Policy Review Framework is a global document, not Bangladesh-specific, meant to assess the effectiveness of the refugee-related projects funded by the global lender. It also said it was not in a position to negotiate the policy issues.

Third death

FROM PAGE 3
foundation said in a press release yesterday.

However, members of Samakal will pay homage to Sarwar at his grave at Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in the capital's Mirpur at 4pm today.

Besides, Sarwar's family will arrange a doa mahfil and distribute food among orphans at his ancestral home in Barishal's Banaripara.

Born on April 1, 1943 in Banaripara of Barishal, Sarwar's career in journalism spanned over five decades, with multiple professional accomplishments.

Sarwar served as news editor of Bangla Daily Ittefaq for 27 years. He was also founding editor of Jugantor and Samakal. He was awarded with the Ekushey Padak in 2014 for his contribution to journalism.

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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

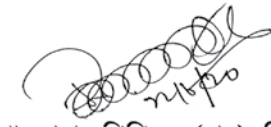
পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ
মিরপুর-১৪, ঢাকা-১২০৬

স্মারক নং-৪৪.০১.০৪০০.০৬২.৩১.০০১.২০২১- তারিখঃ ১২/০৮/২০২১খ্রিঃ

২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বছরে গবেষণা প্রস্তাব আহ্বানের সময়সীমা বৃদ্ধির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজের স্মারক নং-৪৪.০১.০৪০০.০৬২.৩১.০০১.২০২১-১৩৭৪ তারিখঃ ১৩/০৭/২০২১ মূলে দৈনিক সংবাদ ও দি ডেইলী স্টার পত্রিকায় যথাক্রমে ১৪ ও ১৫ জুলাই, ২০২১ তারিখে প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুযায়ী Request for Expression of Interest (EoI) দাখিলের সময়সীমা আগামী ০৩ সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০২১ তারিখ দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত বৃদ্ধি করা হলো।

বিজ্ঞপ্তির তথ্য ও সিডিউল নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর অফিস হতে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।


মোহাম্মদ শাহজাহান পিপিএম (বার), পিএইচডি
বিপি-৭০৯৮০৪৩৪৮
পরিচালক (গবেষণা ও প্রকাশনা)
পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ
মিরপুর-১৪, ঢাকা-১২০৬

জিডি-১৪৬৮

MONEY LAUNDERING

Enamul, Rupon refused bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court on Wednesday refused to grant bail to "Casino Brothers" -- Enamul Haque Enu and Rupon Bhuiyan -- in two money laundering cases involving Tk 2.17 crore.

The court, however, kept the appeal petitions for bail, stand over (waiting for hearing), in the cases for next three months.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the order after hearing the appeal petitions filed by Enamul and Rupon challenging the lower court orders that rejected their bail petitions.

Enamul and Rupon cannot get released from jail following the HC orders, Anti-Corruption Commission lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star.

The senior special metropolitan judge's court of Dhaka on October 10 last year rejected the bail petitions in the cases.

The Criminal Investigation Department of police filed the cases with Sutrapur Police Station against the two accused on September 24, 2019.

Lawyer Shaharia Kabir Biplab appeared for Enamul and Rupon during virtual hearing of the appeals.

Floor For Rent

Commercial Space: 2nd, 5th & 6th floor will be rented at 159/D, Tejgaon (Near Hatirjheel), Dhaka. Space for each floor 6,500 sq feet.

Contact: 01713-442252

টেভার বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল নোটিশ

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে অবহিত করা যাচ্ছে যে, গত ১২/০৮/২০২১খ্রিঃ তারিখে কৃষি আবহাওয়া তথ্য পদ্ধতি উন্নতকরণ প্রকল্পের ১২.০১.০০০০.০১৮.০৩.০০১.২১.৬০৩৫ নং স্মারকে ৯টি প্যাকেজের টেভার নোটিশ প্রকাশিত হয়। উক্ত প্রকাশিত টেভারগুলো অনিবার্য কারণবশতঃ স্থগিত করা হলো এবং টেভার বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল করা হলো।

-প্রকল্প পরিচালক

Two remanded over receiving Covid vaccine at home in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday placed two persons on one-day remand each in a case filed in connection with getting Covid-19 vaccine at home in Chattogram city.

Metropolitan Magistrate Hossain Md Reza passed the order after Khulshi police sought five-day remand for each, said Md Kazi Shahabuddin Ahmad, additional deputy commissioner (prosecution) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

On Monday, police arrested Md Hasan (35) and Mobarak Ali (33) after a photo of Hasan being administered Covid-19 vaccine at his home went viral on Facebook.

Chattogram City Corporation medical officer Tapan Kumar Chakraborty filed the case with Khulshi Police Station accusing Hasan, Mobarak, one Md Sazzad and CCC health department lab technician Bishu Dey.

According to the case statement, Bishu took the vaccines from the Mostafa Hakim Degree College vaccination centre and administered those to the three charging Tk 1,000 each.

Sazzad and Bishu are currently absconding.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Agriculture
Barind Multipurpose Development Authority
Office of the Project Director, EIRP & Superintending Engineer
Rangpur Circle, College Road, Alamnagar, Rangpur-5400 Email: se_rangpur@omda.gov.bd

Memo No. PD/EIRP/BMDA/Rang/2021-2022/111 Date: 12/08/2021

Corrigendum


Due to unavoidable circumstances all concerned are hereby informed that the following amendment has been made against tender/proposal ID No. 595705, 595809, 595810 & 595820 published 02-August-2021 23.00.00 the National e-GP System Portal & dated: 03/08/2021 in The Daily Star, Somokal & Dainik Dabanol respectively for BMDA, Rangpur Circle, Rangpur. This shall constitute an integral part of the said tender notice and tender documents. The revision is as follows:

Tender ID No.	Description & Amendments
595705	Amendment will be- tender Security
595809	Amendment will be-Notice, eligibility, Qualification Criteria & Price and Delivery Schedule for Goods.
595810	Amendment will be-Notice, eligibility, Qualification Criteria, Technical Specification & Drawing.
595820	Amendment will be-Notice, eligibility, Qualification Criteria & Technical Specification.

All other terms and conditions in the original Tender Notice shall remain unchanged and valid.

Engr. Md. Habibur Rahman Khan
Project Director, EIRP & Superintending Engineer (In Charge)
BMDA Rangpur Circle, Rangpur

GD-1467


World Health Organization
Bangladesh

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

The World Health Organization in Bangladesh invites proposals/bids from the interested Companies in Bangladesh for the following services:

- RFP/BAN/2021/009: Provision of shifting and commissioning of ICT and Datacenter (from existing to New Location) of WHO Bangladesh. **(Deadline for the submission of RFP electronically: 14:00hrs, 29 August 2021)**
- RFP/BAN/2021/010: Capacity Building on WHO Package of Essential Noncommunicable Disease (PEN) Interventions for primary health care workers of Cox's Bazar District to strengthen NCD service delivery. **(Deadline for the submission of RFP hardcopy: 14:00hrs, 30 August 2021)**

Interested Companies can view and download the relevant RFP documents from: <https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/procurement-notice>.

Interested bidders are requested to submit their financial and technical proposals as per the instructions provided in the RFP documents.

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

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রুটের নাম	গাড়ির আকার	গাড়ির সংখ্যা	মডেল	দরপত্র জামানত
মতিঝিল-ইন্দিরাপাড় মাভা-১	৩০ আসনের মিনিবাস	০১	২০১৪ সাল বা তৎপরবর্তী	৳২০,০০০/-

অগ্রহী দরদাতাগণ বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ওয়েবসাইটে (www.bb.org.bd) ই-টেন্ডারিং অপশনে Bidders হিসাবে রেজিস্ট্রেশন সম্পন্নকরতঃ নিজ ক্ষেত্রে প্রবেশপূর্বক আলোচ্য দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন। উপরে বর্ণিত দরপত্র জামানত (Tender Security) "মহাব্যবস্থাপক, কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১, বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা" এর অনুকূলে যেকোন তফসিলি ব্যাংকের ইস্যুকৃত ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার ২৬/০৮/২০২১ তারিখ বেলা ১২:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১ (৭ম তলা, ২য় সংলগ্নী ভবন) এ দাখিল করতে হবে এবং একই তারিখ বেলা ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত অনলাইনে (www.etender.bb.org.bd) দরপত্র জমা দেয়া যাবে। একই তারিখ বেলা ১২:৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণকারীগণ অথবা তাদের প্রতিনিধিবৃন্দের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্রসমূহ খোলা হবে।

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

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

মোঃ আবুল কালাম আজাদ
মহাব্যবস্থাপক
ফোনঃ ৯৫৩০১৪৮

ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২১-২৩২৯
তারিখঃ ১২/০৮/২০২১
জিডি-১৪৬৮

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Roads & Highways Department
Office of the Superintending Engineer
Road Circle, Moulvibazar
E-mail: serhdmoulvibazar@gmail.com
Phone: 02-41110074

Memo No. 35.01.5800.07.07.86.21-1337 Date: 11/08/2021

4th Addendum of Tender Document

This is for the information of all concerned tenderers that due to unavoidable situation the following amendment has been made of the tender document for "Supply, Installation, Commissioning, Operation and Maintenance of a Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System of Rustampur Toll Plaza at 193rd KM of Dhaka (Katchpur)-Bhairab-Jogodishpur-Shaistaganj-Sylhet-Tamabil-Jaflong Road (N-2) Road under Habisganj Road Division during the year 2021-22", vide Issue No. 35.01.5800.07.07.86.21-1199; Date: 06/07/2021. **This addendum shall be an integral part of the tender document.**

Reference	As in 3rd Addendum	Amended (4th)
Tender last selling date and time	22/08/2021	25/08/2021 and 5:00pm
Tender closing date and time	23/08/2021 and 12:00pm	26/08/2021 and 12:00pm
Tender opening date and time	23/08/2021 and 12:15pm	26/08/2021 and 12:15pm

A. K Shamsuddin Ahmed
Superintending Engineer, RHD
Road Circle, Moulvibazar

GD-1465

OCCUPIED WEST BANK Israel to okay 2,000 new settler homes

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel is to approve 2,000 new homes for Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank, defence sources said yesterday, despite opposition from dovish members of the governing coalition.

The Palestinians swiftly condemned the latest settlement expansion plans, the first of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's administration.

A security source told AFP the permits for Jewish settlements would come alongside approvals for hundreds of Palestinian homes in the large swathe of the West Bank known as Area C, where Israel exercises military and planning control. "There is an expectation to approve about 1,000 housing units for Palestinians in Area C next week and 2,000 housing units in the Jewish communities," the source told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The office of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas expressed its "strong rejection and condemnation" of the new settler homes, saying they contradicted "the clear American position" President Joe Biden expressed in a call with Abbas. Biden is reportedly to meet with Bennett in the near future, though his office did not specify a date.

Bennett, a former director of the Yeshu Council settler lobby, faced criticism from dovish partners in his coalition, as well as from Israeli settler advocates in the opposition.

Israel seized the West Bank and east Jerusalem from Jordan in 1967. Since then, nearly 700,000 Israelis have moved into settlements that most of the international community regards as illegal. Palestinians hope the territories will become part of a future state.



A woman sits on the broken steps of a partially-collapsed building destroyed by bombardment during the May 2021 conflict between Hamas and Israel in Gaza City, yesterday. Rocket and mortar fire on Israeli cities by Palestinian militant groups in Gaza that killed 12 and injured dozens more during a May conflict constituted war crimes, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. Israeli strikes during the 11-day conflict killed some 260 people in Gaza.

PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN brief

French rescue 108 migrants in Channel

French authorities rescued more than 100 migrants Wednesday seeking to sail to England in four separate boats that officials said got into trouble in the Channel. Last week the British government said a record of at least 482 migrants crossed from France to England in a single day, putting annual figures way above last year's numbers, reports AFP. Maritime officials in France said on Wednesday that a navy patrol boat rescued seven people aboard a vessel "in difficulty" off the coast of Sangatte and took them to the port of Dunkirk, where they were looked after by local officials.

Indian rocket fails to launch satellite

An Indian rocket carrying a powerful earth observation satellite failed to fly fully yesterday, the state-run space agency said, in a setback for the country's space programme, reports Reuters. The satellite, meant for quick monitoring of natural disasters such as cyclones, cloudbursts and thunderstorms, was launched on a geosynchronous satellite launch vehicle (GSLV) at 0013 GMT, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in southern India. But while the liftoff was smooth, the rocket failed in its final phase, the Indian Space Research Organisation said.

US finds Pakistan useful only to clean up 'mess': Imran Khan

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has accused the United States of seeing his country as useful only in the context of the "mess" it is leaving behind in Afghanistan after 20 years of fighting.

Washington has been pressing Pakistan to use its influence over the Taliban to broker an elusive peace deal as negotiations between the fighters and the Afghan government have stalled, and violence in Afghanistan has escalated sharply.

"Pakistan is just considered only to be useful in the context of somehow settling this mess which has been left behind after 20 years of trying to find a military solution when there was not one," Khan told foreign journalists at his home in Islamabad on Wednesday.

The US will pull out its military by August 31, 20 years after toppling the Taliban government in 2001. But as the US leaves, the Taliban today controls more territory than at any point since

then.

Kabul and several Western governments say Pakistan's support for the armed group allowed it to weather the war.

The charge of supporting the Taliban despite being a US ally has long been a sore point between Washington and Islamabad. Pakistan denies supporting the Taliban.

AFGHANISTAN CRISIS

Khan said Islamabad was not taking sides in Afghanistan.

"I think that the Americans have decided that India is their strategic partner now, and I think that's why there's a different way of treating Pakistan now," Khan said.

Pakistan and India are arch-rivals and have fought three wars. The two share frosty ties and currently have minimal diplomatic relations.

A political settlement in Afghanistan was looking difficult under current conditions, Khan added.

He said he tried to persuade Taliban leaders when they were visiting Pakistan to reach a settlement. "The condition is that as long as Ashraf Ghani is there, we (Taliban) are not going to talk to the Afghan government," Khan said, quoting the Taliban leaders as telling him.

Also on Wednesday, the Pakistani military in a statement said all stakeholders should play their part "positively for enduring peace" in Afghanistan, calling it a "collective responsibility". Misperceptions and scapegoating must be avoided to counter designs of spoilers, it quoted military chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa as saying.

Peace talks between the Taliban and a team of Kabul-nominated Afghan negotiators started last September but have made no substantive progress.

Trump blames Biden for Taliban surge

AFP, Washington

Former president Donald Trump blasted his successor Joe Biden yesterday for putting no conditions on the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and said that a violent Taliban surge in the war-torn country was "not acceptable."

Trump said the US pullout, which Biden has set for August 31 and which is already all but complete, would have been "a much different and much more successful withdrawal" if he were still president.

It was under Trump that the US brokered a deal with the Taliban in Doha in 2020 that would have seen the US withdraw all its troops by May 2021 in exchange for various security guarantees from the militants.

When Biden took power earlier this year, he pushed back the deadline for the withdrawal and set no conditions for it.

"If I were now president, the world would find that our withdrawal from Afghanistan would be a conditions-based withdrawal," Trump claimed in a statement.

Trump, who despite his election loss remains the biggest single force in the opposition Republican party, did not provide any details of what he would have done to halt the advances of the insurgents.

Authorities in Kabul have now effectively lost most of northern and western Afghanistan.

Some US officials fear the Taliban could take over Kabul within three months of the August 31 deadline.

'This is murder of democracy'

Rahul Gandhi on abrupt end to session of Indian parliament

AGENCIES

India's opposition leaders yesterday held a protest march towards Vijay Chowk from Parliament against an abrupt end to the monsoon session and a repeal of the Centre's three farm laws.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also joined the march and said that he has come to speak to the media as the opposition is not being allowed to speak in the Parliament.

"Today, we had to come out here to speak to you (media) as we (opposition) are not allowed to speak in the Parliament. This is murder of democracy, said Rahul along with opposition leaders, at Vijay Chowk in Delhi.

"The Parliament session is over. As far as 60% of the country is concerned there has been no Parliament session. The voice of 60% of the country has been crushed, humiliated and yesterday in the Rajya Sabha physically beaten," said Rahul.

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut said the opposition did not get a chance to present their views in Parliament and spoke against the alleged attack on women MPs in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. "The opposition didn't get a chance to present their views in Parliament. Yesterday's incident against women MPs was against democracy. It felt like we were standing at the Pakistan border," Raut said.

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said the Centre doesn't want to run the Parliament proceedings properly and is passing laws without discussions, reports TNN.

"Centre doesn't want to run the Parliament proceedings properly. Govt is passing laws without discussions. There should be a discussion on #COVID19 vaccination, current economic situation, unemployment, farm laws but govt is running away," said Tharoor.



Libel case against Maria Ressa dismissed

A Philippine court has dismissed a libel case against Maria Ressa, a lawyer said yesterday, one of several lawsuits filed against the journalist who says she has been targeted because of her news site's critical reports on President Rodrigo Duterte. The plaintiff of Ressa, who was named Time Magazine Person of the Year in 2018 for fighting media intimidation, has raised international concern about the harassment of journalists in the Philippines, a country once seen as a standard bearer for press freedom in Asia. The cyber-libel case was filed by a college professor against Ressa and a reporter at her site, Rappler, in October.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Paramilitary police officers evacuate residents stranded by floodwaters with a boat following heavy rainfall in Hedian town of Suizhou, Hubei province, China yesterday. Several cities in the province were severely hit by heavy rainfall and floods with some initiating a high level emergency response for flood.



PHOTO: REUTERS

বাংলা একাডেমি
৩, কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম এভিনিউ
রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০

অফিস আদেশ

তারিখঃ ০৮/০৮/২০২১

মহাপরিচালকের নির্দেশে

ডা. কে.এম. মুজাহিদুল ইসলাম
পরিচালক (চলতি দায়িত্ব)
প্রশাসন, মানবসম্পদ উন্নয়ন ও পরিকল্পনা বিভাগ
বাংলা একাডেমি, ঢাকা

বর্তমান ঠিকানা:
জানা বাসু মোঃ ইমদাদুল হক
পিতাঃ মোঃ হাতেম আলী
গ্রামঃ বৈতাল, ডাকঘরঃ কলকাতা
উপজেলা ও জেলাঃ মানিকগঞ্জ

স্থায়ী ঠিকানা:
জানা বাসু মোঃ ইমদাদুল হক
পিতাঃ মোঃ হাতেম আলী
গ্রামঃ বৈতাল, ডাকঘরঃ কলকাতা
উপজেলা ও জেলাঃ মানিকগঞ্জ
জিডি-১৪৬২

PEGASUS SPYWARE SCANDAL UN experts urge moratorium on sales of surveillance tech

AFP, Geneva

UN experts yesterday called for an international moratorium on the sale of surveillance technology until regulations are implemented to protect human rights following an Israeli spyware scandal.

An international media investigation reported last month that several governments used the Pegasus malware, created by Israeli firm NSO Group, to spy on activists, journalists and politicians.

Pegasus can switch on a phone's camera or microphone and harvest its data.

"It is highly dangerous and irresponsible to allow the surveillance technology and trade sector to operate as a human rights-free zone," the United Nations human rights experts said in a statement.

The statement is signed by three special rapporteurs on rights and a working group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other businesses.

"We urge the international community to develop a robust regulatory framework to prevent, mitigate and redress the negative human rights impact of surveillance technology and pending that, to adopt a moratorium on its sale and transfer," they said.

The experts urged Israel to "disclose fully what measures it took to review NSO export transactions in light of its own human rights obligations". Israel's defence establishment has set up a committee to review NSO's business, including the process through which export licences are granted.

Pegasus's list of alleged targets includes at least 600 politicians, 180 journalists, 85 human rights activists and 65 business leaders.

বাংলাদেশ বেসামরিক বিমান চলাচল কর্তৃপক্ষ
পরিচালকের দপ্তর (সম্পত্তি শাখা)
শাহ আমানত আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, চট্টগ্রাম

উন্মুক্ত ইজারা দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

শাহ আমানত আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, চট্টগ্রামের অভ্যন্তরীণ কারপার্ক পরিচালনার জন্য ইজারা গ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান/সংস্থার নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক উন্মুক্ত ইজারা দরপত্র নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তে আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

১.	দরপত্রের বিষয়	শাহ আমানত আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, চট্টগ্রামের অভ্যন্তরীণ কারপার্কিং।
২.	দরপত্রের সূত্র নং ও তারিখ	সিএএবি সদর দপ্তর, ঢাকা স্মারক নং- ৩০.৩১.০০০০.২৩১.৫২.০০৩.১৩.১৮৪, তারিখঃ ০১/০৮/২০২১খ্রিঃ।
৩.	ইজারার মেয়াদ	০১/১০/২০২১খ্রিঃ হতে বা প্রাথমিকভাবে হস্তান্তরের তারিখ হতে ০১ (এক) বছর। (আর্থিক সন বিবেচনায়)।
৪.	প্রতিসেট ইজারা দরপত্রের মূল্য	১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা (অক্ষরতযোগ্য)।
৫.	নির্ধারিত আর্নেস্টম্যানি	আর্নেস্টম্যানি হিসাবে বাংলাদেশের যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংক হতে বার্ষিক উদ্ভূত দরের ১০% (শতকরা দশ ভাগ) হারে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার পরিচালক, শাহ আমানত আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, চট্টগ্রামের অনুকূলে দরপত্রের সহিত দাখিল করতে হবে।
৬.	কর্তৃপক্ষের ন্যূনতম গড় ইজারা মূল্য	৩৬,৫৫,৪২৫/- (ছত্রিশ লক্ষ পঞ্চাশ হাজার চারশত পঁচাত্তর) টাকা।
৭.	দরপত্র সিডিউল সর্বশেষ প্রাপ্তির তারিখ	০৬/০৯/২০২১খ্রিঃ, অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত (সরকারি ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত)।
৮.	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির স্থান	ক) পরিচালকের দপ্তর, হিসাব শাখা, শাহ আমানত আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, চট্টগ্রাম। খ) সহকারী পরিচালক (হিসাব), সিএএবি, সদর দপ্তর, কুর্মিটোলা, ঢাকা-১২২৯।
৯.	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৭/০৯/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। পরিচালকের দপ্তর, শাহ আমানত আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, চট্টগ্রাম।
১০.	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	০৭/০৯/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্রদাতা বা মনোনীত প্রতিনিধিদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি থাকে)। পরিচালকের দপ্তর, শাহ আমানত আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, চট্টগ্রাম।
১১.	অন্যান্য শর্তাবলীঃ	ক) নিজ নিজ সংস্থা/প্রতিষ্ঠানের লেটারহেড প্যাডে ইজারা দরপত্র ক্রয়ের জন্য আবেদন করতে হবে। খ) সীলমোহরকৃত খামের উপর কাজের নাম সুস্পষ্টভাবে লিখে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে। গ) দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী প্রযোজ্য হবে। ঘ) অনিবার্য কারণবশতঃ নির্ধারিত তারিখে দরপত্র অনুষ্ঠিত না হলে পরবর্তী প্রথম কর্মদিবসে একই স্থানে এবং সময়ে দরপত্র অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। ঙ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা আংশিক বাতিল বা সমস্ত দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। চ) বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউল হতে জানা যাবে।

নং-৩০.৩১.০০০০.০৫১.১১.০০১.২১/৩১৩
তারিখঃ ১১/০৮/২০২১খ্রিঃ
জিডি-১৪৫৮

উইং কমান্ডার মোঃ ফরহাদ হোসেন খান, পিএসসি
পরিচালক
শাহ আমানত আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, চট্টগ্রাম



Gulnahr Mahbub Monika is the co-founder of Deshi Ballers, a platform for female basketball players who are determined to follow their athletic pursuits.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

NURTURING DREAMS

Carrying the torch beyond the basketball court

SHANIZ CHOWDHURY

Gulnahr Mahbub Monika is one of the nineteen Bangladeshi changemakers to receive the 2021 Diana Award. She is the youngest female athlete of Bangladesh to earn this accolade. Monika and Ashreen Mridha are the co-founders of Deshi Ballers, a platform for female basketball players who are determined to follow their athletic pursuits.

Being no stranger to winning accolades in her motherland, Monika also participated in the 58th International Session of the International Olympic Academy for Young Participants, in 2018. The following year, she was invited to the One Young World International Summit, where she was championed by The Queen's Commonwealth Trust, and met The Duke and Duchess of Sussex. This year, she was invited to the Championship Principles, a sports exchange programme by AAU Global Coach Academy and the US State Department.

The national-level basketball player discovered the sport when she was in the fifth grade. Her coaches were Niaz Mouta, Sayeed Ahmed, and Mahtabur Rahman Bulbul. Monika juggles being the Project

Manager at Alice Labs and creating opportunities for women in basketball. "I want to complete my master's in Sports Management, and continue playing for my country. Deshi Ballers aims to inaugurate the first ever national women's basketball league in Bangladesh by 2024," she says.

Since their inception in 2018, Deshi Ballers has won accolades such as the Joy Bangla Youth Award and Plan International Equality Award.

In the 16 years that Monika has played basketball, she observed that sports communities are alarmingly discriminating against women. Her personal experiences led her to want to build a better and more inclusive future for women in sports.

For young girls whose lives in the basketball court are just beginning, Monika has some earnest advice. "Never give up playing the sport which makes you happy. There will be many obstacles, but if you are determined to succeed and represent your country globally, opportunities will fly towards you," she concludes.

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YOUTH IN ACTION

Advocating social awareness through Youth Parliament

AKHLAKUR RAHMAN

22-year-old Sarkar Tanvir Ahmed Tanim, the founder and acting president of Youth Parliament, is one of the nineteen changemakers from Bangladesh who received the 2021 Diana Award. He went to K&G High School, and passed his SSC in 2013 from R B Govt High School in Joypurhat. Being a student of Business Studies in school and college, he pursued Economics at Varendra University in Rajshahi. Marking International Youth Day, he joined a summit organised by World Youth Summit for Peace on August 12, 2021.

Tanvir's journey with Youth Parliament started in 2018. "I was heartbroken after the Holey Artisan Café attack in 2016," he mentions. "The event

national flag, the nation's constitution, and drug addiction, among other topics. They also provide winter clothes to underprivileged communities, and engage the youth in tree-planting campaigns. Additionally, they host an annual assembly to discuss matters which should be brought under the national assembly's attention.

"I received the Central Khalaghor Asor Award from the President of Bangladesh, Abdul Hamid," says Tanvir. "Another memorable event of my life was when I received the National Award from the President for working with the youth."

He holds different positions in notable international organisations such as World Humanity Commission, British



PHOTO: COURTESY

Sarkar Tanvir Ahmed (R) receives the Best Parliamentary Debater Award from former High Commissioner of Bangladesh to UK, Professor Dr Sayeedur Rahman Khan, at Debate Festival 2018, Varendra University, Rajshahi.

brought about pressures for many students of private colleges and universities. Ever since then, I wanted to do something to assist the youth of the nation. Working with young people, Youth Parliament found many scopes for improvement in regards to SDG-2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG-13 (Climate Change)." Youth Parliament publishes a magazine with their documented information and possible solutions, yearly.

Currently, the platform is working with SDG-16, which promotes justice, peace, and strong institutions. "We facilitate seminars, workshops, and training sessions for the youth," shares Tanvir.

Every year, Youth Parliament conducts sessions about the uses of our

Council, Humanist ECO-Citizens International, and International Youth Society amongst others, representing Bangladesh. He has received multiple trainings on leadership and youth engagement in social welfare.

In 2019, Tanvir received the National Tree Plantation Award. The same year, he also got the official pass from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. However, due to the pandemic, he attended the programme virtually. "It is my dream to have Youth Parliament's voice heard in the national assembly," he concludes.

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INTERVIEW

Building the path to a data-driven Bangladesh

LABIBA ANJUMI KABIR

Mir Sakib, CEO of Cramstack, was inducted in the 2021 Forbes 30 under 30 Asia list, under the category of Enterprise Technology. Cramstack is a startup that uses artificial intelligence to automate the extraction of information from unstructured data to provide insights for businesses. Mir Sakib graduated from North South University (NSU), and is pursuing his master's from Higher School of Economics, Russia. Star Youth, The Daily Star, caught up with him to learn about his aspirations, and more.

What was your initial idea behind Cramstack? When I graduated in 2015, I joined Incepta Pharmaceuticals as a management trainee, and life was monotonous. So, I took a day off, and joined a hackathon by Asia Foundation, with my thesis partners at NSU. We won the hackathon, and a few angel investors were present at the event. Some of them were interested to invest in my project. They gave me the incentive to start working on Cramstack. Soon afterwards, I left Incepta Pharmaceuticals, and joined a software company to understand how things work in

my relevant study field. I left the job after two months, and started Cramstack in April 2016 with my childhood friend, Hasib Mamun.

What makes Cramstack stand out? The idea behind Cramstack is to build a search platform that allows users to search enterprise data sources as easily as a Google search. It also offers tools to extract and process data from portable document format (PDF) files and images.

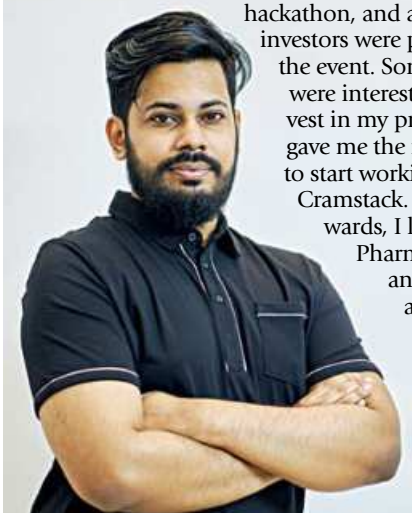
Hasib Mamun and I came up with the idea to work with natural language query. We developed a natural language enterprise database while participating in Grameenphone Accelerator in 2019.

Currently, we have clients in the Ministry of Power in Bangladesh, a number of renowned banks and RMG exporters, as well as international firms such as Boston Consulting Group.

How is Cramstack tackling challenges during the pandemic?

Owing to the pandemic, we had to face obstacles, like most other businesses. Our bills got delayed, but we did not lay off employees or cut off salaries. Even if we went broke, we wanted to make sure our employees had full support from our side. We also provided government data from healthcare workers and immigration officials to help track and curb the spread of the coronavirus. We raised over \$1 million from Rockstart (Netherlands), Grameenphone (unit of Telenor) and angel investors.

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Mir Sakib.

PHOTO: COURTESY

YOUNG ACHIEVER

CUET students shine at Concrete Projects Competition 2021

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

American Concrete Institute (ACI), a Michigan-based international professional organisation, recently hosted the Concrete Projects Competition, an annual event for undergraduate students from all across the world. This year, it was organised virtually.

Three teams from Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET) secured the first, second, and third positions at the competition. Each team consisted of two students, and all six winners were recent graduates of CUET. They worked on the projects for their final-year theses.

Mahfuzul Islam and Imtiaz Ibney Gias were the champions. Their project, 'A critical review on the performance of microbial concrete developed using E. coli bacteria', was supervised by Professor Moinul Islam. The project intends to manufacture a concrete which is stronger and more durable than the conventional one. "For this purpose, we incorporated E. coli bacteria strain into concrete as a partial replacement of water. The bacteria would help in healing the micro cracks developed at an early stage," Imtiaz explained.

Syed Maruf-Ul Hassan and Ezaz Ahmed secured the second position. Their project, 'Effect of compaction on the properties of eco-friendly building blocks produced from industrial by-products', explored ways to generate value for waste materials. "Wastes produced from coal power plants and steel manufacturing industries require safe disposal. Our research introduces an alternative solution for the traditional clay burnt brick, using



(Clockwise) Ezaz Ahmed, Mahfuzul Islam, Jannatul Ferdous, Imtiaz Ibney Gias, Tabassima Faria, and Syed Maruf Ul Hassan.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

industrial by-products. Subsequently, the produced brick is more cost-effective, and eco-friendlier," Maruf shared.

The third position was achieved by Jannatul Ferdous and Tabassima Faria. Their project, 'Ternary combination of industrial wastes for sustainable geopolymer mortars', attempts to utilise wastes generated from different industries as binder materials to prepare eco-friendly geopolymer mortars. "Cement emits a large amount of carbon dioxide. Additionally, the proper disposal of waste is a problem encountered by different industries. Our project intends to minimise carbon emission, discard waste effectively, and prepare sustainable construction materials," Jannatul said.

The participants submitted two electronic copies of their reports. The first copy included the students' contact

information and ACI member numbers, as well as the ACI member numbers of their faculty advisors. On the other hand, the second copy had no identification information of the students or the universities, in order to ensure fair results.

There was no virtual ceremony for the winners. However, the organisers have invited them to the Concrete Convention, which will be held at Orlando, USA, in March next year. The winners extended their gratitude to their faculty advisor, Prof Dr G M Sadiquul Islam, who also supervised the teams that achieved the second and third positions.

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Address migrant workers' wage theft claims

Authorities must ensure migrant workers receive their due

WE express our strong support for the demand put forward by experts at a recent webinar, who urged the government to address migrant workers' wage theft claims at regional forums during bilateral meetings with host countries, and via international and UN agencies working on migration. According to the findings of a survey conducted by the Bangladesh Civil Society for Migrants (BCSM), 1,160 Bangladeshi migrant workers who returned home from six Gulf countries after February 2020 had lost, on an average, about Tk 1.8 lakh in wages and other entitlements amid the pandemic. Of the returnees, 67.7 percent said they did not receive due wages regularly after February 2020.

Ever since the pandemic first swept across the globe, we witnessed how it disproportionately affected migrant workers, especially from countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, etc. The mistreatment of migrant workers in host countries ranged from mass unemployment and hunger to imprisonment in quarantine facilities lacking basic amenities and forced deportation. It is worth noting that the same Gulf countries that expelled migrant workers during the pandemic are now denying them entry without Covid-19 vaccines, and have washed their hands of any responsibility towards them, despite the fact that many major sectors in their economies are dependent on them. In this context, it is almost criminal that after being denied some of the basic rights that every worker is entitled to, they are also being denied their due wages and entitlements.

The injustice of it all becomes more obvious when considering the current situation of returnee migrant workers. According to a survey conducted by Brac, UN Women Bangladesh and the Center on International Cooperation at New York University, many of these workers have amassed an average of Tk 76,000, and a maximum of Tk 7 lakh, in migration loans. How will they manage to survive if, on top of that, their employers take away an average of Tk 1.8 lakh in wages from them? Let us not forget that this wage theft is not just detrimental to migrant workers and their dependants, but also to the country as a whole, since valuable foreign currency that would have been part of our remittances is being withheld.

Experts have suggested that wage theft claims can be addressed at different platforms such as the Colombo Process or Abu Dhabi Dialogue, or they can be placed before host countries through a "commission" or UN organisations such as the ILO. There have also been demands of a continued campaign against wage theft in collaboration with regional platforms such as the MFA, as well as the involvement of concerned foreign missions in Bangladesh in creating more dialogue on the issue. We request the government to take these recommendations on board and collaborate with civil society and rights groups to urgently address the issue. In the long run, we must continue to exert pressure on all actors involved in order to dismantle the unjust global labour markets that allow foreign employers to take advantage of migrant workers, especially those employed in low-wage, precarious jobs.

Make factories pay for polluting the environment

Punishment is necessary, and so are effluent treatment plants

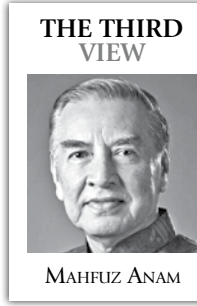
COMING hard on the heels of a new Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report that made dire predictions about the occurrence of more frequent rainfalls, floods, and cyclones in Bangladesh, a report in this daily shows how ill-prepared we still are to face this challenge. It describes how 48 units (out of a total of 185) under the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) are operating without effluent treatment plants (ETP). To put it simply, across four divisions (Dhaka, Chattogram, Rajshahi, Khulna) of the country, there are 48 industrial factories that are dumping their untreated chemical waste right into open drains, allowing filthy and discoloured water to flow into rivers and even into people's homes during the monsoon season when flooding happens.

One such area is Pagar Alerteg, adjacent to the Tongi Industrial Zone of the BSCIC. Here, rain brings knee-deep floods of black, filthy, foul-smelling water that residents have to wade through during monsoon. It has reached a point that residents now refuse to move there, making the area nearly uninhabitable.

One may wonder how such an issue is allowed to fester in four divisions, or how as many as 48 factories are allowed to dump chemical waste irresponsibly and improperly. The fact is, they are not allowed to operate without the ETPs, but neither the BSCIC nor the Department of Environment (DoE) seems aware of the magnitude of this problem.

Although it is mandatory to set up ETPs for factories that generate chemical waste, as per BSCIC guidelines, the corporation is strangely enough not allowed to penalise factories flouting this guideline. One such factory in Gazipur has begun the process of setting up an ETP after facing pressure from the BSCIC and DoE, but it will take at least three more months for this effort to reach fruition. Others either do not have enough land or necessary financial resources to set up their own ETPs. The BSCIC's plan from two years ago to set up a central ETP in Konabari, Gazipur has also not been implemented yet.

Meanwhile, representatives of the DoE told our reporters that they were not "aware" that so many factories under the BSCIC were operating without proper ETPs, and that they would communicate with the corporation soon regarding this matter. We hope this does happen, and soon, as there can be no excuse to pollute the homes and rivers of the country with harmful chemical waste. Although punishment for offending factory owners is desired, there needs to be a long-term solution to this issue that is hugely impacting the natural environment. We earnestly hope that the DoE and BSCIC will prioritise the building of ETPs at every factory (or central ETPs in each industrial city), instead of exchanging blame while the problem gets worse and worse.



MAHFUZ ANAM

IF the section of the government dealing with the overall management of the Covid situation continuously flip-flops on its decisions, then doesn't the image of the government suffer? If what is announced one day is changed on the next, doesn't it lead to people losing confidence in government decisions? When a course of action is decided upon without any implementation plan, then doesn't it erode the credibility of the government? Can the government expect full compliance when decisions are taken without any thoughts given to their impact on the people?

On July 13, the cabinet division in a gazette notification (one cannot get more official than that) announced that "strict lockdown" would be imposed from July 23 to August 5, extending the work stoppage from Eid leave. The home minister on July 27 added that the government had turned down pleas from the business community, including garment factory owners, for keeping factories open during lockdown. Then on Friday, July 30, to everybody's surprise, the same cabinet division announced that all export oriented industries will be out of the purview of the lockdown from next Sunday, giving practically little more than a day for the workers to join their factories on the pain of losing their jobs or being financially punished for late appearance.

Whether or not it was correct to open the factories in the midst of the lockdown or how it will impact the spread of the highly infectious Delta variant is not what we are asking at the moment. Our focus is, in deciding to open the factories on such short notice, how much attention was given to the convenience of the workers and whether it was at all practical for the government to expect RMG workers to report for work, especially when all means of transport was closed, again, by the order of the government.

The decision forced thousands of workers, mostly female, to undergo untold sufferings to travel to Dhaka, Gazipur and Narayanganj, where most of their factories are located, to join work.

After a full day of chaotic, hazardous, life-risking and Covid-spreading travelling, on Saturday (July 31) at 8pm, the authorities, perhaps realising the injudiciousness of giving such a short notice, ended up doing something more foolish. They decided to re-open public transport for 16 hours to "facilitate" workers joining their work.

Opening public transport for 16 hours? Was the practicability of such an order at all thought of? Was it the view that all the bus drivers, ready with tanks full of fuel, were waiting beside their

respective vehicles to start operating from the word go? Was it the assumption that all passengers were lined to board their respective buses at the designated stations to start their journey? Many drivers came to know of the decision when the 16 hours deadline was over. Only a handful of buses operated and that too in a very limited area. The railways, used by a large number of garment workers living in various parts of the country, did not even try to open.

In the meantime, RMG workers and others of export-oriented industries, were seen using rickshaw, vans, private trucks, minibuses and CNGs to join their factories, paying hefty fare for the journey. Sadly, thousands could be seen walking for miles with their meagre luggage on their heads to comply with the factory-opening decision. Did we need, or have the right, to subject our citizens to such turmoil?



RMG workers and others of export-oriented industries, were seen using rickshaw, vans, private trucks, minibuses and CNGs to join their factories, paying hefty fare for the journey.

On Tuesday before last (August 3), an inter-ministerial meeting was held to assess the lockdown situation and finalise the vaccine rollout plan. It was attended, in-person or virtually, by 12 ministers and state ministers, the PM's principal secretary, cabinet secretary, 16 secretaries of different ministries, chiefs of law enforcement and intelligence agencies. The purpose was to spell out the details of the massive rollout plan aiming at vaccinating roughly 1 crore people.

What followed after the meeting was quite unbelievable.

As ministerial meetings go, it was of a very high level. It lasted for over three hours, at the end of which a joint press briefing was held by the Minister for Liberation War Affairs, AKM Mozammel Haque, who presided over the meeting, along with the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Zahid Maleque. In his 30 minutes briefing, among other things, he said that after the lifting of the lockdown, "anyone above 18 years will not be

allowed on the streets or on any mode of transport unless they were vaccinated." How will this decision be implemented? Who will do the checking both about the age and about being vaccinated? Didn't the enormity of the logistics strike the minister's mind before speaking to the press?

The absurdity, the impracticality and the unimplementability of what he was saying obviously did not bother him. Nor did it seem to have struck the health minister, who sitting next to him, who in his briefing, neither contradicted nor clarified what the presiding minister said. He could have at least pointed out that 18-year-olds were not given any vaccine as yet.

So the news was carried by the media and the expected wave of criticism on social media inevitably followed. Around midnight the same day, there was a TV scroll notice from the health

our fight against the pandemic or that we are on the verge of it.

Needless to say, the decision has baffled experts, especially when the infection rate is nowhere near the prescribed level given by WHO, and when the Covid situation is far from under control.

The livelihood argument overwhelmed the government, as the captains of the industry are known to have irrepressible clout over our decision-makers.

Having imposed lockdown from April onwards—a necessary move but frustrated by various concessions given to industry lobbies—the government had to respond to the dire consequences that those on the bottom rung of the society were suffering from, especially when its assistance was not reaching that segment of the population that needed it the most. Thus, the logic of re-opening the economy, howsoever dangerous, became almost inevitable.

While experts will continue to debate as to the judiciousness of lifting the lockdown, once again, as before, we want to focus on how implementable and well-thought-out the decisions were, whether adequate time was given to the government machinery down the line to implement them, and whether any thought was given on how those decisions were likely to impact the citizens?

While lifting all restrictions on transportation, the government directed that only half the fleet of buses will be allowed to ply on the roads with 100 percent capacity. How and who will ensure that only half of each owner's fleet of buses will be allowed to operate? How will the owners who have only one bus implement this decision? What happens to social distancing when buses are allowed to take their full load? The chaos that followed—and the sufferings that people had to go through—speaks for itself.

The importance of the government as a functioning institution cannot be overemphasised. It is at the epicentre of literally everything. All policies, planning, directives, projects, future ideas, and much more emanate from it. A huge amount of taxpayers' money is spent to nurture and facilitate the advancement of our government employees. The credibility of this institution is an important element of effective implementation of all its policies and plans.

The three instances we cited above speak of unthinking policymaking, unprepared decision-making, and an uncaring attitude towards the people that they are paid to serve. This must stop if we are to effectively defeat the pandemic and emerge on top.

We cannot continue to have such confusion and chaos in the decision-making and implementing processes within the government.

Mahfuz Anam is Editor and Publisher, The Daily Star.

PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

Investing in global vaccine equity acknowledges our shared fate



ROSEMARIE MUGANDA

THE extraordinary global effort to develop safe and effective Covid-19 vaccines in record time highlights the power of vaccines to bring us closer to our loved ones and to a more prosperous, equitable world in which everyone has the chance to achieve their full potential. Vaccines are among modern medicine's greatest innovations, allowing billions of people to lead healthy lives. But stopping outbreaks of vaccine-preventable disease—and not only Covid-19—depends on achieving critical mass with immunisation campaigns.

Consider polio. The shuttering of classrooms to protect children from Covid-19 outbreaks might seem unprecedented, but a 1937 polio outbreak in the United States inspired school-by-radio programmes—an early innovation in remote learning. In those days, polio was thought to afflict only industrialised countries, until a major outbreak in South Africa in 1948 led to the establishment of the first African foundation for polio research and catalysed greater awareness of the disease's global burden. In the 1950s, polio paralysed an average of 600,000 people each year.

Fortunately, scientists developed the first polio vaccines later that decade. And since the launch of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988, vaccines have reduced the global incidence of wild polio cases by more than 99 percent, from hundreds of thousands annually to a handful of endemic cases in just two remaining countries: Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 2020, Africa was certified as being free of wild polio,

giving the continent a much-needed glimmer of hope amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Strong vaccine coverage has made it possible to believe that polio could become the second disease—to be eradicated through vaccination.

But the polio clock has not stopped ticking: back in 2014, the World Health Organization sounded the alarm when it designated the disease as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. In particular, areas with low immunisation rates, and thus low levels of protection, are also vulnerable to rare but increasingly frequent outbreaks of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV), which occur when the weakened pathogen originally contained in oral polio vaccines eventually regains virulence.

Today, cVDPV outbreaks outnumber wild polio cases. Although we are closing in on the virus, we are struggling to maintain the strong vaccine coverage needed to stop these outbreaks before they start, owing to a lack of resources, conflict or civil unrest, and pandemic-related disruptions to immunisation drives.

The Covid-19 crisis has so far caused the postponement of 57 lifesaving mass vaccination campaigns in 66 countries, affecting hundreds of millions of people, mostly African children. In November 2020, the WHO and UNICEF called for emergency action to avert a secondary crisis of measles and polio outbreaks caused by disrupted vaccine access.

Even as we rally together against Covid-19, PATH and other partners continue to call upon national governments and donors to double down on immunisation against polio and other vaccine-preventable diseases. The newly launched Immunisation Agenda 2030 global framework has a crucial role to play both to make up for lost time and to boost our collective resilience. As the

pandemic has shown, cross-border spread of infectious disease is an ever-present threat. All therefore have a strong interest in international immunisation coverage.

Investing in disease prevention through vaccine development and delivery protects us all and will pay dividends for years to come. We should thus feel heartened by the stunning speed with which the scientific community—helped by many previous years of research into other coronaviruses—came together to develop

When it comes to highly infectious diseases such as Covid-19 and polio, our fates are bound up together; what affects one part of the world affects us all. Investing in tools for a single country does little to control or eliminate such global health threats. Instead, we must keep global vaccine access at the centre of our efforts. Strong national commitments and financing for the Immunisation Agenda 2030 framework can help get us



The Covid-19 crisis has so far caused the postponement of 57 lifesaving mass vaccination campaigns in 66 countries, affecting hundreds of millions of people.

PHOTO: REUTERS

effective Covid-19 vaccines.

These investments are bearing fruit not only for Covid-19, but also for polio. Last year, after a decade of research and development, the novel oral polio vaccine against type 2 (nOPV2) became the first vaccine to receive a WHO Emergency Use Listing. Researchers expect that nOPV2 will be less likely to seed new cVDPV2 outbreaks, thereby helping to hasten the eradication of polio.

Globalisation has already brought us closer together. With a commitment to equitable immunisation access, the world can advance toward a shared future of health and prosperity.

Rosemarie Muganda is Regional Advocacy Director at PATH, based in Nairobi, Kenya.

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Using technologies is key to speeding up ADP execution

NAWSHAD AHMED and AKM KAMRUZZAMAN

THE implementation of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) in Bangladesh has been severely affected by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the last 17 months. As the country entered the new financial year on July 1, now is an appropriate time to review last year's ADP execution, learn from the challenges faced, and take stringent measures to improve the rate of implementation this year.

up of project-related procurements, delay in release of imported goods from the ports and late recruitment of project staff and consultants. Thirdly, inadequate monitoring and supervision of field activities to ensure quality implementation due to extended lockdowns and closure of offices. That the health ministry performed poorly in executing last year's budget is well known, but there are other ministries whose execution levels were also less than 50 percent.

Bangladesh needs to address the infrastructure gaps in all sectors through increased public investment, and ADP is the main channel to fill this gap.

mechanisms to continue their project execution in both public and private sectors. In Bangladesh, the banking sector showed remarkable resilience and their capital adequacy, asset quality, profitability and liquidity have been praiseworthy during the last two years. The NGOs have also been maintaining their critical operations at a satisfactory level. They have been building awareness of infection prevention measures among the communities, distributed personal hygiene products to the poor households and supplied personal protective equipment to staff who work on the frontline. We can learn from their experiences and adopt the good practices.

channel to fill this gap. However, the government needs to prioritise only the good projects. The ministries should be strict about screening and appraisal of projects so that the most important ones are included in the ADP and they are adequately funded. There is a critical need to enhance technical capacity in the government ministries in these areas. Timely implementation of good projects can help increase the growth rate. We need to enhance ADP implementation which will contribute to achieving pre-Covid GDP growth rate.

The total stimulus packages given during this pandemic by the government so far amount to Tk 128,441 crore (4.59 percent of GDP) from which Tk 940 billion (73 percent) is for the private investors, and the rest for the poorest and disadvantaged people and families. This shows that a significant amount of public resources have been made available to the private sector. The developed countries that have made good progress on vaccination and contained the rate of Covid-19 transmission have resumed their normal economic activities, and our export opportunities to those countries have reopened now. We need to give a boost to public sector projects, to enhance employment opportunities and effective demand, and increase export. The government has made a policy move towards supply side push by incentivising the business sector through such measures as reducing corporate taxes, lowering bank interest rates and allowing delayed repayment of bank loans, in addition to giving a number of stimulus packages. In order to match these incentives, demand side measures should be strengthened as well, by enhancing project implementation, for an early recovery of the economy.

Dr Nawshad Ahmed, an ex-UN official, is an economist and urban planner. Dr AKM Kamruzzaman, Team Leader, Technical Support Unit, Bangladesh Municipal Water Supply and Sanitation Project.



The current and last two years' ADP have had the same Covid-19 related challenges that the implementing ministries should take into account and tackle from the early part of this fiscal year. These are, first of all, the challenge of mobilising the projected revenue from internal sources, borrowing from financial institutions and securing the expected foreign loans and grants. Secondly, slow pick-

The current year's budget (2021-2022) is the 50th budget of Bangladesh. The total amount of ADP proposed in the budget is Tk 225,324 crore, which is 6.5 percent of GDP. The five sectors which received the highest ADP allocation are: transportation and communication, power and fuel, housing and community facilities, education, and health. The first two sectors have been allocated 48 percent of total ADP allocation. These five

sectors have a total number of 743 projects out of a total of 1,426 projects included in the ADP. A huge amount of construction work is included in the top five sectoral projects requiring procurement and physical work. As many as 141 projects have foreign grants and loan components in them, with a total amount of USD 41.6 billion. Due to various reasons, 24.1 percent of the projects included in the ADP have been revised from one to three times already.

Those ministries which didn't achieve up to 50 percent implementation level last year should undertake a planned approach to the implementation of their projects from the beginning of this year. They should start floating the tenders, followed by assessment of the bids and complete the procurement formalities in good time. In case of construction projects, the government should allow professionals like the engineers and workers to work in the same spirit as the health sector professionals who are considered as essential staff, provided they follow the Covid-19 health regulations and get vaccinated. Instead of keeping the offices closed, the government staff should work remotely during the lockdown period and continue their operations.

Many countries have experimented and devised good remote working

Grin and bear it: How economics won Kipchoge an Olympic gold



C RASHAAD SHABAB

ON Sunday August 8, like many running enthusiasts, I watched in awe as Eliud Kipchoge delivered a masterclass in marathoning to become the first man since 1980 to successfully defend an Olympic gold in that discipline. But as an economist, I was also enthralled to observe that Kipchoge was using insights from experimental economics to achieve this amazing feat. What is more, knowledge of these insights can help all of us to rise to challenging circumstances, just like Kipchoge.

Keen observers will have noticed a peculiar smile cross Kipchoge's face in the latter stages of the race. Peculiar, because it was clearly a conscious affectation rather than a spontaneous expression of joy as a smile usually is. Commentators such as Paula Radcliffe (herself a marathoning record-breaker) have observed that the smile has become something of a Kipchoge signature that usually emerges late in the marathon when he starts to fatigue and works especially hard. So why does the world's greatest marathoner pretend to smile when he is under pressure and is there a lesson there for the rest of us? The answer lies in a force that

Nobel Prize winning economist Daniel Kahneman describes in his book *Thinking Fast and Slow*. We all understand that our emotional state can affect our facial expressions: when we are sad we frown, and when we are happy we smile. But experiments have found that the reverse is also true: the facial expressions we adopt can alter our emotional, psychological and even physiological state. Stimulating the facial muscles associated with smiling such as by holding a pencil sideways in one's mouth can elevate measures of mood and subjective wellbeing. The opposite is also true so that simulating a frown by holding a pencil protruding from a pout can make people feel unhappy.

Athletes had many reasons to frown during the Tokyo men's marathon. It was far hotter than is optimal for marathoning. The course was very tight in parts with turns and twists that can break a runner's rhythm. The fierce competition led to overcrowded drink-stations with runners elbowing and running into one another. On three separate occasions, overcrowding prevented Kipchoge from getting the drinks that he needed to fuel his race. Expressing frustration might have been a natural reaction to these impediments, especially during a marathon which by its nature leaves athletes dehydrated with depleted blood sugar and so less in control of their emotions. Evidence from experimental economics suggests that

allowing such negativity to take hold is likely to have adverse psychological and physiological consequences, to the detriment of athletic performance.

But Kipchoge's signature smile uses the same forces to trick his mind into feeling less of the strain from these stressors than it otherwise would. This makes it easier for him to exert the physical effort that is necessary to succeed at a distance as challenging as the marathon (students of Greek

history will recall that the Athenian messenger Pheidippides who inspired the modern race died from exhaustion after running the distance). And just as the smile played a part in helping Kipchoge break the world record in Berlin in 2018 and the two-hour barrier in 2020, last weekend it also helped him retain his Olympic title.

But it is not just elite endurance athletes who can benefit from understanding and using these forces.

Life, like marathoning, can be a long, arduous journey that is pitted with challenges and obstacles. Stressful situations can arise in professional, social, and personal settings. Feelings of anger, sadness, or frustration are normal in these circumstances.



Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge celebrates after winning the men's marathon final during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games in Sapporo on August 8, 2021.

PHOTO: AFP

Dr C Rashaad Shabab is a Senior Lecturer of Economics at the University of Sussex Business School. He has also run 63 official marathons with a personal best of 3 hours and 2 minutes.

QUOTABLE Quote

HELEN MIRREN (born 1945) English actor

I think every woman in our culture is a feminist. They may refuse to articulate it, but if you were to take any woman back 40 years and say, 'Is this a world you want to live in?' They would say, 'No.'

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Poll numbers
- 5 Terre Haute's river
- 11 Biz bigwig
- 12 Broad way
- 13 Different
- 14 Make numb
- 15 Parrot or puppy
- 16 Disease cause
- 17 Trial setting
- 19 Status -
- 22 Make suitable
- 24 Wide inlet
- 26 Tenor Carreras
- 27 Mosquito attack
- 28 Church replies
- 30 Doofuses
- 31 Marks a ballot
- 32 African lilies
- 34 Linen source

DOWN

- 1 Profound
- 2 Wheel bar
- 3 Precedent setters
- 4 Poker card
- 5 Tall boot
- 6 Wards off
- 7 Roof support
- 8 Plus
- 9 Take to court
- 10 Egg layer
- 16 Belly
- 18 Ready for business
- 19 TV with contestants
- 20 Golden Rule word
- 21 Lyric poems
- 22 Trojan War hero
- 23 Capitol top
- 25 Clarinet's kin
- 29 Greet a general
- 30 Cereal buy
- 33 Jacket flap
- 34 Phobia
- 36 Pro votes
- 37 Largest amount
- 38 Janitor's tool
- 39 Gorilla, e.g.
- 40 Model buy
- 41 Pro vote

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

E	R	A	S	F	R	E	S	H		
D	E	N	I	M	R	A	T	I	O	
G	E	T	T	O	G	E	T	H	E	R
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D	R	I	E	S	S	E	A	S		
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BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

Indian state

FROM PAGE 12

sect -- have been vandalised and shops and households belonging to the Matuas were demolished in Khulna, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

"People belonging to the Hindu community are in a jeopardised situation. Their assets, shelter and properties had been looted by the anti-social elements. [They are facing] discrimination where a campaign or programme is initiated to destroy, intimidate and punish a group because of its religious or moral beliefs," he wrote in the letter.

Electorally, Matua Nama Shudras are an influential community in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district bordering Bangladesh.

During his visit to Bangladesh in March this year, Modi had visited the shrine of Harichand Thakur in Gopalganj.

Shantanu, a BJP leader, is the state minister for ports, shipping and waterways.

On Saturday night, criminals, armed with sharp weapons, launched the attack in Shiyali village in Khulna's Rupsha. They vandalised and ransacked several houses, shops and five temples of Matua Hindus community.

Bangladesh Hindu Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad, Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad, Bangladesh Jatiya Hindu Mohajote, Sammilito Sangskritik Jote and other organisations formed a human chain on Wednesday in Khulna city and demanded immediate arrest of those involved in the incident.

Missing Chinese

FROM PAGE 12

The body was sent to Chattogram Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

S Alam Group is installing the 1,224-megawatt coal power plant at Pachim Gandamara in Banskhali.

SS Power I Plant is a joint venture of six companies of S Alam Group (holding 70 percent of the equity), SEPCOIII Electric Power Construction Corporation, China, and HTC Development Group Co Ltd, China, according to the official website of S Alam group.

Yahya a power

FROM PAGE 12

Thousands of men, women and children evacuees from Bangladesh staged massive demonstrations before the Bangladesh mission and the consulates of the USA, the USSR and the UK in Kolkata today demanding release of Bangabandhu. The demonstrations were organised under the auspices of the Bangladesh Liberation Council of the Intelligentsia, the Bangladesh Teachers' Association, and the Bangladesh Film Artists and Technicians Association.

Dr AR Mullick, vice chancellor of Chittagong University, addressing the rally maintained that to justify the murder of Bangabandhu, Pakistan had organised a sham trial. He also pointed out that the evil designs of the Pakistani military junta would not defeat the people's liberation struggle in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh intellectuals urged Senator Kennedy to exert his influence to free Bangabandhu from Pakistan army custody. Kennedy had about an hourlong meeting with intellectuals yesterday.

ISLAMIC STATES URGED TO SUPPORT BANGLADESH

Twenty Muslim MPs of the Indian parliament appealed to all Muslim countries to raise their voice against the most "un-Islamic acts" of the military junta in Pakistan which had created a situation endangering the peace of the subcontinent.

In a statement, they said, "We feel that Muslim countries' silence may be taken as an approval of all these inhumane atrocities perpetrated by the military junta which is against the basic and fundamental principles of Islam."

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

Female

FROM PAGE 12

accused while both were posted in Sudan in May 2019 as part of a United Nations peace-keeping mission.

According to the case statement, the accused raped her on six different occasions.

The complainant said the first two times she was raped without consent, while on the other four occasions, she was told by the accused that they would be married in the future.

Four of the six rape incidents took place in Sudan, while two occurred in Dhaka when both were home on vacation.

The incidents took place between December 2019 and November 2020.

According to the complaint, on April 12 this year, the complainant went to the accused's house at Razarbagh in Dhaka and told him to complete the marriage registration, but the accused refused to do so, threatened her, and physically assaulted her.



Residents use a boat to move in a flooded neighbourhood in Kareli Gaus Nagar area of Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, India yesterday following heavy monsoon rainfalls that caused the overflowing of the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers. Thousands of stranded people were rescued from flooded villages along the Ganges after the river rose above its danger level in the country's most populous state.

PHOTO: AFP

Russia posts record daily

FROM PAGE 12

The coronavirus pandemic has killed at least 4,323,957 people worldwide since the virus first emerged in late 2019, according to an AFP compilation of official data.

The US is the worst-affected country with 618,479 deaths, followed by Brazil with 565,748, India with 429,669, Mexico with 246,203 and Peru with 197,146.

In China, authorities have suspended operations at a terminal in the world's third busiest cargo port after a worker was infected with the coronavirus.

The closure of a key terminal at the Ningbo-Zhoushan port on the east coast, which handled almost 1.2 billion tons in 2020, reflects China's

determination to squash its worst coronavirus outbreak in months no matter the economic costs.

The worker at the port's Meishan terminal tested positive for coronavirus Wednesday, Ningbo city officials said.

The company "immediately stopped production work and closed the port area," as soon as the infection was detected, Jiang Yipeng, the CEO of Meidong Container Terminal, which operates the Meishan zone, said.

The worker had been fully vaccinated and it remains unclear how he became infected.

Almost 2,000 front-line workers at Ningbo-Zhoushan port have been placed under "closed management" -- effectively unable to leave the port

-- as a result of the infection, Chinese media reported.

The latest closure threatens further disruption to the stretched global shipping network, which worsened after a typhoon hit China's east coast last month.

China reported 81 new cases Thursday, of which 38 were local transmissions. Domestic transmissions surpassed 100 on Tuesday -- the first time since January.

Officials have said many of those infected had already been vaccinated.

Meanwhile, Australia's capital Canberra is ordered into a seven-day lockdown after a single case is detected in the city that has largely avoided virus restrictions.

Only slight chance of asteroid Benu hitting Earth: Nasa

AFP, Washington

An asteroid known as Benu will pass within half the distance of the Earth to the Moon in the year 2135 but the probability of an impact with our planet in the coming centuries is very slight, scientists said Wednesday.

OSIRIS-REx, a NASA spacecraft, spent two years near Benu, an asteroid that is about 1,650 feet (500 meters) wide, observing its size, shape, mass and composition and monitoring its orbital trajectory

around the sun.

Using its robotic arm, the spacecraft also collected a sample from the surface of the asteroid that will help researchers determine the future trajectory of Benu.

The rocks and dust collected by OSIRIS-REx are scheduled to return to Earth on September 24, 2023.

Benu was discovered in 1999 and is classified as a potentially hazardous asteroid.

It will make a close approach with Earth in September 2135.

Scientists want to figure out how

Earth's gravity and a phenomenon known as the Yarkovsky effect will affect its future trajectory and the potential for an impact on a subsequent orbit.

"The OSIRIS-REx data give us so much more precise information, we can test the limits of our models and calculate the future trajectory of Benu to a very high degree of certainty through 2135," said Davide Farnocchia, a scientist with the Center for Near Earth Object Studies at Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California.

Neo JMB planned to make

FROM PAGE 12

"We have already held meetings with chemical suppliers so that chloroform is not available in the black market ...," he said.

Nazrul Islam Selim, former president of Bangladesh Scientific Instrument Dealers Association, told The Daily Star that chloroform is mainly used by pharmaceutical companies in the country. Besides, the authorities concerned of the education sector buy the chemical, he said.

"We do not sell chloroform without documents. We are now more aware and check every record even though chloroform alone cannot be harmful. Someone needs to add something to the chemical [to make it lethal]," Selim claimed.

CITC officials claimed that since getting hold chloroform was difficult, Furkan, with instructions from Jon, was trying get a job in a chemical factory to siphon out the knockout drug.

Furkan was a chemistry student of Jahangirnagar University.

"Furkan applied for assistant manager post in two chemical factories just two and half months ago and his plan was to bring barrels of the chemical out of these factories," said a high official of CITC unit requesting anonymity.

"He trained a member of the military wing of the outfit on how to make the chloroform bombs. We are

now trying to identify the member by interrogating Furkan on remand," said the official.

Furkan and his two associates -- Saiful Islam Maruf alias Basira and Rumman Hasan Fahad alias Abdullah -- were arrested by CITC on Tuesday at Kafu in the capital.

Yesterday was the first day of their four-day remand.

Investigators said Neo JMB was trying to make time bombs too as their attempts to trigger remote-controlled bombs failed on a number of occasions over the last couple of years due to defective controllers.

Another official of the CITC claimed that Furkan made the circuit for the time bombs.

"We have recovered the circuit details from his possessions. We are now trying to find out how many of the outfit members know the technique."

Rahmat said they have learnt that Furkan trained at least 15 Neo JMB members on making IEDs.

"We have already arrested some of them and we are now trying to get details of the members on the run," he added.

Prof Ridwanur Rahman, medicine specialist at the Ayesha Memorial Hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday that excessive chloroform can be lethal. "So, we always need to be cautious while applying chloroform on human body," he added.

Technical body

FROM PAGE 12

locomotives in Bangladesh, the BR commissioning committee found that the technical specifications of four key components -- engines, alternators, compressors and traction motors -- of the supplied locomotives did not match the specifications mentioned in the agreement.

Subsequently, the project authority halted 65 percent of the payment for the locomotives and the railways minister in October last year ordered an investigation into the matter.

In March this year, the technical committee was formed to determine whether the 10 locomotives can be commissioned. It has now recommended receiving those.

Asked whether the contract-related issues have to be placed before the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase again, Mazumder said, "No. Only the approval of the railways ministry is needed."

Mohammad Hassan Mansur, the project director, told this newspaper yesterday that the committee suggested receiving the locomotives as the BR is operating trains with locomotives of similar configuration.

The next steps regarding the locomotives would be taken based on the report of the technical committee, he said.

Though the committee led by Borhan Uddin, chief mechanical engineer (east) of the BR, submitted its report recently, it is yet to be accepted

officially, according to Mansur.

The issues involving the 10 locomotives made waves within the BR and beyond.

Nur Ahmed Hossain, the then-project director who had halted the payment and also raised allegations against "some senior BR officials" of joining hands in an unethical activity to release the funds, was changed on March 31 this year and posted under a junior in his batch in Bangladesh Civil Service.

A probe committee led by Md Farukuzzaman, an additional secretary of the ministry, recommended actions against Hyundai for supplying locomotives in deviation from the contract, and also CCIC Singapore, which the BR employed for pre-shipment inspection, for failing to carry out its duties.

But the authorities did not take any action against Hyundai; rather, they wrote to the Korean company in April this year, asking it to change the alternator, a major equipment of the locomotives, or else the company will get less payment.

"They [Hyundai] did not give alternators as per the contract, so we have asked them to change the alternators," Mansur told this newspaper on May 25.

The engines, traction motors, compressors and other equipment can be used as they are.

Hyundai sought six months to check whether the alternators can be replaced, he added.

stay safe to stay alive

FROM PAGE 12

However, despite facing three waves and losing numerous friends and family members it seems that many of us are still complacent.

When the bolt struck us from the blue for the first time last year, like others on this planet we also thought that the answer was lockdown. We started to believe that if we keep ourselves indoors for two weeks or at best a few more that will see the end of the Covid transmission.

The next hope was vaccine. We began to see a ray of hope at the end of the not so long tunnel, as we eagerly followed the race between multinationals in multiple countries.

The vaccine ultimately did come. But it's now evident that currently, there is an inadequate quantity of vaccines to inoculate sufficient number of people all over the world, in order to achieve herd immunity and finally bid farewell to this nasty guest.

Many of us are still not proactive.

Many still believe that this is a "disease of affluent city dwellers" and will not cause any casualty in the villages. This impression, however, changed dramatically after we experienced Covid's delta variant, which is now ravaging the globe. Now, finally we know that none is immune, none will be spared and although the ultimate target is mass vaccination, that won't be easily achievable.

So, as we now prepare for the "new normal", our only option is to be extra cautious till 80 percent of our population are vaccinated. How do we do that? We must adapt to health measures -- namely, wearing masks properly, washing hands frequently, avoiding going out unless absolutely necessary, and maintaining physical distancing. These are the only practices that can keep us going to witness better days.

The writer is head of Interventional Hepatology Division at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and member secretary, Sampritee Bangladesh.

Chinese scientists

FROM PAGE 12

its hardness reached 113 gigapascals (GPa) while natural diamond stone usually scores 50 to 70 on the same test.

"Consequently, our measurements demonstrate that the AM-III material is comparable in strength to diamond and superior to the other known strongest materials," the scientists noted in the study.

According to the scientists, AM-III has tunable energy absorption properties comparable to semiconductors commonly used in solar cells such as hydrogenated amorphous silicon films.

While in diamond crystals, the organised internal structure of its atoms and molecules contribute to their immense strength and hardness, in AM-III the researchers found that a combination of order and disorder of its molecules give rise to its strange properties.

Using fullerenes, which are

materials made of hollow football-like arrangements of carbon atoms, the researchers produced different types of glassy materials with varying molecular organisation among which AM-III had the highest order of atoms and molecules.

To achieve this order of molecules, the scientists crushed and blended the fullerenes together, gradually applying intense heat and pressure of about 25 GPa and 1,200 degrees Celsius in an experimental chamber for about 12 hours, spending an equal amount of time cooling the material.

Increasing the order further, the scientists observed, could potentially kill the semiconductivity and other properties that required the atoms and molecules to be chaotic.

"The emergence of this type of ultrahard, ultrastrong, semiconducting amorphous material offers excellent candidates to [the] most demanding practical applications," the researchers wrote in the study.

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

E-mail: ee_bar@eedmoe.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

Tender Notice No. 131/EED/BARI/Project Code: (224149400) e-Tender/2021-22 Date: 12/08/2021

Name of Project: Vertical Extension of Selected Non-Govt. Secondary Schools.

e-Tender is invited through the National e-GP Portal for the following procurement of works.

Sl.	Name of the tender	Tender ID	Type method	Last date & time of selling documents	Last date & time of submission documents
01	VER-51: Horizontal & Vertical Extension & Repair and Renovation of Existing Academic Building in/c Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Babugonj Pilot Secondary School, C-3 (Est.) Babugonj Upazila Barishal District.	597564	NCT, LTM	31-Aug-2021 15:00	01-Sep-2021 12:00
02	VER-52: Horizontal & Vertical Extension & Repair and Renovation of Existing Academic Building in/c Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Rahmatpur Pilot Secondary School, C-3 (Est.) Babugonj Upazila Barishal District.	597565	NCT, LTM	31-Aug-2021 15:00	01-Sep-2021 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender document of following packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Jahangir Alam
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Barishal

GD-1471



FANS RETURN to a changed landscape

SABBIR HOSSAIN AND ASHFAQ UL MUSHFIQ

When football returned following its slumber owing to the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, one of the beautiful game's key elements eluded it. Fans, whose presence had been taken for granted for decades, were suddenly forced to stay away and watch the teams they love from home for an entire season.

The recently-concluded Euro 2020, which had been deferred by a year to the summer of 2021, marked the return of the fans to arenas all over Europe, bringing life back to the pitch. Following one of the more entertaining international football tournaments in recent memory, the focus now shifts to domestic leagues and fans being once again able to experience football from the stands.

Ecstasy already peaked in Paris, where fans flocked to the airport upon hearing news that a certain Lionel Messi was on his way to sign for Paris Saint Germain after spending 21 years at his childhood club, Barcelona.

As the Argentine looks forward to taking on a new challenge with a new team, his new coach, Mauricio Pochettino, is faced with the mammoth task of



After Chelsea's Champions League glory last season, manager Thomas Tuchel will hope that his young team have found their footing and that the addition of Romelu Lukaku will be the final piece of the puzzle in challenging Pep Guardiola's Manchester City, the reigning champions, for the Premier League title. Liverpool and Jurgen Klopp may have meekly surrendered their first league title in 30 years last season owing to a spate of injuries, but, unlike the others chasing City, they will have the experience of challenging a team to the 100-point mark on their side. Pep has added Jack Grealish for a three-figure sum and harbours hopes of adding England captain Harry Kane, which would be another, perhaps insurmountable, leap. Meanwhile, Manchester United, bolstered by the additions of Jadon Sancho and Raphael Varane, will also be looking to make a splash.



(L) Mauricio Pochettino once stated: "every coach dreams of coaching the best". Everyone is now waiting with bated breath to see how his dreams play out. (R) Can new coach Julian Nagelsmann continue Bayern Munich's domination and lead them to a tenth straight league title?



Much of the blame for Juventus' poor performances last year were laid at the feet of club legend Andrea Pirlo, who was sacked after one season in charge and replaced by Massimiliano Allegri, a safe pair of hands who led the team to five league titles and four Coppa Italias between 2014 and 2019. PHOTO: TWITTER



Where will Ronald Koeman take Barcelona without Lionel Messi? Can Diego Simeone's Atletico Madrid retain the title? Or will Carlo Ancelotti, who returned for a second spell after Zinedine Zidane stepped down at the start of the summer, bring glory back to Real Madrid? PHOTO: TWITTER

managing a star-studded locker room that has in one summer added not just Messi, but also Sergio Ramos from Real Madrid, Gianluigi Donnarumma from AC Milan, Georginio Wijnaldaldum from Liverpool. All four arrived as free agents, joining superstars like Neymar, Kylian Mbappe, Angel di Maria, Marquinhos and Marco Verratti.

Although PSG had stumbled in Ligue 1 last season, losing their title to Lille, the additions to the roster have heightened demands that the Parisiens win not only the domestic titles, but finally lift the biggest prize in European football.

Pochettino possesses a squad that many coaches can only dream of, but creating a collective approach environment in the team in the presence of all the big individual stars will be a daunting task.

As Messi himself opined in his first press conference for PSG, one may not achieve the highest success even with the best of teams and if things go south at the Parc de Princes, the first fingers will be raised towards Pochettino.

Although the Argentine coach has had success in the past with Tottenham, taking them the Champions League final with limited resources, Pochettino's managerial credibility will be tested to the limits this season.

While those in Paris are certainly enjoying the high life, Messi's previous club has no choice but to start afresh in La Liga. For years, Barcelona could rely on the Argentine's heroics whenever they were in dire situations. Now, coach Ronald Koeman's biggest responsibility now is to fill the void. The Dutch has options in the

form of new signings like Sergio Aguero and Memphis Depay and old options like Antoine Griezmann.

A new day is also dawning at Real Madrid, where Carlo Ancelotti begins his second reign this season after Zinedine Zidane's departure from the managerial hotseat. The mastermind behind La Decima -- Real Madrid's 10th European cup in 2014 -- has to now manage a squad that finished trophyless last season and has seen their captain, Ramos, leave for greener pastures.

The addition of David Alaba may add some value to defence, but Madrid's long search for attackers may prove to be fruitless as signing either Kylian Mbappe or Erling Haaland looks very unlikely.

Defending La Liga champions Atletico Madrid will also be in no mood to relinquish their crown. Having waited seven years for a second league title following his initial attempt to break the wheel in 2012, Diego Simeone will hope that his side need not endure another stretch as long, especially as they have held on to all their major players.

The level of competition in the Premier League is perhaps the highest, with defending champions Manchester City, Champions League winners Chelsea and a fully-fit Liverpool side the top contenders for the prize.

Pep Guardiola's City have won the league three times in the past five seasons and the inclusion of Jack Grealish plus the possible signing of English striker Harry Kane will add even more depth to City's already formidable squad.

The German coaches, Chelsea's Thomas Tuchel and Liverpool's Jurgen Klopp, have opted not to tinker too much with their squads, although the addition of Romelu Lukaku means that the former have

covered one of their biggest weaknesses from the past season. Manchester United have also made significant strides, adding Jadon Sancho and Raphael Varane, but a lack of depth means a title challenge could still be a way off.

In Serie A, Massimiliano Allegri returned as Juventus manager with the aim of banishing the memories from a disappointing season under Andrea Pirlo. His job has certainly been made easier by Inter Milan having to sell off the key cogs of last season's title-winning team due to their owner's financial situation and no other club quite at the level of the Old Lady, although Atalanta and AC Milan will harbor some hope.

Similar to Ligue 1, Bundesliga may also be a one-horse race. There seems to be little opposition to Bayern Munich, who will fight for their tenth consecutive league title. The Bavarians have recruited Julian Nagelsmann, a young, energetic coach who has created huge hype around Europe in his short managerial career.

Nagelsmann takes over a squad that won every title available to them just two years ago and the biggest task for the 34-year-old will be to earn the trust and respect of his players as soon as possible, including captain Manuel Neuer, who happens to be a year older than his new manager.

As a new season dawns against the backdrop of big changes at major clubs, it will be quite interesting to see what unfolds. But the return of fans to the stands, chanting, screaming and cheering their hearts out for their club, the outburst of joy with every goal scored and every tear shed for every defeat, with banners, flares and fireworks, football will get back its lifeblood, the fans.

Kings eye success on international territory

SPORTS REPORTER

Having already established their dominance in the domestic circuit, Bangladesh Premier League champions Bashundhara Kings are now on course to make their presence felt in the upcoming AFC Cup, which is an annual continental club football competition organised by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

Although, during the last edition of the AFC Cup, Kings in their debut season had made quite an impression -- by thumping a 5-1 defeat to TC Sports of Maldives in Dhaka -- before the tournament was cancelled due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus.

However, the back-to-back Bangladesh Premier League champions, placed in Group D, are now geared up to take another shot at the AFC Cup as their matches are scheduled to take place in Maldives from August 18 to 24. Kings were set to depart for Maldives during early hours at 3:30 am (local time) today.

Bashundhara Kings' Spanish coach Oscar Bruzon believes that the upcoming tournament is going to be

a challenge for all the participating teams, as this edition of the AFC Cup features big names of the sub-continent clubs, the likes of Maziya SR&C, Eagles Club of Maldives, and ATK Mohun Bagan, JSW Bengaluru FC from India.

"Every team will find it challenging as there is no clear favourite," Oscar told The Daily Star yesterday.



"Upon analyzing our rivals, we are anticipating tight games which would be decided on small details. For us, it'll be important to start with a victory and keep our qualifying chances alive till the last game against Mohun Bagan [August 24]," said the 44-year-old coach, whose charges will kick-off the campaign against Maziya on August 18 before facing the winner between Bengaluru and Eagles on August 21.

"Our opponents have a variety of game plans but they all regularly deliver good results. Maziya is a very sharp dynamic team, and especially good on transitions, whereas Mohun Bagan is cohesive as a unit and difficult to beat. And Eagles have signed the senior players of Maldives national team for this tournament while Bengaluru under their new coach are implementing a high-line pressing game to prevent opponents from building up [from the back] comfortably. We also have our own playing style. Every game will require different adjustments but we will be loyal to our objective of being the dominant side on the pitch."

The charges of Bruzon have been consistent throughout the season to win two titles this season, courtesy of the four quality foreign recruits they possess, along with some talented national players boosted by the addition of Nigerian-born Bangladeshi Eleta Kingsly who however, is waiting for the final green signal from the AFC. One major advantage for Kings is that they would play in their peak form in Maldives, after having been in action in the domestic league of late.



England's James Anderson celebrates the dismissal of India opener Rohit Sharma during the opening day of the second Test at Lord's yesterday. Anderson also took the wicket of Cheteshwar Pujara as India scored 161 for 2 in 54 overs. PHOTO: REUTERS

Hockey back after prolonged absence

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) finally decided to roll the games to the turf after an absence of nearly three years, as the BHF league committee took a decision yesterday to hold a five-day interclub player transfers from September 19 to 23.

Following the transfers, the season will get underway through the Club Cup hockey tournament on October 12 and the Premier Hockey League will begin in just three days after the completion of the Club Cup, which was last held in 2018.

"The decision was unanimously taken with 11 representatives out of 12 clubs attending the meeting," said BHF acting general secretary Mohammad Yousuf.



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CONTRACT BREACH OVER 10 LOCOMOTIVES

Technical body recommends accepting those

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A technical committee has recommended taking delivery of the 10 locomotives that South Korean Hyundai Rotem Company supplied to Bangladesh Railway without meeting some of the specifications agreed in the contract, said BR officials.

The locomotives, which cost about Tk 330 crore, were left unused for eight months since they arrived in Bangladesh in September last year. The Railway authorities began trial run of the locomotives in late April this year, but the issue of receiving those formally is yet to be settled.

According to the technical committee, the locomotives can be accepted in their present format, said Dharendra Nath Mazumder, director-general of the BR.

The locomotives, procured under a Tk 733.6 crore-project taken up in 2015, were supposed to be of TA12-CA9 alternator model, as per the contract signed with Hyundai. But the South Korean company provided the locomotives of TA9-12CA9SE alternator model.

The two models are different in terms of power output, said BR officials.

Besides, as per a government plan, all rail lines in Bangladesh would be converted into dual gauge within a few years. The BR was instructed to purchase locomotives that could be used on both metre-gauge and broad-gauge by changing the undercarriages.

But with the TA9-12CA9SE alternator, the locomotives will not run on broad-gauge, according to BR officials.

Upon the arrival of the metre-gauge diesel-electric

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NATURE QUEST

A mother Indian pitta feeding a chick near Nuhash Polli in Gazipur. Usually, this beautiful bird visits Bangladesh in the summer and the females lay two to four eggs. This very mother pitta is taking care of three chicks.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ASKER IBNE FIROZ

Female cop files rape case against SP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A female police inspector yesterday filed a case against the superintendent of police in Bagerhat, accusing him of raping her several times, including four occasions after the accused promised to marry the complainant.

The 43-year-old complainant filed the case with the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-7 of Dhaka, Special Public Prosecutor Afroja Farhana Ahmed told The Daily Star.

After hearing the complaint, Judge Mosammat Kamrunnahar took the case into cognisance and recorded the complainant's statement, she said.

The judge also directed the OC of Uttara East Police Station to draft a first information report, Afroja added.

According to the case statement, the complainant was acquainted with the

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Neo JMB planned to make bombs with chloroform

Claim CTTC officials; buses, classrooms were targets

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The IS-inspired militant outfit Neo JMB was planning to make chloroform bombs for carrying out attacks in buses, classrooms, and at public places, claimed Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) officials.

The outfit's plan was to "kill silently" and it even conducted tests on frogs, which swelled up and died, the officials said.

The military wing of the outfit had started work to make the chloroform bombs with the blessings of Neo JMB ameer Mahadi Hasan Jon. The outfit's bomb expert Jahid Hasan alias Ismail Hasan Furkan was coordinating it.

The CTTC unit claimed to have unearthed the plans following the arrests and interrogation of several Neo JMB bomb makers, including Furkan.

Rahmat Ullah Chowdhury, in-charge of the bomb disposal unit of CTTC, told The Daily Star yesterday, "The outfit is planning to use the chemical for silent killing. But we are aware of it and have already intensified vigilance."

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ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

'Yahya a power maniac'

AUGUST 13, 1971
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

DOCKER'S BLOCK PAK SHIP
A Pakistani freighter due to dock in Philadelphia was forced to change its course and head for Baltimore after pickets supporting the cause of Bangladesh -- backed by a non-violent fleet of small craft -- occupied the shore and the inlet.

About 50 members of the peace group -- which espoused a complete halt to arms and military shipment to the Government of Pakistan -- grouped at Pier 80 on the Delaware River.

The group launched seven canoes and a kayak in the docking area. It was the group's second action in a week against Pakistani shipping. Earlier, on August 6, 1971, it prevented the freighter Padma from docking in Baltimore.

APPEAL TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
Describing Pakistan President Yahya Khan as a "power maniac", Awami League leader Abdus Samad Azad charged him today with the guilt of waging a war against the unarmed and defenceless 75 million people of Bangladesh.

In a statement appealing to the international community and the UN to exert pressure to save the life of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Azad said he was convinced "the language of reason and persuasion would not prevent Yahya, now turned into a power maniac, from enacting the tragedy".

MASSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST BANGABANDHU'S TRIAL

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

CTG POWER PLANT Missing Chinese worker's body found in ditch

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police recovered the body of a Chinese citizen in Chattogram's Banskhali upazila yesterday, a day after he went missing from his workplace SS Power Plant.

The deceased, Xie Qingwen, 49, was a worker at the power plant, said police, adding that his passport number is EC0415633.

Shafiqul Kabir, officer-in-charge of Banskhali Police Station, said the man worked for a sub-contractor agency at the plant.

On-duty security guards last saw him fishing in a nearby ditch around 10:30am on Wednesday. But he did not return for lunch and snacks during the break, the police official said.

Later, workers at the factory found his body in the ditch yesterday and informed police, he added.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Chinese scientists develop world's strongest glass



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists in China have developed the hardest and strongest glassy material known so far that can scratch diamond crystals with ease.

The researchers, including those from Yanshan University in China, noted that the new material -- tentatively named AM-III -- has "outstanding" mechanical and electronic properties, and could find applications in solar cells due to its "ultra-high" strength and wear resistance.

Analysis of the material, published in the journal National Science Review, revealed that

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COVID PANDEMIC Russia posts record daily death toll

AFP, Moscow

Russia yesterday reported its highest daily coronavirus death toll since the start of the pandemic, as rising cases in parts of world fuelled by the Delta variant continued to cause havoc.

A Russian government tally reported 808 fatalities over the past 24 hours -- the first time Russia has crossed the 800-mark for daily virus deaths -- and 21,932 new infections.

Russia, the fourth worst-hit country in the world in terms of cases, according to an AFP tally, has been swept with an unrelenting third wave since mid-June that has been driven by the Delta variant.

Authorities have faced a vaccine-sceptic population, with a poll by the independent Levada Centre this week showing that 55 percent of Russians do not plan on getting a jab.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



A huge surge of vehicles is seen on city streets as Covid restrictions are eased. There were traffic congestion at different points in the capital. This photo was captured in Banani Chairmanbari area around 12:30pm yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

ATTACK ON KHULNA TEMPLES

Indian state minister seeks intervention from Modi

STAR REPORT

Indian State Minister and Lok Sabha MP Shantanu Thakur has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking his intervention to safeguard the "Matua Hindu community members whose shrines and properties have been attacked in Bangladesh".

In his letter on Wednesday, Shantanu, lawmaker from Bongaon and a leader of Matua Mahasangha, wrote that the Hindu temples of Ganesha, Shiva and Harichand Thakur -- founder of Matua

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PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 13

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-25 12-30 4-45 6-41 8-00
JAMAAT 5-00 1-15 5-00 6-44 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Star HEALTHLINE

Covid not going away soon
STAY SAFE TO STAY ALIVE

PROF MAMUN AL MAHTAB

As we are faced with a pandemic which is showing little or no signs of regression, Bangladesh -- like other countries -- is preparing for a long coexistence with the unseen menace called SARS-CoV-2.

As the virus started its journey from China's Wuhan one and a half years ago, we were initially complacent, assuming that it will never invade our boundaries. It took us three months to realise that the reality did not match our expectations.

HygineX
Instant hand sanitizer

BEACON
Pharmaceuticals Limited

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2