



POLITICAL CRISIS IN MALAYSIA Scandal-plagued party UMNO poised to win PM race SEE PAGE 6

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AL feud behind Barishal violence

At least 50 hurt, some of them bullet-hit, in Wednesday night's clashes on UNO office premises; AL men including city mayor sued



STAR REPORT

A political rivalry between two Awami League stalwarts in Barishal city triggered the violence on the premises of sadar UNO's office on Wednesday night, leaving at least 50 people injured.

The incident led to a conflict between the authorities of the city corporation and the local administration, according to several politicians in the district.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Munibur Rahman and police filed two cases over the incident, naming Barishal City Corporation (BCC) Mayor Semiat Sadiq Abdullah as the prime accused for instigating the violence. Local AL men were also accused in the cases.

The mayor, however, alleged that Ansar members opened fire on him upon the UNO's directive after he went to the spot to calm the situation. He was unharmed.

Several local politicians told this newspaper that there has been a longstanding rivalry between Semiat and Zaheed Farooque, state minister for water resources, over establishing supremacy in AL politics in Barishal city. SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

GOVT RECRUITMENT Age limit raised by 21 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Considering the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the age limit for entry into government jobs has been extended by 21 months from the current limit of 30 years.

The Ministry of Public Administration yesterday issued an order in this regard.

The letter stated that all government agencies that were unable to issue recruitment notices due to the Covid-19 pandemic are requested to accept applications till the end of this year from job seekers based on applicants' maximum age on Mar 25, 2020.

At present the age limit for entering government service is 30 years; 32 for freedom fighters' offspring. However, it will not be applicable for the jobs under BCS.

According to the order, if a job seeker was not 30 years old on March 25 last year would be eligible for upcoming government openings advertised till December this year.

As such, people seeking jobs in the public sector have, effectively, had the age limit raised by 21 months. SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK



FILE PHOTO

17 years on, the road to justice not over yet

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Final justice has yet to be delivered over the August 21, 2004 grenade attack on an Awami League rally on the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue, even almost three years after a trial court found 49 people guilty.

A Dhaka court on October 10, 2018 sentenced 19 people, including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar to death. Nineteen others, BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman included, were given life imprisonment.

Another 11 people were handed different prison terms in the two cases. SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

WOUNDS UNHEALED not only physical

RASHIDUL HASAN

Last year, Md Selim and Mahbuba Parvin gave interviews to different media outlets to express their anguish and dismay over the delay in implementing the verdict over the August 21, 2004 grenade attack.

Selim, an Awami League activist who carried several hundred splinters in his body, died a few months back, Mahbuba said, while she is not doing well herself. "Carrying over 1,800 splinters in

different parts of my body, including my head and kidneys, my physical condition is deteriorating due to multiple complications caused by the attack," she told The Daily Star on Monday.

"I am 52. My memory is failing and I am losing my eyesight day by day. Recently, a new problem has arisen -- my ears bleed," went on Mahbuba, women affairs secretary of Awami Swachhchhasebak League of Dhaka district (south). SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

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Holy Ashura today

BSS, Dhaka

The holy Ashura, commemorating the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hossain Ibn Ali (RA), a grandson of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), will be observed across the country today with due religious solemnity.

Today is the 10th day of the month of Muharram in Hijri calendar. Muslims across the world recall the sacrifice of Hazrat Imam Hossain (RA) along with his family members and 72 followers, who embraced martyrdom in 680 AD. SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star office will remain closed today on the occasion of Ashura. There will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow. However, our digital version will serve the readers 24/7.

Resistance against Taliban spreads

Several killed in flag-waving protests in Afghanistan; ex-VP, son of ex-warlord vow to battle on, seek US help; G7 calls for int'l 'shared mission' to limit crisis; airport chaos drags on

AGENCIES

Protests against the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan have spread to more cities, including the capital Kabul, while the militant group called on the country's imams to urge unity at Friday prayers, the first since they seized control.

Several people were killed when the militants fired on a crowd in Asadabad in the eastern province of Kunar, a witness said. Another witness reported gunshots near a rally in Kabul, but they appeared to be Taliban firing into the air.

"Our flag, our identity," a crowd of men and women waving black, red and green national flags shouted in Kabul, a video posted on social media showed, on the day Afghanistan celebrates independence from British control in 1919.

Marchers chanted "God is greatest". At some protests elsewhere, media have reported people tearing down the white flag of the Taliban.

The Islamist movement conquered Afghanistan at lightning speed as foreign troops withdrew, surprising even its leaders and leaving them to fill power vacuums in many places.

"The Taliban doesn't control the whole territory of Afghanistan. There are reports of the situation in the Panjshir Valley where the resistance of Afghanistan's vice president Mr Saleh and Ahmad Massoud is concentrated."

RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEI LAVROV

The Taliban urged unity ahead of Friday prayers and called on all imams in Kabul and the provinces to persuade people not to try to leave the country.

Since seizing Kabul on Sunday, the Taliban have presented a more moderate face, saying they want peace, will not take revenge against old enemies and will respect the rights of women within the framework of Islamic law.

During their previous rule from 1996-2001, they severely restricted women's rights, staged public executions and blew up ancient Buddhist statues.

In Asadabad, several people were killed during Friday prayers. SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

COVID-19 INOCULATION CAMPAIGN Alarm as vaccines found at pvt clinic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recent incident of Covid-19 vaccines found in the black market raised questions about the grip the government has over its inoculation campaign. The issue came to the fore on Wednesday night when police arrested a man in the capital's Dakkhinkhan area in connection with selling and administering Moderna shots at a private clinic.

This comes at a time when over one crore people, who have registered for getting the vaccine, are waiting for their first dose.

The government has not permitted any private facility to administer Covid-19 vaccines. All eligible people are supposed to get the shots from designated government facilities for free.

The reported vaccine embezzlement and the subsequent availability of those in the black market came after various irregularities marred the special vaccination campaign between August 7 and 12.

Experts say these, however, small in number, are causes for serious concern and put the entire campaign into question.

"It's a small incident but the consequences are huge. The entire vaccine chain management system needs to be re-examined to find the loopholes. Monitoring and supervision should be strengthened from the national level to field level," Be-Nazir Ahmed, National Immunisation Technical Advisory Groups (NITAG), told The Daily Star yesterday.

Be-Nazir, also former director of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said a proper probe was needed. Mechanisms must be devised to prevent such incident since a huge number of people would be vaccinated in the coming days.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Hefajat chief Babunagari passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hefajat Amir Junayed Babunagari died after suffering a stroke around 11:00am yesterday in Hathazari, Chottogram. He was 68.

He had diabetes, lung conditions and other ailments associated with old age.

He was also the director of education at Chottogram's Darul Ulum Moinul Islam Madrasa, often considered the heartland of Hefajat-e-Islam.

He died around 11:00am. SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

WORLD MOSQUITO DAY TODAY

Lax monitoring led to surge in dengue cases

Experts for year-round surveillance, effective mechanism to keep the mosquito-borne disease in check

HELEMUL ALAM

The absence of an effective mechanism to check Aedes mosquitoes, including proper and timely surveillance by the city corporations, is mainly to blame for dengue cases spiralling in the capital and elsewhere in the country, experts say.

They say hospitals are dealing with an increasing number of dengue patients every day and it has put an additional burden on the country's healthcare system already stretched by the Covid pandemic.

At least 32 dengue cases were reported in January, when the population of the Aedes mosquito -- vector for the dengue virus -- tends to be low.

But it was only in June that the two city corporations in Dhaka started mosquito fogging in areas where hospitalised dengue patients lived. The city corporations took almost four months to swing into action after collecting patients' addresses from hospitals, the experts pointed out.

By that time, the number of dengue patients had already crossed the 250 mark,

shows data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The situation has only worsened since then.

"To fight dengue, year-round surveillance on Aedes mosquitoes is very important," Saifur Rahman, an entomologist at the Bangladesh National University, told The Daily Star.

He said had the authorities conducted an extensive fogging in and around the patients' houses in January, the dengue situation would have been much better now.

On Tuesday, the country reported 329 dengue cases, the highest daily count this year.

In 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, 270 dengue patients were admitted to hospitals across the country, shows DGHS data. Of them, 33 were admitted to hospitals outside Dhaka.

Another dengue patient died in those 24 hours, taking the official death toll to 31. All these patients died in July and August.

Till yesterday, the total number of dengue patients had already crossed the 250 mark, SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



Advertisement for Xpel mosquito repellent. Includes text: 'এমন সময়ে ডেঙ্গু থেকে বাঁচতে অধিক কার্যকর xpel', 'সংবাদপত্র বাড়ছে ডেঙ্গু সেই সাথে বাড়ছে ডেঙ্গু', 'ZERO MOSQUITO FORMULA', 'MAGIC FILTERING SYSTEM ENSURES 100% SAFETY FOR YOUR FAMILY'. Also features a newspaper clipping about dengue cases.

BANGLADESH UPDATE

6,566
New cases in 24hrs

14,47,210
Total cases

24,878
Deaths

13,37,181
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

4,411,603
Deaths

210,473,612
Total cases

10 ABSCONDING CONVICTS IN AUG 21 CASE CID moves to seek Interpol red notice

To write to Police HQ for necessary steps

SHARFUL ISLAM

The CID will write to the National Central Bureau of the Police Headquarters to get the Interpol to issue red notices for 10 absconding convicts of the August 21 grenade attack case.

The 10 fugitives are retired Lt Col Saiful Islam Joardar, former DGF director retired Maj Gen ATM Amin Ahmed, and militants Md Iqbal, Mohibul Mukhtak, Anisul Morsalin, Mohammed Khalil, Maulana Liton alias Delwar Hossain alias Zobayer, Jahangir Alam Badar, Mufti Shafiqur Rahman and Mufti Abdul Hai.

Of the 49 convicted of the grenade attack in 2004, 16 are absconding.

Interpol had earlier issued red notices for six of them, but later cancelled the notice for BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman, who is in the UK, and former BNP lawmaker Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad, who is either in the UK or the US. About the other four, the NCB has come to know Mawlana Mohammad Tajuddin Mia is probably in Pakistan, Abul Haris Chowdhury in India or Malaysia, Ratul Ahmed Babu in Italy or South Africa and Mohammad Hanif in Thailand or Malaysia.

The International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) issues red notices for fugitives wanted either for prosecution or to serve a sentence. A red notice is a request to law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action.

Police Headquarters' National Central Bureau (NCB) in Dhaka is the focal point for Interpol in Bangladesh.

Officers familiar with the proceedings said the NCB recently asked the

Criminal Investigation Department for its opinion on whether to seek red notices for the 10 convicts.

An officer at the section concerned of the CID said the department was preparing the necessary documents. "We will write to the NCB to communicate with the Interpol about issuing the red notices for the 10 convicts."

Mohiul Islam, assistant inspector general, at the Police Headquarters said Interpol red notices were issued for six of the convicts at different times, but Tarique's red notice was cancelled on January 26, 2016, due to his protective status and Kaikobad's notice got cancelled on May 4, 2018, as it did not comply with the Interpol's constitution.

The grisly attacks on Bangabandhu Avenue in 2004 left 24 people dead and over 300 wounded. AL chief Sheikh Hasina, then opposition leader, narrowly escaped with injuries to her right ear.

Mohiul said at the request of the

commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, the NCB was trying to get the red notice reissued for Tarique in a money laundering case filed with Cantonment Police Station in the capital.

In the grenade attack case, the CID pressed charges against 52 in October 2018. Of them 49 got convicted. The court awarded death penalty to 19, life imprisonment to 19, three years imprisonment and a fine of Tk 50,000 to four and two years imprisonment with a fine of Tk 50,000 to seven.

Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Mufti Abdul Hannan and Shahidul Alam Bipul were found guilty and executed in other cases by the time the charges were pressed in the grenade attack case.



Relatives take Nasir Uddin, a critical Covid-19 patient, to the coronavirus unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning after he was brought there in an ambulance from his home in Munshiganj. He was given oxygen support as he was experiencing difficulties in breathing.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

AL feud behind Barishal violence

FROM PAGE 1

Semiabat is the general secretary of Barishal city AL while Farooque, lawmaker from Barishal-5, is vice-president of Barishal AL.

Witnesses said the violence ensued as some BCC staffers – believed to be followers of the mayor and members of the local AL units – appeared on the premises of the UNO's office in the city's C&B area around 9:30pm and tried to take down banners put up by Farooque's followers marking the National Mourning Day.

As on-duty Ansar members barred the BCC staffers from removing the banners, the mayor's followers started scolding them. On information, the UNO rushed to the spot from his government residence on the same compound. Mayor's followers misbehaved with him, according to the witnesses.

At one stage, Semiabat's followers left the spot only to return with another 60-70 people. They then attacked the UNO's residence, breaking open its gate. At this, the UNO ordered the on-duty Ansar members to open fire.

Additional policemen, who had already arrived there, also swung into action, charging batons on the crowd to disperse it, said witnesses.

At least 50 people were hurt – some of them bullet-hit, according to AL sources and witnesses.

Mayor Semiabat and Barishal city AL President AKM Jahangir went to the spot while the chaos went on. The situation was brought under control after around one and a half hours, added witnesses.

The UNO later told journalists that some local AL and BCL activists broke the gate of his residence. "Ansar members had to fire shots to ensure our safety."

Talking to the media, Semiabat said he went to the spot to calm the situation

and alleged that Ansar members fired shots targeting him.

As the incident heated up Barishal's political landscape, the authorities suspended road and river connection between the district and other parts of the country till yesterday noon.

Additional members of police and Rab were deployed at different parts of Barishal city to avoid any further untoward situation.

The C&B Road was blocked by garbage trucks of the city corporation.

Ten platoons of BGB members were also deployed across the city yesterday evening to maintain law and order.

Talking to journalists, Barisal Metropolitan Police (BMP) Additional Commissioner Md Enamul Haque said, "We did whatever was necessary to drive the mob away."

Barishal Divisional Commissioner Md Saiful Hassan Badal and Barisal Metropolitan Police (BMP) Commissioner Md Shahabuddin Khan visited the spot. Both of them said legal action would be taken against those responsible for the violence.

Two separate cases were filed with BMP's Kotwali Police Station in connection with the incident.

The UNO yesterday sued the mayor, 28 other named and 80 unnamed people over the violence.

A police sub-inspector filed the other case accusing the mayor, 94 other named and 400 unnamed people.

Police arrested 12 people, including Barishal city unit AL Joint Secretary Hasan Mahmud in connection with the incident, said Nurul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

Barishal district AL, city unit AL and BCL jointly organised a press conference yesterday and alleged that the UNO unleashed the violence as he was

involved in a conspiracy to tarnish the government's image.

In a statement yesterday, Bangladesh Administrative Services Association said it held an emergency meeting of its executive committee. The Association thinks the incident took place at the instruction of the BCC mayor, the statement said.

The association demanded the mayor's immediate arrest and other legal action against him, added the statement. Talking to The Daily Star, several local politicians said the violence on Wednesday night was the result of a longstanding feud between the mayor and the state minister.

Almost all 30 ward councillors in Barishal City Corporation were loyal to the mayor. But recently, six to seven of them joined hands with the state minister. These councillors in collaboration with the state minister organised different programmes and put up banners on the occasion of the National Mourning Day.

This irked the mayor and that is why his men went to take down banners from the premises of the UNO's office, they said.

The politicians also said Semiabat wants to take absolute control of Barishal city politics while Farooque is trying to increase his political strength in the city.

The two AL leaders did not make any comments regarding their rivalry or their involvement in the incident.

No official comment on the alleged conflict between the BCC and the local administration was also available.

Talking to journalists yesterday, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said action would be taken against those responsible after investigation.

"The probe will reveal the real issue," he said.

COVID FIELD HOSPITAL BSMMU slows down expansion as virus infection drops

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University authorities have slowed down the expansion of their Covid-19 field hospital as fewer new cases are being detected in recent days.

Officials yesterday reported 159 deaths of patients confirmed to have Covid-19, the lowest in the past one and a half months.

The BSMMU launched Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Covid-19 Field Hospital with 356 beds on August 7. There are 20 beds at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and 20 beds at the High Dependency Unit (HDU) at the facility which has central oxygen supply system.

Health officials earlier said there would be a total of 1,000 beds at the hospital.

But Prof Debabrata Banik, coordinator of the field hospital, yesterday said the expansion work has been slowed down because the infection rate has dropped.

He told The Daily Star that the plan now is to increase the number of beds to 500 instead of 1,000.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, the number of Covid-19 patients has declined in

different Covid-19 hospitals across the country.

Yesterday, the general bed occupancy declined to 39 percent from 69 percent on July 13. The ICU bed occupancy rate declined to 70 percent from 90 percent on July 30.

"The number of Covid-19 patients has been declining because there were some restrictions before August 11. With everything reopening, there is a risk of another rise," Dr Abu Jamil Faisal, member of the Epidemiology and Public Health Committee of the DGHS, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Since August 2, the positivity rate has been declining steadily, with 17.64 percent recorded yesterday, the lowest in the past two months.

As the Delta variant of coronavirus spread across the country the positivity rate jumped to 33 percent on July 24.

Yesterday, the DGHS reported 6,566 new cases, taking the total confirmed cases to 14,47,210.

With the latest count, the total number of deaths rose to 24,878.

Of those reported dead yesterday, 76 were male and 83 female. Fifty of them were in Dhaka, 38 in Chattogram, 23 in Sylhet, 13 in Rajshahi, 12 in Khulna, 10 in Barishal, eight in Rangpur and five in Mymensingh divisions.

Wounds unhealed

FROM PAGE 1

"With all these complications, I am not sure if I will get to see the culprits punished before I die."

During the phone conversation, her voice cracked frequently. In between, she spoke of her tribulations: she feels numb in her left leg and left hand. Just days ago, she slipped and fell from the stairs as her left leg betrayed her and took a misstep.

Her husband, who was a big support for her in this condition, died a few years ago. "For me, living is now hell due to the pain all over the body."

She added: "Despite all these sufferings, it would bring us some solace if we could see implementation of the verdict in our lifetime."

When she was taken to the hospital after the grisly attack 17 years ago, everybody thought she was dead. They even kept her among the dead bodies, she recalled.

She first moved her limbs after three days in a coma, and regained full consciousness after 25 days.

Rashida Akhtar Ruma, another victim bearing over 1,000 splinters in the body, was 24 when she suffered the injuries. Now 41, her pain is unbearable some days, and it is getting worse with time.

"All that we want is to see the perpetrators and mastermind of the attack, Tarique Rahman, punished in my lifetime," she said.

A Dhaka court on October 10, 2018, sentenced 19 people, including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar to death. Nineteen others, BNP acting chairman Tarique included, were given life imprisonment.

Execution of the capital punishment

remains pending as the High Court has not yet started hearing on the death references and appeals by the 19 death-row convicts.

The HC accepted the appeals more than two and a half years ago.

Nasima Ferdushe, now in her 60s, sustained injuries so bad that doctors cannot do an MRI on her because of the 1,500 splinters she still carries, including in her head, lungs, and chest.

A former MP, Nasima said the pain was a constant reminder of the attack. She was only able to walk after five years of treatment and had been bedridden for nine months.

"Many of the grenade attack victims have already died. Many others are waiting for the end like me with untold sufferings," she said, adding that to be able to see the final justice done would take away at least some of the pain.

The attack left 24 people dead and over 300 injured.

Prime Minister and AL chief Sheikh Hasina, then opposition leader, narrowly escaped death with injuries to her right ear. Ivy Rahman, wife of late president Zillur Rahman, was among those killed.

Nazimuddin, 60, carrying around 100 splinters, said pain in different parts of his body was increasing with each passing day.

A vice-president of Dhaka City North Awami League, he said the execution of the verdict, including the death sentence for 19, would bring them some mental peace although it would not ease their physical pain.

Several other survivors shared his sentiment and called for quick completion of the High Court proceedings.

Alarm as vaccines found at pvt clinic

FROM PAGE 1

On Wednesday night, police, following a tip-off, arrested Bijoy Krishna Talukder, 37, for selling Moderna Covid-19 vaccines at Sheba Clinic in Chalabon area of Dakkhinkhan, Azizul Huq Mia, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Dakkhinkhan Police Station, told The Daily Star.

Bijoy was supposedly a volunteer in the special vaccination drive at a centre in Uttarkhan in the city.

The law enforcers recovered an ampul of the vaccine from Bijoy's room and 20 packets that could hold 10 ampules each. Police later raided his home in Hazipara area and found another ampule in his refrigerator, said the official.

"During primary interrogation, we learnt that Bijoy was vaccinating people for Tk 500 per dose. We traced a couple who have taken the jabs from him. We are trying to get details," said Azizul.

Saiful Islam, deputy commissioner of Uttara division police, told this paper that Bijoy told police that he took the ampules from the vaccination centre.

"We have requested the city corporation [DNCC] to check whether any ampul was missing. We have also asked for details of Bijoy as he claimed to have worked as a volunteer," said Saiful.

He said the DGHS was informed and it was investigating how the shots got out of the vaccine centre.

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam said, "I am yet to receive any letter from the police. We will give full assistance to the police."

He, however, said they would not

investigate the matter themselves.

Health officials have squarely blamed the DNCC authorities for the vaccines ending up in the black market.

They also said the vaccination campaign was going smoothly until the special vaccination campaign was held during which around 55 lakh people got vaccinated.

"The vaccination campaign has been monitored by us. But during the special mass vaccination campaign, some new centres were opened under city corporations and all the anomalies happened in the city corporation areas," said a DGHS official, preferring not to be named.

The claim is neither entirely unfounded nor accurate in particular.

On August 12, a councillor of Cumilla City Corporation administered Covid shots to over 100 people at her office.

Photos of Nadia Nasrin, councillor for reserved seat-4, -5 and -6, vaccinating people made the rounds on social media, drawing widespread criticism.

Mir Mubarak Hossain, civil surgeon of Cumilla, said, "There was chaos and the ward councillor took the health workers and vaccines to a nearby place. But the councillor had no permission to administer vaccines to the people."

Many in Chattogram city got vaccinated in their homes during the special campaign. The matter came to light after Md Hasan, 31, posted a photo of him getting the jab on Facebook.

Even big shots got the jabs at home and that too not during the special campaign.

Resistance against Taliban spreads

FROM PAGE 1

a rally, but it was unclear if the casualties resulted from Taliban firing or from a stampede.

"Hundreds of people came out on the streets," witness Mohammad Salim said. "At first I was scared and didn't want to go but when I saw one of my neighbours joined in, I took out the flag I have at home."

"Several people were killed and injured in the stampede and firing by the Taliban."

Protests flared in the city of Jalalabad and a district of Paktia province, also both in the east.

On Wednesday, Taliban fighters fired at protesters waving flags in Jalalabad, killing three, witnesses and media reported.

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov yesterday said that armed resistance to the Taliban is forming in Afghanistan's Panjshir Valley, led by

deposed vice-president Amrullah Saleh and Ahmad Massoud, a veteran guerrilla leader killed by suspected al-Qaeda militants in 2001.

"The Taliban doesn't control the whole territory of Afghanistan," Lavrov told reporters at a press conference in Moscow following a meeting with his Libyan counterpart.

Famed for its natural defences, the valley never fell to the Taliban during the civil war of the 1990s, nor was it ever conquered by the Soviets a decade earlier.

"Salute those who carry the national flag and thus stand for dignity of the nation," Amrullah Saleh said on Twitter yesterday.

Saleh said on Tuesday he was the "legitimate caretaker president" in Afghanistan after president Ashraf Ghani fled.

In an op-ed for the Washington Post, Ahmad Massoud, leader of the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan, called

for Western support.

"I write from the Panjshir Valley today, ready to follow in my father's footsteps, with mujahideen fighters who are prepared to once again take on the Taliban," wrote Massoud.

Qatar could host fresh talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government as soon as next week to reach an agreement over power sharing and government transition, said two sources familiar with the process and two foreign diplomats.

Former Afghan leaders, including ex-president Hamid Karzai, have already held talks with the Taliban.

Meanwhile, G7 foreign ministers yesterday called for a united international response to prevent the crisis escalating further, in comments echoed by countries including Russia. China said the world should support, not pressure, Afghanistan.

JAPANESE WOMAN'S PETITION HC summons father over custody of two daughters

Asks him to bring them to court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed Bangladesh-born US citizen Imran Sharif to produce his daughters before it on August 31 after his Japanese wife Eriko Nakano, who moved to Bangladesh, filed a writ petition for custody of their children.

The court ordered the officers-in-charge of Adabor and Gulshan police stations to ensure that Imran and his sister Amina Jebin produce the children -- Nakano Jasmine Malika, 11, and Nakano Laila Lina, 10, -- before the court on that day.

It also ordered Imran not to leave the country with his daughters in the next 30 days.

The HC also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned of the government and Imran and Amina to explain as to why they should not be directed to produce the children before the court to satisfy it that they are not confined illegally.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the order after hearing the writ petition.

Lawyer Mohammad Shishir Munir appeared for the petitioner during the virtual hearing.

Nakano, 46, a doctor based in Tokyo, came to Bangladesh on July 18 this year and filed a writ petition with the HC seeking a directive on Imran, 58, to hand over the children to her custody.

She submitted the petition to the court through lawyer Shishir, saying that Imran, who now lives in Mohammadia Housing Society under Adabor Police Station in Dhaka or in a Gulshan house, may flee Bangladesh with her daughters.

In the petition, Nakano said she and Imran got married on July 11, 2008, in Japan following Japanese and Muslim culture.

Imran submitted a divorce notice to a Japanese court on January 18 this year. However, he did not appear before the court on the scheduled dates for the hearing.

On January 21 this year, Imran picked up the daughters from their school in Tokyo and came to Bangladesh on February 21.

In the petition, Nakano prayed to the HC to order Imran to produce her daughters before the court in three days to demonstrate that they are not confined illegally.

She added that Imran took her daughters and harassed her intentionally by preventing her from seeing or contacting them.

Age limit raised

FROM PAGE 1

months until the end of the year.

On August 12, State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain told reporters at the Secretariat that they had sent a proposal to the Prime Minister regarding this issue.

The government increased the age limit by five months in the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic last year.

Holy Ashura today

FROM PAGE 1

for establishing truth and justice in the fight with soldiers of Yazid on Karbala Maidan in Iraq.

The day is a public holiday. President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday issued separate messages on the eve of the holy Ashura, paying deep respect to Hazrat Imam Hossain (RA) and other martyrs of Karbala.

In his message, the president said, "The holy Ashura is a significant and mourning day for the whole Muslim Ummah."

Their supreme sacrifice for upholding the ideals of Islam remains as a glorious event in the history, he said.

"Islam is a religion of peace and harmony. Here there is no room for confrontation, jealousy and envy," President Hamid added.

In her message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the sacrifice of Hazrat Imam Hossain (RA) and his companions to establish truth and justice in society is an example for the Muslim Ummah across the world.

She urged all to follow health guidelines and offer special prayers to the Almighty Allah seeking relief from the coronavirus pandemic.

Police have taken special security measures in the capital marking the occasion.

The religious affairs ministry has restricted Tazia marches, processions and rallies on the occasion of the holy Ashura.

However, all other necessary religious rituals on this occasion can be performed maintaining health protocols, said a release of the ministry on August 17.

Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and private TV channels will air special programmes, while newspapers and online news portals publish supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

No let-up in dengue deaths

2 die, 270 hospitalised in a day

HEMUL ALAM and SUMON ALI

Leaving a 40-day-old baby behind, Tabassum Shahirin died of dengue yesterday morning while undergoing treatment at Enam Medical College Hospital.

Tabassum was a former student of Jahangirnagar University's international relations department.

Her husband Miftahul Islam has also been hospitalised with dengue.

"Tabassum was admitted to the hospital in critical condition on Wednesday night around 8pm. After her condition deteriorated, she was shifted to the intensive care unit (ICU), where she passed away at 7:25am yesterday morning," the hospital's duty manager Babul Hossain told The Daily Star.

According to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), one more dengue patient died, while 270 more were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday.

With the new cases, the number of dengue patients this year rose to 7,251, according to DGHS. Of the total infected, only 416 are from outside Dhaka.

Meanwhile, 31 people have died of dengue in the country this year -- the fifth-highest total deaths since 2000, when the country first experienced dengue cases. At the time, 93 people died of the virus.

Experts said if the city corporations do not take effective measures to kill adult mosquitoes immediately, the situation will

YEAR-WISE DENGUE CASES AND DEATHS IN BANGLADESH (2011 TO 2019) UPDATED ON 31.12.2019

YEAR	CASE	DEATH
2011	1,359	6
2012	671	1
2013	1,749	2
2014	375	0
2015	3,162	6
2016	6,060	14
2017	2,769	8
2018	10,148	26
2019	1,01,354	156
2020	1,405	7

DATA SOURCE: CONTROL ROOM, DGHS

go out of control.

Addresses of dengue patients should be collected from hospitals, and those areas should be fogged intensively to kill adult mosquitoes, they added.

"It would be possible to avoid more deaths, if both city corporations take our suggestions and conduct their anti-mosquito drive accordingly," said Monzur Chowdhury, entomologist and former president of Zoological Society of Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



At Shyamoli's DNCC Wonderland Park, this youngling was all smiles when she finally managed to mount her carousel horse after a couple of attempts, with some help from her brother, who took another horse for himself. In fact, not just them, every kid that went to visit amusement parks across the country yesterday couldn't get enough of their rides. Closed for a prolonged period due to the lockdown, the parks reopened following a recently issued government instruction.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Indiscriminate parking on the road is a common scene in Dhaka. But when vehicles are parked right in front of a "No Parking" sign, on one of the busiest avenues around Motijheel's Shapla Chattar, it is emblematic of an overall attitude towards illegal parking, and also points to the negligence of law enforcement agencies in this regard. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Army chief on official visit to Turkey

STAR REPORT

Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiqul Islam left Dhaka on Wednesday for Turkey on an eight-day official visit.

The army chief, who is leading an eight-member delegation, will pay courtesy call on the Turkish defence minister, assistant defence minister, president of the Turkish defence industries, Chief of General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces and other senior officials during his visit.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Bangladesh-India flights in limbo

Airlines ready; no response from India yet, says CAAB

RASHIDUL HASAN

Although the foreign minister recently said flights with India will resume today, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, US-Bangla and Novoair said they are yet to get any direction from Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) in this regard.

CAAB on the other hand said they are yet to get any formal reply from India about resuming flights.

Amid this situation, several hundred Bangladeshis, most of whom went to India for medical purposes, remained in

uncertainty about returning to the country by air. Many Bangladeshis waiting for a long time to go to India for treatment are also in limbo.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen on Tuesday said operation of flights between Bangladesh and India will resume today.

He said India had agreed to resume on Bangladesh's request, considering demands of facilitating movement of passengers and goods.

CAAB on August 4 sent a letter to India's

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

'They kept asking for more money'

A trafficked worker shares ordeal; Rab arrests 4 traffickers in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They were supposed to go to Fiji to work as agricultural labourers. But after being trafficked to India, and they ended up spending months in seedy hotels.

A Rab-3 unit yesterday arrested a manpower agency who had left dozens of aspiring migrant workers stranded in Delhi, Mumbai, and Nepal for months.

Md Yasin Mollah, a small trader from Madhabdi in Narsingdi had spent as much as Tk 4,50,000 for the elusive agricultural job in Fiji. But instead, he landed in a hotel in India for three months. And after his visa expired, he was forced to cross back to Bangladesh illegally.

The primary school graduate cannot even locate Fiji in a map, and the traffickers took advantage of exactly that.

The four arrested traffickers are Md Alamgir, Md Mamunur Rashid, Md Mizanur Rahman Mizan, and Md Abdul Kuddus. They were all arrested from Bashundhara

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Address challenges of climate migration

Speakers urge govt to highlight the issue in dev agenda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government needs to address the challenges of climate-induced migration and forced displacement more prominently in its development agendas, said speakers at an online consultation yesterday.

The government needs to support people who have been migrated and forcibly displaced due to natural calamities by ensuring their livelihood and job opportunities, they said.

Bangladesh Parliamentarians' Caucus on Migration and Development (BPCMD) and WARBE Development Foundation organised the multi-stakeholder consultation on "Understanding the Climate-Induced Migration, IDPs

(internally displaced persons) and Migration Development Issues in the 8th Five-Year Plan".

Supported by British Council's "Prokas" project and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the event was attended by parliamentarians, government officials,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide people with training
- Take scientific action plan
- Undertake 'land reclamation' initiative
- Formulate 'river erosion policy'



Journalist Zahiduzzaman passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zahiduzzaman Faruk, a senior journalist and editor of the Dainik Orthoniti, died of cancer at his residence yesterday. He was 72.

He left behind his wife, two sons, a daughter, numerous relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Zahiduzzaman was a managing committee member of Jatiya Press Club, and member of Dhaka Reporters Unity and Economic Reporters Forum.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Though rickshaws were on the street during the lockdown, there weren't as many commuters to ride them. With income heavily squeezed, rickshaw-puller Md Wahid doesn't miss out on an opportunity to make a few extra bucks. Every now and then, he'll get an order to wash and clean large carpets used in households and offices. When the pay is around Tk 2,000 for two days' work, Wahid and his two assistants don't hesitate to get down and dirty. This photo was taken from Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

MINI BYTES



Twitter launches new tools to report covid misinformation

ZARIF FAIZ

Twitter announced on Tuesday that it will begin testing a new reporting feature that will allow users to flag tweets that contain potential misinformation, reports The Verge.

Users will be able to report misinformation in the same way that they can report harassment or other harmful content, starting today, via the dropdown menu at the top right of every tweet.

Users will be asked to choose whether the false statement is political, health-related, or belongs to another category.

According to The Verge report, more specific forms of misinformation, such as election-related content, are included in the politics category. Users will be able to flag Covid-19-specific misinformation under the health category.

Users will not receive any updates from the company on what happens to misleading tweets they report for the time being, though this may change in the future.

The new feature will be available to most users in the United States, Australia, and South Korea on Tuesday. Twitter stated that it plans to run this experiment for a few months before expanding it to other markets.

Twitter describes the test as an "experiment," not a fully functional feature. According to a report in

TechCrunch, Twitter will monitor how users interact with the new misinformation reporting tool to see if it can be a useful tool for identifying potentially harmful misleading tweets.

Previously in 2019, the platform added the option to report false election-related tweets to help protect elections in Europe and India.

As the platform continues to test the feature, Twitter stated that not every report will be reviewed. However, the information gathered during the test will aid the company in determining how to expand the feature in the coming weeks. The test could also be used to detect tweets that contain false information and have the potential to go viral.

While the option to identify tweets as misleading is a new feature, the new option will feed reported tweets into Twitter's current enforcement mechanism, which employs a mix of human and algorithmic moderation to enforce Twitter's known policies surrounding health and political misinformation.

This procedure will also prioritise reported tweets for review. Tweets from users with large followings or tweets with unusually high levels of engagement, as well as tweets about elections and Covid-19--Twitter's two areas of focus when it comes to policing misinformation, will be prioritised for review.

According to TechCrunch, the new test is Twitter's newest attempt to rely more on its own community to detect misinformation.

DU authorities reopen Asif Nazrul's office

BCL locked it demanding his trial over Facebook post

DU CORRESPONDENT

After BCL members locked up Dhaka University law department chair Dr Asif Nazrul's office room on Wednesday, over a Facebook post made on Tuesday, DU authorities moved to open the office yesterday evening.

Dr Nazrul said some BCL leaders and activists padlocked his law faculty office room and put up several posters on the lobby wall, labelling him as a "traitor", "Taliban agent" and more. The saga began after he posted on his Facebook profile, "If a fair election took place [in Bangladesh], scenes similar to Kabul Airport's could transpire here too."

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, he said, "I'm a department chair. It's absolutely essential that I go to office, as final examinations are taking place online."

"[In the post] I only demanded a fair election," he said on a separate Facebook post on Wednesday. He said he did not support the situation in Afghanistan.

About locking his office, BCL president Al-Nahean Khan Joy said it was the right thing to do, as he propagated "anti-state sentiments". They also demanded his trial for treason.

DU Proctor Dr AKM Golam Rabbani said, "After getting an application from Dr Nazrul, we opened the lock and removed the posters." VC Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman said, "I asked the proctor to brief me about the whole matter."

They kept asking for more money

FROM PAGE 3

Residential Area.

"I was first flown out of Bangladesh in March, 2019 and taken to Delhi. I was told that I would get a visa for Fiji from there," said Mollah. He travelled as part of a group of ten people.

Upon landing in Delhi, the first thing that the traffickers did was confiscate their passports. "I was in a hotel in Delhi for two months. From there we were taken to Mumbai and kept in a hotel for another month."

During this time, the traffickers

routinely took money from the trapped migrant workers -- even their family members were asked to send them money through various mobile money accounts. And just like that, Mollah racked up Tk 4.5 lakh in bills.

"They kept the people stranded in hotels, just to extort them. They were not going to take them anywhere during this pandemic," said additional superintendent of police Bina Rani Das, who led the raid team. "We have tracked as many as 72 people who were kept in India and Nepal this way

by the traffickers."

Das said a case was being filed against the traffickers with Uttara (East) Police Station. When Mollah's three-month tourist visa expired, he was threatened by the traffickers of being turned over to Indian police. That is when he decided to take matters into his own hands.

"They kept asking for more money by threatening me with arrest. So I thought, if I was going to get arrested anyway, I might as well cross back to Bangladesh illegally," he said.

No let-up in dengue

FROM PAGE 3

Manzur said the government will have to make insecticides and spraying tools readily available to carry out anti-mosquito drives regularly.

"Monitoring this virus is important, but there is no such initiative in our country," he said, adding that in countries like the USA, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, they first identify the dengue virus and vulnerable locations, and then destroy adult Aedes mosquitoes in those particular areas through extensive drives.

"We are at a stage where we have to use adulticides [a type of insecticide used to kill adult mosquitoes] on a massive scale to control the spread of

dengue." He said city corporations took their advice on different occasions, but did not follow through.

"It's very important to kill the mosquitoes now instead of conducting mobile court drives to fine people. The latter is making infected people hide their addresses," he said.

Manzur added that the actual number of dengue patients would be much higher than the number provided by DGHS, which only collects information from 41 hospitals in the capital.

Entomologist Tauhid Uddin said city corporations should appoint entomologists to top posts, as skilled

manpower is needed to design interventions to control mosquitoes.

City corporations will have to pay more attention to wiping out breeding spots, but unfortunately, they do not pay enough attention to the issue, he said.

An integrated vector management plan -- which includes environmental management, controlling Aedes mosquitoes through other insects, applying adulticide and larvicide, and involving general people in this work -- is needed to control Aedes mosquitoes.

"These four activities will have to be done round the year, but we do not see such implementation," said Bashir.

NEWS IN brief

Vaccine drive in chaos: GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairperson GM Quader yesterday said the country's Covid-19 vaccination programme is in a chaotic state, and demanded vaccines for all citizens.

The deputy leader of opposition made the remarks after inaugurating the academic building of Lohakuchi High School in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

In such a situation, it would not be right to impose a fresh lockdown, he opined.



PKSF accredited as Implementing Entity of Adaptation Fund

CITY DESK

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), in recognition of its workplan and efficiency in combating the adverse impacts of climate change, has been accredited as the National Implementing Entity (NIE) of the Adaptation Fund, based in Washington, USA.

The Adaptation Fund Board concluded on this accreditation in its board meeting on August 3, 2021, said a press release.

PKSF is the 34th entity, and the only from Bangladesh, to receive the accreditation of the Adaptation Fund, created in 2007.

This will increase PKSF's access to international funds for facing climate change fallout.

DRUG CASE Pori Moni remanded for third time

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed film actress Pori Moni on a one-day remand in the third phase in a case filed with Banani Police Station under the Narcotics Control Act.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Atiqul Islam passed the order after CID Inspector Kazi Golam Mostafa, investigation officer of the case, produced her before the court seeking five-day fresh remand for her.

Earlier in the day, Pori Moni was produced at the prison cell of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka at 8:30am.

On August 5, Pori Moni and her associate Ashraf Islam Dipu were shown arrested in the case.

The previous day, Rab detained them after raiding her house. They also seized a huge quantity of narcotics from there.

Meanwhile, the HC rejected a verbal prayer for directing the authorities not to place Pori Moni on remand further in any case.

Address challenges of climate

FROM PAGE 3

representatives of civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

Water resource and climate expert Prof Ainun Nishat said salinity intrusion due to sea-level rise and river erosion are two major causes behind climate-induced migration and displacement in Bangladesh.

People facing such situation have to be provided with sufficient skills training for employment opportunities, he said.

Prof Ainun said the government's action plan on climate change related issues has to be scientific and suggested for undertaking "land reclamation" initiative in the coastal areas to support people's livelihood there.

In his keynote presentation, former foreign secretary and migration expert M Shahidul Haque said climate change is an "existential threat for Bangladesh" and "climate migration is a development crisis".

Climate change displacement has redefined migration and mobility globally, he said, adding, due to climate-induced migration, the development ambition of Bangladesh will be challenged.

Saying people displaced forcibly due to frequent flooding are "climate-induced migrants", Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said another example in this regard is river erosion.

She said they have been advocating for long to formulate a "river erosion policy" in the country, adding the new poor has to be the targeted group if the country wants to live up to the goal "leave no one behind".

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, executive director of COAST Foundation, said Bangladesh needs to form a "climate commission" to negotiate climate change

related issues in global forums.

Affirming that river erosion is a main reason behind creation of poverty in the country, State Minister for Planning Shamsul Alam said the government is aware of the situation.

Various projects have been undertaken for the development of slum areas, said the state minister, addressing the event as chief guest.

Besides, the government is also trying to reduce the gap between rural and urban areas in terms of ensuring services, he added.

On labour migration, the state minister said, "The 8th Five-Year Plan will make a comprehensive push to expand overseas employment and remittance earnings through government-to-government negotiations by lowering the cost of migration."

BPCMD Chairperson Shameem Haider Patwary said creating partnership between government and non-government organisations was necessary to address the challenges of climate change.

Moderating the consultation, BPCMD Secretary General Mahjabeen Khaled stressed the need for working collectively to this end.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of Parliamentary Committee on Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ministry; Suzanne Mueller, chargé d'affaires of Switzerland Embassy in Bangladesh; Rahnuma Salam Khan, national programme officer of International Labour Organisation; Syed Saiful Haque, chairman of WARBE; migration expert Asif Munier; parliamentarian Aroma Dutta; and Gerry Fox, team leader of British Council's Prokash project, among others, spoke at the event.

YABA TRADE Piyasha confesses to magistrate

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Model and former TV presenter Faria Mahub Piyasha yesterday confessed to a magistrate that she had been running yaba business for a long time.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mainul Islam recorded her confessional statement after Criminal Investigation Department Inspector Iftekharul Alam, investigation officer of the case, brought her to his chamber, court courses said.

After recording her statement, the magistrate ordered to send her to jail.

She was produced before the court on completion of her three-day remand in the case filed with Khilkhet Police Station under the Narcotics Control Act.

In her statement, Piyasha said she, in connivance with two of her associates -- Sharful Hasan alias Mishu Hasan and Masudul Hasan alias Jisan -- ran the business.

Army chief

FROM PAGE 3

said a press release of Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Directorate.

General SM Shafiquddin will discuss further strengthening the relations between the armies of the two countries and mutual cooperation. The army chief is expected to return home on August 26, the press release said.

Bangladesh-India flights

FROM PAGE 3

Directorate General of Civil Aviation, seeking its approval for resumption on August 11, under an air-bubble agreement.

Air-bubble agreements are arrangements between two countries that allow carriers of both nations to fly passengers either way without restrictions.

"But we are yet to get any reply from our Indian counterpart about the letter. That's why it's hard for us to say right now whether flights will resume from tomorrow [today]," Group Captain Chy M Zia Ul Kabir, member (flight standard and regulations) of CAAB, told The Daily Star.

Biman on Wednesday formally announced plans to operate flights to Kolkata and Delhi from August 22, without mentioning anything about directions to do so.

Asked about the announcement, Biman Managing Director and CEO Dr Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal told this correspondent, "Like other airlines of the country, we have announced this as part of our preparation to operate flights."

He acknowledged that they are yet to get any direction from CAAB.

Kamrul Islam, general manager of public relations at US-Bangla Airlines, said although they are all set to resume flights with India, they are yet to get CAAB's direction.

He said if flights are resumed, a passenger will have to complete various formalities, including getting tested for Covid-19 within 72 hours of their flight.

Sources in India said it might consent to resume flights with Bangladesh from next week. Initially, flights will resume on Dhaka-Kolkata and Dhaka-Delhi routes.

CAAB in its letter to India had proposed 21 air-bubble flights per week for both countries. The letter also said which categories of passengers could fly.

Regarding capacity restrictions on flights, CAAB said a maximum of 140 passengers in a narrow-bodied (single aisle) aircraft and 200 passengers in wide-bodied (twin aisle) aircraft can be carried.

Apart from Biman, Novo Air and US Bangla, five Indian airlines used to operate flights from Bangladesh on various routes going to India during normal times. The airlines include Air India, Indigo, SpiceJet, Vistara and GoAir.

More than 3,500 Bangladeshis travel to India daily on average. Of them, over 10 percent used to travel for medical purposes.

More than 13.7 million foreigners, including 2.8 million Bangladeshis, took treatment in India between January 2018 and March 2019.

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Want to purchase used Scaffolding Materials (700 to 1000 MT) of Pipe dia 50mm x thickness 2.90mm (approx)
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Uzbek & Russian cuisine expert/chef wanted. Contact with NID & other papers. Cell- 01313368284

4 GRAFT CASES
Wanderers Club GS Joy Gopal Sarkar gets bail
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

brac
Invitation for Tender (IFT) for Cloud Service
Tenders are hereby invited from Cloud Service Providers.

Project Name	Cloud Service/Infrastructure as a Service-Technology Division
Source of Fund	Strategic Partnership Agreement
Tender Package No.	BPD/2021/IFT-1759
Reference No. & Date	BPD/2021/IFT-1759 Date: 11-08-2021
Tender Name	Cloud Service
Time for Delivery	As per Tender Documents
Price of the Tender Documents	N/A
Tender Security	As per Tender Documents
Tender Documents Available	https://tender.brac.net/ (Go to live tender from the dashboard after entering the above URL and search for the Tender Package No.)
Date & Time for Documents Availability	From 20 August, 2021 till 05 September 2021, 2.30 pm
Tender Dropping Place, Date & Time	https://tender.brac.net/ Before 05 September 2021, 2.30 pm (The tender dropping procedure will be discussed during the Pre-bid meeting)
Tender Opening Place, Date & Time	Online, 05 September 2021 at 03:00 PM Link: meet.google.com/udo-vhmi-jvy
Pre-bid meeting	On 24th August, Tuesday from 11 am till 12.30 pm through Google meet link: meet.google.com/mjs-qxyv-bcg

BRAC Procurement Department, BRAC Center, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212 Phone 9881265 Ext 5490 or Mobile: 017 67 689 679

Garments Sale
A small knit garments will be sold. Address Shyampur (golap gram), Birulia, Savar. E-mail: amutaskin@gmail.com Mobile-01799562201

জমি বিক্রি করা হবে
মহম্মদিয়াহ সনক চমখরিজা মৌজায় পাকা বাঁধা সংলগ্ন ৬০৭৫ একর জমি বিক্রি করা হবে। জমির উপর একটি চালু পোড়ি-হাচারী ও স্ট্যান্ডার্ড থাকার স্থান রয়েছে। স্বাভাবিকভাবেই ইনকিউবেটর প্রতিটিসে বারান্দা ক্ষমতা ৯০,৭২০ পিস জিম এবং বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহের ২টি চালু জেনারেটর চালু আছে।
যোগাযোগঃ ০২৭৫-৩৯০২২/ ০২৭৭-৮২৯২০ D-102

HOUSE TO LET
Full furnished house at Road No. 3, North Khulshi Hill residential area, Chittagong with 4 bedroom (attached 4 bathroom), drawing, dining, kitchen, south face verandah, gym equipment with two car parking facilities and also it will be rented at attractive rate for Residence/Rest House. Contact: 01672-910260, 01636-869382 D-101

Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited
Alternative Banking Wing (ABW) ATM Management Division Head Office, Dhaka

Tender Notice

Sealed offers are hereby invited by Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited from reputed vendors for maintenance of 671 units online UPS (Different Brand) Including earthing after taking over the same which are using in different ATM/CRM Booths around the country. Details information regarding the notice is available at Bank's website: www.islamibankbd.com or in the form of hard copy at the office of the undersigned.

SEVP & Head of ABW

Journalist
FROM PAGE 3
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock at the death. In a condolence message, the PM prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family. Besides, various journalist organisations did the same. Following his namaz-e-janaza at Jatiya Press Club, he was buried at Nikunja-1 graveyard in Dhaka after Isha prayers.

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

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

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

S.L No.	Tender No. Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & opening
01.	IMP/PM/SEM/09/2021-2022 dated 19/08/2021	Pharmaceutical Packing Materials: (specification as per tender schedule): 01. 7.5 ml Tubular Glass Vial with 20 mm Neck Finish 02. 10 ml Tubular Glass Vial with 20 mm Neck Size 03. 15 ml Tubular Glass Vial with 20 mm Neck Finish 04. 30 ml Tubular Glass Vial with 20 mm Neck Finish 05. 20 ml Amber Glass Vial (type-1) 06. 20 mm Rubber Stopper (Ready for Sterilization) 07. Flip off Alu. Seal Cap 20 mm	Tk. 2750.00/set Equivalent to US\$ 32.00 Non-refundable	Closing :09/09/2021 at 11.00 AM Opening : 09/09/2021 at 11.15 AM
02.	IMP/PM/SEM/10/2021-2022 dated 19/08/2021	Pharmaceutical Packing Material: (specification as per tender schedule): 01. 100 ml White Glass Bottle 02. 32mm Rubber Stopper (Ready for Sterilization) 03. 32 mm Alu. Seal Cap(Green) 04. 32 mm Alu. Seal Cap (White)	Tk. 1950.00/set Equivalent to US\$ 23.00 Non-refundable	Closing :12/09/2021 at 11.00 AM Opening : 12/09/2021 at 11.15 AM

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

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

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

N.B: This Information is also available at our Website : www.edcl.gov.bd. The above Tender which was published earlier in The Daily Star on 10/08/2021 and The Samokal on 10/08/2021 will be treated as cancel.

General Manager Procurement For : Managing Director.

(9" x 4 col.)

COPING WITH PANDEMIC

Locals raise Tk 16 lakh in five days to install central oxygen supply

50-bed Birganj Upazila Health Complex now has an oxygen supply outlet next to each bed

KONGKON KARMAKER WITH FIROZ A MUZAHID

Belongingness, willingness, compassion and leadership go a long way when it comes to overcoming any difficult situation or task.

The people of Birganj, which means land of the brave, have just proved that they have all it takes to overcome any situation and the naming of their birthplace is justified.

Thanks to the timely initiative of a local business owner turned politician, a number of warm-hearted residents of Birganj upazila in Dinajpur raised necessary funds in five days to install a centralised oxygen supply system for every bed in 50-bed Birganj Upazila Health Complex.

When many high-priority government-run district hospitals are yet to get central oxygen supply system, the authorities of Birganj Upazila Health Complex, with oxygen outlet available for every bed, is now capable of assuring their critical Covid patients of best possible care.

Serving a population of 3 lakh, the health complex had so far been unable to treat critical patients with Covid-19 since the pandemic broke out in the country in March last year.

Zakaria Zaka is a business owner and president of Awami League's Birganj upazila unit. He said after he found out that the health complex was not equipped to cope with the rising number of Covid patients with its existing eight oxygen cylinders, he put his mind to find a solution to the ominous scenario.

On July 19, he met with officials of the health complex to assess what is required to solve the longstanding problem at the hospital. Soon afterwards, he conveyed the assessment to a firm that builds



Oxygen is being administered to a Covid patient from a newly installed outlet of the centralised oxygen supply system at Birganj Upazila Health Complex. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

and delivers central oxygen supply systems to medical facilities.

Following site visit, the firm provided him a Tk 16-lakh estimate for the job and Zakaria formed a committee of 23 members to raise the fund.

Thanks to the generosity of Birganj residents, the entire amount of the required fund was raised by July 31 -- only five days after they started going from door to door in Birganj, Zakaria said.

The firm took five days to install a 360-kg upgradable oxygen reservoir for the centralised system and 50 wall outlets for supplying oxygen to patients in all the 50 beds of the hospital.

The final bill the firm collected

was Tk 14 lakh, said a thankful Zakaria.

Mohammad Mohsin, health and family planning officer at the health complex, hoped that the situation would now improve at the hospital that had been struggling to provide proper oxygen support to critical patients in all its four wards, including its Covid isolation ward.

A 42-year-old Covid patient, who took treatment at the hospital a week ago, said she realised how dangerous it could get if proper oxygen supply is not provided to a patient in time.

She hoped that government hospitals in other upazilas would follow the example of Birganj Upazila Health Complex in getting their own centralised oxygen supply

systems.

During the inauguration of the central oxygen supply system at Birganj Upazila Health Complex on August 11, Dinajpur-1 (Birganj and Kaharol) lawmaker Manoranjan Shil Gopal, while speaking as chief guest, said the people have done what the government could not do.

This proves that every problem can be solved if the people want it, the MP added.

According to health officials in Dinajpur, at least 480 people tested positive for Covid-19 in Birganj upazila since March last year and 13 of them, including a staff member of Birganj Upazila Health Complex, died of the disease.

Marginalised rural women in Satkhira producing handicrafts for export

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Underprivileged women in rural areas of Kalaroa upazila in Satkhira are becoming self-reliant by making handicrafts with date palm leaves and straw, paving the way of solvency as these handmade products are being exported to 10 different countries including those in Europe.

The artisans make a variety of laundry baskets, place mats, rectangular baskets, kitchen baskets, cylinder baskets, etc while they are able to work from the comfort of their homes.

Shihab Uddin Palash of Panchnal village of Yugikhalai union in Kalaroa upazila used to work in a school for the disabled people run by a non-governmental organisation (NGO). The young man also worked as an artisan beside the job.

At one stage, he left the job and trained up the poor women of the area in handicrafts to help them become self-reliant. He formed an organisation called 'Puppet Handicrafts' in 2014.

"We use date palm leaves and straw as raw materials. Our products are being exported to 10 countries including those in Europe after meeting up the orders from the country," Palash said.



Women in rural areas of Satkhira's Kalaroa upazila make a variety of laundry baskets, place mats, rectangular baskets, kitchen baskets, cylinder baskets, etc while they are able to work from the comfort of their homes. PHOTO: STAR

Each of the 30 women of 12 unions of Kalaroa upazila earns Tk 3,000 to Tk 4,000 by making handicrafts in their spare time after doing household works, he said.

He added that women from Joynagar, Kshetrapara, Kamarali, Khordo, Jalalabad, Kushodanga, Kazirhat, Raghunathpur, Sonabaria, Khaspur and Baksa areas of the

upazila are involved in designing and making the crafts.

The women are spending their earnings on their children's education as well as their household needs.

Moreover, these marginalised women are also keeping poultry, cows and goats at their home to meet the nutritional demand of their families, said Palash.

Boy kills father over family feud

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A teenage boy stabbed his father to death allegedly over family feud in Brahmanbaria town on Wednesday night.

The deceased, Abu Kawsar, a fish trader, was son of late Juru Miah of Kandipara area of the town.

Meanwhile, police arrested 15-year-old Prithiraj along with a knife, after four hours of the incident.

Quoting the victim's family members, Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) of Sadar Model Police Station Harunur Rashid said deceased Kawsar, an alcoholic, used to beat his wife Anwara Begum over trifling matters almost every day. On Wednesday night, when Kawsar was beating up his wife, the couple's teenage son Prithiraj stepped in and tried to save his mother.

Failing to save his mother, the teenage boy took a knife, stabbed his father mercilessly and fled the scene.

Neighbours rescued injured Kawsar and took him to Brahmanbaria General Hospital, where the doctors declared him dead, he said.

Dr Nizam Uddin, on-duty doctor at the hospital, said the victim had multiple stab injuries on the chest and back.

OC of Sadar Model Police Station Emranul Islam said they first took the victim's wife and elder son to the police station for interrogation and later arrested Prithiraj.

Youth held with firearms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police arrested a young man along with two firearms from a cattle market in Parbatipur upazila of the district on Wednesday night.

The arrestee, Sajib Rana, 22, is a resident of Doulatpur village in Chirirbandar upazila.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team raided a cattle market at Ambari village on Dinajpur-Gobindaganj road around 8:30pm on Wednesday night and arrested Sajib with a pistol, a shutter gun, a magazine and a bullet, wrapped in a shopping bag, police said.



AGRANI BANK LIMITED

Establishment & Engineering Division
Head Office, 9/D, Dilkusha, Dhaka.

Invitation for Tenders

1	Procuring Entity Name	Agrani Bank Limited, Establishment & Engineering Division, Head office (7th floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.	
2	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka	
3	Invitation for	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 630 Kg Capacity 02(Two) Passenger lift including all other accessories for Agrani Bank Limited, Head Office, Dhaka.	
4	Invitation Ref No	ABL/E&ED/Eng/Mecha-149/2021	
5	Date	16/08/2021	

KEY INFORMATION

6	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method.	
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FUNDING INFORMATION

7	Budget and Source of Funds	Own fund of Agrani Bank limited.	
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PARTICULAR INFORMATION

8	Tender Publication Date	16/08/2021	
9	Tender Last Selling Date and Time	Date	Time
10	Tender Closing Date and Time	12/09/2021	4.00PM
11	Tender Opening Date and Time	13/09/2021	03.00PM
12	Name & Address of the office for Selling Tender Document	Agrani Bank Limited, Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.	
13	Receiving Tender Document	Attention: General Manager Address: Agrani Bank Limited, General Manager's Secretariat, Head Office (4th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000. Time: 10:00AM to 03:00PM, Date: 13/09/2021	
14	Place of Opening Tender document	Tender Opening will take place at the Dropping Place.	

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

15	Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer	Tenderers who have: a. Not been prevented by order of any judicial court from entering into and/or signing contract with the procuring entity. b. Tenderers shall have at least 05 (Five) years of overall business experience in similar works preceding the date of publication of IFT. c. Tenderer shall have successfully completed similar lift's supply, installation and related works in Government/Semi-Government/ Autonomous body at least Tk. 75.00 (Seventy five) lac in a single tender during the last 03(three) years. d. Minimum annual average Supply (Turn Over) in the last 03 (three) years preceding the date of submission of Tender is not less than Tk. 80.00 (Eighty) lac. e. Minimum amount of Liquid asset i.e Working capital/ Credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be Tk. 80.00 (Eighty) lac only. Should be counted 28 days before from the date of opening of tender. f. Tenderers shall be the Lift Manufacturer or Authorized Agent of Internationally reputed Lift Manufacturer. g. The bidder shall submit a certificate stating that minimum 20 Nos. of lift of proposed brand and proposed country of origin has been used successfully in BANGLADESH. minimum 15 of those 20 lifts have installed and have been running successfully in Bangladesh. h. The tenderer shall also have one year's experience of maintenance of minimum 20 nos of lift. i. Bidding company must be managed by Bangladeshi nationals. No joint venture company will be allowed.	
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16	Tenderer to attach copies of the following documents	i) Up to date valid Trade license ii) Up-to-date income tax paid certificate iii) Valid VAT registration certificate iv) TIN Certificate v) Liquid asset i.e. working capital or line of credit certificate of the Tenderer shall be Tk. 80.00 (Eighty) lac only. vi) Main Catalogue/ Brochure. vii) Certificate of successfully completed same Brand and Country of Origin lift's supply, installation and related works in Government/Semi-Government/ Autonomous body/Reputed Limited Company at least Tk. 75.00 (Seventy five) lac in a single tender within the last 03(three) years. viii) Bidder shall submit financial statements such as profit and loss statements and audited balance sheet of last 03 (three) years. Annual Average supply of related goods (Turn Over) of minimum value of Tk.80.00 (Eighty) lac. ix) Certificate of Manufacturer Authorization. Must follow the format of form PG3 - 6 which will be verified by the procuring entity. x) Affidavit/Declaration of legal ownership/ Certificate of incorporation. xi) Tender Submission Letter (Form PG3-1) xii) Bio-data of key personnel employed by the contractor to carry out the functions stated in the schedule. xiii) The bidder shall give the assurance form the manufacturing company to supply of spare parts of minimum 20 years and this assurance must be authenticated by the Chamber of Commerce/Ministry of Commerce/Ministry of foreign affairs of the concerned manufacturing company. xiv) Certificate by manufacturing company stating that minimum 100 Nos. of the proposed brand of lift have been used in minimum 10 (ten) countries of the world including the manufacturing country for equal to or more than ten years. certificate must be authenticated by Chamber of Commerce/Ministry of Commerce/Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the lift manufacturing company xv) Certificate by the bidder stating that minimum 20 nos. of lift of proposed brand and proposed country of origin have been used successfully in BANGLADESH. xvi) Bidder must be the sole agent/commercial distributor of the proposed lift of the contract and he/she must submit its all supporting documents. xvii) BC class contractor license provided by the electric licensing board. xviii) International Standard Conformity Certificate and Every other documents mentioned in TDS.	
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17	Brief Description of Goods	Fujitech (Japan), Hitachi (Japan), Mitsubishi (Japan), Kone (Finland), Otis (USA/Japan/France), Schindler (Switzerland), Thyssenkrupp (Germany) ; the lift manufacturing company shall be a multinational one and shall have lift manufacturing capability for speed 10m/s (minimum) and shall have lift manufacturing experience in their own factory for a period for not less than 60 years and proposed brand of lift shall be manufactured and tested in Germany/Japan/Switzerland/USA , complying all other detailed specifications stated in the Tender Document Schedule. Capacity: Minimum 630 kg (8 passengers) Speed: 1.5 m/s, 240 starts/hour No of Entrances/stops: 8 (G, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)	
18	Brief Description of Related Services	Installation, testing, Commissioning of the above mentioned lift with necessary works in Doors, Pit and Machine room etc.	
19	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	5000/- (Tk Five thousand Only) Non-refundable pay-order from any branch of Agrani Bank Limited.	

20	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Nurul Islam	
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21	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Deputy General Manager	
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22	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Agrani Bank Limited, Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.	
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23	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	01552475489 029561674 dgmeed@agraniabank.org	
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24	a) The Tenderer shall furnish Registration certificate and evidence of being managed by Bangladeshi nationals in original and certificates of satisfactory completion of previous work for proposed brand lift of above magnitude from the owner at the time of dropping the Tender documents. b) If communication is disrupted on the date of receiving and opening the Tender(s), the same will be received at the same time on the day after next working day. c) Furnishing of any false, misleading documents may result in rejection of tender and may lead to action under Reg. 127 of PPR 2008. d) The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever. No claims will be entertained in this regard.		
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(Md. Nurul Islam)
Deputy General Manager
Agrani Bank Limited,
Establishment & Engineering Division
Head Office, Dhaka.

 Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Bangladesh Railway Dhaka Corrigendum-1		
No. BR/ADB/MG Wagons (Re-bid)		Date: 19.08.2021
The following amendment is made to the Invitation for Bid No. BR/ADB/MG Wagons (Re-bid), issued on 15 July 2021 for "Procurement of 386 Meter Gauge Bogie Covered Wagons, 174 Meter Gauge Bogie Open Wagons and 20 Meter Gauge Bogie Brake Vans for Bangladesh Railway".		
Clause Reference	Existing Paragraph/ Sentence/Word in the bidding document	Amendment
Section 2 ITB 24.1 of Bid Document	The deadline for bid submission is: Date: 26.08.2021 Time: On or before 11.00 hours.	The deadline for bid submission is: Date: 09.09.2021 Time: On or before 11.00 hours. (Bangladesh Standard Time)
Section 2 ITB 27.1 of Bid Document	The bid opening shall take place at: Floor/Room number: 3rd Floor/Room No. 411 Street Address: 16, Abdul Gani Road, Rail Bhaban, Dhaka-1000. City : Dhaka Country : Bangladesh Date : 26.08.2021. Time : 11:30 hours.	The bid opening shall take place at: Floor/Room number: 3rd Floor/Room No. 411 Street Address: 16, Abdul Gani Road, Rail Bhaban, Dhaka-1000 City : Dhaka Country : Bangladesh Date : 09.09.2021. Time : 11:30 hours. (Bangladesh Standard Time)
Date of selling of bid document up to 08.09.2021 till 04:00pm.		
The other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.		
Md. Mizanur Rahman Project Director (General Manager/Project) Rolling Stock Operations Improvement Project (Rolling Stock Procurement) Bangladesh Railway, Rail Bhaban, Dhaka		
GD-1496		



Afghans celebrate the 102th Independence Day of Afghanistan with the national flag in Kabul, yesterday. Flag-waving protesters took to the streets of more Afghan cities yesterday as popular opposition to the Taliban spread.

PHOTO: AFP

MORE NEWS

Three dead, 50 wounded in blast targeting Shia in Pakistan

At least three people were killed and 50 others wounded when a bomb explosion ripped through a Shia Muslim procession in central Pakistan yesterday, officials said. Security was high as the religious minority marked Ashura during the holy month of Muharram, a flashpoint for sectarian violence in previous years. Social media videos showed bleeding victims lying on a road being assisted by members of the public. Authorities have suspended mobile phone services in major cities as a security measure during Ashura processions. No group claimed responsibility for the blast till filing the report.

Pfizer jab declines faster than AstraZeneca: study

The effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine against Covid-19 declines faster than that of the AstraZeneca jab, according to a new study published yesterday. "Two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech have greater initial effectiveness against new Covid-19 infections, but this declines faster compared with two doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca," researchers at Oxford University said. The study, which has not been peer reviewed, is based on the results of a survey by Britain's Office for National Statistics that carried out PCR tests from December last year to this month on randomly selected households. Pfizer had "greater initial effectiveness" but saw "faster declines in protection against high viral burden and symptomatic infection", when looking at a period of several months after full vaccination, although rates remained low for both jabs, it added. "Results suggest that after four to five months effectiveness of these two vaccines would be similar," the scientists said.

China marks Tibet anniversary with call to accept Party rule

China yesterday marked the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region on the roof of the world, with a call to accept the rule of the Communist Party. Beijing has ruled the remote region since 1951, after its People's Liberation Army marched in and took control in what it calls a "peaceful liberation". "Tibet can only develop and prosper under the party's leadership and socialism," Wang Yang, who heads a national organisation responsible for uniting all races and all parties under the leadership of the Communist Party, said at the event in the region's capital, Lhasa. The celebration, attended by almost 10,000 people, was held at the foot of the iconic Potala Palace, a sacred Buddhist site associated with the Dalai Lamas.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

PREPARATION FOR 'THIRD COVID WAVE' IN THE COMING WINTER

India focuses on child health

Sets up thousands of paediatric beds; Biden to get booster jab

AGENCIES

Several Indian states are building facilities with more paediatric beds, plus oxygen, due to concern that children returning to school without being vaccinated will be among the most vulnerable during a third wave of coronavirus infections.

Health administrators have taken heed of trends in the United States, where a record number of children have been hospitalised as the coronavirus Delta variant, first found in India, has surged through unvaccinated populations.

During a second wave of infections in India that peaked in April and May, hundreds of thousands of people died for want of oxygen and medical facilities, and now there are concerns that another third wave will gather during the winter months.

"We don't know how the virus will behave, but we cannot afford to be unprepared this time around," Suhas Prabhu, who heads the Paediatric Task Force in the big western state of Maharashtra, said.

"No mother should have to run around looking for a hospital bed when her child is sick."

The Maharashtra government has stockpiled medicines, and built facilities for additional paediatric beds and oxygen provisions in new centres in Mumbai and Aurangabad.

Built on empty stretches of land or in re-purposed stadiums, the Mumbai facilities have a total of 1,500 paediatric beds, most of them with oxygen.

"We can upgrade this capacity to double if

needed," Suresh Kakani, a senior official with Mumbai's civic body said.

In neighbouring Gujarat, authorities have set up 15,000 pediatric oxygen beds, health commissioner Jai Prakash Shivhare said.

Meantime, schools in at least 11 of India's 28 states have opened after more than a year of closures, raising worries these could become breeding grounds for transmission of the virus.

As of March 2021, less than 1 pct of India's coronavirus deaths were in the under 15 age group, according to the health ministry, and officials say the severity of the disease in this age group has been minimal so far.

Epidemiologists say there is no evidence to show that the Delta variant or any other mutations affect children more than other parts of the population.

Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden said he and his wife Jill will both be getting a Covid vaccine booster shot, with the extra dose becoming available to all US adults from next month.

Israel began administering third Pfizer doses last month to confront a surge in local infections driven by Delta. Several European countries are also expected to begin offering boosters to the elderly and people with weak immune systems.

The World Health Organization condemned Wednesday the rush by wealthy countries to provide Covid vaccine booster shots, while millions around the world have yet to receive a single dose.

POST-POLLS VIOLENCE IN WEST BENGAL

HC orders CBI probe

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Calcutta High Court yesterday ordered a probe by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into allegations of arson, violence and rape in West Bengal soon after assembly elections in which Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress emerged victorious this year.

A seven-member committee set up by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in compliance with the High Court order had investigated the incidents of post-poll violence and recommended a court-monitored CBI probe.

The CBI will probe the allegations of murder and rape while a separate Special Investigation Team (SIT) consisting of senior Indian Police Service officers of West Bengal cadre will be set up to investigate the other allegations.

The court observed that there are "definite and proved" allegations that complaints of the victims of violence in the aftermath of polls were not even registered. The High Court has sought probe status report within six weeks and fixed the next hearing on October 4. Both investigations will be monitored by the court.

The BJP had alleged that after TMC's victory, its goons had attacked women members, killed workers, vandalised houses and looted shops and offices belonging to the saffron party members. The Bengal government has said the reports have been greatly exaggerated and most of the incidents of violence that took place around the May 2, the vote counting day, when the state police were under the control of the Election Commission.



Sabri poised to become Malaysia PM

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

Former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob moved closer yesterday to forming the next government after securing a parliamentary majority from the same coalition that collapsed earlier this week.

Muhyiddin Yassin resigned as prime minister on Monday after conceding he had lost support from his alliance, bringing to an end a fraught 17 months in office.

If confirmed, Ismail Sabri's appointment would mark the return of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) party to leadership, three years after it lost a general election because of corruption allegations.

Muhyiddin yesterday said Sabri has the support. The support was conditional on Ismail Sabri ensuring that the new cabinet members were free from graft charges, he said in a statement.

Ismail Sabri, 61, has the support of 114 lawmakers out of the 222-seat parliament. UMNO lawmaker Ahmad Maslan said on Twitter.

King Al-Sultan Abdullah, the constitutional monarch who will be appointing a new premier, is scheduled to meet with the country's other senior royals today.

A decision on the new government head is likely to be announced after that.

TALIBAN FIGHT TRUST DEFICIT WITH PR BLITZ

Smiling and waving at journalists, posing for selfies in the streets and even sitting down for a TV interview with a woman journalist, the Taliban appear to have launched a public relations blitz, telling Afghans -- and the world -- that life under their rule will be different this time. But Taliban 2.0 is a hard sell. Memories of the militants' brutal 1996-2001 regime and the near-two-decade insurgency that killed tens of thousands are etched on Afghan minds -- especially women and religious minorities.

WHAT ARE THE TALIBAN PROMISING?

"On ideology, and beliefs, there is no difference," longtime Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in his first press conference. "(But) based on experience, maturity, and insight, no doubt there are many differences." He ticked off all the boxes -- a full amnesty for all, women would have rights, including to education and work, the media would be independent and free, and an inclusive government would be created in a country where ethnic and sectarian rifts run deep. Taliban have also vowed that Afghan soil will not be used against other nations, and that they want to be a part of the international community. In arguably one of their most astonishing gestures, they sent representatives to a ceremony marking Ashura, one of the most important periods of the year for Shia Muslims -- considered heretics by many hardline Sunnis, such as the Taliban. But all the vows come with a caveat: everything must be in line with the principles of Islam, as they interpret it.

WHY IS THERE SUCH LOW TRUST IN THE TALIBAN?

Much like last week, the Taliban promised general amnesty to their opponents when they first captured Kabul 25 years ago. "We do not believe in any kind of revenge," their leader Mullah Omar told Kabul residents on September 25, 1996. Two days later, the Taliban shot former president Mohammed Najibullah, dragged his bloodied body outside and hung it from a post. While the group is trying to show a moderate, new face

from Kabul and Doha, reports have emerged of their fighters harassing journalists and not letting women enter universities in some parts of the country. Images of women have been covered up or vandalised on storefronts around Kabul. And their enforcers in rural Afghanistan and smaller cities are still reportedly brutalising people. Just over a week before capturing Kabul, the Taliban claimed responsibility for killing the head of the government media centre -- the same place where their spokesman spoke of independent journalism on Tuesday. "They have better PR now," Pashtana Durrani, who runs a women's education charity, told Britain's Channel 4 in an interview. "What they are saying in press conferences and what they are doing on the ground... are two different things," she added. "It's a grave reality that they haven't changed, they're the same people."

DOES WORLD BELIEVE THEIR PROMISES?

Not yet. Despite their months-long campaign of assurances, Afghans are terrified. And the Taliban's promises have yet to win them any diplomatic recognition. Analysts and officials say there is no guarantee Taliban will get the funds it needs to revive its fragile economy unless Western donors are convinced that rights are protected and groups like al-Qaeda no longer find haven in Afghanistan. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday echoed warnings from other governments: "We will judge this regime based on the choices it makes and by its actions rather than by its words."

SOURCE: AFP



Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, accompanied by the old government's main peace envoy, Abdullah Abdullah, sits for talks with members of the Taliban delegation in this undated handout released yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS)

67, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

No.CPS-355/2021/29136

Date: 17-08-2021

Schedule for FCPS Part-I, FCPS Part-II (Final), Preliminary FCPS Part-II, FCPS (Sub-Speciality), FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS written examinations to be held in September, 2021.

FCPS Part-II (Final), Preliminary FCPS Part-II, FCPS (Sub-Speciality) and MCPS Examinations.

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
All Subjects	Paper - I	01.09.2021 (Wednesday)	9:00 A.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
	Paper - II	02.09.2021 (Thursday)	12:00 Noon	

FCPS Mid-Term Examination

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
1. Anaesthesiology	Paper - I	01.09.2021 (Wednesday)	9:00 A.M. to 10:40 A.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
2. Medicine & Allied				
3. Obstetrics & Gynaecology & Allied	Paper - II	02.09.2021 (Thursday)	9:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon	
4. Ophthalmology & Allied				
5. Paediatrics & Allied				
6. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation				
7. Psychiatry				
8. Surgery & Allied				

FCPS Part-I Examination

Morning

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
1. Anaesthesiology	Paper - I	04.09.2021 (Saturday)	9:00 A.M. to 10:40 A.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
2. Biochemistry	Paper - II	05.09.2021 (Sunday)		
3. Dermatology & Venereology	Paper - III	06.09.2021 (Monday)		
4. Haematology				
5. Histopathology				
6. Medicine & Allied				
7. Microbiology				
8. Ophthalmology & Allied				
9. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation				
10. Radiology & Imaging				
11. Radiotherapy				

Noon

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
1. Dental Surgery (Conservative Dentistry & Endodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics & Dental Facial Orthopedics and Prosthodontics)	Paper - I	04.09.2021 (Saturday)	12:00 Noon to 01:40 P.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
2. Obstetrics & Gynaecology & Allied	Paper - II	05.09.2021 (Sunday)		
3. Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery	Paper - III	06.09.2021 (Monday)		
4. Paediatrics & Allied				
5. Psychiatry				
6. Surgery & Allied				

Program for OSPE/IOE/Oral, OSCE/Clinical, Practical & examinations for FCPS Part II (final), Preliminary FCPS Part-II, FCPS (Sub-Speciality), FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS examinations will be notified on the Notice Board and Website of BCPS well in advance.

The list of the examinees and the name of the venue of the OSPE & IOE, OSCE/Clinical, Oral & Practical examinations will be notified on the Notice Board and Website of BCPS on the day before examination (after 8.30pm).

The Admit Card for the FCPS Part-I examination will be available through online only from 22 August to 6 September 2021, (till completion of the FCPS Part-I examination) and for FCPS Part II (final), Preliminary FCPS Part-II, FCPS (Sub-Speciality), MCPS and FCPS Mid-Term examinations will be available through online only from 22 August to 6 October 2021 (till completion of the examination). Please visit BCPS website (exams.bcps.edu.bd) and login password protected profile and print admit card. Please contact examinations department if there is any problem related to download of the admit card. **Admit Card of July 2021 session (to be held in September) is a prerequisite for entering the examination hall.**

- No Admit Card will be issued after the deadline.
- No Admit Card will be printed and distributed from BCPS campus.

Instructions for Examinees

- Examination hall will be opened one hour before commencement of the examination. Examinees will go directly to the examination hall.
- Examinees are not allowed to stay anywhere other than the examination hall.
- Carrying mobile phones / laptops / tabs / wrist watch / calculator / other electronic devices / bags / jackets / water bottles / beverage cans / lighter / pens / metal objects other than keys by the examinees is prohibited. Carrying such materials shall be subject to expulsion from examination.
- Examinees are not allowed to write anything on the admit card/instruction sheet or keep any other papers. These may lead to cancellation of the paper.
- FCPS Part-II written qualified examinees have to download "Information Update Form" from BCPS website (www.bcps.edu.bd) immediately after publication of the written result and have to send the filled up form back to BCPS 5 (five) days before clinical examination through e-mail (query@bcps-bd.org) or by hand/postal. It is mandatory to submit the form. If found, incorrect information and incomplete form, examination will be held as per legal action will be taken against the candidate.
- NO MASK NO SERVICE.
- Follow all the safety measures to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

Professor Md. Titu Miah
Controller of Examinations

GD- 1493

Trapped in Kabul's no-man's land

AFP, Kabul

Thousands of Afghans were packed yesterday between Taliban checkpoints and a US-imposed ring of steel around Kabul's main airport, desperate to get aboard any flight out following the return of the headline Islamist group.

Even more were mobbing foreign embassy compounds in the capital, as rumours spread that visas were up for grabs or safe passage on offer at least as far as the airport.

Unconfirmed reports on social media say several people have been killed as US forces and the Taliban struggle to contain the desperate throngs on their respective sides of an unofficial no-man's land.

"I went to the airport with my kids and family... the Taliban and Americans were shooting," said one man who until recently had worked for a foreign NGO.

"Despite that, people were still moving forward (to get in) because they knew a situation worse than death awaited them outside the airport."

There have been chaotic scenes since the weekend, when the Taliban drove unopposed into the capital



after a two-week lightning offensive that capped a simmering 20-year insurgency.

Distressing pictures and video have emerged of people desperately trying to get aboard any flight leaving -- even resorting to climbing on a US military Hercules as it rolled down the runway for take-off.

Some semblance of order has been restored, but thousands have been left stranded between the Taliban and US lines -- clinging to an unrealistic hope that they will be let in and evacuated. The Taliban have provided official

escorts for some foreign embassies -- taking their nationals as well as Afghans -- and they are being allowed in by the Americans.

But even that journey -- which can take several hours for just a few kilometres (miles) is fraught with heartbreak.

"There were people beating on the windows of the bus, trying to get inside," said a woman who made it through on Wednesday.

"The Taliban with us fired in the air to chase them away."

There was desperation also near the diplomatic enclave yesterday, as thousands clamoured to get the attention of anyone at now largely deserted embassies.

"I was told that if I get my name and my details and my phone on a paper to the French embassy they will take me," said one man.

Hundreds of people sat on pavements begging for scraps of paper or to borrow a pen to do the same.

Washington said Wednesday the Taliban were reneging on pledges to allow Afghans who worked with the United States and its allies out of the country and asked for compliance.

NURTURING DREAMS

Skipping towards Guinness World Records

SHANIZ CHOWDHURY

Skipping is a playground staple for people of all ages. Rasel Islam, a teenager from Thakurgaon, has commanded the sport with two Guinness World Records to his name. On January 2, 2021, he set new world records by skipping 145 times in 30 seconds on one foot, and another by skipping 258 times in 1 minute. To improve his hand-eye coordination and muscle endurance, the 18-year-old trained for six months before attempting to break the records.

Rasel has been skipping since 2017. "People used to discourage me from skipping, saying it is a 'girl's sport'. Nonetheless, I continued practicing, as I was determined to prove my ambitions," he said.

Rasel looks up to Konok Karmakar, who is currently the highest Guinness World Record holder from Bangladesh, with 15 records to

his name. "The fact that someone from Bangladesh won accolades for his talents inspired me. I thought that if he can do it, I can do it too," said Rasel, who applied for the Guinness World Records in 2019.

The young skipper received his official recognition certificates on July 29 this year. "My family was over the moon. People came over to our house to take pictures with me," Rasel added.

This is just the beginning for Rasel as he hopes to break more records in the skipping category, moving forward. He has already signed up for 10 more records. "I plan to participate in the World Jump Rope Championship. I also want to form a team of skippers in Bangladesh, so we can compete on international platforms," concluded Rasel.

The author is a freelance journalist. Email: shanzay-chowdhury@gmail.com.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF RASEL ISLAM



Rasel Islam from Thakurgaon set new Guinness World Records by skipping 145 times in 30 seconds on one foot, and another by skipping 258 times in 1 minute.

PHOTO: QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT



PHOTO: COURTESY OF RAKIB AL HASAN

YOUNG ACHIEVER

Rakib Al Hasan's laudable aspirations

The Bangladeshi medical student won the Outstanding Young Leader of Asia Award

MD MIZANUR RAHMAN HIMADRI

Rakib Al Hasan from Bangladesh won the Outstanding Young Leader of Asia Award 2021 from the Asian Youth Council for his work in children's and women's rights, education, health, democracy, and peace. Youths around the world are doing important work during the coronavirus pandemic. For the first time, the Asian Youth Council, a well-known youth organisation in Asia, organised this award programme to provide such young leaders with opportunities.

Rakib, a final-year medical student of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, is a writer and activist. His role in the Kurdistan Youth Movement, the formation of public opinion by world Muslim leaders in the Armenia-Azerbaijan war, ability to garner moral support for the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, and ethnic recognition of Bengalis living in Pakistan has earned him the award.

After a three-month selection process, the Asian Youth Council announced the names of 10 outstanding youth leaders, on the occasion of the International Youth Day on August 12. Rakib is the only Bangladeshi to receive the award from the Asian Youth Council, in Kuala Lumpur. The winners will be presented with certificates, crests, and medals at the Asian Youth Council's forthcoming conference, once the pandemic subsides.

Furthermore, they will have the opportunity to make fully funded tours in 48 countries in Asia, and actively participate in international projects and development activities of the Asian Youth Council.

"I do not wish to be complacent. There are more opportunities to work for the welfare of others now, and I am happy to do my part," says Rakib, who has been working on youth leadership for a long time.

Earlier, he received the Global Youth Leadership Award 2019. He represented Bangladesh at a 2019 summit by China, marking 70 years of China's independence. He also attended the International Volunteer Forum of Islamic Countries last year, in Azerbaijan.

GUIDES

5 prestigious scholarships for Bangladeshi students

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Pursuing higher education at a foreign university is a dream for many, but the associated costs may be a hurdle. In this case, financial aid and scholarships are helpful. Students often do not apply for scholarships due to lack of knowledge about the opportunities. Let us look into 5 prestigious scholarships for Bangladeshi students.

Fulbright Scholarship

The Fulbright Scholarship provides graduate students and young professionals with opportunities to pursue fully funded master's degrees in the USA. As a prerequisite, applicants must have at least two years of full-time professional experience relevant to their proposed field of study. "This scholarship includes a variety of allowances for potential grantees. It also acts as a good network of scholars from other participating countries," shared Shwe Wai Ching, a Fulbright scholar.

Erasmus Mundus Programme

This programme offers fellowships and scholarships, which cover tuition fees, living costs, insurance, and travelling costs. The amount varies according to the levels of study, duration, and the nationalities of students. The joint master's scholarship is a fully-funded grant sponsored by the European Commission. "The scholarship offers students the opportunity to study in multiple European Union countries," shared Md Shafwan Ul Alam who is set to attend his first two semesters at the University of Lorraine, France.

Commonwealth Scholarship

This scholarship and fellowship is only available for students from Commonwealth countries. The subject areas the scholarship covers are engineering and technology, science, agriculture and humanities, and social sciences. As a part of the application process, students have to scout through the different host universities listed, and jot down the courses that seem fit. "My scholarship is jointly funded by the United Kingdom (UK) Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the UK university I was



ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR accepted to," said Tasnia Khandaker.

Chevening Scholarship

This scholarship, funded by the UK government's FCDO, empowers recipients to pursue a master's degree at a UK university. It is a merit-based scholarship for young professionals from diverse fields who have at least two years of work experience, and have proven exemplary leadership and networking skills. "The Chevening secretariat and local British High Commissions arrange different events for scholars, offering great networking opportunities with people from all over the world," added Chevening scholar Khaled Hasan.

Stipendium Hungaricum Programme

The Stipendium Hungaricum programme aims at providing scholarships and study opportunities on a wide range of courses. It seeks to encourage the globalisation of Hungarian higher education and its continuous growth, to improve academic and research community international relations. It is currently offered to students from close to 80 countries. "This scholarship provides me with tuition-free education, monthly stipend, accommodation and a health benefit scheme," asserted Maisha Maimuna.

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AKHLAKUR RAHMAN

Seeking an equal and inclusive society, Brihonnola relentlessly works with the transgender community. The organisation intends to include transgender individuals in the mainstream society, while promoting gender equality in Bangladesh. Sadikul Islam started Brihonnola in 2018, along with an executive team of 15 members, amongst which most were transgender people.

"We disbursed daily necessities and relief funds to the transgender community in the beginning," mentions Sadikul, who received the Joy Bangla Youth Award 2018. "During this pandemic, we initiated various social-awareness campaigns around Dhaka. A team of Brihonnola's transgender members have been volunteering in front of Dhaka Medical College regularly. They bring in medicines and assist patients. Seeing the smiling faces of city dwellers makes our transgender members feel more accepted. For them, this experience is life-changing." Brihonnola's members also deliver daily



Brihonnola's coronavirus emergency team members help out patients in front of Dhaka Medical College.

YOUTH IN ACTION

Brihonnola reaches out to those in need



Brihonnola's team members distributed iftar boxes in front of the high court during Ramadan 2021.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF BRIHONNOLA

necessities to people's homes, and provide free, emergency oxygen masks.

However, their journey has not been a smooth one. "There is an ill-intending middle man circle at the hospital gates, and we are sometimes mistaken for them," says Sadikul. "On the other hand, some people are still hesitant about getting help from a transgender person because of social stigmas, or family pressures."

Research, cultural, youth networking and relationship development, accessible environ-

ment promotion, and education and skill development are the main departments of Brihonnola. The organisation also has three active executive committees, including the central committee, Chittagong University committee, and Dhaka University committee, with 100 members.

Facilitating financial and educational empowerment for the transgender community, Brihonnola provides counselling, and plans to open a learning centre for transgender people to equip them with necessary skills for var-

ious working environments. The organisation has reached out to multiple corporations about employing transgender individuals.

Brihonnola has been solely dependent on self-funding, which has been one of their biggest challenges. Despite the hindrances, the organisation plans to keep working towards empowering the transgender community.

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The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
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Any law on data protection must respect data privacy

Such laws must not be used to infringe on individual rights

THE protection of personal data in the modern world is a complicated and contentious issue, especially when there is increasing evidence not just of spyware and surveillance technology accessing our data in the most insidious ways, but of big tech companies collecting and mining user data and potentially having the power to store more personal information of a country's citizens than their own government. After the 2018 Cambridge Analytica data scandal, there has been a growing debate on how much information is too much, and what governments can do to ensure they are able to protect the personal data of their citizens.

Against this backdrop, it is safe to say that there is a strong logic behind countries playing a more involved role in the protection of data generated within its borders and preserving data sovereignty. However, the best way to go about it is still being debated, and there are still questions of whether this is even realistic—given the nature of big data—and whether it would be ethical for governments to have more control over the personal data of its citizens either.

Now that Bangladesh is drafting a new data protection act, these differing views must be taken into account with the utmost seriousness. According to the minister of post and telecommunication, this law will address three major gaps—it will allow the authorities to take action against social media companies, fulfil the need for a law on data protection, and enable the protection of people's privacy. Given that Bangladesh is one of the 25 countries in the world with no laws on data privacy and protection (according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's tracker), experts have recognised the need for legislation in this area.

However, experts and rights activists have also expressed concerns that the new law will focus less on data protection, and instead be used more as a tool of surveillance on social media. In India, we have already seen the authorities use similar data protection laws to infringe on individual rights—for example, by suspending Twitter accounts of journalists, media outlets, and politicians during the country's farmer protests, and blocking hundreds of pro-farmer tweets that were deemed "controversial" by the government. What safeguards will be in place in Bangladesh to ensure that the same does not occur, especially when the draconian Digital Security Act has already been wielded by the authorities to suppress dissent?

There is definitely a lot of merit in formulating data protection laws, but there is a lot of scope for misinterpretation and misuse as well. Any such laws created in the country must have the ultimate goal of protecting the privacy and data of users from anyone, including state actors. The precedent set so far in this regard is not an encouraging one—according to experts, the existing Data Privacy and Protection Regulation 2019 does not provide enough checks and balances to protect data from state actors. We must remember that personal data of any individual is personal property that cannot be misused by private companies or by the state. Whatever steps Bangladesh takes, our government must guarantee individual rights are not infringed upon, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Bangladesh.

Migrant workers forced into quandary over flight home

Why the dire lack of coordination between different organs of the state?

AS if migrant workers are not already suffering enough due to unemployment and underpayment/non-payment of salaries during the pandemic, those in Malaysia have now been put in the middle of a brand new dilemma—that too by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) and the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur. CAAB, as reported in this daily, had issued a circular on August 16 stating that "Bangladeshi citizens have to be fully vaccinated against the novel coronavirus 14 days before the travel date for their return home by flights." It also said that those who were not fully vaccinated would need special authorisation from the Bangladesh foreign ministry in order to be allowed to fly back home.

Naturally, this caused migrants in Malaysia to crowd the Bangladesh High Commission offices. However, once there, they were reportedly turned away by officials who claimed that the travellers would not need any special approvals to fly back to Bangladesh. Some officials even said that the CAAB circular had been withdrawn. But when Bangladesh's deputy high commissioner in Malaysia was contacted by *The Daily Star*, he contradicted this claim, saying the circular remains effective, and that there must have been some miscommunication about it.

The deputy high commissioner has since assured us that an announcement would be made clarifying that migrant workers will need to be fully vaccinated before they can travel to Bangladesh. However, we must ask why and how the misinformation—about migrants being allowed to substitute a special approval from the foreign ministry for full vaccination—came to be placed in the CAAB's circular.

Do instances such as these not signal to the neglect with which issues of Bangladeshi migrants abroad are handled by the authorities here? Because of this lack of coordination between the CAAB and Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, our migrants in Malaysia, who have been waiting for months to come home (many of whom have lost their jobs or work permits recently, or just come out of jail) are now facing unnecessary hassles. Some are having to spend money on hotel stays as the process of returning to Bangladesh has been made so complicated.

We would urge the authorities at home and in Malaysia to coordinate with each other before issuing such notices, so that migrants do not get caught in the middle of such confusions. We would also ask them to make it easier for Bangladeshis to return home, perhaps by reverting to the previous process of undergoing PCR tests to detect Covid-19 and obtaining a negative certificate and then quarantining for 14 days once they are in Bangladesh.



The Taliban victory proves, if proof was at all necessary, how the presence of foreign troops is hated everywhere in the world.

PHOTO: AFP

Taliban takeover of Afghanistan: Its meaning and implications

THE THIRD VIEW



MAHFUZ ANAM

HISTORY unfolds in ways that may appear to be totally incomprehensible to us. It may not fit into our logic, may appear to be contrary to the facts that are at hand and our own analysis, which, often guided by our prejudice, may have indicated a different outcome. But as the dust settles and we understand things better, the outcome looks quite inevitable. That is how the Taliban takeover looks as we unearth more and more facts—inevitable. It is up to us now to understand the meaning of their victory, its regional and global significance, its ideological impact on the short term and the long term and what implications it has for us in Bangladesh.

Two fundamental realities must guide our present thinking: The importance of the Taliban victory and how the US, a superpower, will digest this humiliation and defeat and what course of action it will take.

Let me address the second aspect first. Let us not forget that the US is a superpower and in some ways the only one for the moment. For them, it is very hard to live with the fact that a rustic, village-based community, with a backward economy in every sense, with little training in modern-day warfare, with no airpower, no latest weaponry, no tank, no laser-guided missiles, no night-vision equipment, no drones, no helicopters, and wearing only slippers and their traditional dress and carrying powerful automatic rifles—the only signs of modern weaponry—sent the US and NATO armies packing, invoking the memory of the US' ignominious flight from Saigon 46 years ago. It is very hard to digest this reality, especially for a superpower like the US, that lives with a daily diet of "we are the best" slogan.

I mention this first because I anticipate that the immediate post-Taliban period will see efforts by the US and its Western allies to make the Taliban takeover look as bad as possible. They will try to highlight every flaw and shortcoming in the Taliban operation, notwithstanding the fact that so far six days of takeover have passed without much violence or law and order issues, which are inevitable in case of a shifting of power of this magnitude. This they will do—the CIA, starting from the 50s, has 70 years of experience in that—to justify their 20-year presence in Afghanistan. The fundamental weakness of the Afghan society is its ethnic divide which every external power tried to exploit over the centuries. Hopefully, the new Taliban regime will be extremely conscious of that vulnerability and act accordingly.

From the US perspective, the 20-years narrative of "caring" for the Afghan people and "helping" them to modernise and build a society of freedom and democracy cannot be allowed to just vanish into the thin air. Otherwise, the whole architecture of the "white man's burden" in its modern-day version loses credibility, especially for its, God forbid, future use.

The decision to invade Afghanistan was taken by George W Bush following the bombings of New York's Twin Tower and Pentagon by Al-Qaeda. Though there was not a single Afghan in the 19-member squad that led to the 9/11 attacks (in September 2001)—there were 15 Saudi

men led by an Egyptian among them—yet, the Bush administration decided to invade and occupy Afghanistan because it refused to hand over Osama Bin Laden to the Americans. US and UK military began bombing the country in October, 2001.

It was more like "how dare the US has been attacked"—that too in its mainland, something that had never happened before, and so someone and the country that supports or shelters them have to pay. The man—Osama Bin Laden—was the self-proclaimed perpetrator and the country, Afghanistan, the shelter-giver to Bin Laden, became the recipient of US' wrath and thus the invasion of a country began. Bin Laden escaped to Pakistan and was later killed by the US forces in 2011.

The quick victory over the Taliban and its removal from power gave the Americans a premature feeling of having prevailed. The Taliban withdrew and returned to fight another day and win.

What the Americans would now find harder to digest, more than the Taliban takeover—as that was being discussed in Doha for the last few years—is the manner of the takeover and collapsing of the edifice—the Afghan army—that the US military built over a 20-year period spending nearly a USD 100 billion to train and equip. No country, leave alone a superpower, can take defeat well. The Americans are especially vulnerable in

millions of dollars for doing what the regular army was supposed to do, without any of the motivations and institutional disciplines that military institutions usually are known to have.

The vanishing Afghan army speaks more of the American training than of the Afghan soldiers. How can it be that as soldiers in the army under US training they disappear without any fighting and the same Afghans under the Taliban take on the mighty US and fight like lions for 20 years or less? As the US leaders search for an answer for the debacle, they should focus their attention internally, to their very institutions and investigate the US army itself, how it worked in Afghanistan, what were the role of the private companies, who were paid what and how.

Let none of us lose sight of the enormity of this event. After Vietnam, this is the first time that the Americans have been defeated in the battlefield by a guerrilla force. And unlike the Vietnamese, who were helped by the Russians and the Chinese, the Afghans did not have such generous patrons.

A rustic army comprising of tribal people got together and defeated the mightiest power in the world over a period of 20 years. The US had everything—money, power, literally the whole of the Western world behind it, not to speak of the latest technology, the most

world. Every country, in whatever stage of development, hates foreign domination. However it be packaged and whatsoever be the narrative of "helping", "assisting", "caring", etc. the presence of foreign troops generates resentment which develops into hatred and finally into a desire to resist, and if compelled, through force. Each time the US air force flew sorties, each time a drone destroyed a house, each time US troops fired at an Afghan, it became a recruitment event for the Taliban.

To give some credit to the Americans, they seem to have understood this reality some time back, and hence started talking to the Taliban, initiating the Doha talks which reached its highest level in 2019 with US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and top Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar leading their respective sides, reaching an "agreement in principle" when former President Trump, quite inexplicably called off the peace talks and cancelled a secret meeting at Camp David with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. In February 2020, a "Path to Peace" agreement was signed and the first peace talks between the Taliban and Afghan government in 20 years was held in Doha. In April 2021, Biden declared complete troops withdrawal by September 2021.

Well, the world didn't have to wait till then. The US's longest war in recent history ended as the Taliban took control of Kabul without any resistance.

The Taliban victory has tremendous significance for our region. It will definitely have Pakistan and India competing intensely for their attention. Here Pakistan may appear to have an edge, but India's considerable presence in infrastructure building in Afghanistan will not be something that the new rulers will ignore. Pakistan will focus on expeditious return of the three million refugees that have been living in Pakistan ever since the Soviet invasion of 1979 when their 10 year occupation began. India will keep a keen eye on how the Kashmir situation is handled by the Taliban, who have declared that they will not let their territory be used to meddle in other countries' affairs. They have assured the Chinese about their total non-interference about the Uyghurs. The Russians have their concerns about the Chechens, and here also, the Taliban appears to have calmed their nerves. It is too early to predict, but so far the dealings have been matured.

As for Bangladesh, we need to observe the situation carefully and move as it unfolds. About recognising them, we should go slow but definitely not close our mind to doing so, especially if they are able to form an inclusive government, taking in the other ethnic groups that inhabit their land. Their internal and external policies will definitely be a strong guiding factor for our actions in Bangladesh.

The thing to remember is that the external factors behind the Taliban coming to power are different this time around than in 1996, especially the part played by Saudi Arabia and its brand of Wahhabi Islam. In fact, Saudi Arabia itself has undergone changes.

The Taliban appears to have learnt a lot in the last 20 years since they were last in power. They are a far more nationalistic force than they were in 1996, and we should expect them to focus more on their own development than meddling in other people's affairs.

What Vietnam proved 46 years ago to the US—after fighting there from the late fifties till 1975—Afghanistan proved again in 2021, that with all the sophisticated technology and limitless resources in hand, one cannot suppress the human spirit. It was Afghan nationalism, expressed through faith, that prevailed over unthinking arrogance, disdain for a people's way of life, very low impression of another people's culture and tradition.

these situations. "It can't be their fault", and so a scapegoat will have to be found.

Questions are being raised about who the Americans were training, and what level of efficiency, commitment and loyalty they were generating in these soldiers. Though the Americans are now trying to say that the Afghan national army did not want to fight to defend their country and were not committed, the real story is that the US trainers just did not see the writing on the wall. The government that these soldiers were supposed to defend did not enjoy public confidence, and the leaders for whom they were supposed to lay down their lives were corrupt to the core, many holding foreign passports and having their families living abroad. Nothing could depict the bankruptcy of the government leaders more than its head, President Ashraf Ghani, fleeing the country with a helicopter full of foreign currency—which he later denied. I think this one incident says it all.

It had been frequently reported that at the grassroots level, the ordinary soldiers were ill-paid if at all, not regularly given ration, and most often served under corrupt seniors. Didn't the US trainers know that? If not, then how come? And if yes, then what did they do about it. What was the role of the intelligence bodies? Were the trainers from the US army, or were they outsourced to private mercenary groups like the Blackwater who made

sophisticated communication systems, the extensive network of satellites to monitor the Taliban's every move. With the addition of drones, the Americans, to kill the "enemy", had only to press a button, sitting in an air-conditioned room in any part of the world, most probably in the US, and not having to take the trouble of going to the war-zone. This press a button warfare led to indiscriminate killings of Afghan civilians, including women and children, especially when the rules for air strikes were relaxed.

What Vietnam proved 46 years ago to the US—after fighting there from the late fifties till 1975—Afghanistan proved again in 2021, that with all the sophisticated technology and limitless resources in hand, one cannot suppress the human spirit. It was Afghan nationalism, expressed through faith, that prevailed over unthinking arrogance, disdain for a people's way of life, very low impression of another people's culture and tradition. Not that everything about culture needs to be preserved, nor every aspect of tradition to be eulogised, but whatever change that needs to be brought about—and change must come in tune with the process of modernisation—cannot be done through imposition and foreign occupation. All changes must come from within, through a nation's own experiences and thinking.

The Taliban victory also proves, if proof was at all necessary, how the presence of foreign troops is hated everywhere in the

What can we do if inflation is back?



AN OPEN DIALOGUE

ABDULLAH SHIBLI

WHY talk about inflation in the midst of the pandemic, one might ask. The answer is simple, if somewhat unpleasant. Inflation may soon be making

a comeback! There is no question that while defeating the Covid-19 virus and cutting its hydra-like fangs are of utmost urgency, we might soon see a situation where the world is fighting multiple battles on several fronts. Some of the issues that policymakers are currently grappling with are a surge in the Delta variant or some other variant, a sluggish economic recovery compounded by unemployed and underemployed population, lack of skilled workers in developed countries, and inflationary pressures that might complicate the task of the central banks as they pursue expansionary monetary policy and keep interest rates low. To complicate matters, inflation is emerging as a major concern in both G7 and emerging market and developing economies (EMDE).

Fahmida Khatun, Executive Director of CPD, in reviewing the country's monetary policy cautioned that the Bangladesh Bank "will have to be vigilant in maintaining the stability of the financial market in such unusual circumstances to avoid any price bubble." (*The Daily Star*, August 2). Other economists knowledgeable about the Bangladesh economy, including Zahid Hussain and Ahsan H Mansur, are all unanimous that inflationary pressures unleashed by disruptions in the supply chain and the easy money flowing from the government's stimulus programmes are already evident in the price of food and other essential commodities. According to BSS, the average inflation in the just-concluded fiscal year was 5.56 percent, overshooting the government's target of 5.4 percent. June's inflation of 5.64

percent was the highest in eight months. The spectre of inflation has been on the minds of central bankers and policy analysts in developed countries for some time, and this is reflected in the public discourse as well as in the print and online media. Inflation is also a constant fear in developing countries. For example, in Bangladesh, the total stimulus packages given during this pandemic by the government so far amount to Tk 128,441 crore (4.59 percent of GDP). Prices of almost all the commodities, including rice, pulses, flour, onion, vegetables, fishes and meat, are on the rise. This can be partially attributed to disruptions in the supply chain due to the pandemic, floods and market manipulation. However, inflationary expectations are rising too. "In addition to these, the increased flow of money into market from the stimulus packages has created fears of further inflation," according to Mansur.

I was recently searching for a topic for my next op-ed for *The Daily Star*. I started with the *Wall Street Journal* which has over the years been a reliable source of current news as well as emerging business issues. During the last few weeks, US Congress and the financial markets have consistently expressed their worries about the prospects of inflation. The lead stories and the opinions pages have kept on chirping about inflation. Regardless of the constant denials from the Federal Reserve, the central bank of the USA, one can be sure that just as the US and the global economy appear to be bouncing back from last year's slowdown, the fear of inflation will be a dominant theme.

Inflation phobia is obviously the result of our past experience, and theoretical discussions about the effect of increased money supply on inflation. Inflation—or the rate of change in prices over time—is not a simple phenomenon to measure or interpret. In general, a swiftly growing economy, a tightening job market, and continuing supply-chain issues seem a ripe environment for prices to keep on rising.

The prognosis is in sharp contrast to

recent low inflation in most countries. Until 2020, inflation has averaged just above 0.5-1 percent over the past decade, well below the US Federal Reserve's target of 2 percent. Low inflation for such an extended stretch is quite unusual if we consider the post-World War II record. "With the current unemployment rate near historic lows, the persistent soft readings on inflation pose a puzzle and challenge for economists, financial market participants, policymakers, and the general public," according to Dan Sichel

as monetarists, believe that a higher rate of inflation is coming, and inflation will remain high in the coming years.

For Bangladesh, economists caution the government to remain alert in the face of rising commodity prices, including that of daily essentials, "in the face of already existing excess liquidity which has reportedly reached Tk 2.31 trillion." Experts everywhere are somewhat in double minds about the future inflationary trends, though. Central bankers are not sure and forecasters in some instances stand at

the high-income economies.

Some cautionary words

Inflation measures in both developed and developing countries have been found to have underestimated price rises during the pandemic. Spending on "food at home" is up and spending for "transportation" is down as a result of the pandemic, but the CPI weights of these categories are unchanged. Alberto Cavallo of Harvard Business School found that in 10 of the 16 countries, inflation rates during the pandemic were higher than the official rates.

The IMF suggests seven possible measures to curb inflationary surges. In its report "The Impact of Covid-19 on Inflation: Potential Drivers and Dynamics", the IMF suggests international coordination to secure food and medical supplies, especially for low-income and fragile countries, checks on speculative price hikes and hoarding, and "targeted transfers—like food stamp programmes—to address the needs of the most vulnerable populations at the country level."

It is possible that the rise in prices as lockdowns start to be lifted may be "transitory", as many central bankers are hoping. The government can reduce uncertainty and the extent of pent-up demand which fuels inflation by announcing a credible plan to open up the economy to mitigate both deflationary pressures due to lack of demand during the containment and the inflationary pressures due to a rebound in demand during the reopening.

Moreover, to avoid creating inflationary pressures, appropriate monetary and fiscal policy after the end of the pandemic should be data-dependent and based on the strength of the rebound in supply and demand. This calls for watchful eyes from the policymakers, economists, and statisticians alike.

Dr Abdullah Shibli is an economist and IT consultant. He is also Senior Research Fellow at International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI), a think tank based in Boston.



Inflation is emerging as a major concern in both G7 and emerging market and developing economies.

PHOTO: STAR

of Wellesley College, USA.

Let us now look ahead. The trillions of dollars of stimulus money that have been pumped into the global economy over the last 18 months are bound to trigger inflation. "Too Much Money Portends High Inflation. The Fed should pay attention to Milton Friedman's wisdom", write economists John Greenwood and Steve H Hanke.

According to Milton Friedman, an economist who won the Nobel Prize, the relationship between money supply and price level is captured by a simple equation, known as the Quantity Theory of Money. Friedman's disciples, known

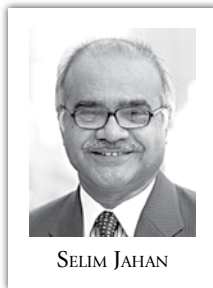
opposite ends of the spectrum.

One commentator jokingly quotes the poet Robert Frost, who said, "some say the world will end in fire, some say in ice". Robert Frost wasn't writing about the inflation debate, but he might as well as have.

Strong economic rebound and lingering pandemic disruptions fuel inflation forecasts above 2 percent through 2023, according to a survey of economists. Developing countries such as Bangladesh have managed to live with a higher level of inflation, as well as with a degree of uncertainty over inflation that would be politically unacceptable in

The spectre of inflation has been on the minds of central bankers and policy analysts in developed countries for some time, and this is reflected in the public discourse as well as in the print and online media.

How debate can help create a better world



SELIM JAHAN

FROM the beginning of human civilisation, people have loved to argue and debate. They argue on topics, trivial or important, and they debate on issues

which affect them personally or collectively. Sometimes, they just argue for argument's sake, but that is not a debate. A debate is a constructive way of substantive interaction, where people argue and counter-argue, using reasoning, objectivity, rational analysis, and facts. The idea is that through such processes, a society would have a better understanding of issues that affect it and possibly will find ways to encounter them. The ultimate objective of debate is to create sharpened, logical, and creative minds. Debating provides a platform for having discussions on critical issues facing the world and is thus an important means of creating a better world.



A debate is a constructive way of substantive interaction, where people argue and counter-argue, using reasoning, objectivity, rational analysis, and facts.

concept, whereas equity is a relative or proportional one. For example, everyone should be treated equally before the eyes of the law, but should be treated equitably in terms of taxes, where the tax burden should be proportional to the income of the person concerned.

A better world would mean a stable world—a world without wars and conflicts, without human oppression,

without social unrest and communal riots, and last but not the least, without terrorism. Today, our world is beset with wars and conflicts, characterised by unrest and human oppressions, and human security all around is threatened by terrorist activities here and there. In order to settle differences of opinions or any other conflict, people often resort to force or weapons. There has been an increasing radicalisation or

environment as that would shrink the opportunities and potential of the future generations and would hurt inter-generational equity. As *Homo sapiens*, we must realise that we can exist and prosper when we are respectful and sensitive to our environment and nature. Debates provide a critical means for the youth to better equip themselves for meaningfully participating in the creation of a better world. For such meaningful participation, debates prepare young people in five distinct ways:

First, debates provide a broader picture by exposing the pros and cons of the topic. As a result, the participants get a holistic view of concerns—a view which is needed for a constructive and balanced change in the world. For a changed world, such a broader vision is much-needed.

Second, since debaters are trained to approach issues in a logical manner, they can identify the priorities of societies in a logical manner. Identification of priorities and setting them in a logical manner is needed for any kind of change. Debates also equip young people to be focused and clear in their thoughts and approaches. Again, without a clear and focused approach, changes cannot be brought in. Furthermore, while making their arguments and counter-arguments, debaters depend on evidence. Their deliberations are fact-based. Evidence is also critical while making a case for a change and without facts, a blueprint for change cannot be formulated. Since they know how to use evidence in an objective manner, debaters can also effectively participate in the process of changing the world.

Third, debates teach people to be more sensitive to others, more respectful of others and more tolerant of opposing

viewpoints. In a world bedevilled by wars, conflicts and terrorism, one needs sensitivity, tolerance, and mutual respect to end conflicts and to stop terrorism. Such traits would also breed equality, communal harmony, and stability—all critical elements of a better world.

Fourth, debates give debaters confidence—confidence to speak out, to raise their concerns and to demand and seek solutions. All these are needed for effective participation in the process of changing the world. Furthermore, through debates, a sense of collaboration and cooperation develops among the team members. So, the debaters do not go for individual celebration, rather a collective approach to get their desired goal. Such a sense of collaboration and cooperation help young people understand the importance of collective actions, which are needed for changing the world.

Finally, changing the world is not a static process, rather a dynamic one. In such a process, priorities change, focus is redefined, strategies are revised. The change-makers must adjust to such shifts. Debating is also a dynamic process, which teaches the debaters to shift grounds as arguments and counter-arguments evolve. I think at present, debates can contribute to changing the scenario in at least three specific areas—**first**, in areas of intolerance and conflict by bringing in reasoning, respect for others, and the desire to settle differences; **second**, by having deliberations on emerging challenges like environmental degradation, migration, and refugees; and **third**, helping the issue of mental health because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Selim Jahan is Former Director, Human Development Report Office and Poverty Division, UNDP.

Changing the world is not a static process, rather a dynamic one. In such a process, priorities change, focus is redefined, strategies are revised. The change-makers must adjust to such shifts.

QUOTABLE Quote

CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI
(born July 29, 1956)
Indian-American author

Two great and terrible truths of war are these: War is easy to enter into, but difficult to end. And ultimately, in war there are no winners.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Goofs off
- 6 Painter Picasso
- 11 Permit
- 12 Cook's protector
- 13 "Robinson Crusoe" writer
- 14 Honking birds
- 15 Folded food
- 17 Director
- 18 Nuclear reactor inserts
- 22 Norway's capital
- 23 Sioux people
- 27 Plant anew
- 29 Singer Carly
- 30 Makes blank
- 32 Brussels-based org.
- 33 Atom orbiter

DOWN

- 1 Young fellow
- 2 Bullring cry
- 3 TV alien
- 4 Free of responsibilities
- 5 Take an oath
- 6 Asian temples
- 7 Gorilla, for one
- 8 Make coffee
- 9 Finish last
- 10 Wallet bills
- 16 Atlantic fish
- 18 Golf cry
- 19 Manual reader
- 20 "Frozen" queen
- 21 Far from baggy
- 24 Poet Khayyam
- 25 Dorothy's dog
- 26 Shortly, in poems
- 28 Construction site workers
- 31 Take in
- 34 School group
- 35 Pageantry
- 36 River of Russia
- 37 Mexican peninsula
- 40 Shipping weight
- 42 Lyricist Gershwin
- 43 Table part
- 44 Ram's mate

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

C	A	R	O	B	S	E	C	T	S
A	R	O	M	A	A	V	A	I	L
M	A	T	E	R	D	E	L	T	A
P	R	A	N	C	E	D	E	L	T
E	A	T	E	V	A	D	I	N	G
R	T	E	L	E	M	O	N	S	
P	L	A	N	E	T	R	A	G	
F	R	I	G	A	T	E	A	R	R
R	O	E	T	R	A	N	C	E	
A	N	D	R	E	D	U	C	A	T
U	T	T	E	R	A	T	O	N	E
D	O	O	M	S	M	O	R	E	L

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

HOW IS THE SPEECH I DRAFTED FOR YOU? GOOD, BUT I WANT TO CHANGE THIS "A" TO "AN" WHY CHANGE THAT? SO I CAN TAKE CREDIT FOR WRITING IT

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

BEFORE YOU SAY ANYTHING, JUST HEAR ME OUT. WE COULD RENT A MOTORHOME FOR OUR SUMMER VACATION! THE KIDS WOULD LIKE THAT. THIRTY-FOOT DIESEL PUSHER FORGING DOWN THE HIGHWAY, ANSWERING THE CALL OF THE OPEN ROAD. THIS IS FOR THE KIDS, RIGHT?

Covid risk

FROM PAGE 12
cites an association between serious Covid cases and physical inactivity. The study informs that being physically inactive increased the hospitalisation risk 2.26-fold in people aged 18 and above.

Physical activity, during the pandemic, can provide the immune system the required boost to fight the virus in the event one happens to contract it.

The World Health Organization believes all adults over the age of 18 should at least spend 150 minutes in moderate-intensity physical activity throughout the week. In practical terms, that is just a little over 20 minutes of stretching, a light run, a couple of sets of push-ups, or even yoga every day.

Alternatively, you can choose to spend 75 minutes per week doing high-intensity workouts. That will be 25 minutes of muscle workouts, fast cardio, and bodyweight training spread across three days of the week.

In addition to a boosted immune system, one will experience better mood while stuck at home during lockdowns or while working from home. With the recent trends in Covid-19 cases, it seems as good a time as any to work up a sweat.

Yahya discusses

FROM PAGE 12
what you have told me it is obvious that you have given considerable thought to a solution of this problem."

Yahya replied, "I have, and you can stop worrying because I am not going to execute the man even though he is a traitor."

SHYAMNAGAR DEBACLE

Bangladeshi freedom fighters faced a major setback today as Pakistani troops attacked one of their hideouts at Shyamnagar in the Sundarbans forest area, killing 51 and capturing nine. The troops made a surprise attack with the assistance of local collaborators.

Those taken prisoner were reported, according to Radio Pakistan, to have said the camp had been commanded by a captain from the East Pakistan Rifles.

13 AWAMI MNAS ASKED TO ANSWER CHARGES

The Pakistani military junta today ordered the last 13 of the 79 disqualified Awami League members of the National Assembly (MNAs) to appear before the Martial Law Authorities to answer charges of criminal offences. Radio Pakistan said Martial Law Administrator Lt Gen Tikka Khan had directed the 13, including a woman member (Nurjahan Murshid), to appear before the authorities. If they failed to do so, they would be tried in absentia, added Radio Pakistan. *Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com*

NGO official

FROM PAGE 12
charge of Rowangchhari Police Station.

Police are trying to arrest the accused, he said.

In the district's Ruma upazila, police arrested one Nurul Islam, 48, accused in a case filed over the rape of a Tripura girl.

Nurul, of Dighinala in Khagrachari, allegedly raped the girl on Monday afternoon, said Kazi Rakib Uddin, officer-in-charge of Ruma Police Station.

He was arrested after the child's mother filed the case on Wednesday with the police station, said the OC.

"The victim was sent to Bandarban Sadar Hospital for treatment," he added.

In Madhukhali upazila of Faridpur, police arrested a man on charge of raping a six-year-old girl around 11:00pm on Wednesday.

The arrestee Mohammad Sagor, 23, of Garakhola area, is a salesman of a clothing store in Madhukhali bazar.

According to the case statement, Sagor took the victim to his house and raped her.

Confirming the matter, Sohildul Islam, officer-in-charge of Madhukhali Police Station, said, Sagor was arrested from his residence.

The victim's father filed a case with Madhukhali Police Station yesterday morning.

The victim was undergoing treatment at Faridpur Bangubandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, added the OC.

In another development, a Panchagarh court yesterday sent a man to jail in connection with the case filed over the rape of a madrasa girl in Sadar upazila, said Court Inspector Anisur Rahman.

The accused Kamrul Hasan, 28, a truck driver by profession, raped the girl several times alluring her with fake promises of marriage, said Abdul Latif Mia, officer-in-charge of Panchagarh Police Station.

As she felt sick, family members brought her to a village doctor where they came to know that the girl became pregnant four months ago.

Then victim's father filed a case with the police station accusing the trucker on Wednesday afternoon, said the OC.

218 Rohingyas died or went missing at sea

FROM PAGE 12
Sea since the region's "boat crisis" in 2015, according to the report of the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, released yesterday.

"This means that journeys were eight times deadlier in 2020 than those in 2019," according to the report titled "Left Adrift at Sea: Dangerous Journeys of Refugees Across the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea".

It also highlights that some two-third of those attempting these perilous voyages are women and children in contrast to earlier periods where most of those travelling were men.

UNHCR says these deadly journeys of the Rohingyas are not a new phenomenon. Over the past decade, thousands of Rohingya refugees have left by sea from Rakhine State in

Myanmar and from the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

"The roots of these dangerous journeys are found in Myanmar, where the Rohingya were stripped of their citizenship and denied basic rights."

Bangladesh hosts nearly a million Rohingyas, mostly those who fled a brutal military campaign in 2017. Back in Rakhine State, there are some 600,000 Rohingyas.

For the Rohingyas who found refuge in neighbouring countries, restrictions on movement, livelihoods and education are compelling factors to seek a future elsewhere in the region. Motivations are various, often overlapping, and also include aspirations of reuniting with family members, UN Refugee Agency said.

Korean firm to be tasked with toll collection

FROM PAGE 12
Under the approved proposal, KEC was supposed to be appointed for the work following direct procurement method under a government-to-government arrangement.

Shamsul Arefin, additional secretary of the cabinet division, said the company collects tolls and maintains 4,112km of expressway and 1,329km of bridges in South Korea.

TOLL FOR EXPRESSWAY

The finance ministry in April this year approved a toll rate -- Tk 10 per km as base fare -- proposed by the Road Transport and Highways Division for the expressway.

As per the rate, a medium-sized truck would have to pay Tk 550 to use the 55km expressway, on top of the

toll to use the Padma Bridge.

The toll for a bus would be Tk 495 and for a car Tk 138, as per the toll rate.

The division wanted to start collecting tolls from vehicles using the expressway from July this year, but later stepped back from the decision as the necessary structures were not ready.

Currently, tolls are collected by Roads and Highways Department for use of three bridges on the route. Once the Korean firm starts collecting tolls for the entire expressway, the current toll collection will be discontinued.

Contacted, RHD's Chief Engineer Abdus Sabur said terms of reference will be shared with the Korean firm

They are at even greater risks of abuse by smugglers when making such journeys. Their ordeal was made worse because safe harbours to end their dangerous journey were nowhere to be found.

Since 2020, many refugees have been marooned for months on unseaworthy boats, falling prey to abuses by smugglers, becoming gravely ill through insufficient food and water, and enduring the harsh conditions at sea, it said.

These risks have been prolonged on the occasions where the regional states have "pushed back" boats to prevent disembarkation, UNHCR said.

UNHCR has called on all states in the region to search for and rescue refugees in distress at sea, and disembark them to a place of safety,

work towards a regional mechanism for predictable and equitable disembarkation and provide access to asylum procedures for those who disembark.

It also called on the states to work with UNHCR and support fellow countries in the region to implement dignified reception arrangements and provide protection and assistance to refugees who disembark, and address the root causes of refugee maritime movements.

UNHCR's Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific Indrika Ratwate said, "For as long as states bordering the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal are reluctant to rescue and land those in distress at sea, that collective failure to act will have tragic and fatal consequences. We can and must do better."

which will then give financial and other proposals.

After negotiations, the proposal would be placed before the CCGP, he said, adding that the process is expected to be completed within three months.

Replying to a question, he said the Korean company has given a tentative estimate of Tk 425 crore for five years' service, but that is not final.

He said for the first time in the country, intelligent transport system (ITS) would be installed on the expressway under a separate project funded by Korea.

Once the technology is installed, the KEC will operate those, he added.

Using ITS, authorities will be able to learn news of any accident or other

incidents on the road immediately. It will allow the authorities to take quick action to prevent traffic disruption, an RHD official said.

However, the project for installing ITS is still at a preliminary level, another RHD official said.

Meanwhile, CCGP yesterday approved eight proposals involving several projects.

According to a proposal, National Development Engineers Ltd will construct Road Research and Training Centre of RHD and maintain it for three years at a cost of Tk 251.6 crore.

The centre will be established under the South Asian Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Road Connectivity Project 2 of RHD.

17 years on, the road to justice not over yet

FROM PAGE 1
filed over the attack, considered one of the most sensational political crimes in the country's history, which left at least 24 people killed and 300 injured. Then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina narrowly escaped death.

Eighteen of the convicted accused, including Tarique Rahman, who is in London, are absconding and 31 are in jail.

Execution of the capital punishment remains pending as the High Court has not yet started hearing on the death references and appeals by the 19 death-row convicts. The HC accepted the appeals more than two and a half years ago.

Under the law, all death penalties by trial courts must be confirmed by the HC before their execution.

The long delay in the hearing

is partly due to the coronavirus pandemic that has forced the court to suspend much of the regular activities and to run virtually amid lockdowns, court sources said.

The compilation of documents -- trial proceedings, statements, evidence, orders and the verdict -- relating to the murder and explosives cases have reached the HC in August last year, clearing the way for the court to start the hearing.

The sources added 63 appeals had been filed by the convicts in connection with the cases and all of them are pending before the HC.

Last year, HC officials placed the relevant files before the chief justice for a decision. But he has yet to assign any High Court bench to start hearing the death references and the appeals, as the SC had to suspend regular

activities amid surge in coronavirus contamination, the sources also said.

Contacted on August 16, Law Minister Anisul Huq said the government had taken all necessary steps to prepare the paper books, which contain all the details of a trial, expeditiously for quick disposal of the cases.

"The paper books are ready now. The government will move an application before the High Court through the attorney general's office in the first week of September for fixing a date to start hearing of the death references and appeals in the cases," he told The Daily Star.

He said the culprits had carried out the attack to kill Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to frustrate the dream of building the "Sonar Bangla"

Condemned fugitive held 22 yrs after the killing

FROM PAGE 12
Kazi Aref, were killed in a brushfire during a rally on Kalidaspur Government Primary School premises in Kushtia's Daulatpur.

The others killed were the then Kushtia district JSD president Lokman Hossain, general secretary Yakub Ali, local JSD leader Israel Hossain and Shamsur Mandal.

On August 30, 2004, a Kushtia court sentenced 10 people to death and 12 others to life imprisonment in the case.

On August 5, 2008, the High Court upheld the death sentence of nine of

them and acquitted 13 others.

On January 8, 2016, three death row convicts -- Safayat Hossain Habib, Anwar Hossain and Rashedul Islam Jhantu -- were executed at Jashore Central Jail.

All three were top members of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Laltu).

One of the death row convicts died in custody while some others are still on the run.

At the press conference, the Rab official said that although Raushan's hometown is Gangni of Meherpur, he used to tell everyone in Rajshahi that he was from Gazipur. He also

changed his name to Uday Mandal in his National ID card.

"Law enforcement had trouble identifying Raushan as his name had been changed. That is why it was possible for him to stay in hiding for so long," said Moin.

"Apart from cattle farms in Rajshahi, Raushan was also involved in the business of selling land. He has grown up children who don't know their father's real identity or about the murder. His wife, however, knew everything."

He said Raushan was involved in coordinating and planning Kazi Aref's

murder.

"During interrogation, Raushan said he was involved in several other killings besides that of Kazi Aref. He was a death row convict in the murder of Kaziur union parishad chairman Abdul Baki in 1999, and an accused in the killing of a local school teacher Amzad in 2000," the Rab official said.

Raushan had been involved in smuggling, haat (market) leasing and other business activities in border areas since 1992 and had formed a criminal group in the area. At that time, he also befriended groups of outlaws.

Tourist spots reopen after 5 months

FROM PAGE 12
Two private airlines have also increased the number of flights to different tourist destinations, including Cox's Bazar.

On August 12, the government said all tourist spots, resorts and recreation centres would reopen from August 19 (yesterday).

In a notification, the cabinet division said they will be allowed to operate at half capacity while following health safety protocols.

Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB), a platform of around 700 tour operators, said the

tourism sector has incurred a loss of Tk 20,000 crore last year due to the pandemic.

Several lakh people involved with this sector had been spending their days in a sorry state due to the closure of tourist spots for around 19 months, with a gap after the first lockdown last year.

TOAB President Md Rafeuzzaman yesterday told The Daily Star that without reopening inbound and outbound tourism, this sector won't be able to bounce back from the losses.

In Chattogram, many people, with friends and/or family, were

seen coming out of their homes and roaming around different tourist spots.

However, the turnout of visitors on the first day at different tourists' sites, including Foy's Lake Amusement Park, Swadhinata Complex, Chattogram Zoo, Patenga Sea Beach and Karnaphuli Park, was low due to rough weather.

During a visit to different spots, it was seen that visitors were not allowed to enter without face masks.

In Foy's Lake Concord Amusement Park, staffers were seen with disinfectant sprays at the entry point.

Dulal Karmakar, a visitor, went

to the park with his family. He said they were exhausted from spending months at home and came to the park for some refreshment.

Bishwajit Ghosh, deputy manager of Foy's Lake Concord Amusement Park said they are following the instructions and health safety guidelines issued by the government.

The Chattogram district administration strictly instructed the authorities of all tourist centres to allow visitors at half capacity. It also instructed them to strictly follow health rules and ensure face masks were used.

Lax monitoring led to surge in dengue cases

FROM PAGE 1
reported dengue cases stood at 7,251, including 416 cases confirmed outside Dhaka, the data shows.

The mosquito-borne viral infection and Covid-19 present similar symptoms such as fever, headache and body ache, which makes diagnosis hard.

And most hospital beds, including those at the Intensive Care Units (ICUs), are occupied by Covid-19 patients, making it difficult for dengue patients to get hospital admissions, said experts.

Saifur went on to term the existing system for eradicating Aedes mosquitoes outdated.

Fogging, which is the government's preferred mode of controlling the Aedes mosquito population, is not good at nipping the nuisance in the bud, according to the entomologist, who did his PhD on medical entomology in Malaysia.

"It [fogging] is the last resort," he said, adding that the Insect Growth Regulators (IGRs) were very useful insecticides against mosquitoes.

The IGRs are insecticides that mimic hormones in young insects and can prevent reproduction, egg-hatching and moulting from one stage to the next.

"If we can use this kind of insecticides, we need not worry about the Aedes mosquito breeding like we are doing now."

Had those insecticides been available, people could have used them in places where water remained stagnant for a long time.

Saifur underscored the need for an integrated vector management unit, which is yet to be formed by the government.

Besides, he lamented that the two Dhaka city corporations lack entomologists, whose presence is crucial for monitoring the Aedes mosquitoes and advising anti-mosquito operations round the year.

The Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) has two entomologists, but the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) does not have a single one.

The entomologist's post in the DSCC has remained vacant since last year, said an official of its health department, preferring not to be named.

"Serovigilance is very important to know about the type of virus so that the authorities can take necessary measures accordingly," said Manzur Chowdhury, entomologist and former president of the Zoological Society of Bangladesh.

Serovigilance is a globally used and trusted standard that measures the levels of antibodies against a certain infection and decodes the percentage of the population previously exposed to the virus. It is typically used as an extensive tool to

see how far an infection has breached in a community.

The Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) has conducted serosurveillance in July and found serotype-3 active in Bangladesh this year like in 2019, when the country suffered its worst-ever dengue outbreak with more than one lakh dengue cases and 179 deaths.

The serotype-3 is the most dangerous variant among the four dengue serotypes, he said, adding that the IEDCR could have done it much earlier.

The two city corporations, however, beg to differ.

Contacted, Brig Gen Md Zobaidur Rahman, the chief health officer of DNCC, said they have increased the manpower and equipment to combat dengue after 2019.

An additional 540 workers were recruited after 2019 to take the workforce to about 1,000.

Apart from the anti-mosquito drive, the DNCC is working to build awareness among people since the beginning of the dengue season this year, Zobaidur said.

The insecticide DNCC is using is 100 percent effective in killing mosquitoes, he said, adding that they have tested it in three laboratories before using it.

"We examine every bit of the chemical to check its effectiveness."

Ripples

FROM PAGE 12
was rocky. But data gathered by Nasa's Cassini spacecraft, which orbited the ringed planet for 13 years before intentionally plunging into its atmosphere in 2017, suggests a larger core than previously estimated.

Rather than solid rock, Saturn's core is likely what scientists refer to as "fuzzy," or a slushy mix of ice, rock and metallic fluids.

A study on the findings published Monday in the journal Nature Astronomy.

Oscillations occurring within Saturn's interior cause the planet to move, which creates ripples in the planet's stunning system of rings.

"Saturn is always quaking, but it's subtle," said Christopher Mankovich, lead study author and a postdoctoral scholar research associate in planetary science at the California Institute of Technology, in a statement.

"The planet's surface moves about a meter every one to two hours like a slowly rippling lake. Like a seismograph, the rings pick up the gravity disturbances, and the ring particles start to wiggle around."

The frequency of the gravitational ripples measured in the rings suggest that Saturn's deep interior is stable. When the planet was forming, its interior formed stable layers as heavy materials like rock and ice moved toward the planet's center and lighter materials rose above them.

"This is the first time we've been able to seismically probe the structure of a gas giant planet, and the results were pretty surprising," said Jim Fuller, study coauthor and assistant professor of theoretical astrophysics at Caltech, in a statement.

Hefajat chief

FROM PAGE 1
12:30pm on the way to CSCR Hospital in the port city, said ANM Ahmedullah, former publicity secretary of Hefajat's Chattogram unit.

Resident Medical Officer Amzad Hossain said Babunagari had different old age complications.

Babunagari left behind his wife, a son, six daughters and a host of relatives and followers to mourn his death.

Babunagari was born in 1953 at Babunagari village of Fatikchhari, Chattogram.

He studied in reputed madrasas and when he was 20, enrolled in Jamia Uloom-ul-Islamia in Pakistan and studied there for four years.

He was the secretary general of Hefajat when the islamist organisation was formed in 2010.

But a rift between him and late Hefajat amir Shah Ahmad Shafi became well-known in recent years.

On 15 November, 2020, he was elected the new amir following Shafi's death.

Relatives and family members of Ahmad Shafi claimed that Babunagari and his aides caused Shafi's death by creating obstructions in ensuring his medical treatment.

A relative of Shafi even filed a case against Babunagari and several others.

The Police Bureau of Investigation in a probe report in April said Babunagari and 42 others were involved in "creating an atmosphere to accelerate" Shafi's death.

In November 2020, soon after the formation of Hefajat's 249-member central committee, the organisation hogged the headlines by strongly opposing the construction of Bangabandhu's sculpture in the capital.

Tension between the government and Hefajat over the issue eased after a series of meetings between the two sides.

On December 7, two sedition cases were filed with the Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Court against Babunagari.

On April 26, Babunagari dissolved the committee reportedly because of the government pressure that came after Hefajat activists' widespread violence that lasted several days in late March.

Babunagari was under tremendous stress after the arrest of several hundred Hefajat activists and leaders following the violence that left 17 dead.

Two cases were filed against him with the Hathazari Police Station on charges of his involvement in the violence.

Amid pressure from the government, a new committee of Hefajat was announced in June with Babunagari as the chief. But most of the Hefajat leaders involved in the violent activities and those involved in different political parties were dropped from the new committee.

In a bid to come to terms with the government, Babunagari sent several delegations to meet Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and different intelligence agencies.

At one stage, Babunagari and top Hefajat leaders announced that students of any Qawmi madrasa will never get involved in anti-government activities and politics.

Babunagari will be buried at the graveyard of Darul Ulum Moinul Islam Madrasa, popularly known as the Hathazari madrasa, after a namaz-e-janaza, said Maulana Yahya, a senior teacher of the madrasa.

The home minister and leaders of different political parties expressed deep shock at his death.

Mushfiqur, Liton return to squad

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 19-member squad yesterday for the upcoming five-match T20I series against New Zealand, starting from September 1.

The wicket-keeper batsman duo -- Mushfiqur Rahim and Liton Das -- returned as predicted, while young leg-spinner Aminul Islam made the cut as well. The three aforementioned players had to miss out on Bangladesh's recently-completed historic 4-1 series win against Australia for having opted to exit the bio-bubble for personal reasons, following the Zimbabwe tour.

The only player dropped from the previous T20 squad is Mohammad Mithun, who was one of the players from the 'Tigers' ODI squad for the Zimbabwe tour that the BCB had asked to stay back for the T20Is against the Aussies in order to fill in for the missing players.

The inclusion of technically gifted,

experienced right-handed batsmen like Mushfiqur and Liton is most likely to strengthen the batting line-up, given that the top-order, especially the openers Soumya Sarkar and Naim Sheikh, were found wanting against the Aussies and that the batting order is lop-sided by left-handers as well.

As far as Aminul is concerned, having a diverse option of a leggy in the bowling unit could prove to be a vital component behind Bangladesh's success in the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup later this year.

SQUAD

Mahmudullah (Captain), Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Soumya Sarkar, Liton Das, Mosaddek Hossain, Afif Hossain, Naim Sheikh, Nurul Hasan Sohan, Shamim Hossain, Rubel Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, Mohammad Saifuddin, Shoriful Islam, Tajjul Islam, Mahedi Hasan, Aminul Islam Biplob, Nasum Ahmed.

NABID YEASIN



What is more important: a false sense of achievement or a harsh realisation that will eventually make you stronger? As Bangladesh prepare to host a second-string New Zealand side for a five-match T20I series starting from September 1, that question is the most pertinent one for the team's think-tank.

None of the 16 members of the Kiwis' side for the tour will be included in their squad for the upcoming T20I World Cup, which makes it clear that the Kiwis do not consider this tour ideal preparation for the showpiece event just over a month away. However, the New Zealand squad still have a number of talented players within their ranks.

For instance, touring for the Kiwis is Finn Allen, who emerged as the breakout star in the latest edition of Super Smash, New Zealand's premier T20 league. He plundered 512 runs in 11 innings at a stellar strike rate of 193.93 and smashed 25 sixes, the most in the Super League, in February this year. The attacking opener also has experience against the Tigers, with all three of his T20I caps coming against Bangladesh during the Tigers' tour of New Zealand earlier this year and his T20I-best score of 71 being recorded in the third T20I.

Aside from Allen, the team include the likes of Tom Latham, who will be leading them on this tour, Colin de Grandhomme, Hamish Bennett and Henry Nicholls -- all of whom have their fair share of experience at the international level and in franchise T20 leagues around the globe.

But will these players be able to give the Tigers a real challenge and help them prepare for what is waiting for them in the T20 World

Desperation to win setting Tigers up for failure?



Black Caps coach Glenn Pocknall (L) chats with pacer Hamish Bennett during a training session ahead of their five-match T20I series against Bangladesh.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Cup in the UAE and Oman in October-November this year?

The truth is that even if the likes of Kane Williamson, Trent Boult, Kyle Jamieson and Lockie Ferguson toured, Bangladesh would still be the favourites for the upcoming series if they decided to opt for yet another slow, low and gripping Mirpur pitch similar to the surfaces during a historic first-ever bilateral series triumph against the Aussies earlier this month.

Winning ought to boost confidence, but at times winning in favourable conditions only can severely add to a false sense of achievement. That can be far more detrimental to a team than a few losses in challenging conditions, which could actually help a team grow and adapt accordingly.

The trend for Bangladesh over the past five years goes to show just how a false sense of achievement has impacted the Tigers' performance.

In that period, Bangladesh won 25 of the 40 games played across formats at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, which typically behaved more or less the way it did during the recent tour of Australia. A winning rate of 62.5 per cent should have seen Bangladesh make massive strides in the game, at least going by the logic that counts winning as the only measure of success.

However, while Bangladesh kept bolstering their confidence in Mirpur, the Tigers saw the other side of the coin when playing overseas over the same period, losing 48 of 67 games played across formats

with a winning rate of just 23.88 per cent.

After hammering Australia 4-1 in their last T20I series, Bangladesh are now in high spirits and looking to put up another dominant showing against the Kiwis in the coming month.

But if the team management decides to employ the same tactic against the Kiwis as they did against Australia, it would probably only serve to improve their winning rate on a favourable Mirpur pitch. That would also mean that the quality of cricket during the New Zealand series will also be far from what is required for an ideal preparation ahead of an event as big as a T20 World Cup.

It is true that teams need to utilise home conditions to make the most of them. And like every other home series, the Bangladesh team management must opt to use the home conditions to assist their

While Bangladesh kept bolstering their confidence with wins in Mirpur in the last five years, the Tigers saw the other side of the coin when playing overseas over the same period, losing 48 of 67 games played across formats.

cause this time around as well. Only this time, the difference should be that they prepare a true cricketing wicket that will genuinely challenge the Tigers' abilities.

That may see them lose a few T20Is, but will certainly help the players recognise their shortcomings and rectify them before the T20I World Cup, which, in fact, is the true purpose of this series.



Bangladesh coach Russell Domingo shares a light moment with all-rounder Shamim Hossain during a training session at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

Saif and Police earn victories

SPORTS REPORTER

Saif Sporting Club notched up a 3-1 win over Uttar Baridhara Club, courtesy of a brace from Nigerian John Okoli, in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The day's other match witnessed a stoppage-time strike from Mohammad Jewel which guided Bangladesh Police to a single-goal win over Arambagh KS, who have been relegated already, at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

However, both winning sides stayed in their previous positions of the 13-team table of BPL, with Saif SC in the sixth position with 38 points from 21 matches while eighth-placed Police raised their tally to 25 points from 22 outings.

Robson proving to be the difference-maker

SPORTS REPORTER



When Bashundhara Kings roped in Brazil's Robson Da Silva, popularly known as Robinho, on loan from top-tier Fluminense FC, the Bangladesh Premier League champions had his marauding runs down the left flank in mind and hopes their Argentine talisman Hernan Barcos could capitalise on Robson's flawless crosses and decisive passes in the AFC Cup.

However, Barcos left Bashundhara Kings after the expiration of his contract, having played only one match in the abandoned 2020 AFC Cup. He made an undeniable statement in that game, the former Argentine international netting four times in an overwhelming 5-1 win over TC Sports Club in Dhaka.

And while Robson was denied the opportunity to pair up with Barcos in the AFC Cup or domestic competitions, he found a partner in another Argentine, Raul Becerra, and has become the most lethal striker in the league with 19 goals from 20 matches.



The 26-year-old also effectively translated his rich scoring form to the AFC Cup to give Bashundhara Kings a winning start and prove that he was as important as Barcos had proved in the 2020 campaign.

Robson also has a splendid ability with the ball at his feet and he has easily danced past three or four players many times in domestic matches before finding the back of the opponent net or feeding the ball to others. He is undeniably dangerous in the opposition's box, but the top-left

corner of the box seems to be his favourite striking position, as a number of his 19 goals came from that spot during league matches.

So when the Brazilian received the ball in his favourite position in the 10th minute against Maziya S&RC in an AFC Cup match on Wednesday, the Kings held their breath in anticipation. But frustratingly, Robson drove straight into the hands of the Maziya goalkeeper at the near post as he attempted his trademark curler into the top right corner.

Having survived the initial pressure from Maziya S&RC, Robson grew into the game and began to penetrate, but it was not until the 39th minute that he truly made amends, striking a stunning goal from a bullet-like drive that blazed in at the near post with the goalkeeper motionless.

Despite being the hero of the match, Robson was polite in giving credit to his teammates and management.

"Since I've been with Bashundhara, my confidence has increased. I feel the support of the staff and my teammates as well as the management. I know I need to be one of the players pushing and making plays that make the difference," Robson was quoted as saying on the Asian Football Confederation website after the match.

"The main thing compared to our league was the intensity. It was a high-intensity game. I want to praise the team. All of them were very confident with the plan as we analysed them in detail and we knew that if we stuck to the plan, we would get some points."

Spirited West Indies aim to seal series

AGENCIES



Less than five days after playing one of the most memorable Test matches in recent history, West Indies and Pakistan will once again take the field on Friday in the second and final game of the series.

West Indies scraped through by the barest of margins to register a thrilling one-wicket win against Pakistan in the first Test of the series as the hosts registered full 12 points on the ICC World Test Championship 2021-23 table.

Since the second Test too will be played at Sabina Park in Jamaica, both teams could opt to go with an all-pace bowling lineup after the spinners went wicketless in the first game.

West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite could look to off-spinner Roston Chase to provide some variety and bring in another fast bowler, perhaps Alzarri Joseph, to complete the pace quartet. Pakistan too might ring in a couple of changes if they too want to go with the all-pacers strategy, which would mean Yasir Shah sitting the second match out.

The bowlers might have hogged most of the limelight in the first Test, but it also highlighted how important it is for batters to grind it out in difficult conditions, especially in low-scoring encounters such as these. While several batters on both sides got off to starts, they could not convert it into big scores.



Left-arm seamer Shaheen Afridi, who picked up eight wickets in the first Test, will once again be vital for Pakistan as they look to turn the table against the West Indies in the second Test at Sabina Park, starting on Friday.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Inter's turbulent summer leaves Serie A crown up for grabs

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan kick off the new Serie A season on Saturday in the midst of fan protests and money troubles that threaten to derail their title defence before it has even begun.

A dramatic summer for the champions reached its lowest ebb last week when star striker Romelu Lukaku was sold to Chelsea, a transfer that enraged not just supporters but reportedly also CEO Giuseppe Marotta and new coach Simone Inzaghi.

The Gazzetta dello Sport reported that Inter's cash-strapped Chinese owners Suning forced the sale of Belgium forward Lukaku after having already offloaded buccaneering right-back Achraf Hakimi, a key figure in their first Serie A triumph



since 2010, to Paris Saint-Germain.

The club's financial problems were clear well before the league crown was claimed, and last month previous coach Antonio Conte left Inter knowing his team could be dismantled. They are still strong in key areas and have one of Italy's Euro 2020 heroes in Nicolo Barella, but the squad has certainly been downgraded.

Lukaku has been replaced with Edin Dzeko, a capable forward familiar with Serie A, but the Bosnia striker is 35 years old and scored just seven league goals last season. Dutch defender Denzel Dumfries however is an intriguing choice for the vacant spot at right-back after his exciting displays at Euro 2020. How he and Dzeko fare will be key to Inzaghi's chances at Inter

after doing an excellent job on a small budget at Lazio.

Ready to pounce will be Juventus, who have Massimiliano Allegri back at the controls and added Euro star Manuel Locatelli to a midfield which was the Old Lady's weak point under Andrea Pirlo last season. Rumours of Cristiano Ronaldo's desire to leave Juve have not dampened enthusiasm around the team's chances as the chaos that has enveloped Inter and Allegri's return has boosted hopes in Turin of reclaiming the title from their old enemies.

Also sniffing to overtake Inter is a new cast of managers led by Jose Mourinho at Roma, who on Tuesday celebrated the arrival of Tammy Abraham from Chelsea. Mourinho was welcomed back to Italy this summer, memories of treble glory at Inter over a decade ago leaving Roma fans hoping the once Special One's star has not definitively waned.

Elsewhere Maurizio Sarri will try to bring his brand of passing football to Lazio while Luciano Spalletti has a chance to get a talent-packed Napoli back in the top four on his return to club management after two years away.



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DHAKA-MAWA-BHANGA EXPRESSWAY Korean firm to be tasked with toll collection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is set to give Korean Expressway Corporation the responsibility to collect toll from vehicles on the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga expressway.

The South Korean company has already been assigned to collect toll on the Padma Bridge.

Apart from toll collection, the company would be appointed to operate an intelligent transport system (ITS) and the operation and maintenance of the country's first ever expressway.

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) yesterday gave approval in principle to a proposal in this regard.

No date was fixed to start toll collection on the 55km expressway. However, it may start when the Padma Bridge is open to public next year, officials said.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, who presided over the virtual meeting, briefed reporters about the development.

The company, which will use an automatic toll collection system, will give a detailed proposal, including the financial aspects, for approval by the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase (CCGP).

The Road Transport and Highways Division has set a toll rate for the expressway but the rate for the Padma Bridge has not yet been finalised. The CCEA in August last year approved a proposal to appoint KEC for maintenance and toll collection once construction of the Padma Bridge is complete.

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A battery-run rickshaw is running dangerously in front of a bus on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway. Defying a ban, slow-moving vehicles like this rickshaw and other three-wheelers get in the way of fast-moving vehicles on the highway regularly. The photo was taken near Kanchpur Bridge in Narayanganj recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Tourist spots reopen after 5 months

Experts urge govt to ensure all follow safety measures against Covid

RASHIDUL HASAN and ARUN BIKASH DEY

People involved with tourism, hotel and motel businesses breathed a sigh of relief as all tourist spots and parks reopened yesterday, after almost five months, despite ongoing the Covid-19 pandemic.

Public health experts, however, urged the government to ensure proper health guidelines are maintained at tourist spots.

Staff members and officials of different hotels in Cox's Bazar, one of the most popular holiday destinations, said they are ready to welcome tourists in compliance with the government's health safety guidelines and regulations.

Advanced bookings have already started in hotels and motels, they added.

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SEEKING REFUGE 218 Rohingyas died or went missing at sea

Says UN report

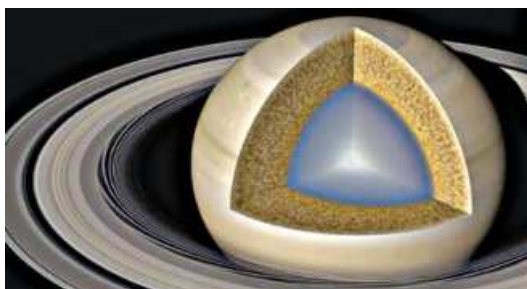
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

At least 218 Rohingyas died or went missing at sea in 2020 as they desperately sought refuge in the Southeast Asian countries either from Myanmar's Rakhine State or Bangladesh's Rohingya camps, a new UN report says.

They are part of 2,413 Rohingyas who are known to have travelled last year, making it the deadliest year on record for refugee journeys in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman

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Ripples in Saturn's rings reveal its 'fuzzy' core



CNN ONLINE

A rippling detected within the rings around Saturn has helped scientists determine that the giant planet may be "fuzzy" at its core.

Previously, researchers believed Saturn's core

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

KAZI AREF MURDER Condemned fugitive held 22 yrs after the killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion yesterday arrested a death row convict for the murder of Kazi Aref Ahmed, a Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader and an organiser of the Liberation War, around 22 years after his killing.

A Rab team arrested Raushan alias Uday Mondal, 57, during a drive in Rajshahi, said Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Legal and Media Wing of Rab, at a press briefing at its media centre in Karwan Bazar.

Raushan, originally from Meherpur, was absconding for years assuming different names in different districts, Rab officials said.

Moin said they located him recently when he was paying his utility bill in Rajshahi, where he lived, as "Ali from Gazipur", with his family.

On February 16, 1999, five JSD leaders, including

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ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Yahya discusses trial of Bangabandhu

AUGUST 20, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

TRIAL OF BANGABANDHU

In a telegram sent today to the US Department of State, Joseph Farland, the US ambassador to Pakistan, provided an interesting detail of his discussion with Pakistan President Yahya Khan about the trial of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The one-on-one meeting took place on August 19, 1971.

Farland told Yahya that as a friend, he felt strongly obligated to suggest that Bangabandhu not be executed. Such an action, Farland continued, would be contrary to the best interests of Yahya's government as well as to his own "best personal interests".

Yahya replied that he wanted Farland to know (and for the US Government to know, but only on the highest levels) that the concern in that regard was unfounded. He said he had gotten the most qualified Pakistani attorney, AK Brohi, to act as defence counsel, that

the military tribunal had been advised that the trial must be conducted with the greatest care, without bias or prejudice, and that the record must be in full substantiation of whatever verdict was reached.

Yahya further stated that because the charge carried the possibility of a death sentence, it was his plan that if such the verdict be, a request for mercy would be made on Bangabandhu's behalf, and that Yahya would accept the petition. Yahya observed that when this request for mercy, as aforesaid, would reach him he would "sit on it for a few months" without making a decision until

power was turned over to a civilian government.

It was Yahya's further observation that once the problem of Bangabandhu's mercy petition became the problem of a civilian government, there was little or no possibility that he would be executed, reported Farland.

The American Ambassador finished his comments with the remark: "From

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

NGO official sued over rape of girl

STAR REPORT

An NGO official was sued in Bandarban's Rowangchhari upazila yesterday on charges of raping a schoolgirl.

Meanwhile, police arrested three men in connection with separate rape cases in Bandarban, Faridpur and Panchagarh.

A four-year-old indigenous girl in Bandarban, a six-year-old girl in Faridpur, and a 14-year-old girl in Panchagarh are among the victims.

In Bandarban's Rowangchhari upazila, an NGO official raped the schoolgirl at her relative's place on August 15, said Towheed Kabir, officer-in-

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বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

“মুজিববর্ষের অঙ্গীকার দেশী পণ্যের ব্যবহার”

বিদেশ থেকে আগমনকালে আনীত বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা সংরক্ষণ প্রসঙ্গে

বিদ্যমান বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা লেনদেন ব্যবস্থায় শুষ্ক কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট এফএমজে ফরমে ঘোষণা প্রদান করে বিদেশ থেকে আগত যাত্রী যে কোনো পরিমাণ বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা বাংলাদেশে আনতে পারেন। তবে আনীত বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার পরিমাণ অনধিক দশ হাজার মার্কিন ডলার বা সমমূল্যমানের হলে শুষ্ক কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট ঘোষণা প্রদানের প্রয়োজন নেই।

বাংলাদেশে নিবাসী কোনো ব্যক্তি বিদেশ থেকে সঙ্গে আনীত অনধিক দশ হাজার মার্কিন ডলার বা সমমূল্যমানের বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা যে কোনো সময়ে নগদায়ন বা অনুমোদিত ডিলার ব্যাংকে রেসিডেন্ট ফরেন কারেন্সি ডিপোজিট হিসাবে জমা রাখতে পারেন, পরবর্তী বিদেশ যাত্রায় সঙ্গে নিয়েও যেতে পারেন। দশ হাজার মার্কিন ডলারের অতিরিক্ত পরিমাণ আনীত বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা দেশে আসার ৩০ দিনের মধ্যে অনুমোদিত ডিলার ব্যাংকে/লাইসেন্সধারী মানিচেঞ্জারের নিকট টাকায় নগদায়ন বা রেসিডেন্ট ফরেন কারেন্সি ডিপোজিট একাউন্টে জমা রাখা নিবাসী বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের জন্য বাধ্যতামূলক।

বিদেশ থেকে আগত অনিবাসী বাংলাদেশীরা আনীত (দশ হাজার মার্কিন ডলার বা সমমূল্যমানের বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার বেশী হলে শুষ্ক কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট ঘোষণা প্রদান সাপেক্ষে) বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা বাংলাদেশে আগমনের পর যে কোনো সময়ে নগদায়ন বা অনুমোদিত ডিলার ব্যাংকে নন রেসিডেন্ট ফরেন কারেন্সি ডিপোজিট একাউন্ট/প্রাইভেট ফরেন কারেন্সি হিসাবে জমা রাখতে পারেন। বিদেশী নাগরিকগণ আনীত বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা (দশ হাজার মার্কিন ডলার বা সমমূল্যমানের বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার বেশী হলে শুষ্ক কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট ঘোষণা প্রদান সাপেক্ষে) বাংলাদেশে ত্যাগকালে সঙ্গে নিয়ে যেতে পারেন। বিদেশী নাগরিকগণ উক্ত বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা বাংলাদেশে আগমনের পর যে কোনো সময়ে নগদায়ন বা ফরেন কারেন্সি হিসাবে জমা রাখতে পারেন।

জনস্বার্থে বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি জারি করা হলো।

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

NATURE QUEST

A great egret, locally known as boro bago, sitting on a branch in Rangpur's Pargachha upazila. It is the breeding season for the bird. This large heron, which is seen across the country, builds nests on trees close to water. It mainly lives on fish, frogs and small mammals.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TUHIN WADUD

Star HEALTHLINE

Covid risk: Give your body A BETTER FIGHTING CHANCE

STAR HEALTH DESK

The delta variant's rampage throughout the world has created an uptick in hospitalisation cases in the 20-54 age group.

While there does not seem to be solid data to suggest increased virulence of the delta variant among young people, numbers of hospitalisation cases and breakthrough infections in the age group is an indication of the risks younger people face.

At the same time, research in the British Journal of Sports Medicine

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Hyginex Instant hand sanitizer

BEACON Pharmaceuticals Limited