

**'INCLUSIVE GOVT' IN AFGHANISTAN**

Taliban say caretaker government will include leaders from all ethnicities and tribal backgrounds in the country  
**SEE PAGE 5**

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Your Right to Know

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## High-value fish stock depletes

Experts for action to stop overfishing

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The stock of some high-value sea fish species has depleted over the last three decades due to excessive fishing that also damages the ecosystem of the marine environment, threatening survival of other aquatic lives.

The depletion trend of some fish populations, including shrimp, pomfret, croaker and Indian Salmon, is so alarming that experts call for urgent protective measures.

"The overall shrimp biomass trend has been consistently downward over the last 30 years and somewhat depleted due to overfishing," said a government report, titled Marine Fisheries Survey Reports and Stock Assessment.

The report was published in 2019, after a three-year (2016-2019) survey by the Department of Fisheries (DoF).

The report recommended immediate

government interventions before fish like shrimp, pomfret and Indian Salmon face "commercial extinction".

Two years on, the relevant ministries and departments are yet to formulate the rules needed to stop overfishing and rebuild the stock of endangered fish species.

Kh Mahbubul Haque, additional director general of DoF, said the coronavirus pandemic had slowed down their work.

**THE DEPLETION** Though the overall shrimp production has risen due to inland shrimp farming, the total catch of marine shrimp has dropped by about 10,000 tonnes in a decade, according to the statistical yearbooks of the DoF.

In 2009-10, the total catch of marine shrimp was 52,592 tonnes. It dropped to 42,816 tonnes in 2019-20.



TIGER SHRIMP



SILVER POMFRET SIGNIFICANTLY DEPLETED



CATFISHES SIGNIFICANTLY DEPLETED



INDIAN SALMON SEVERELY DEPLETED



HARINA SHRIMP SIGNIFICANTLY DEPLETED

Marine Shrimp catch declines from **57,660** tonnes in 2011-12 to **42,816** tonnes in 2019-20

**KEY POINTS**

- Marine shrimp catch drops due to overfishing
- Catch of pomfret sees a nearly five-fold decline
- With a 44-fold drop, Indian Salmon seems worst victim of 'overfishing'
- Experts for quick action to save high-value fish species, ecosystem

Govt report recommended immediate interventions before fish like shrimp, pomfret and Indian Salmon face "commercial extinction". But the relevant ministries and departments are yet to formulate the rules needed to stop overfishing and rebuild the stock of endangered fish species.



Locals looking for missing people after a boat capsized in Laishka Beel in Bijoy Nagar, Brahmanbaria, yesterday evening. At least 21 people died and about 50 others went missing after the boat sank.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDYO

### 2 judges get death threats from 'militant groups'

STAR REPORT

Two judges in Joypurhat and Tangail have received death threats from "militant groups".

They received threatening letters through the post on Thursday.

Rustam Ali, judge of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Joypurhat, received a two-page letter at his residence.

Police and court office sources said the senders of the letter claimed that they are "the Taliban" and the group will take control of Bangladesh like Afghanistan soon.

"You are a judge, but people are not getting fair justice," said the letter.

It also asked "judges and lawyers to wear Taliban

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## 21 die as boat sinks in B'baria

It was hit by 2 cargo vessels; about 50 missing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

At least 21 people drowned and around 50 others went missing as a boat capsized in Laishka Beel in Brahmanbaria yesterday evening.

Firefighters and locals were looking for the missing people well past midnight.

Witnesses said more than 100 people were on board when the boat left Champaknagar area for Brahmanbaria town around 5:30pm.

As the boat reached Dewdona area, it collided with a small dinghy and the boatman lost its control. The boat was then hit by two sand-carrying vessels coming from the opposite direction and capsized, said survivors and witnesses.

"I was on the bank of the waterbody when I heard a loud noise and saw the cargo vessels hit a boat full of people. The boat sank within moments," said Nurul Amin, a local resident.

"Some passengers were trying to swim ashore," he told this newspaper last night.

One of the survivors, Anwar Hossain, who was travelling with his family, was seen in tears on the bank of the waterbody around 8:15pm.

"I had to see my two children drown. I could not save them," he cried. Soon after the accident, hundreds of villagers thronged the spot and kept searching for the missing people. Many were desperately looking for their loved ones.

The deputy commissioner of the district visited the area later and announced that Tk 20,000 would be given to each family of the deceased.

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### STRANDED IN AFGHANISTAN

## Evacuation of 15 Bangladeshis still uncertain

160 Afghan students of AUW also wait for flight

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The evacuation of 15 Bangladeshis from Afghanistan remained uncertain till yesterday as the chartered flight that was supposed to carry them home on Thursday got cancelled following the blast at Kabul airport.

Eight telecom engineers and three BRAC International officials are among the 15 who have been stranded in strife-torn Afghanistan.

The US arranged the chartered flight for flying to Bangladesh 160 Afghan students who are studying at the Asian University for Women (AUW) in Chattogram.

They had gone to Afghanistan on leave but got stranded there as the Taliban seized control of that country.

Mashfee Binte Shams, secretary (east) at the foreign ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday that Thursday's flight was cancelled and it was yet to be rescheduled.

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## Biman pilot suffers heart attack in flight

Emergency landing at Nagpur airport, India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Biman flight from Muscat to Dhaka had to make an emergency landing at an Indian airport yesterday after the pilot in command suffered a heart attack in the cockpit.

The Boeing 737-800 had 124 passengers.

The plane landed safely at Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport in Nagpur of Maharashtra around 10:40am (local time), Abu Saleh Mustafa Kamal, Biman managing director and CEO, told The Daily Star.

The flight BG-022 was scheduled to land at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 11:30am (Bangladesh time).

Biman in a press release said Capt Nowshad Ataul Qayyum suddenly fell sick while the aircraft was over Raipur in India.

In a WhatsApp message, Group Captain Touhid-ul Ahsan, executive director of Shahjalal airport, said after Capt Nowshad suffered the heart attack, the co-pilot took over and landed the plane safely.

Capt Nowshad was admitted to the emergency department of Hope Hospital in Nagpur, said the press release.

The pilot was improving and the country manager at Biman's Delhi office was sent to Nagpur to provide necessary assistance to passengers and crew.

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Fifty-year-old Jamil Hossain sharpens a pair of scissors at his small shop in old Dhaka's Churihatta. On weekdays, he sharpens about 100 pairs of scissors he gets from the numerous sweatshops in the area. Apart from running his family, he pays for the education of his two college-going son and daughter from the earnings at his shop.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## KABUL AIRPORT CARNAGE

## US on alert for more attacks

Says next few days most dangerous; Biden vows to hunt down culprits; death toll hovers around 100

AGENCIES

US forces helping to evacuate Afghans desperate to flee Taliban rule were on alert for more attacks yesterday after an Islamic State suicide bombing killed around 100 people, including 13 US service members, just outside Kabul airport.

The White House said the next few days of an evacuation operation that has taken more than 100,000 people out of the country in the past two weeks were likely to be the most dangerous.

Reuters yesterday put the death toll at 92, while AFP said 85 people have died in the attack. Some US media including the New York Times and CNN cited local health officials as saying as many as 170 people had died in the attack.

The blast targeted US forces, but hit hardest the mass of people who had converged on the airport in a desperate bid to escape the Taliban's feared hardline rule.

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said the United States believed there are still "specific, credible" threats against the airport.

"We certainly are prepared and would expect future attempts," Kirby told reporters in Washington. "We're monitoring these threats, very, very specifically, virtually in real time."

US and allied forces are racing to complete evacuations of their citizens and vulnerable Afghans and to withdraw from Afghanistan by an Aug 31 deadline set by President Joe Biden.

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# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Brown Hawk-owl, Hail Haor, Bangladesh.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## OWL

The first bird that many remember from childhood might be an owl. In my case, there was a massive Krishnachura tree just behind our house. A family of owls lived in a cavity in the tree about twenty feet from the ground where the trunk forked into two main branches. Whenever I looked at them they stared back intensely. Being a child, I found this unsettling and avoided going under the tree.

Humans have attributed significance and meaning to owls for as long as 30,000 years – the age of a cave painting of an owl in the South of France. In folklore, owls have been considered mysterious and evil in many cultures, portents of bad luck. However, in other cultures owls are a symbol of wisdom. For example, the Bangla name of Barn Owl is *Lokkhi Pecha*. *Lokkhi* means bearer of good luck.

The main reason why people are fascinated by owls is their eyes. Compared to the size of their heads, owls' eyes are large. They are set facing forward (eyes of other birds face sideways.) They often stare back, unblinking, creating uneasiness. They are also immobile and owls must rotate their head 180 degrees to "look around."

At the same time, their eyes give owls fantastic vision, particularly at night. The retina of an eye, where light is collected, contains millions of sensors of two types: rods and cones. Rods are sensitive to low light and cones are sensitive to brighter light. The owl's retina contains a preponderance of rods giving them extraordinary nocturnal vision. Coupled with acute hearing and fast, silent flight, owls succeed as nocturnal

predators, hunting by night and resting by day. They catch rodents, small mammals, fish, insects and smaller birds with their sharp claws.

There are two hundred odd species of owls in the world, seen in all continents except Antarctica. They are divided into the owl family (Strigidae) and the barn owl family (Tytonidae). The latter is characterized by a heart-shaped face, as seen in Barn Owls.

In Bangladesh we can see thirteen species of owls covering a gamut of sizes from just larger than a sparrow to the size of a kite. The Spotted Owllet and the Asian Barred Owllet are, in my experience, our most common owls. Brown Hawk-owl, Brown Fish Owl and Collared Scops Owl can also be seen with some effort. Barn Owls can be seen in the city – a kind friend alerted me once when he saw it in his Banani backyard and allowed me to photograph it. The Buffy Fish Owl, a rare species, can be seen in Sundarban. I saw it deep inside the forest from a boat – it was enormous, almost the size of a monkey. The Short-eared Owl is seen in the chargs of the Padma but my day-long search for it was fruitless. Our other owls are rare and live deep in the forests of Sylhet and the Hill Tracts.

A good place to see owls is Dhaka's National Botanical Garden. Look for cavities in the larger tree trunks for Spotted Owllets; a Brown Fish Owl is also known to hang out in the garden. The tea gardens of Sylhet have many Asian Barred Owllets. If you are looking for an owl in a rural area it is worth asking local villagers since owls tend to stay in the same tree.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow "ihtishamkabir" on Instagram.

## SURGE IN DENGUE CASES

# Dedicated hospitals still not ready

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Amid the rise in dengue cases, the government on Monday dedicated six hospitals for treating dengue patients. However, it has been four days, but only two hospitals have started treatment till yesterday.

Officials blamed shortage of healthcare professionals and logistics for the delay. They are hopeful to start soon.

Among the six hospitals, Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital in Dhaka and Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master General Hospital in Tongi have started dedicated treatment.

Asked yesterday, Dr ABM Khurshid Alam, director general of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said, "We will look into the matter."

He said, besides the dedicated hospitals, they have already instructed some other public facilities, including Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, Dhaka Medical College and Hospital and Mugda Medical College and Hospital, to provide dengue treatment, as Covid-19 patients are decreasing.

**Death toll 40**  
28 died in Aug so far  
12 in July  
184 more hospitalised yesterday

DGHS on Monday dedicated 6 hospitals  
4 days on, only 2 became operational  
Officials cite shortage of manpower, logistics as reason  
DMCH, Suhrawardy and Mugda hospitals to also treat dengue patients

DGHS on August 23 announced six hospitals dedicated to dengue patients, which also included Railway General Hospital at Kamalapur, 20-bed Aminbazar Govt Hospital in Dhaka, Lalkuthi Hospital in Mirpur, and 31-bed Kamrangirchar Hospital in Dhaka.

These correspondents visited the dengue-dedicated hospitals on Wednesday and Thursday and found such a scenario.

Meanwhile, more and more dengue patients are requiring hospitalisation, as cases continue to rise across the country.

At least 184 people with dengue fever were admitted to hospitals in the country in 24 hours till 8am

yesterday, according to DGHS data, taking the total cases this year to 9,304.

Forty people have died of dengue in the country this year, all of whom succumbed to the disease between July and August. Twelve people died in July while 28 died in August so far.

Among the infected, 2,443 took treatment at government and autonomous hospitals, while 6,191 were treated at private hospitals across the country.

Dengue patients have been struggling to get treatment at the capital's public hospitals, as the major facilities are burdened with Covid-19 patients.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College, earlier said patients taking treatment at private hospitals was a matter of grave concern.

There is a national guideline for dengue treatment, and DGHS has trained doctors and nurses of government hospitals to abide by the guideline. But the ones working at private hospitals are not trained, and they, in many cases, do not follow the guideline, he said.

Dr Ripon Das, divisional medical officer of Bangladesh Railway Hospital, told The Daily Star on Wednesday that they did not get any directives to run the hospital as a dedicated one.

"We are going to send a requisition to the ministry concerned to run the hospital as a dengue-dedicated one and will prepare 100 beds in this regard," he said.

Ripon said they need reagents in their lab, at least one pathologist and a lab technician, as they only have a single pathologist now.

He said dengue patients need 24-hour lab support and only one person cannot provide that.

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For the first time since April 2, National Zoo in the capital opened up to visitors yesterday. Fittingly, they thronged the zoo, meeting for the first time numerous cubs born during this closure.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## 'Who will take liability for this?'

Man yet to be found 3 days after falling down drain in Ctg; CDA, CCC playing blame game

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Three days have passed since vegetable trader Saleh Ahmed (55) fell into a roadside drain at the port city's Muradpur area, but fire service's rescue team is yet to trace him.

Biplob Kanti Nath, team leader of the diving unit of fire service, said they could not trace the man as of yesterday evening. He said the accident occurred as there was no retaining wall or any demarcation mark in the drain area.

"My father fell down the drain on Wednesday morning due to the sheer negligence of the authorities," said a grief-

stricken Mohammad Mahim, Saleh's son. Mahim has been at the spot for the last three days along with fire service personnel, searching for Saleh.

"The authorities could have at least put up a red flag, warning people of the drain there. That way, this accident could have been avoided," Mahim said. "Who will take liability for this accident?" he asked.

Meanwhile, residents said with most of the city canals as well as secondary and tertiary drains remaining uncovered and unfenced, accidents have become a common scene during waterlogging, and

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No coverings, no barriers, no warnings, these wider drains of the port city are possible death traps for unsuspecting pedestrians. And when the streets are submerged due to waterlogging, there is no way of knowing where danger lurks. This photo was taken yesterday from Muradnagar area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## 'An inexhaustible source of inspiration'

45th death anniversary of national poet observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 45th death anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam was observed yesterday in a befitting manner.

Different political parties, and socio-cultural and professional bodies observed the day by paying tribute at the poet's grave on Dhaka University campus and by arranging discussions.

The poet passed away at the then PG Hospital, now Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, in the city in 1976. He was buried with state honour beside the Dhaka University Central Mosque.

Yesterday, the day's programme started with Quran-khwani after Fazr prayers at the DU Central Mosque. Awami League leaders, led by its general secretary Obaidul Quader, who is also road transport and bridges minister, placed a wreath at the grave of the poet, reported BSS.

Besides, the party's associate bodies and pro-AL student organisations also paid homage to the national poet, maintaining social distancing.

Members of Bangladesh National Awami Party and Jatiya Ganatantrik Party also paid tribute to the poet at his grave, said separate press releases of the political parties.

Marking the day, teachers, students, officers and employees of DU held a procession, led by DU Vice Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman, which proceeded towards the poet's grave at 7:15am, reports our DU correspondent.

They paid glowing tributes to the poet by placing wreaths at his grave. Later, at a discussion at DU, Prof Akhtaruzzaman termed Nazrul an "invaluable resource of Bengali language and literature" and the nation's "inexhaustible source of inspiration".

National Professor Rafiqul Islam said, "Nazrul's rebellious poems changed the course of Bengali poetry. Nazrul will always be remembered... as long as there is Bengali language and literature," he added.

Nazrul wrote nearly 3,000 songs and composed many of them, which are known as Nazrul-Geeti or Nazrul Sangeet.

The nation got inspiration from his poems and songs during the Liberation War and all democratic movements and struggles.



## New frog on the block!

Researchers discover new-to-science species from country's south-eastern forests



PHOTO: COURTESY

ABIDA RAHMAN CHOWDHURY

The worldwide scientific community is too often bombarded with bad news – from first time ever rains at the Greenland ice summit to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) doomsday forecast, there is hardly ever a reason to celebrate.

Yet for Bangladesh's nature enthusiasts, there is cause to celebrate. Researchers have recently discovered and confirmed a new-to-science species of frog from Bangladesh's south-eastern forests – Chattogram and Cox's Bazar.

It is a "ribbiting" story of a group of young researchers scouring the lowland, mixed-evergreen tropical forests of Bangladesh in the height of monsoon to collect specimens that they believed might lead to a new discovery. And their hunch was right.

The stocky, semi-aquatic frog, specimens of which were collected back in 2019, has been named *Phrynoglossus swanbornorum* or Swanborn's Puddle Frog in English and Chattgai ar gata bang in Bangla, according to the scientific paper titled "A new species of *Phrynoglossus* Peters, 1867; *Dicroglossidae* from southeastern Bangladesh, with comments on the genera *Occhiozyga* and *Phrynoglossus*."

The paper was published in the international peer-reviewed journal *PeerJ* on the 19th of this month.

The authors are Creative Conservation Alliance's (CCA) Hassan Al-Razi, Marjan Maria, Shahriar Caesar Rahman Fahimuzzaman Nobel, Scott Trageser, and Jagannath University's Assistant Professor of Zoology Department Md Asaduzzaman.

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KABUL AIRPORT BLASTS GLOBAL REACTION

The Taliban has joined global leaders in condemning twin suicide bombs that ripped through crowds waiting to be evacuated outside Kabul airport, killing at least 85 people, including 13 US troops. Here is a round-up of the reaction to Thursday's attack.

United States: President Joe Biden vowed to hunt down those behind the suicide bombings that killed American troops in the worst single-day loss for the Pentagon in Afghanistan since 2011. "We will not forget. We will hunt you down and make you pay," Biden, visibly shaken, said in a White House address during which he said evacuations of vulnerable people would continue until August 31.

Taliban: The Taliban slammed the blasts, but pointed out they happened in an area that was under the control of US military. "The Islamic Emirate strongly condemns the bombing targeting civilians at Kabul airport," the group's spokesman tweeted.

Russia: Russia also blasted the attacks "in the strongest possible terms." "Unfortunately, the pessimistic forecasts that entrenched terrorist groups, especially ISIS, will not fail to take advantage of the chaos in Afghanistan, are being confirmed," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

China: China said it was "shocked" by the explosions. They show "the security situation in Afghanistan is still complex and severe", foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said.

Europe: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson condemned "barbaric" attack, paying tribute to the "phenomenal effort" of those involved in the evacuation operation. French President Emmanuel Macron expressed "his condolences to the families of the American and Afghan victims".

Canada: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pledged to work with partners to resettle refugees in his country. "Our hearts break for the people of Afghanistan and the loved ones of the victims, including the brave women and men of our allies," he said.

OIC: The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned the "twin heinous terrorist bombings". Secretary General Yousef al-Othaimen in a statement "reaffirmed the OIC's firm, principled position against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations."

Middle East: Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry rejected the attacks as "incompatible with all religious principles and moral and human values." Turkey's foreign ministry deplored "this heinous attack in the strongest terms," while Egypt decried the "gruesome terrorism". Iran, meanwhile, condemned "the targeting of Afghanistan's defenceless people and any terrorist operation in which women, men, youth, and children are attacked."

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Taliban forces block the roads around the airport, while a woman with Burqa walks passes by, in Kabul, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Humanitarian crisis unfolding Hundreds of displaced families seek food, shelter in Kabul

REUTERS

Hundreds of Afghan families who have been camping in searing heat at a Kabul park after the Taliban overran their provinces begged for food and shelter on Thursday, the most visible face of a humanitarian crisis unfolding in the war-torn country.

While thousands of people have crowded the airport to try to flee, many others, like the families in the park, are stuck in limbo, unsure whether it is safer to try to go home or stay where they are.

"I'm in a bad situation," said Zahida Bibi, a housewife, sitting under the blazing sun with her large family. "My head hurts. I feel very bad, there is nothing in my stomach." Ahmed Waseem, displaced from northern Afghanistan said those in the park were hoping the central government would pay attention. "We are in an open field and in the heat," he said. A Taliban spokesman told Reuters the group was not providing food to the people at the park and others at the airport because it would lead to further overcrowding. They should return to their homes, he said.

The Taliban have placed its members in ministries and ordered some officials back to work, but services are yet to resume, with banks still closed.

Phalwan Sameer, also from northern Afghanistan, said his family came to Kabul after the situation rapidly deteriorated in his home town.

"There (was) a lot of fighting and bombing as well. That's why we came here. The houses were burned and we became homeless," he said.

Biden presidency shaken to core

AFP, Washington

Eyes closing, voice cracking, Joe Biden physically reflected the terrible blow to his presidency from the slaying of 13 US service members during the desperate Kabul evacuation.

Addressing the nation from the White House, Biden appeared occasionally close to tears as he spoke of the dead "heroes." And when he promised the attackers "we will hunt you down," there was steel in his voice.

No doubt that Biden's presidency has been shaken to the core by the bombing at Kabul's airport.

In January, he took office promising calm at home and respect for the United States abroad after the turbulent Donald Trump years.

Now Biden's been left with a mountain to climb if he's to persuade the nation and America's partners that either goal remains achievable.

After the fall of Kabul literally unopposed, his administration has been working around the clock for 10 days, hoping it could still pull triumph from disaster. The airlift was going far better than predicted. Then the bombs went off.



Shutting himself away with aides in the Situation Room, Biden canceled a meeting of state governors and told visiting Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett that their planned meeting in the Oval Office would have to wait until Friday.

"Joe Biden has blood on his hands," Republican congresswoman Elise Stefanik said.

"This horrific national security and humanitarian disaster is solely the result of Joe Biden's weak and incompetent leadership. He is unfit to be commander-in-chief."

Republican Senator Marsha Blackburn tweeted that Biden and all his top national security staff "should resign or face impeachment and removal from office."

The Republican outcry was predictable. But the wider damage reflected in opinion polls will be more worrying for Biden.

While a USA Today/Suffolk University poll this week found overwhelmingly that Americans believe the Afghan war was not worth fighting, Biden isn't getting thanked. The poll found his overall approval at just 41 percent, with 55 percent disapproving.

Taliban working on 'inclusive caretaker govt'

Say it will include leaders from all ethnicities and tribal backgrounds in Afghanistan

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

The Taliban yesterday said it is planning an inclusive caretaker government in Afghanistan after the group toppled the Western-backed administration in a stunning sweep earlier this month.

Taliban sources told Al Jazeera that the caretaker government will include leaders from all ethnicities and tribal backgrounds in the country.

Nearly a dozen names are being considered to be part of the new government, sources said. The duration of the caretaker government is unclear at the moment.

Afghanistan's ethnic diversity has been at the centre of politics and conflict in the country, with no single ethnic group enjoying a decisive majority in the country of 40 million people.

The Pashtuns are Afghanistan's biggest ethnic group, making up more than 42 percent of the population. The predominantly Sunni Muslim community speaks the Pashto language and has dominated Afghan politics since the 18th century.

Taliban sources also told Al Jazeera the caretaker government will have an "amir-ul momineen" (commander of the faithful) to lead the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

They said a supreme leadership council has been convened to decide the form of the future government and nominate ministers.



The sources added that the group wants to bring new faces in to the government, including the sons of Tajik and Uzbek tribal leaders.

They said the United States has been insisting on bringing in some members of the older governments, including former President Hamid Karzai and former Head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah.

Another Taliban source told Al Jazeera that the group remains committed to the 2020 Doha accord it signed with the US, including not allowing Afghan soil to be used to launch terror attacks.

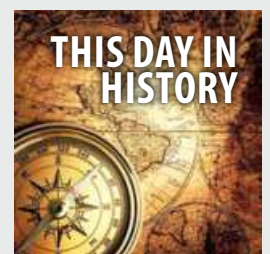
On women's rights, the source said women will be allowed to work in various government bodies as they did in the previous government, mainly in the health and education sectors.

The source said special courts will be set up at local levels to fight corruption and make examples of corrupt officials.



Rescuers help a migrant child to disembark from a Spanish coast guard vessel, in the port of Arguineguin, in the island of Gran Canaria, Spain on Thursday. The photo was released yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



AUGUST 28

1963 - Martin Luther King delivered his "I have a dream" speech to 200,000 civil rights demonstrators who had marched on Washington for jobs and freedom.

1996 - The marriage of Prince Charles and Princess Diana, which took place with pomp and pageantry in 1981, ended with a rubber-stamp divorce.

SOURCE: WEBSITES

Advertisement for BSMRU (Bangladesh Secondary and Madrasah Research University) featuring a table of courses and fees.

No jobs, passports for 'anti-national' social media posts in India

THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION

At least three Indian states are denying passports and government jobs to people because of their social media posts or participation in protests, human rights activists said.

In a move that could jeopardise the futures of tens of thousands of vocal young Indians, authorities in Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar and Uttarakhand have issued such orders, as India clamps down on dissent online and on the ground.

"It is a reprehensible move - the police have no right to decide whether any post on social media is anti-national or not," said Nasir Khuehemi, a student leader in the restive region of Jammu and Kashmir, enmeshed in turmoil for decades.

"The need of the hour is to not create more hassles in the path of thousands of Kashmiri youth who are now in jobs or studying. It will push the youth into further alienation," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

In Bihar, state police said participating in any kind of protest could result in clearances being denied for passports and government jobs.

"Such people have to be prepared for serious consequences," said Bihar's director general of police S K Singhal.

Earlier this year, police in the northern state of Uttarakhand said they would monitor social media posts and maintain a record of those that are "anti-national" or "anti-social", and reject passport applications accordingly.

Across Asia, lawmakers have introduced a slew of legislation for governments to access internet users' data and block so-called false news, which human rights groups say raises the risk of mass surveillance and free speech violations.

Factory fire kills 16 in Karachi

AFP, Karachi

At least 16 workers died and more were missing after a factory fire in Pakistan's commercial capital Karachi yesterday, police said.

More than 25 labourers were inside the small factory in a residential area of the port city when the blaze broke out, causing it to fill with thick smoke.

"We have recovered 16 bodies so far," senior police officer Shahjehan Khan told AFP.

"We are trying to recover more stranded people but I fear they might not make it out," Khan said, adding the factory had no proper fire exits.

"The stairs leading to the roof were locked, otherwise the labourers could have survived by running to the rooftop," Khan said.

Karachi city administrator Murtaza Wahab also said there was no safe exit for the workers.

Poor industrial laws and building codes in Pakistan mean factory blazes are frequent.

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Tejosh Halder.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

## Behind Tejosh Halder Josh's powerful sculptures

FARAH KABIR

Tejosh Halder Josh is a skilled sculptor from Gopalganj, Bangladesh. Born in 1982, he had an affinity towards sculpting since childhood. It first grew in the second grade, when he was asked to create a structure out of mud. Sculpting amuses him, as he finds power in being able to physically touch his art. Tejosh is also drawn towards the materials used in his art, due to their unique properties.



Sculptures by Tejosh Halder



The sculptor has completed his bachelor's and master's from the Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka in 2007 and Visva-Bharati University in Shantiniketan, India, in 2010, respectively. His muses are the works of Henry Moore, Alberto Giacometti, Michelangelo, Ramkinkar Baij, Frances Segelman, and the sculptures sold in markets of rural Bangladesh.

Tejosh connects research with his works. His sculptures are focused on a variety of topics, ranging from society, people, politics, religion, spirituality and existential questions centering on the connections between the universe and humans and who are humans. However, he does not explicitly put across his ideas as he prefers leaving his works up to the audience's interpretation, allowing them to relate to his work and find the joy in discovering on their own.

The artist recounts his student life when people liked his sculptures, but this did not necessarily guarantee their sale. He was only able to sell 2-3 pieces every year. Hence, as an artist, one needs to go through an arduous phase of time when s/he has to invest money for his/her art from a different source and stay very patient.

Such a phase of time may even extend till one's death. The sculptor says that he is still going

through the phase and will only deem himself as successful after its passing. He furthers that when he is working, he is traversing through a particular period of time, which is actually shaping his future.

Tejosh also opines that an artist's journey is more challenging in our country as it still follows an age-old curriculum, which creates lesser opportunities for skilled artists. Although the market for art is rich, people hardly know artists. There is also an absence of connection between artists and the wealthy, middle class, and a dearth of advertising facilities, art agents, media exposure and platforms such as a private art museum for showcasing their works.

Until now, Tejosh Halder Josh has had one solo exhibition, 28 group exhibitions, 6 workshops and 7 major commissions. He is also the recipient of the following awards and scholarships: Media Best Award (2006 and 2008), Honorable Mention Award (2006), Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin Gold Medal (2005), Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharati-Scholarship (2010), Bengal Group Scholarship (2008, 2009 and 2010).

Currently, he is working on a project as a commission for a certain organization. He briefly describes it as the figure of a sun, at the centre of which, the word 'Imagine' is written. Its rays extend as a chain of human figures, depicting the growth of population.

## Devotion is needed to practice art:

Mosharraf Karim

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Mosharraf Karim is a household name, having garnered respect amongst people of all age groups. His contribution to the Bangladeshi television and film industry is immense. In a recent conversation with *The Daily Star*, the actor talks about the current standard of tele-fictions, actors, OTT platforms and so on.

*Can you tell us how television fictions are faring today, compared to how they used to?*

Bangladeshi television fictions have evolved with time. Improvements have been made in direction, acting, plot, camera, light and makeup to suit the needs of the present day. It will be unfair to say that all the projects of the past were great. In comparison to olden days, there are more channels, content, and tools at our disposal. Through my experience, I can say that quality television fictions only stand out at the end of the day, which makes me believe that good work is being done.

*The audience of our country has been watching tele-fictions even before independence. Once upon a time, there were package dramas, and currently, we have OTT platforms. What is your perspective towards this new medium?*

I have taken OTT platforms positively as I believe that change is inevitable. More emphasis is to be given to scripts, as audiences enjoy good stories. If there is a powerful story, people will watch it regardless of what medium it belongs to. We have to welcome what is new, because change is certain.

*Many argue about the variation in quality found in OTT projects. How do you feel about that?*

How is that any different from television? We need to give the platforms more time for its development and wait patiently. However, many wonderful series have been released till, and the audience has accepted them. We have to keep in mind that the story must be ours to tell and thus, belong to our roots. Most importantly, a lot of money, time and dedication is being spent on creating these series, which will always attract an audience.

*There is a strange urge for newcomers to become 'famous' by any means possible. Why do you think that is?*

I wholeheartedly believe that devotion is needed to practice art. Acting is not an easy job. One needs to practice it for years before mastering. However, the matter of establishing oneself as a star is different. Some people want to gain instant popularity as an actor, but this does not suffice in the long run. An actor needs to nourish a said character within him before delivering his performance. The process also provides him enough joy. I do not understand why people feel the need to rise instantly. They must come out of it.

*You are also known as a 'chameleon' actor. How do you adapt so well to any role?*

I learn acting by observing my surroundings. When I go out, I observe the people around me. Similarly, I also make note of people in the fields, river banks and markets of villages during shooting. Their daily roles in life serve as lessons in acting.

*Do you miss any aspect of your former life as an aspiring actor?*

I miss much of the times I have already spent, especially in theatre. I reminisce about conversations my comrades at Baily road, and my work in Natya Kendra. I had spent quite a lot of my childhood at my village in Barishal, during which I used to ride on boats, get drenched in rain during the rainy season, visit the village market and bathe in the river after returning from school. Those are moments that I cherish.

*Your recent work in the Ashfaq Nipun directorial, 'Mohanagar', has become the subject of discussion in both Bangladesh and West Bengal. How do you feel about that?*

When any of my work is well-received by the audience, I like being a part of it. It thrills me that "Mohanagar" was instantly accepted. I was elated when Prosenjit Chatterjee himself called to congratulate me on it. Much of the credit goes to the director, Ashfaq Nipun, and the entire crew. Good work will always bear fruit.

Translated by Farah Kabir



PHOTO: STAR

## The bleak future of filmmaking in Afghanistan under Taliban rule

FARAH KABIR

Following the repositioning of Afghanistan by the Taliban, various filmmakers took to explaining the plight of Afghan artists, particularly that of females.

Diana Saqeb Jamal, the director of the Afghan-Bangladeshi short film, *Roqia*, told *Variety* that she had left her friends and family in Kabul, and her belongings in her apartment. She compared her grief to the weight of the Hindu Kush mountains.

Sahraa Karimi, director and Head of the government-run company known as Afghan Film, reasoned that the Taliban is afraid of free-thinking, which especially threatens the lives of artists. She has safely escaped the country with her family and two assistants to Ukraine.



Mohsen Makhmalbaf's 'Kandahar'

More recently, director Hassan Fazili, who is now in Germany, told the *Times of India* that art, cultural activities, and filmmaking are destined for destruction under the Taliban. Shahrbanoo Sadat, the



Sahraa Karimi's 'Hava, Maryam, Ayesha'.

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

Afghan filmmaker whose credits include the 2019 Cannes Directors' Fortnight movie, "The Orphanage", recently fled Kabul successfully.

According to *Variety*, artists and civil society workers in Afghanistan are refraining from sleeping in their homes, as they are now being located by Taliban militants with address intelligence technology. Sahra Mani, the founder of Documentary House said that intellectuals, filmmakers, and artists are only left with two options: to flee the country or get executed by the Taliban. It is very easy for them to track down female filmmakers, whose numbers are as low as 10.

The Taliban is a fundamentalist Islamic group, whose members were originally Mujahideen guerrillas, who fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. The group gained momentum in the early 1990s in the backdrop of a civil war against the Mujahideens.

By 1996, they had captured Kabul, declared Afghanistan as an Islamic emirate and imposed extreme measures such as widely banning women's education and employment, music, and television, and abusing ethnic and religious minorities.

In 2001, the US accused the Taliban for collaborating in the 9/11 attacks by hiding Osama Bin Laden, who was believed to be

its master plotter. Upon asking for proof, the US denied, and in a matter of months, the Taliban was reduced to shreds by a US bombing campaign. A new constitution based on the 1960s reformed constitution under Afghanistan's last king was formed, which granted rights to women and ethnic minorities.

However, by 2006, the Taliban had reestablished itself, with a mission to expunge the US. They became successful in 2021, which led to the withdrawal of the US troops.

The Afghan film industry rejuvenated in the last decade with the help of a few women who worked tirelessly and fought against obstacles. Their films mainly portray the lives and daily struggles of Afghan citizens, especially women, in a war-stricken



Diana Saqeb Jamal's 'Roqia'

country under the Taliban regime.

There are also many notable documentaries based on the US-Afghan war such as *Zero Dark Thirty* and the Oscar-winning *Taxi to the Dark Side*. Filmmaker

and social activist Mariam Ghani, daughter of former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani directed *What We Left Unfinished*, which studies the relationship between the Afghan film industry and the country's national identity, from the abolition of monarchy in the 70s to the Taliban in the 90s.

The efforts of Afghan directors yielded fruits as films won accolades at international platforms. *Osama*, directed by Siddiq Barmak won a Golden Globe in 2003. In 2019, Karimi's *Hava, Maryam, Ayesha* premiered at the Horizons section of the Venice International Film Festival.

On the other hand, Afghans produced movies like *Kandahar* (2001), a film that tells the story of an Afghan-Canadian who returns to her homeland to save her sister from committing suicide. It didn't get much attention when it premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, but then came the 9/11 attacks, and the world wanted to find out more about the hardships faced by women in Afghanistan.

It is in the making and perceiving of our own art that time and again reminds us of our roots. On the other hand, art acts as a vessel for knowledge of foreign cultures, and its restriction leaves us marooned. It now seems that the years of hard work by Afghan filmmakers and artists have become futile.

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ILLUSTRATION: NOOR US SAFA ANIK

## Dhaka streets devoid of women following decision to only venture out at night

### STAR NIGHT QUEEN CORRESPONDENT

The city's streets, its offices, homes, schools and colleges have witnessed a curious absence over the last few weeks. Ever since the comment by a senior official calling popular film actress Mona Fairy, Raat er Rani (Queen of the Night), it seems women have decided to band together.

A press conference was arranged a week back at 2:30am and was attended by scores of women from all walks of life.

"We have decided to start our day

only after nightfall. The ones who are early birds can and will start the day around 7-8pm and the others will join as the night progresses," said one of the women leading the press conference.

This correspondent, also a woman, attended the press briefing and decided to do a weeklong follow-up of the pledge to only work at night as a show of solidarity to Mona Fairy by women of the nation.

This mandate included everyone, from homemakers, office going women, RMG workers, to household help and schoolchildren and teachers.

I visited various spots throughout the

course of the week and recorded scenes of chaos as the first week of the "Raat er Rani" campaign unfolded. This paper also received hundreds of email, all from men sharing their plight at this sudden decision by women.

"My wife refuses to wake up in the morning. That is when I have to go to work. I have no idea where most of my clothes are or my matching tie is. And what about breakfast? I have had to leave the house without breakfast for the past three days. I return home and find my wife is just waking up to tackle the day," said the senior law enforcer who had come up with the term Raat er Rani.

Meanwhile for boys who live in messes, this new decision by women to only work at night means their mess continues to get messier.

"Our bua has not shown up for the last few days. I mean, she comes at the oddest of hours. Like the other day, she came at 3:30am but our night guard was sleeping and didn't let her in. Our house hasn't been cleaned in days and we have been living on store-bought meals for the last few days," said Iman, an engineering student who lives with his classmates in a mess.

Men have been complaining non-stop since this decision came into effect.

"We are left confused and worried and don't know how to go about our days. Regular office requires us to go to work during the day but to interact with the women in our lives we have to stay up late. My wife has even been doing all her gardening at night. My friend's wife apparently catches up on all her shows and cooking in the dead of night. She even hosted her friends for a dawat after midnight. Which also means the house is constantly noisy and us men who have to work during the day can barely get any sleep," said another disgruntled husband.

### ADVERSARIAL

## You think you woke me?

### SLEEPLESS WHEREVER YOU'RE NOT

Woke Folk has opened its doors to the public, and offers solutions to anyone who wants to appear more woke than the person they are arguing with, especially on online platforms.

"We have long been noticing that everyone, and I mean everyone, has been jumping on the social cause bandwagon of the day," said Amijaga Tuina, CEO of Woke Folk. "They do this to appear woke and come across as caring deeply about injustices of the day."

But the tragedy, Tuina said, was that people at Woke Folk actually cared, and for others to steal the limelight from the pain Woke Folk felt for those who were actually suffering was the real injustice.

"You see, the time has come to separate those who are actually woke and those who are just jumping on bandwagons. I have been woke for so long that I don't know what year it is - can they say that?"

Tuina outlined the services they will offer to their members.

"First, you become a member by submitting a vial of crocodile tears. Then, whenever someone on your feed is making too much of a noise about a social justice issue, you contact us and then choose from a number of solutions.

"There are currently three services we offer," he said.

They are:

#### DEFLECTION

Suppose someone is wringing their virtual hands about, say, Australia's draconian measures against animals to curb the spread of Covid-19, you can shut that dose of self-righteousness right up with: "Hah! Nice to see so much concern about animals when people are falling off planes in Afghanistan."

Afghanistan is just the example of the day. So, let's say someone is crying about Afghanistan, then you can say: "Typical. People are dying from Covid-19 in our own country and not able to eat during lockdown,



but our armchair warriors are heartbroken about reports they see on CNN, BBC and Al Jazeera."

#### TURN THE TABLES

On the positive side of things, some can start feeling very good about themselves by pointing out the racial and gender diversity in the cast of a western show. Contact us then, and we will help you tell them how mistaken they are. The show is basically propaganda about how great the west is, when it actually sucks. On the flip side, if someone praises a classic show which featured very little diversity, criticise that and insist that the watching public are naïve enough to believe everything they see on a sitcom.

Bottom line: nothing anyone does is right or woke - that is the credo of the true Woke Folk.

#### BORE THEM INTO SUBMISSION

In the rare case that someone actually makes a good, nuanced point about an issue, and you feel like you cannot help but agree - that is when our services are most valuable. Do not try to respond yourself, contact us and we will write 2200-word responses with a guarantee that no one will read that far or follow the twists of logic.

These are just three initial strategies of Woke Folk.

"It will forever be evolving as circumstances change," said Amijaga. "To avail our solutions, please mail us at [uthinkuwoke@gmail.com](mailto:uthinkuwoke@gmail.com)."

Star Satireday can confirm that this is a real email address and as Woke Folk's media partner, we will be printing their woke solutions if and when you face problems during debates and contact them at this address.

## We swear on our wives and daughters that we will be less misogynistic: Reformed misogynists

### WHATEVER CORRESPONDENT

*A Very Religious Organisation in the newly unliberated country of Ivegoneinsane has garnered international acclaim after they said they will be less misogynistic than they were 20 years ago.*

In a press conference, the leader of the Very Religious Organisation said now, after the supreme world power have finished unliberating the country, they will ensure that women along with other lesser beings will have rights.

These rights, the leader said, will be determined by the Very Religious Organisation.

Some of these rights include allowing women to breathe the open air, but only up to 20 feet away from their dwellings.

Women, he said, can also study from textbooks written by the organisation to broaden their horizons. This is a rare opportunity from them to glimpse into the superior minds of the men.

They can also work, but only from home. The work is limited to creating face coverings.

The international community has welcomed the initiative, despite protests



in Ivegoneinsane. World leaders said they would support whichever regime the people of the country support, but the leader of the Very Religious Organisation also said there would be no elections.

# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR  
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA SATURDAY AUGUST 28, 2021, BHADRA 13, 1428 BS

## Ensure health and safety when reopening universities

*Wellbeing of students must play a central role in decision-making*

AFTER over 500 days of closure of all education institutions in Bangladesh—one of the longest pandemic-induced shutdowns of education in the world—we are pleased to hear that the authorities have decided to resume certain education-related activities from mid-October. At a meeting on Thursday, it was announced that students of all public and private universities will be inoculated against Covid-19 by end of September, and the universities will start in-person classes from October 15.

Although there have been attempts to shift to online learning during the prolonged shutdown, the huge digital divide and inadequate planning and haphazard directives from the education ministries did not lead to desired results. Given that Unesco has termed the learning loss caused by the pandemic an unfolding “generational catastrophe”, we fully accept the urgency of holding exams and resuming classes as soon as possible. However, we must also equally stress the importance of protecting our students while helping them to recover from learning losses.

While we appreciate the initiative to vaccinate students, it must be noted that only 35 percent of 1.45 lakh registered students have been inoculated so far, out of a list of about 3.5 lakh university students sent to the health ministry by the UGC. This means that there are still around three lakh university students who need to be given both doses of the vaccine, of whom over two lakh haven’t even registered for it yet. What steps are being taken to ensure these students are registered? Does the government have enough vaccines in stock to inoculate all of them by October? Is there going to be another special vaccination drive for students, and will this be as crowded and chaotic as the one we saw earlier this month? Given the precedent that has been set regarding stock shortfalls and last-minute cancellations of special vaccination drives, one can be forgiven for being cautious in their expectations.

The reopening of halls is another issue where education authorities have been accused of being unsympathetic to students’ needs. So far, it has been decided that universities will make their own decisions regarding this. But if halls do not open by the time students have to sit for exams or join classes, have the authorities considered how they will afford the substantial expenses of arranging their own accommodation? The UGC chairman has also said that strict Covid-19 health protocols will be maintained in classrooms. We hope that these protocols, and all other relevant information, will be properly communicated well in advance to the students—since so far, the frequent disruptions in learning as well as the uncertainty and lack of clarity surrounding decisions related to the resumption of in-person classes have put a great deal of stress on them.

While no concrete decisions have been taken regarding the reopening of schools and colleges, it is expected that an announcement will be made within the week. We urge the authorities to allow no further delays in holding SSC and HSC examinations, and to listen to the experts in formulating strategies for reopening all schools and colleges in phases. At the end of the day, it is imperative that the wellbeing of our students is at the centre of every decision taken regarding them, and that they are able to have their concerns heard during this decision-making process.

## Every child deserves to be registered at birth

*Govt must fully resume birth registration in Cox’s Bazar*

IT is disheartening to know, as a recent study cited by *The Daily Star* found out, that citizens in Cox’s Bazar district are being put through unnecessary hassles in relation to acquiring birth certificates for their babies. Apparently, since 2017, soon after the influx of Rohingya refugees, the district administration suspended birth registration in a bid “to prevent Rohingya babies and children from obtaining the primary certification required for citizenship.” As a result, Bangladeshi nationals in the district have been denied the basic right of registering the births of their children for nearly four years.

While the High Court in 2019 did order the district administration to resume issuing birth certificates, only 12 of the 71 union parishads (UP) in the district so far did so. Around the same time, “the government and the UNHCR had begun the biometric registration of all Rohingya refugees, including babies born in the camps.” Still, and even to this day, most citizens in the district are unable to register new births. It seems that the law also differs between unions, as the chairman of Palongkhali union of Ukhiya upazila says that locals in his union cannot get a birth certificate from another union, despite what the relevant law states.

Now that the facts are out of the way, we cannot help but wonder at the sense—or lack thereof—of the authorities in suspending birth registration in the district in the first place. We understand that the arrival of Rohingya refugees was chaotic and disorganised and that some form of control was necessary initially. We also fully agree that repatriation of the Rohingya to Myanmar should be the ultimate goal of Bangladesh. However, couldn’t the refugees have been prevented from possible attempts at registering their children as Bangladeshis without stopping a vital service for the lawful citizens? Residents in the 12 UPs where birth registration has resumed are also facing various hurdles in the process. First, there is the Tk 500 fine for “late registration” even though the delay is not to be blamed on the applicants. There is also an unusually high number of documents (around 28) to be provided for registration including, curiously enough, birth certificates of the grandparents of a baby.

We would urge the government and relevant authorities to fully resume birth registration for Bangladeshi citizens in all 71 UPs of the district, and also to make the registration process as simple and hassle-free as possible. In Bangladesh, birth registration is mandatory within 45 days of a birth. It is also required to access a host of vital services. Citizens must not pay for the inability of the administration to devise an effective way to deal with the concerns surrounding illegal registration.



BLOWIN’ IN THE WIND

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

I don’t remember the last time I went to Chattogram. My knowledge of the port city can be summed up by the memorable quote from the epic fantasy series, *Game of Thrones*, where the main protagonist is told:

“You know nothing, Jon Snow.”

A piece of news made me venture into the abyss of the unknown. On Wednesday, a certain Saleh Ahmed (55) was wading through a waterlogged road in Chattogram when he slipped and plunged into a nearby canal. There has been no sign of the body that disappeared in the Chashma Canal. Firemen are keeping an eye for the body to surface as their initial search has yielded no results. In the last five years, at least six people have died in this canal that flows into Karnaphuli river, including a CNG auto-rickshaw carrying a passenger. Mind it, we are talking about the disappearance of a citizen from the heart of a city, not of a trekker lost in the wilderness. It tells a lot about our urban planning and management.

Instead of unfolding my ignorance over the waterlogging issue caused by that illegal settlements and unplanned urbanisation; dried-up canals through illegal refilling; garbage accumulation and encroachment of drains; landslides during torrential rains; lack of coordination among different service agencies; and lack of political will and civic behaviour—I shall instead focus on an image that struck me after I heard the canal’s name: *chashma*. *Chashma* or eyeglasses, according to Collins dictionary, “are two lenses in a frame that some people wear in front of their eyes in order to help them see better”.

Saleh Ahmed failed to see that the road

man, a vegetable trader, died under the watchful eyes of the hill and the canal. I am sorry if the reference reminds you of the horror film *The Hills Have Eyes*. But this incident has no horror plot or link to any urban legend suggesting that the man had offended one of the holy men in the shrines or that the canal demanded human sacrifices to keep its flow. It is an accident as the victim failed to see. The question is: Whose fault is it that he couldn’t see? Can we afford not to

waterlogging. The incident at the Chashma Canal makes us see such rain as the cry of the sky. Nature exists in an organic whole; if one body is hurt, the other part feels it too.

Surely, there are agencies to see this and dismiss my poetic rendering as illusory as the birthplace of Rama. A simple Google search produced the names of three key actors. The Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) is responsible for the drainage system besides houses, roads, and

Saleh Ahmed will keep occurring.

From my safe distance in the capital, it is difficult for me to fathom the gravity of the situation. Just like it is difficult for us to imagine why desperate Afghans were clinging on to the body of a plane to escape from Kabul that had fallen. The spectacle made us aware of the horror that returned to a space that was beginning to feel the air of freedom and democracy. The image of the bodies falling off the plane created a spectacle. The sight and sound



Firefighters search for a man in a canal at Muradpur, Chattogram after he slipped and plunged into it as the nearby road was submerged by rainwater on August 25, 2021.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

*In Chattogram, these institutions are either over-mandated or under-mandated for its drainage system management. The end result is a mess.*

underwater had merged with the canal. He disappeared while trying to cross the road on his way to the shrine at Muradnagar. Google Maps helped me locate the canal near a hill of the same name. The canal, if I have understood correctly, flows from the nearby Chashma Hill and ferries water to the river and then to the sea. The

see when an accident like this happens? Where is the body now? Stuck somewhere in the cornice of a hill? Stuck in the silt and filth of the blocked canals, flow into the river, or carried to the sea to become shark meal?

The uniqueness of Chattogram lies in its topography. Here we have a city that houses hills, plains, canals, rivers, and the Bay area. A 1969 survey under the “Storm Drainage and Flood Control Master Plan and Feasibility Report for Chattogram”, conducted by the US-based engineering firm JR Snell, identified 34 canals in Chattogram. Twelve of those canals do not exist anymore, and eight are in the process of drying. Of them, Chatkhai Canal has the ill fame of being the “Sorrow of Chittagong.” If this downward trend continues, what future do we have for the water bodies? The lost body of Saleh Ahmed creates a spectacle to reflect on the condition of manmade disasters. His death, in a way, is a performative act. We may not hear it, but we can feel its silence. It is easy to blame the downpour for the

rainwater management. The Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) deals with primary and larger canals. Chattogram WASA (CWASA) takes care of sanitation and storm-water management. My colleague from Chattogram tells me that these three agencies become hyper-active only during the monsoon (and I believe him, because the Dhaka officials are no different). The lack of coordination among them is evident from the city flyovers where you can see that one agency digs and fills up the road, and then another agency repeats the performance soon after. One agency vacates the illegal settlements, while the others allow new ones to grow. It seems like a recitation competition where everyone is given the same poem to recite. Ideally, everyone should play a certain part of the play to complement one another so as to complete the act. According to experts, these institutions are either over-mandated or under-mandated for drainage system management. The end result is a mess. It must be dealt with urgently, otherwise tragedies like that of

it had reached many shores including ours. Unfortunately, sometimes we get excited over things that happen afar while we miss things that occur in our own backyard.

Wasn’t it Tagore who famously wrote in *Sphulingo* (Sparks):

*“I’ve gone to see the mountains, the oceans I’ve been to view.  
But I haven’t seen with these eyes  
What two steps from my home lies  
On a sheaf of paddy grain, a glistening drop of dew.”*

Tears of Saleh add “a glistening drop of dew” to the waters of the Chashma canal, by extension to the Karnaphuli river, and to the sea. One can only hope that the pair of spectacles will be fixed soon. The frame needs to be fixed. Only then will we “see better” (as the fool advised King Lear in Shakespeare’s tragedy) and see the misery of the common man.

Shamsad Mortuza is Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), and a professor of English at Dhaka University (on leave).

# Why amplifying Rohingya voices is essential

AHMED SHAFQUAT HASSAN

THROUGHOUT history, humanity has often failed to take adequate notice of some of the worst atrocities that were committed. The story of the Rohingya falls squarely into this category. As a group, they are among the most persecuted, and yet their cries for justice and help have long gone unheard.

On August 25, 2017, the Myanmar military launched a brutal crackdown that would lead to the exodus of about 700,000 Rohingya who fled persecution and mass ethnic cleansing on their own land. They crossed miles of treacherous terrain to find themselves at the borders of Bangladesh, where most of them are currently housed in camps strewn across Cox’s Bazar. While some countries surrounding Myanmar turned away many of the Rohingya refugees, Bangladesh took in all who turned up and gave them shelter and support. August 25 has since come to be known as the “Rohingya Genocide Remembrance Day”, to be observed every year.

This was but the latest in Myanmar’s long history of systematic oppression of this community, however. Since 1942, the Rohingya have suffered almost apartheid-like conditions in their country. They have been disenfranchised, and denied support, education and economic opportunities. Beyond that, they have been subjected to myriad human rights abuses, including forced labour, not unlike slavery. Myanmar’s distaste for the Rohingya is a result of an ethno-religious clash with the objectives of the Myanmar junta, which has been trying not only to curb the establishment of democratic rule in the country, but also to unite the nation under a more Buddhist identity.

This infectious problem was first noticed during World War II, as the Rohingya sided with the Allied forces while the Myanmar military chose to side with the Empire of Japan. Since then, the abuse and ostracisation of the Rohingya people have been prevalent. They were denied any opportunity to self-identify or find any form of economic emancipation. And, while this infection festered, the

world failed to take notice. Although the rise of the democratic movement in Myanmar seemed to have brought some semblance of hope for a cure, especially for marginalised communities like the Rohingya, the recent coup staged by the military stunted any possibility of justice, accountability or reconciliation in the foreseeable future. While the world was distracted by the 2020 American presidential election and its aftermath, whispers of a coup to seize power in

like the Palestinians, the Syrians and many more, is their (lack of) ability or opportunity to tell their story. It is one thing for a nation to host those who have been displaced, but that is neither a sustainable nor a justifiable way of managing the problem. What is required is the demand for justice and the accommodation of that process.

In the years leading up to the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials, there was a sufficient degree of mandate and political

along with their allies and advocates from across the globe.

The Rohingya require the same form of support and access to such modes of narrative building. This could happen primarily by giving them access to modes of media allowing them to speak freely in demand for justice and accountability against those who oppressed them in Myanmar. However, to make their advocacy effective, access to education and a guide for advocacy are necessary. The world can collectively help further the cause by simply joining their demand for justice. The momentum towards justice delivery must be kept up.

The effectiveness of international law largely depends on cooperation. The global community, if correctly informed, can be persuaded to push for the restoration of democracy and the rights of the Rohingya in Myanmar. Bangladesh has long demanded such restorations. As a host country, Bangladesh’s support of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other such supranational legal bodies and trial initiatives is instrumental in ensuring that justice is served to the Rohingya quicker than instances in the past. Such courts have presented their interest in the matter in recent years; the logistical support necessary should not be difficult to obtain.

As we recall the unspeakable horrors of August 25, 2017 today, it is imperative that we remind ourselves why remembering these stories of atrocities inflicted on the Rohingya and other refugees around the world is important. While Bangladesh may not have the resources to offer them a permanent home, it is possible for us to amplify their voices, demanding justice for their people by being their permanent allies—much like our own allies did in the past. Their message and stories must be heard and amplified so that they can no longer be ignored or, worse, forgotten. So that even if it is in the distant future, those who have suffered, and the generations after them, are able to use these narratives to demand the justice they long for.

Ahmed Shafquat Hassan is a Research Assistant, Centre for Peace and Justice, Brac University.



Rohingya children fly improvised kites at the Kutupalong refugee camp near Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, on December 10, 2017.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Myanmar, democratically won by the NLD party, were already in the air. But the global community failed to take notice again. Today, some 600,000 Rohingya still remain in Myanmar, living in constant fear for their lives.

The Rohingya are currently screaming into a void, unable to find ways to voice their concerns and thoughts or attract meaningful support. What binds us to their plight is Bangladesh’s experience of similar tragedies before and during the 1971 war. What binds the Rohingya’s plight to that of the millions of other persecuted or forcibly displaced peoples,

will galvanised against the atrocities committed during World War II. The stories of the families who suffered at the hands of their oppressors, and later were allowed to come forward, were a means to ensuring that their stories lived to see the days of trial and stand as testimony when required. This was equally true of the years of advocacy in favour of trials against the war criminals of 1971 in Bangladesh. Many of these stories were frequently published in media across multiple platforms. However, it was imperative that the people who suffered were empowered to speak for themselves,





# Brothers with the lyrical names

WAQAR A KHAN

I arrived in Islamabad as a schoolboy along with my family from Dhaka in January, 1968. The new capital city of Pakistan was still in its nascent stage of development. To the north of Islamabad lay the small semi-autonomous principality of Swat ruled by a Wali. It was visited by Queen Elizabeth II, during her trip to Pakistan (she also came to former East Pakistan now Bangladesh) in

1961. She famously coined the enviable sobriquet of 'Switzerland of the East' for Swat, because of its pleasant weather, the enthralling beauty of its snow-capped mountains, vales and placid lakes. The Queen was enchanted by it all. The following story is about two brothers from Swat, with the lyrical names of: Naushe-e-Rawan and Bakth-

e-Rawan. The year was 1970. Naushe was an office peon of my father at the 'planning commission' in Islamabad. For a Yousufzai Pashtun (Pathan) from Swat he was of a medium height, fair of complexion with light brownish hair and a slightly pock-marked face. He was in his mid-20s. His younger brother Bakth-e-Rawan lived up in the hills of Swat, in their remote village home.

over rocks which flowed downwards with a musical cadence. Bakth with Grecian features and fair complexion, was employed as a domestic hand in our house to run errands. However, as I showed Bakth around the house, kitchen and the backyard, it occurred to me that his seemingly sedate behavior perhaps masked a more youthful exuberance. There was that all-knowing half crescent smile and a twinkle in his hazel eyes, which at close proximity looked like those of a mischievous cat. Bakth slowly settled down to his daily chores and life went on as usual.

Meanwhile, about three months would elapse before there were visible signs of serious trouble with Bakth. He would often whistle and hum a song around the house for which he was reprimanded by our parents. He sulked for a couple of days and was heard to mutter, "hum toh kisi ka qaidi nahi hoon" (I am not anyone's prisoner). One day, the pious darwan, a middle-aged man, complained that his sleep was often disturbed because of Bakth's raucous singing. Once when he had scolded Bakth and threatened to box his ears, Bakth had surreptitiously put salt in his tea. The darwan also complained about his vanishing acts. He said that while we took our afternoon nap, a customary ritual in bygone days, Bakth would sneak out of the house and go to a nearby tea-stall and spend time with some unsavory characters. This alarmed my parents since these rickety 'Jhopris' (shacks) were known to sell 'charas/ganja' or cannabis. The darwan also reported that on a few occasions Bakth had sneaked out of the house by scaling the wall late at night to watch Punjabi/Urdu movies in the nearby town of Rawalpindi, with his newly found friends. Afterwards, he would slip back into the house at dawn. He had also been offending the puritan sensibilities of the darwan by repeatedly belting out a line of a love song from an Urdu film he had recently watched. It went somewhat like this: "aaja meri jaan, aaja meri piyare" (come hither my

love, come to me my beloved). I have personally heard the darwan scream "Khamosh! Yea betamizee bundh karo" (Shut up! Stop this nonsense). Once I found Bakth sitting on a sofa in our drawing room watching TV. I was aghast and immediately told him to quit the room. He was hurt and left crestfallen. Again, he was heard to mutter, "mein to kisi ka qaidi nahin hoon." Meanwhile, he would often talk about his village life to me. It would change his somber facial countenance to one of joy. It was obvious that he was missing the carefree life of his 'gaon' (village) he was used to.

One day, Bakth failed to show up for work in the morning. The darwan was called in. He reported that Bakth was unwell. Our mother asked the darwan to take the morning breakfast to Bakth, and keep an eye on his welfare. However, Bakth did not eat anything the whole day except for some tea and an occasional drink of water. The darwan further reported that Bakth was running a fever. Father arranged for Bakth to be taken to the government polyclinic (doctor's clinic) at G-6/3 in Islamabad with the darwan. Bakth looked pale and gaunt. In the next two days his condition took a nosedive. He started to retch violently. Our mother was afraid that Bakth may die on us. And, on his sudden premature death, she envisioned his Pathan relatives descending upon us with vengeance from the heights of Swat with guns blazing! We laughed a lot about it.

Soon Naushe arrived and spent a better part of the afternoon trying to talk and feed his brother Bakth. However, he could not succeed much in discerning the cause of his ailment. He apologetically told father that it would be better if he took his brother back to Swat. Our mother was overjoyed. Frankly, I was a bit saddened to see Bakth go. There was something endearing about his rustic youthful vigor. However, when I went to his room I was in for a big surprise! The lad who could barely stir yesterday, was now briskly engaged in packing his few belongings into bundles.

For possession he had a small transistor radio and a worn-out shoulder-bag for his clothes. He stood ramrod straight and eyeballed me with a grin. It was then that he opened up. He told me that one of the tea boys at the 'chai ke dokan' he befriended, had borrowed 50 rupees from him and absconded. I was appalled. Bakth hurled a flurry of the choicest invectives at the thief and at Punjabis in general. He detested people of the plains, he told me with a huff. It was homesickness coupled with the theft that got him so depressed. That is why he had fallen ill.

Suddenly, he became quite garrulous and broke into neurotic ramblings. Torrents of words flowed forth some of it unintelligible because it was in Pushto or Yousufzai dialect. However, it all sounded like a litany of grievances. He then turned to me in earnest and started pleading in Urdu. Translated into English it would be something like this: "Respected sir, will you go with me to my village home high up in the hills? Don't be afraid, I'll always be beside you. On our way up, I shall pluck sweet ripe apples from the orchard for you to eat. You will then drink cold water from the stream to your heart's content. Next, you will stretch yourself and inhale lungs full of fresh air and a transformation will come over you. You will start to feel that you are at last free!" And, as if to emphasize his points he dramatically enacted some of what he said. I was rendered speechless!

It suddenly occurred to me that we had unwittingly brought a carefree, happy-go-lucky 'creature' from the wilderness, nay, from the very lap of 'mother nature' and entrapped him in the alien environment of a city amidst mundane rules. He felt enslaved, as if in fetters. That explained the better part of his ailment. It was as much an affliction of the soul as it was of the heart and mind. "Farewell, Bakth-e-Rawan, wherever you are," I said to myself. "May you remain in life or death, forever free!"

Waqar A Khan is the Founder of Bangladesh Forum for Heritage Studies.



1961. She famously coined the enviable sobriquet of 'Switzerland of the East' for Swat, because of its pleasant weather, the enthralling beauty of its snow-capped mountains, vales and placid lakes. The Queen was enchanted by it all.

The following story is about two brothers from Swat, with the lyrical names of: Naushe-e-Rawan and Bakth-

Bakth was a school drop-out having read up to class IV, in a school located at some distance from his village. At 16 years of age, he was now in need of a job. He had never ventured much out of his sleepy little village, where clouds caressed the mountain tops, rolling mist played in its bewitching vales and gurgling waterfalls cascaded

# On Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel*

SHIREEN MAINUDDIN

*Guns, Germs and Steel* was first published in 1997 and received the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction the following year. Reading this book has been an incredible experience. Each time I put the book down for the day I had to gasp for air because I had been totally immersed, rather like deep sea diving and looking at the world in a new dimension.

The depth and breadth of the knowledge that Diamond has passed on is vast, and the questions that he has raised remain a challenge. One does not have to agree with his opinions but the book serves to activate the mind in a hitherto unknown manner.

Jared Diamond is one of the US's most celebrated scholars. A Professor of Geography and Physiology at the University of California, he is equally renowned for his work in the fields of ecology and evolutionary biology and for his ground breaking studies of the birds of Papua New Guinea. Other than the Pulitzer, his prizes and honours include the U.S National Medal of Science, the Tyler Prize for Environmental Science, and election to the U.S National Academy of Sciences etc. As a biological explorer his most publicized finding was the rediscovery, on the New Guinea highlands, of the Golden Fronted Bower Bird which had not been seen for almost a century.

*Guns, Germs and Steel* starts around 11000 BC and is divided into four parts, within which, each chapter covers different issues. To summarize the book, if at all possible, the author states that he was inspired by a question from Yali a local politician in New Guinea who asked him, "Why is that you white people developed so much cargo and brought it to New Guinea when we black people had little cargo of our own?"

Throughout the book, Diamond seeks an answer to that query but

not from a racist point of view. He is an American and his constitutional belief that 'all men are created equal' forms the premise of his research.

Using the equality of man as his cornerstone, he examines in great detail the growth of certain ancient human settlements in the world and the reason why some of them achieved the basics of food production earlier than others. Food production and food surplus being the basic requirement for humans to move upwards into the next stage of development. Diamond, however, does not make any references to the Indus Valley civilization, and when writing about linguistic development, fails to mention the Indo Aryan group of languages. His emphasis in on the parts of the world that he is familiar with, New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, North and South America and Europe and Africa with most of his focus on the America's and Australia/ New Guinea.

Diamond compares world history to an onion, "One has to keep taking off the layers. History is not just one damned fact after another. There really are broad patterns to history and the search for their explanation is as productive as it is fascinating."

Diamond commences by giving an analysis of the world prior to 11000 BC. He proceeds to write about the effect of geography on shaping societies on Polynesian Islands, with human movement from the mainland to Islands, across the seas, in ancient times being his prime focus. Continuing with migration, he covers the defeat of the Inca Emperor by the Spanish. The result of the victory, was the subsequent colonization of the New World by Europeans, the resultant disappearance of most groups of Native Americans and the biggest population shift of modern times.

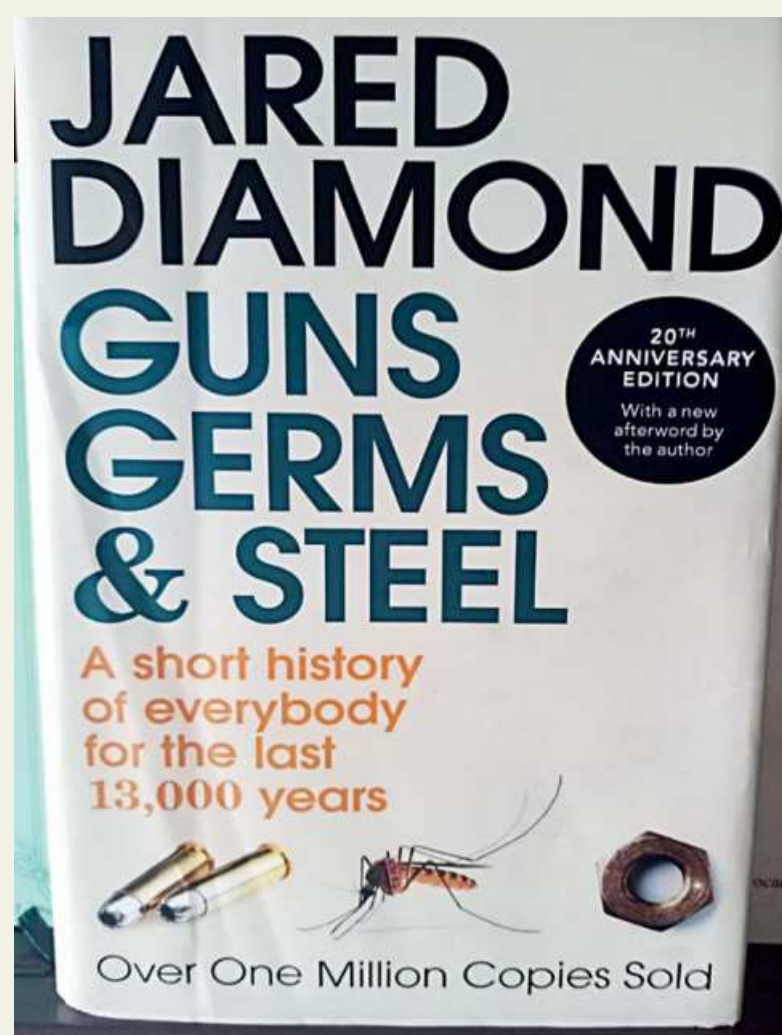
The second section talks about the rise of food production and how

farmer power forms the root of *Guns, Germs and Steel*. He puts forward his theory that geographic differences provided the greatest advantage in the onset of food production and the major reason why people from certain areas flourished over others. His views are especially important in the context of geographic changes that are likely to be caused by climate change.

Diamond goes from food to guns germs and steel in the third section in which he covers the evolution of germs, writing, technology, government and organized religion.

His views on the evolution of germs and the connection to domesticated animals is of particular importance in the present pandemic as he states that given human proximity to the animals that are kept as pets and those that have been domesticated, the human body is getting constantly bombarded by their microbes. He cites four stages in the evolution of a specialized human disease from an animal precursor with the first being the diseases directly transmitted to us from our pets and domestic animals. Examples of such diseases are cat scratch fever from our cats and leptospirosis from dogs. Human beings are similarly liable to pick up diseases from wild animals such as the tularemia from skinning wild rabbits.

In the second stage, a former animal pathogen evolves to the point where it does get transmitted directly and causes epidemics. However, the epidemic dies out for any of several reasons, such as being cured by modern medicine, or being stopped when everybody around has already been infected and either becomes immune or dies. He gives the example of Onyong-nyong fever which appeared in East Africa in 1959 and proceeded to infect several million Africans. The fact that



the patients recovered quickly and became immune to further attack helped the new disease to die out quickly.

Interestingly, Diamond refrains from mentioning Spanish flu although it killed millions all over the world. The final stage of this evolution of germs is represented by the major long established epidemic diseases which remain confined to humans.

He emphasizes the importance of lethal microbes in human history and uses the European conquest and depopulation of the America's

as an example. "Far more Native Americans died in bed from Eurasian germs than on the battlefield from European guns and swords." Small pox, measles influenza and typhus competed for the top rank among the killers. The Aborigines of Australia and the Maori population of New Zealand faced similar extinction.

The book ends with a whirlwind tour of the histories of Australia and New Guinea, East Asia, Austronesian expansion, a historical comparison of Eurasia and the Americas, and Africa.

A singularly fascinating in *Guns Germs and Steel* is the detailed

description of the defeat of the Inca Emperor on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1532 on his home turf in Peru, by the Spanish Conquistador Francisco Pizarro with only 168 Spanish soldiers. Diamond traces the chain of causation in this confrontation and the role played by guns, germs and steel.

Pizarro's military advantage lay in the Spaniards steel swords and other weapons, steel armor, guns and horses. In comparison, Atahualpa's troops were foot soldiers and had only stone, bronze or wooden clubs, hand axes, plus slingshots and quilted armors.

The Inca Empire was divided because of a battle between Atahualpa and his half-brother. The reason for this civil war was that an epidemic of small pox had spread among native South American Indians, after the germ arrived with Spanish Settlers in Panama and Colombia. The disease had killed the Inca Emperor Capac, his designated heir and most of the court officials. These deaths led to a contest for the throne between Atahualpa and his half-brother with the latter gaining ascendancy of the throne but not having the necessary training for the position.

Diamond concludes by making a passionate plea for history to be treated as a science in much the same way as Political Science and Economics and recommends a Nobel Prize be established for history.

At times, Diamond meanders, in other instances he places too much information for the reader to digest but it is an incredible journey that he takes us on. The book is as meaningful as it was when first published and perhaps in the context of the present human versus virus encounter even more so.

Shireen S. Mainuddin is a former banker and a member of The Reading Circle.





## Bangabandhu Tunnel is being built with BSRM

COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT **BSRM** building a safer nation



## Aktaruzzaman Flyover Chittagong

Principal Cement Brand



# DHAKA-SYLHET CORRIDOR ADB approves \$1.78b to help boost trade

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Asian Development Bank has approved a \$1.78-billion multitranchise financing facility (MFF) to help improve mobility, road safety and regional trade along Dhaka-Sylhet trade corridor in Bangladesh.



The corridor will support a new trade route that connects Chattogram port with India's northeastern states through three land ports of Akhaura, Sheola and Tamabil, and from there to Bhutan and Myanmar, according to a press release of the ADB yesterday.

"Bangladesh's export-driven economic growth has shown its unique potential and opportunity of becoming a regional transport and trade hub. To sustain this growth, the country's transport infrastructure needs to be improved," said Satomi Sakaguchi, ADB transport specialist for South Asia.

The funds for the SASEC Dhaka-Sylhet Corridor Road Investment Project will be provided in four tranches. The first tranche of \$400 million will help finance the initial works of the major contracts for the widening of about 210km of the National Highway No 2 along Dhaka-Sylhet corridor from a two-lane to a four-lane road with slow-moving vehicular traffic lanes.

It will include 60km of footpath, 26 footbridges, and 13 overpasses. Its design will have features responsive to the needs of the elderly, women, children, and the differently-abled, as well as disaster and climate risks.



Fear of dengue has gripped many in the capital as the number of patients of the mosquito-borne disease keeps rising. The photo of this homeless child tucked under a mosquito net while taking a nap on a rickshaw van was taken in the city's Khilgaon.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Man's body recovered from rehab centre

Family alleges torture

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Police yesterday recovered the body of a man from Holycare drug rehabilitation centre in Barishal.

The victim is Chandan Sarkar, 27, of the district's Agailjhara upazila. His family alleged that he was tortured to death inside the facility.

Contacted, Holycare authorities denied the allegations and said that Chandan was mentally sick and died by suicide.

The victim was found dead with a towel around his neck.

According to Sarwar, a staff member of the rehabilitation facility, Chandan was locked in a dispute with another patient on Thursday night. Early yesterday, he was found dead.

Sajahan Mallik, sub-inspector of Kotwali Police Station, said they recovered

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## Daily Covid cases lowest in 69 days

117 more die; infection rate drops below 13pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of daily Covid-19 cases dropped to 3,525, the lowest in the last 69 days though the death toll is still above the 100-mark.

The infection rate has also dropped to 12.78 percent, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

A total of 27,578 samples were tested in the past 24 hours.

So far, 14.86 lakh people have been infected by the deadly coronavirus since the detection of the first cases in the country on March 8, 2020.

Of the daily Covid-19 cases, 1,613 were detected in Dhaka division.

A total of 117 people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday. With this, the total number of deaths in the country has reached 25,846 and the death rate stands at 1.74 percent.

Among the deceased, 56 were men and 61 women. Of them, one aged between 0 and 10 years old, one between 11 and 20, three between 21 and 30, nine between 31 and 40, 16 between 41 and 50, 19 between

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## ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

### Bangladesh mission at London

AUGUST 27, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZZA SAJEN

#### LONDON MISSION INAUGURATED

Pakistan was now dead and two countries had been born the dead state, said Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, speaking today at the inaugural function of the Bangladesh Mission in London.

Justice Chowdhury was the overseas representative of the Bangladesh Government. Although Bangladesh Government had not yet received any official international recognition, the Mission in London intended to carry out diplomatic activities there.

Justice Chowdhury described the detention of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by the Pakistani authorities as illegal and called for his immediate release.

#### LATIN AMERICAN PARLIAMENT CONDEMNS BANGLADESH GENOCIDE

The Latin American Parliament at Caracas, Venezuela today unanimously passed a resolution condemning the brutal suppression of human rights, the massive genocide, the deliberate liquidation of politically conscious elements and of intellectuals and the imposition of a reign of terror in East Pakistan by the Pakistan Army.

They also called upon the Government of Pakistan to desist from committing a further violation of human rights and of law and justice, stop military repression, respect the life of the leader Mujibur Rahman, and enter into immediate negotiations with the already elected representatives of the people with the object

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



## Covid cases rise again in India

Govt asks 2 states to consider night curfew

AGENCIES

India has asked the states of Kerala and Maharashtra to consider night curfews in areas with high Covid-19 case numbers as the country reported more than 40,000 new infections for two days in a row yesterday.

Cases fell to a five-month-low of 25,166 in the middle of the month but have risen sharply in the last three days, mainly in Kerala that recently celebrated a big festival during which families typically come together.

India reported 44,658 new Covid-19 infections yesterday, taking the total to 32.6 million, the most in the world after the United States. Deaths rose by 496 to 436,861.

Kerala, on India's southern tip, has accounted for nearly 60% of the new cases in the past week and

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## Fossil of four-legged whale found in Egypt



REUTERS, Cairo

Scientists said on Wednesday they had discovered the 43 million-year-old fossil of a previously unknown amphibious four-legged whale species in Egypt that helps trace the transition of whales from land to sea.

The newly discovered whale belongs to the Protocetidae, a group of extinct whales that falls in the middle of that transition, the Egyptian-led team of researchers said in a statement.

Its fossil was unearthed from middle Eocene rocks in the Fayum Depression in Egypt's Western Desert -- an area once covered by sea that has

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Ronaldo returns to Man Utd

REUTERS, Manchester

Manchester United have agreed a deal to re-sign Cristiano Ronaldo from Juventus,



the Premier League club announced on Friday, with the transfer subject to the agreement of personal terms, visa and a medical.

The Portugal forward is headed back to the club where he won eight major trophies from 2003-2009. Financial details were not disclosed but British and Italian media said United would buy Ronaldo for 25 million euros on a two-year deal.

Ronaldo, signed by Juve in 2018 for 100 million euros (\$117.90 million) from Real Madrid in the hope of leading them to an elusive Champions League title, will leave the club with 101 goals, two league crowns and a Coppa Italia

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## Idol at a Kali temple vandalised in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

An idol of a Kali Temple was vandalised by unidentified criminals at Delduar upazila early yesterday, creating anger among local Hindu community people.

Radhika Chandra Radhu, general secretary of the temple committee, said unidentified criminals vandalised an idol of the Kali Temple at Dheuria Rishipara under Deulee union and threw it away from the temple.

Being informed, a police team from Delduar Police Station along with the local union parishad chairman

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### PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 28

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-30 12-45 4-45 6-33 8-00  
JAMAAT 5-05 1-15 5-00 6-36 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



In preparation for tomorrow's formal performance test of the country's first metro train, a contractor yesterday operated the train among four metro stations in Uttara. Many residents of the area saw the cars on the elevated tracks for the first time in Bangladesh. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader will be present at the event on Sunday.

PHOTO: VIDEO GRAB

## Star HEALTHLINE

### WHAT IS LONG COVID?

STAR HEALTH DESK

Don't panic if you still feel extremely weak, climbing a few flights of stairs, four weeks after recovering from Covid-19. Scientists are becoming more aware of "long Covid" manifestations and how they may impact patients.

Long Covid is generally identified through persistent symptoms lasting more than three to four weeks.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this trend is usually noticed in people

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Hyginex Instant hand sanitizer

