



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



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"I don't regret the decision to put Australia's national interest first."
AUSSIE PM SCOTT MORRISON DEFENDS HANDLING OF FRENCH SUBMARINE DEAL



"After reopening schools, students are following health guidelines but in most places guardians are flouting the guidelines."
EDUCATION MINISTER DIPU MONI



"The proposed personal data protection bill is nothing but a conspiracy to snatch the rights of citizens' freedom of expression."
BNP SECRETARY GENERAL MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR

Apathy eats away vote

Culture of being elected unopposed rampant in by-polls, local body elections

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

In an ominous sign for democracy, the practice of a candidate being elected unopposed has gripped the parliamentary by-polls as well as local body polls.

Even a few years ago, these elections would be held amid much enthusiasm and fanfare irrespective of how the national polls had gone.

But lately, the perception runs deep that someone participating in an election on the ruling party ticket would win no matter what. This has led to widespread apathy among both voters and prospective candidates, keeping them away from participating in the democratic process.

Experts opined that the election culture of the country has already been destroyed and so many being elected uncontested further underlines the flaws in the electoral system.

They also blamed the Election Commission's failure to ensure free and impartial elections, which has led to people and many political parties being disinterested in participating.

Talking to the Daily Star, Election

Commissioner Mahub Talukdar said, "It is an ominous sign that all political parties are not participating in elections. We need to know why a candidate would be elected unopposed."

"We want elections to be competitive with all political parties joining in. But we cannot interfere on the internal activities of political parties, including their decision of whether or not to participate in the elections."

Today's elections of 160 union parishads (UPs) could be a good example of the prevalent system of being elected unopposed.

The polls are part of the first phase of UP elections that were postponed due to the pandemic.

Election Commission data shows that in 160 union parishads, 45 chairman candidates were elected uncontested, which means around 29 percent chairmen were elected without a single vote.

Out of the 45, 38 were in Bagherhat. Of them, all but one was from the ruling Awami League, reports out Bagherhat correspondent.

Sixty-five UPs of the district are going to

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Moments after a serious tragedy was averted in front of Suhrawardy hospital: The traffic sergeant taking apparently his daughter to school on the motorcycle was riding on the wrong side of the road when the car, making a legal U-turn, managed to stop inches away from the bike. Nevertheless, traffic cops present in the vicinity penalised the car driver. The traffic sergeant's bike is not even registered. It just says "DMP E.N: 364311" on the number plate.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SPECIAL INOCULATION CAMPAIGN

Twice a week at unions, upazilas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will soon run a "Special Inoculation Campaign" during which people even at the unions would be able to get Covid shots twice a week.

The move is apparently being made so that the government can achieve its target of administering two crore Covid shots every month.

The health assistants will run the special campaign on days of the week they do not have any regular vaccination work, decided a meeting held at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) yesterday evening.

People aged 60 and above will be able to get registered on the spot on one of the two days.

"We have ensured continuous supply of vaccines in the coming days. In continuation of this, we have planned to administer around two crore shots of Covid-19 vaccines each month, including one crore through special campaign," Prof

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EVALY SCAM AFTERMATH

Customers, sellers seek legal recourse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aggrieved customers and sellers are now out to file cases against the controversial e-commerce platform Evaly, hoping to get back their hard-earned money.

Saad Rahman, a customer of Evaly and a resident of the capital's Nawabganj, yesterday came to Gulshan Police Station to file a case against Evaly CEO Mohammad Rassel, Chairman Shamima Nasrin, its officials and goodwill ambassadors.

He claimed he paid Tk 3.15 lakh for a motorbike in April but is yet to get the product or the refund.

Gulshan police suggested that he go to Dhanmondi Police Station as the Evaly office is not under its jurisdiction.

Another customer in Jashore, Jahangir Alam Chanchal, went to Kotwali Police Station on Saturday to file a case against Evaly owners over similar allegations. He had paid Tk 1.30 lakh in May but yet to get the product.

Kotwali police, however, didn't register his complaint as a case. "The complaint - he wants to recover his money - was incomplete and could not be registered as a case. We suggested he talk to other Evaly customers in the area, who are facing similar troubles, to file a complaint together. Then we will decide whether to file a case," Tajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Amid this situation, customers and sellers, whom Evaly owes crores of

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KHALEDA'S JAIL TERM

Suspended for another 6 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has extended for six months the suspension of the jail term of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said this while briefing reporters at his secretariat office yesterday.

Khaleda will receive treatment at home and she would not be able to go abroad, he said.

The former prime minister was released from prison on March 25 last year after she was in jail for 776 days.

The decision was made as per section 401

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Govt mulls new citizens' database

BBS to collect data from all; each citizen will have a unique 16-digit identification number

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics is going to develop what officials said would be an extensive and comprehensive identity database containing demographic and biometric particulars of every resident of the country.

The BBS will collect the data to develop the National Population Register (NPR) where demographic and biometric data will be stored permanently.

The citizens will be provided with a unique 16-digit identification number, BBS officials said.

The new initiative was discussed at a workshop organised by BBS at the planning

ministry.

Planning Minister MA Mannan said the issue of privacy should be dealt with caution while developing the NPR.

Shamsul Alam, state minister for planning, said implementation of such projects tends to get delayed and a deadline should be set.

Shahadat Hossain, director of Census Wing and team leader of the NPR, said the NPR will create a comprehensive demographic, biometric and administrative database for every resident of the country, irrespective of citizenship.

It will guide the government, non-government organisations and other

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Cox's Bazar Forestland JS body's no to civil service academy plan

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary body yesterday strongly opposed the public administration ministry's plan to build a civil service academy in Cox's Bazar on 700 acres of land that has been declared as protected forest and ecologically critical area (ECA).

"We are recovering the forest land that has been grabbed by different individuals and organisations. Therefore, it cannot be acceptable that a government department will take the reserved forest land," Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of the parliamentary watchdog, told The Daily Star after the meeting.

In 2018, the Cox's Bazar district administration sought clearance from the Department of Environment (DoE) for construction of Bangabandhu Academy of Public Administration on 700 acres of land adjacent to the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Marine Drive.

The area was declared as a reserved forest in 1935. Then in 1980, it was declared a national park, and finally, in 1999, the area was declared as ECA.

The list of forest lands of the country compiled in 2001 also includes Jhilongja Mouja as forest land, according to Chowdhury.

According to the Environmental

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A jam-packed hall in front of a room marked post-Covid followup in Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College hospital yesterday. Doctors said the number of Covid-19 patients have fallen significantly, but about 300-400 people recovering from the disease through the hospital for post-Covid issues every day.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

59 unlicensed IPTV channels shut down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission closed down 59 internet protocol television (IPTV) channels yesterday for not possessing valid licences to operate.

The telecommunications regulatory body announced this in a statement circulated yesterday.

"BTRC only allows licensed internet service providers (ISP) to operate internet protocol-based data services, like streaming services, IPTV and video-on-demand," said the statement.

BTRC said only those ISP operators licensed to provide IPTV services can be allowed to broadcast television channels, which are themselves licensed by the information ministry.

However, each of the channels, programmes or content must also have obtained the necessary licence, authorisation or clearance from the authorities concerned, said the statement.

"It has been observed that in recent times certain unscrupulous businesses have been operating IPTVs illegally by buying domains or through Facebook and YouTube," BTRC claimed.

"It is absolutely illegal to operate any IPTV without a licence," it said, "and so BTRC is closing 59 such channels."

Sources in BTRC circulated a list of the IPTVs which include certain television

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BANGLADESH UPDATE



1,383
New cases in 24hrs



15,42,683
Total cases



27,225
Deaths



15,01,541
Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE



4,703,348
Deaths



229,156,219
Total cases

Probe if Pir has links to militancy

HC asks CTTC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the Counter Terrorism and Transitional Crime (CTTC) Unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police to find out if Rajarbag Darbar Shareef Pir Dillur Rahman had any connections with militancy.

The court also ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to enquire into the assets of Pir Dillur Rahman and his disciples. Both the CTTC and ACC were asked to submit reports in 60 working days.

Meanwhile, Pir Dillur Rahman and his followers allegedly filed false cases against the writ petitioner for harassing and humiliating them.

Thus, the court directed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to identify those who filed false cases against the writ petitioner and submit its report in 60 working days.

At the same time, the HC asked the inspector general of police to provide proper security to the victim writ petitioners.

Besides, the court issued a rule asking the authorities to explain in

four weeks why they should not be directed to take appropriate legal action against Pir Dillur Rahman and his disciples for filing false cases against the writ petitioners.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the directives and rule after hearing a writ petition that sought its order on the authorities to take appropriate actions against Pir Dillur Rahman and his disciples for filing vexatious cases against them.

On Thursday, eight victims, including a seven-year-old child, collectively submitted the petition to the HC through lawyer Mohamad Shishir Manir mentioning that Pir Dillur Rahman has filed several false, misleading and defamatory cases against them through his disciples.

Lawyer Shishir Manir told The Daily Star that he annexed a report of the National Human Rights Commission in the writ petition saying that the Rajarbag Darbar Shareef Pir Dillur Rahman and his disciples who filed the false cases against the petitioners may have a connection with the militants.



A policeman putting a lock on a battery-powered rickshaw for using the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in the capital's Matua area. Witnesses said police let the rickshaws go after realising a certain amount of fines. Initiatives to keep such three-wheelers off the highways have borne little fruit.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Twice a week at unions

FROM PAGE 1

Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of the health directorate, said in an online briefing after the meeting.

He did not mention when this special campaign would start.

On August 6-12, the government inoculated around 34 lakh people through special campaign in around 6,000 centres in rural and urban areas.

However, the government backedtracked from its decision to continue the special campaign due to the shortage of jabs.

There are 1,005 Covid-19 vaccination centres for regular campaign across the country.

During yesterday's briefing, Prof Khurshid said schools can no longer be used as vaccination centres as classes have resumed.

"At upazila level, we have planned to use the upazila auditoriums or any large halls alongside the upazila health complexes as vaccination centres," he said.

At the union level, the union health sub-centres and the union health and family welfare centres will be used as vaccination centres.

"People willing to get vaccinated will register online at the upazila health complexes and will go to the designated vaccination centres after getting texts. The ICT division will arrange mechanism to send texts mentioning the centres' names," Prof Khurshid said.

About vaccinating children, he said, "This is a sensitive issue. We are trying to bring children under vaccination as

per directives from the prime minister. We will start this campaign based on specific data in future."

Health Minister Zahid Maleque had said inoculation of children 12 and above will start in 15-20 days.

The health DG also said migrant workers will get vaccines as required by the countries they work in.

According to health officials, the DGHS has taken necessary steps to deliver Pfizer shots in 22 districts, including Dhaka.

Asked, Prof Khurshid said, "We have planned the campaign in a way so that certain people can get the certain vaccines. The migrant workers will get priority always."

43 DIED, 1,383 NEW CASES
Forty-three more people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday, said a press release issued by the DGHS.

The total number of Covid-19 deaths in the country now stands at 27,225, and the death rate at 1.76 percent.

At least 1,383 new infections were recorded during the period, taking the total number of people infected to 15,42,683, added the release.

The positivity rate was 5.62 percent against a total of 24,623 samples tested across the country in the 24 hours.

At least 2,887 Covid-19 patients have recovered during the period.

The total number of recoveries is now 15,01,541, and the recovery rate 97.33 percent.

Among the 43 deceased, 22 were men and 21 women.

JS body's no to civil service

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Protection Act, it is prohibited to build any kind of installation in the ecologically critically forest.

Later in 2018, the DoE had issued the clearance.

"We think the respective department and the prime minister's office were not properly informed about the type of the land it was while giving permission to the construction of the training centre there. We are trying to understand how it happened."

According to a report submitted by the ministry to the parliamentary committee, the land has 100 acres of orchards created through social afforestation under the afforestation project in the coastal areas to address the adverse effects of climate change.

There are hills of different heights up to 20-200 feet, different species of trees as well as elephants, monkeys, wild pigs, various species of snakes and birds.

If the project is set up in the area,

the environment and ecology in the surrounding area would be severely damaged.

Subsequently, the parliamentary standing committee on the ministry of environment, forests and climate change has recommended that the government take steps to stop the project and relocate it to other areas to save the environment.

It has also asked the DoE to withdraw the clearance.

The ministry of environment, forest and climate change will also send a letter to the land ministry, which gave the plot to the public administration ministry, on the issue.

According to the direction of the court, there is no opportunity to allocate such land.

"We support the enhancement of efficiency and capacity of government officials. But not at the cost of damaging the environment. This is unconstitutional. It can be constructed somewhere else."

Ex-Algerian president Bouteflika given state funeral

ALGIERS, Reuters

Former Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika, ousted in 2019 after mass protests, was given a state funeral on Sunday attended by senior officials but received little of the attention given to such occasions in the past.

Bouteflika died on Friday, aged 84. An armoured vehicle decked with flowers pulled his coffin, covered with the national flag, on a gun carriage from his home in Zeralda, west of the capital, to the el-Alia cemetery in Algiers where five of his predecessors are buried.

Bouteflika was first elected in 1999, and is widely credited with a national reconciliation policy that restored peace after a war with armed Islamists in the 1990s killed an estimated 200,000 people.

But many Algerians blame him for the economic stagnation of his latter years in power, when he was rarely seen in public after suffering a stroke, and widespread corruption led to the looting of tens of billions of dollars from a state that depends heavily on its large gas and oil reserves.

He stepped down in April 2019 after mass demonstrations to reject his plan to seek a fifth term, and demand political and economic reforms.

As well as Bouteflika's family, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, who laid a wreath of flowers on the tomb, and many ministers of the current government and military officers, including army chief of staff Lieutenant-General Said Chenegriha, were among the mourners.

Attendees also included foreign diplomats in Algiers.

Customers, sellers seek legal recourse

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taka, are uncertain whether they would get back the money.

On Friday, a seller sued Evaly CEO Rassel, his wife and Chairman Shamima, and 12 officials of the company with Dhanmondi Police Station on charges of embezzlement and threatening the plaintiff.

Dhanmondi police then filed a prayer with a Dhaka court to place Rassel and Shamima on a seven-day remand each.

In the case statement, seller Kamrul Islam Chakdar, who has four businesses in the capital's Paltan, alleged that he supplied goods worth around Tk 35 lakh but Evaly did not pay him since January.

It gave him a post-date bank cheque in May, but it bounced twice as the company didn't have enough money in their account in June, added the case statement.

"Evaly had signed an agreement that it would pay the money within 30 days of delivering products. But it didn't abide by that even after I filed a general diary in January in this regard," he wrote in the complaint.

Hours after filing of the case, Evaly authorities shut down its head office in Dhanmondi until further notice and said that its employees will work

from home.

"The office will reopen with permission following the completion of investigation by authorities," read a notice hung at the entrance of the Evaly headquarters on Dhanmondi road 14.

Earlier, a customer named Arif Baker filed a case against Rassel and Shamima for not delivering products worth Tk 3.10 lakh.

Following the case, Rapid Action Battalion arrested the duo at their Mohammadpur residence on Thursday.

They are now on a three-day remand each.

Meanwhile yesterday evening, a group of sellers and customers staged a protest in front of the Evaly office, demanding release of the Evaly CEO and the chairman.

They urged the government to release Rassel and his wife so that Evaly can run the business and pay back the money.

They started collecting mass signatures in support of their demand. 'STERN ACTION IF THEY FAIL TO PAY BACK'

At the secretariat, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday told reporters that stern action would

be taken against Evaly and other e-commerce platforms if they fail to keep their commitments to the customers.

"Evaly has taken a lot of money from people. I don't know how they [Evaly] will fulfill their commitment. [But] If they cannot pay back the customers' money, law enforcement agencies will take stern action."

He also warned people not to make transactions without knowing about the business.

"I mean, the tempting offers...For example, a car that costs Tk 100 is being offered at Tk 50. Make sure you know how much risk there is and what kind of [money or product] you will get and whether there is any chance of being deceived... If you are not sure, you should refrain from investing in such companies."

Talking to The Daily Star, Aminul Islam, inspector (investigation) of Gulshan Police Station, said they appealed to a Dhaka court, seeking information on the bank accounts and assets of the Evaly CEO and chairman.

"Rassel told us that most of the money was spent on discounts. Besides, they also spent a lot on advertisements and promotions," he said, adding that they were verifying those.

Apathy eats away vote

FROM PAGE 1

polls today. In the 27 remaining UPs, most of the AL nominated candidates will have to face challenges from party dissidents.

Other than three mayoral candidates of nine municipalities, which is going to vote today, the rest were elected unopposed.

The same scenario was seen in the earlier portion of first-phase UP polls. Voting in 204 UPs were held on June 21, when 28 chairmen were elected unopposed.

The presence of voters has also declined in recent years.

Experts said people believe that the victory of a ruling party nominee is inevitable.

The Sylhet-3 by-polls, which were held on September 4, only saw 34 percent voter turnout. The picture was grimmer in the Dhaka-10 by-polls on March 21 last year, which saw a turnout of only around five percent.

Hafuzzuddin Khan, president of Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan), said, "The number of candidates elected unopposed are on the rise as many are unwilling to take part in the election considering that the ruling party ticket-holder will win in the polls."

He said people consider taking part in elections a waste of time and money.

The "elected unopposed" phenomenon is not limited to local bodies' polls; two members of parliament (MPs) were elected unopposed through by-polls in recent months, and one is set to be elected unopposed soon.

Former Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University vice-chancellor Pran Gopal Datta is set to be announced the MP from Cumilla-7 as all contenders in the by-polls have withdrawn from the race.

Dulal Talukder, regional election officer in Cumilla, on Saturday told The Daily Star that AL nominee Prof Pran remains the only person running for membership in parliament

after NAP nominee Monirul Islam withdrew his candidature on the day.

On Thursday, Jatiya Party nominee Lutfar Reza withdrew his nomination paper.

Contacted, NAP nominee Monirul said he withdrew his candidature due to a family issue, while Lutfar's phone was found switched off.

The seat fell vacant on July 30 after Ali Ashraf, then MP of the constituency, died at a hospital in Dhaka. The by-poll was scheduled to be held on October 7.

AL-nominated candidates Aga Khan Mintu, for the Dhaka-14 by-polls, and Abul Hashem Khan, for Cumilla-5, were elected unopposed on June 26.

In Dhaka-14, three candidates -- Mostakur Rahman of Jatiya Party, Abu Hanif of Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal (Inu), and AYM Kamrul Islam of Bangladesh Nationalist Front -- withdrew their nominations.

The three cited the Covid-19 pandemic as the reason for withdrawal, said an official of the returning officer's office.

In Cumilla-5 by-polls Jatiya Party nominee Jashim Uddin withdrew his candidature.

Both by-polls were set to be held on July 28.

Jatiya Party expelled both Lutfar Reza and Jashim Uddin, citing the reason of "violating the party charter".

But insiders said both the party leaders withdrew their candidatures in exchange for money.

"We don't know anything about them withdrawing in exchange for money. But they said they withdrew their candidacies due to pressure from various quarters," Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader said yesterday.

He said the party instructed the leaders and activists to stay in the election race till the end of the elections. "We are trying to make elections meaningful."

"We are also observing the activities of the EC as they have to ensure a

conducive environment for candidates during an election," he added.

In elections of 456 upazilas, held between March and June 2019, 94 chairman candidates were elected unopposed. Of the 94, 93 were AL-backed.

In the 2014 national polls, the country witnessed the ominous phenomenon when 153 MPs out of 300 constituencies were elected unopposed.

In all the elections mentioned above, most political parties, including the BNP boycotted, saying they did not see any prospect of a free and fair election.

BNP candidates did participate in municipality elections that took place between December 2019 and February 2021. Even so, 10 mayoral candidates were elected unopposed in the 230 municipality elections.

In May 2019, AL mayoral candidate Ekramul Haque Titu was elected unopposed in the maiden election to the Mymensingh City Corporation.

Local government and election expert Professor Tofail Ahmed said there has been a general reduction in participation, of candidates and voters alike, in all elections.

"They think the election result is predetermined," he added.

"The country is witnessing a suffocating period. The voting system and culture has been damaged. Political democracy is already demolished. Politics is a profitable business now so there is no place for democracy there."

Election Commissioner Rafiqul Islam, however, said the Election Commission has nothing to do with the political parties' decisions to withdraw candidatures.

"It is unfortunate that many are not taking part in elections," he said.

Asked what the commission is doing to bring all political parties to elections, Rafiqul replied, "What can we do if a party decides to skip elections?"

Vaccine bookings spike after Italy extends Covid pass

AFP, Rome

Bookings for coronavirus vaccines in Italy spiked this week after the government said all employees must show proof of a job, negative test or recent recovery from Covid-19, authorities said.

"On a national level, there was a generalised increase in bookings

for the first dose of between 20 and 40 percent compared to last week," coronavirus commissioner Francesco Figliuolo said in a statement late Saturday.

Reservations for the first dose of the vaccine on Saturday were up 35 percent on the same time a week earlier, he added, without giving the actual figure.

Almost 41 million people in Italy have so far been fully vaccinated, government data shows -- close to 76 percent of the population over the age of 12.

But authorities remain concerned about the hold-outs ahead of the winter flu season, and this week extended the so-called "Green Pass" to all public and private workplaces.

59 unlicensed

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channels operated from abroad.

These include US-based Time Television, Total Cable, Radiant IPTV, Millenium TV and Biswa Bangla 24; Canada-based DesheBideshe, NRB TV, Jhankar TV and Azan.tv; UK-based channels like Iqra Bangla TV, iOn TV UK and TV One UK; Singapore-based Joy TV; and Australia-based JonmoBhumi TV.

The rest of the channels listed are located in Bangladesh.

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud said last Tuesday that the ministry has already started many activities including providing registrations to IPTV services to bring discipline.

The Deputy Secretary (TV-2) of the information ministry Ruzia Sultana said right now around 600 applications for IPTVs are pending with the ministry.

None of the IPTVs have been given licenses to operate yet.

"We have no knowledge of the decision by BTRC," said Sultana.

Suspended

FROM PAGE 1

(1) of Code of Criminal Procedure.

According to the notification, Khaleda will receive treatment staying at her residence in Dhaka and she will not be allowed to travel abroad during the jail suspension period.

The government through an executive order released her for six months which has been extended four times.

Khaleda's physicians said she was suffering from rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, ophthalmological and dental complications.

Her family has long been seeking permission from the government to allow her to go abroad for treatment.

However, Law Minister Anisul Huq on September 12 said she has to return to jail first to submit a new application seeking release on condition and permission to go abroad.

On March 25, the government extended the imprisonment suspension of Khaleda for six months.

The 76-year-old BNP chief was released from jail on September 25 last year for six months upon an executive order considering her age and humanitarian grounds, following an application by her family.

On February 8, 2018, Khaleda was sent to the Old Dhaka Central Jail after a lower court had sentenced her to five years' imprisonment in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case.

The High Court later doubled her jail sentence.

She was found guilty in another corruption case the same year. Her party, however, claims both the cases are politically motivated.

Govt mulls new

FROM PAGE 1

stakeholders to identify, locate and communicate with every individual for administrative and legal purposes, he said in a presentation.

The database will ensure proper distribution of social services and safety net programmes in the most efficient and cost-effective way, and it will offer a single window for personal identity verification, he added.

The NPR will help detect and eliminate corruption and it will ensure security for all, he said.

It will be continually updated and the record will be permanent.

The data to be stored in the NPR will include name, sex, education, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, religion, duration of stay at present address, permanent address, and details of the NID, passport, mobile phone and birth registration.

Information of each individual's family members, employment, health, economic status, nationality, citizenship, and residence would also be stored in the NPR.

Biometric information will include prints of 10 fingers and data needed for IRIS and face recognition.

Shahadat told The Daily Star that the project was still being conceptualised and opinions of the stakeholders were being collected at yesterday's event.

Once the NPR is developed, there will be no need for a population survey every 10 years, he said, adding that it will integrate databases of the NID, passport and driving licence.

The NPR would accumulate all sorts of data in one place to be monitored by the government, he said.

India seizes \$20m heroin haul in drug bust at sea

AFP, Ahmedabad

Indian authorities seized over \$20 million of heroin and detained seven Iranian men in a deep-sea drug bust off the country's western coast, officials said yesterday.

Officials intercepted messages sent to the boat's crew and apprehended the vessel -- travelling from Iran to Sri Lanka -- 180 nautical miles off the coast of Gujarat, the state's anti-terror squad chief, Himanshu Shukla, told AFP.



This canal at the port city's Colonel Hat is under development works for the last three months. While that's well and good, its construction materials are kept right in front of a nearby foot overbridge, which is creating difficulties for pedestrians. On the other hand, as the adjacent road has been dug up, people are crossing the canal using a thin, railing-less pipe, which is an extremely risky undertaking, especially during the rainy season. These photos were taken yesterday.



PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Extradition of Sohel Rana hangs in the balance

Delhi yet to respond to Dhaka's call

MUNTAKIM SAAD

The extradition of suspended Banani police inspector Sohel Rana, who was held by Indian Border Security Forces for trespassing, is uncertain as Delhi police are yet to respond to Dhaka's call.

Talking to The Daily Star on Saturday, Mohiul Islam, assistant inspector general of National Central Bureau (NCB) of the Police Headquarters, expressed doubts about whether they were getting back Sohel anytime soon.

He said they sent two letters to the Indian interface of Interpol in New Delhi to enquire about Sohel and to start processing his extradition. However, the Indian counterpart did not respond to the emails.

"There is a case against him in India. From our experiences we can say as long as they have a case against him [Sohel], they would not hand him over until the trial is over," said Mohiul.

Sohel is allegedly involved with E-orange, an e-commerce platform which made headlines for reportedly embezzling

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SUHRWARDY UDYAN

Govt can implement project protecting environment: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday observed that the government can implement construction project in Suhrawardy Udyan, protecting the environment and historical elements.

The article 18A of the constitution and the spirit of the 2009 High Court verdict must be maintained in implementing the construction project, the HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice SM Maniruzzaman said while delivering order on a writ petition in this regard.

The article says, "The State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to preserve and safeguard the natural resources, biodiversity, wetlands, forests and wildlife for the present and future citizens."

Following another petition, the HC on July 7, 2009 directed the government to identify and preserve all the important historic places related to the republic's Liberation War and to set up memorial monuments at the historic places at Suhrawardy Udyan, maintaining international standard so that people from



The article 18A of the constitution and the spirit of the 2009 High Court verdict must be maintained in implementing the construction project.

HC BENCH

home and abroad can pay homage to martyred freedom fighters.

Yesterday, the HC bench, however, summarily rejected a petition filed seeking its directive on the government to refrain

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'Just a tip of the iceberg'

TIB calls for fair probe into irregularities in recruitment of 18 constables in Narayanganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has called for an impartial, fair and thorough investigation in quickest possible time into the recruitment of 18 constables in Narayanganj two years ago through massive fraud and possible bribery.

"The recruitment of police constables in Narayanganj through massive fraud and possible bribery is an unforgivable and heinous crime; which risks exacerbating the erosion of confidence in law enforcing agencies," TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said in a press release yesterday.

The Daily Star ran the report yesterday. He said unless punishment is ensured to perpetrators through a fair and impartial investigation into the incident, it will not be possible to prevent the reckless recurrence of such irregularities in the future and the perpetrators will become more daring.

"This will further erode public trust and confidence in the law enforcement agencies," said Iftekharuzzaman.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Art is for everybody

Ghartera's 'In the Terrains of Fear' shatters barriers of normative art forms



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



MORMEE MAHTAB



PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION LAW

A conspiracy to snatch peoples' rights: Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday said the proposed personal data protection bill is nothing but a conspiracy to snatch the rights of citizens' freedom of expression.

"The standing committee think this sort of act is a conspiracy to snatch away citizens' freedom of expressions. This act will turn into a big threat for democracy. The meeting urged to uphold the personal rights and freedom of expressions," party's secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told journalists.

Fakhrul said party's standing committee members held a meeting on Saturday with its acting chairperson Tarique Rahman in the chair.

The meeting discussed the details of the three-day series meetings held between September 14-16.

Fakhrul said the meeting also decided to hold views-exchange meetings with the



SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

'Non-Muslims, transgender people their new target'

CTTC officials on Ansar al Islam's recruitment process

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Militant outfit Ansar al Islam, said to be the Bangladesh chapter of Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, is now targeting non-Muslims and transgender people to recruit them into militancy, according to the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit (CTTC).

They have adopted this strategy as these members would not invite suspicion from law enforcers or others, said officials.

As per the plan, they targeted 711 different Christian institutes in Dinajpur.

The CTTC unit claimed to have unearthed this information following a drive in Dinajpur, during which 18 people were arrested for their involvement with the outfit.

The outfit was working on this project through an institute named Islamic Online Madrasa (IOM). Mufti Jubayer Ahmad is the so-called chief of the institute.

Counterterrorism officials claimed that Jubayer is one of the members of Ansar Al Islam's "Mufti Board" (expert wing) and that they are "looking for him".

CTTC, along with district police, conducted the

drive on Friday. Of the 18 arrested, seven were shown arrested in different cases filed earlier by CTTC.

Dinajpur district police filed three separate cases against 11 others with Dinajpur Sadar, Biral and Bochaganj police stations on Friday night. The arrestees were brought before a local court on Saturday, which fixed September 21 for hearing.

Earlier, during the drive, the CTTC and district police detained 42 persons but the rest were released from custody immediately as no militancy connection were found against them, Abdul Mannan, deputy commissioner, CTTC's special action group, told The Daily Star yesterday.

CTTC informed that the IOM used to impart religious training to people through online platforms and take them on field visits, with 14 members in each batch.

Due to Covid-19, IOM used to train three batches at a time, said officials.

Investigation sources said the outfit leaders would mainly recruit members during the training procedure.

"During the training, they taught them how to convert a non-Muslim into a Muslim and drag

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

FACE-OFF OVER PARIR PAHAR

Ctg lawyers demand removal of DC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chattogram District Bar Association (CDBA) leaders yesterday demanded removal of Deputy Commissioner of Chattogram Mohammed Mominur Rahman, accusing him of resorting to falsehood against the lawyers' association.

They said the DC should apologise to lawyers for making "derogatory remarks" about the organisation. They also accused the DC of taking rent from illegal structures by leasing the hill area in the name of lawyers.

The leaders came up with the demands while addressing a press conference at the city's CDBA Auditorium.

The demands come amidst an ongoing face-off between the district administration and lawyers of Chattogram Court Building over the construction of two establishments at Parir Pahar, popularly known as Court Building hill.

It began when the CDBA issued a tender to construct two 12-storied buildings on the hill.

CDBA general secretary AHM Zia Uddin said, "He (the DC) has been peddling serious falsehood centring our establishments. We want peaceful coexistence, but if needed, we will take the legal path."

"CDBA's buildings are constructed by the donation of PM, law ministry, and self-funding by the association. If the buildings are illegal, then the donation would not be approved by the PM and ministry," he added.

CDBA president advocate Enamul Haque said, "We have seen in the news media that the DC office has sent a confidential report to the PM office filled with

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Journalist associations held a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday, protesting the move of seeking bank account details of 11 journalist leaders by Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit.

PHOTO: STAR

241 more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 241 new dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). Of them, 59 are from outside the capital.

With the new cases, a total of 5,345 were diagnosed during the current month, out of a total 15,701 infected.

Of this total, 1,778 patients are from outside Dhaka.

At least 7,698 were hospitalised in August, 2,286 patients were hospitalised in July, 272 in June, while 43 were infected in May, according to DGHS data.

Meanwhile, 59 people have died of dengue infection in the country this year. Twelve people have died in July, 34 in August, and 13 in September so far.

Govt can

FROM PAGE 3
from any further tree felling in Suhrawardy Udyan for commercial purposes. The bench said the petition is not maintainable (acceptable) as the petitioners have not challenged the plan approved for implementing the construction project in Suhrawardy Udyan, and the government has suspended the tree felling there.

Additional Attorney General SK Md Morshed told The Daily Star there is no bar for the government to implement its constitution project following the HC order.

Petitioners' counsel Syeda Rizwana Hasan told this correspondent that the HC did not say in the order that no tree can be felled in Suhrawardy Udyan. She said they are yet to decide whether an appeal will be moved before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

On May 9 this year, six rights organisations and an architect collectively filed the petition seeking HC directive on the government to refrain from any further tree felling in Suhrawardy Udyan for commercial purposes and/or for purposes not directly related to the preservation of the memories of the national liberation and war of independence.

Ctg lawyers

FROM PAGE 3
misinformation. In the report, they said our establishments are illegal, though the Chittagong Development Authority says they are legal.

"The report states that there are 353 illegal structures at the court building premises. However, the DC office regularly collects rent from these establishments," said the lawyer.

Contacted yesterday, the DC office said after taking lease of the land in 1977, CDBA did not pay any land tax in the last 44 years. Apart from that, breaking the rules of land lease, CDBA has built several permanent establishments without taking any permission from the DC office. Moreover, CDBA has encroached one acre and 24 Shataks of land after taking the land on lease.

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Non-Muslims, transgender

FROM PAGE 3
them into militancy," said a high official of CTC unit, requesting anonymity.

The IOM has been spreading such propaganda for the last four years.

CTTC officials, however, failed to provide any details on how many people were converted and subsequently became involved in militancy.

A CTTC high official, who has been following the operations of Ansar Al Islam for a long time, said the outfit has two types of recruitment process

for new members -- open invitation and secret invitation.

Recruiting members through IOM was an open process. For secret invitation, they mainly invite and recruit people through different secret sites and social media, the official told The Daily Star yesterday requesting anonymity.

The official also said IOM teaches Islam to new members of the outfit who lack knowledge of the religion.

"Ansar Al Islam doesn't only target Christians but also transgender people. The outfit has even opened

some social media pages and sites, through which they are collecting funds for their operation," said the CTTC official.

As part of the recruitment process, they are also providing aid to needy people, setting up schools and madrasas, said the official, based on analysis of different encrypted sites and interrogation of previous arrestees.

[Kongkon Karmaker, our Dinajpur Correspondent, contributed to this report.]

A conspiracy to snatch

FROM PAGE 3
party leaders on September 21-23.

Replying to a query, Fakhrul said, "Most of our committees' reorganising process has started. It will

be completed soon as the Covid-19 situation has improved." Regarding the release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Fakhrul said, "The government is afraid of releasing her."

When asked whether the party will put pressure on the government to release her, he said, "Whenever the party will take that decision, we will do so."

Just a tip

FROM PAGE 3
So it is imperative that the culprits be brought to justice as soon as possible through a proper investigation and that the investigation report be made public.

The TIB executive director said according to media sources, there had been massive irregularities and forgery in verification of documents and police verifications in recruitment of constables in Narayanganj district quota in 2019 which came up in an investigation by the Police Headquarters in 2020.

According to the investigation report published in the media recently, evidence of recruiting at least 18 constables by submitting fake and forged documents has been found,

the release said. However, the authority in charge of verification has completely avoided the matter or has given a positive report hiding the facts which is not possible without the direct involvement of the higher authorities, it said.

Referring to the inquiring officer's remarks that the then top district police officer directed them to give a positive report on human ground, Iftekharuzzaman said there is no moral and legal scope for recruitment in police service on human ground even after submitting fake and forged documents.

So, it needs to be addressed immediately through an impartial and independent investigation why the superintendent of police concerned

gave such reported instructions for what purpose, he added.

"At the same time, it has to be ascertained whether there was any illegal money transaction in this recruitment," he added.

"Attempts to prove one's innocence by placing blame on subordinate officers from the higher echelons concerned are questionable and unacceptable," he further said. The TIB executive director further said irregularities, corruption and fraud in the recruitment of law enforcement agencies have been heard for a long time but in most cases it is not acknowledged.

"So it would not be an exaggeration to say that this incident in Narayanganj is just the tip of the iceberg," he said.

Extradition of Sohel Rana

FROM PAGE 3
crores of taka by not delivering customers' products.

On September 4, Sohel was detained by the BSF on the Changrabandha border in West Bengal's Cooch Behar on charges of trespassing. Following the arrest, Sohel was suspended from his position.

"I don't know what they will do... they must make a response. However, it's not compulsory. We will give a gentle reminder again," said the police official.

He added that if that does not work, Gulshan police may approach the foreign ministry to start the process.

Meanwhile, official sources in New Delhi said NCB-Dhaka has written to India's CBI, the Indian interface of Interpol, in this regard.

Since Sohel is in West Bengal police custody, CBI needs to tell Bengal police to help in this matter. If no charge sheet has been filed against him so far in Bengal court, extradition process will be easy. If a charge sheet is filed, then it will require court permission, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Talking to journalists, DMP Commissioner Shafiqul Islam earlier

said bringing back Sohel from India won't be easy as there is a case filed against him there.

Meanwhile, investigators from several agencies are now looking into the wealth of Sohel and his family members, beyond the known sources of income, at home and abroad, after their involvement with E-orange came out in the open.

According to investigators, Sohel has several flats in Dhaka. He ran three business establishments and a number of dealerships of multinational companies. He also runs a business called T&G, with branches in Gulshan and Uttara.

He also has investments in few other countries.

Hailing from Gopalganj, he has over several bighas of land. Besides, he is a member of a number of elite clubs.

Investigators said that these businesses and wealth he accumulated in others' names.

On August 16, a customer, on behalf of others, filed a case against the owners and staffers of E-orange for reportedly embezzling around Tk 1,100 crore by not delivering their products.

A week later, another customer

filed a case against Sohel and nine others for their alleged involvement in misappropriating Tk 88.98 lakh from investors.

After receiving a court order, Gulshan police recorded it as a regular case on September 2. Later that day, Sohel fled the country.

From the beginning, Sohel has been denying allegations of his involvement with E-orange.

However, his name as the director can be seen in the TIN certificate used to open the company called Orange Bangladesh. E-orange and Orange Bangladesh were at the same location in Gulshan.

There are allegations against him that he has withdrawn Tk 2.5 crore from the company at different times.

Aminul Islam, inspector (investigation) of Gulshan Police Station, who is investigating the cases, told The Daily Star that when they asked Sohel's sister Sonia Mahjabin about it, she told the investigators that Sohel withdrew the money on her request.

"So far, we found Sohel's involvement as director of Orange Bangladesh in its TIN certificate and withdrawal of the money as a carrier," Aminul said.

Delwar Hossain passes away

CITY DESK

Delwar Hossain, former founding president of Dhaka Sangbadpatra



Hawkers Bohumukhi Samabaya Samity Ltd, passed away on Saturday.

He was 79. He left behind three daughters and two sons to mourn his death, said a press release.

He worked for the development of the Samity and the newspaper industry since the inception of the association. The association prayed for the salvation of his departed soul and expressed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Art is for

FROM PAGE 3
of the country through his work, along with the pain that permeates from that experience.

AAA battery, an anonymous collective, steps into a non-art format with their conversational art that offers a strong critic of the existing political system. They refuse to play by the conventions of the traditionalist white cube and its rules of display that confines each artist to an individual gallery space.

Photographer Orchid Chakma focuses on the history of the Kaptai dam, the tales of displacement of the indigenous communities in the face of systematic oppression. The event also showcases works by Shamsat Tabrejee, Razib Datta, Junaid Iqbal Ishmam, Shehzad Chowdhury, Oishik Jawad, and the Khyapa collective.

The exhibition will run till September 23 from 3pm to 9pm.

The author is a student of Political Science, and a freelance journalist.

MORE NEWS

Rozina's petition seeking return of passport rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected a petition filed by journalist Rozina Islam seeking return of her passport, two mobile phones, and a PID card.

Rozina, a senior reporter of Prothom Alo, was sued by the health ministry on May 17 under the Official Secrets Act-1923 and the Penal Code on charges of stealing and taking photos of "highly sensitive" government documents.

She was arrested after being confined for more than five hours at the Secretariat earlier in the day.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Abu Bakar Siddique issued yesterday's order after Rozina and her lawyer appeared before it.

Rozina filed the petition on Wednesday.

On May 23, the court of Metropolitan Magistrate of Dhaka Mohammad Baki Billah granted ad-interim bail to Rozina on the condition that she surrender her passport.

Ex-DIG prisons Partha Gopal sent to jail on surrender

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent suspended deputy inspector general (DIG) of prisons Partha Gopal Banik to jail after he surrendered before it in a case filed over recovering Tk 80 lakh from his home in Dhaka.

Judge Shaikh Nazmul Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka passed the order after Partha Gopal surrendered before the court.

On September 2, an HC bench delivered a short verdict scrapping an order of a Dhaka court that granted Partha bail, saying it was done in an "unusual manner".

HC issues rule on saving Sutang river

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to explain why its failure to save Sutang River in Habiganj and its connected Shailajura canal from pollutions should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, it asked the authorities concerned to show causes as to why they should not be ordered to take steps to protect the waterbodies.

The HC also ordered the government to form an independent committee to ensure continuous operation of pollution prevention machines, suspend the environmental clearance certificate of the factories polluting the river, to examine water of the waterbodies and to submit compliance reports.

The HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Kamrul Hossain Mollah issued the rule and order following a writ petition of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, moved by lawyer Syeda Rizwana Hasan.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Nawabganj
Phone & Fax: 0781-52101, 0781-52102
Email: eenaw@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No: 35.01.7000.454.07.001.21.1967(18) Date: 19/09/2021

E-Tender Notice

e-Tenders is invited in e-GP System (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Nawabganj for procurement of following works.

Tender ID	Name of Work	Publishing Date and Time	Closing Date and Time
612899 e-GP/Naw/2021-22/03	Supply of P.J/1st Class Brick, Stone Chips, Pea Gravels, Local sand & Fire wood at RHD stack Yeard under Road Division, Nawabganj for Maintenance of Different Road work Shibganj Road Sub-Division under RHD, Road Division, Nawabganj during the Financial Year 2021-2022.	19-Sept-2021 15:30	11-Oct-2021 13:00

(Sanjida Afrin Jhinuk)
ID No-602251
Executive Engineer (c.c), RHD
Road Division, Nawabganj
GD-1684

Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd.
Bangladesh Navy
Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj
Phone: 880-02-7661480, Fax: 8802223303501
E-mail: commercial@dewbn.gov.bd, www.dewbn.gov.bd
Ref: 06.02.6758.165.07.193.21.385 Date: 19 September 2021

Invitation for International Tender

01	Procuring entity name	Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., BN, Narayanganj.
02	Invitation for	Rail Line, 3200 Feet.
03	Procuring method	Open Tender.
04	Budget & source of funds	Ovm finance.
05	Tender selling date	19 September 2021 to 21 October 2021.
06	Tender closing date and time	24 October 2021 Time: 12:15pm.
07	Tender opening date and time	24 October 2021 Time: 12:30pm.
08	Name & address of the office:	Cash Section, Account Department, Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj or Account name: Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., Bank name: Trust Bank Ltd., Account No: 00350320000056, Branch: Narayanganj, deposit slip submitted by tender document. (If tender schedule document download from website).
	a. Selling tender document	Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj.
	b. Receiving tender document	Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj.
	c. Opening tender document	Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj. Tenderers and their authorized representative are allowed to attend.
09	Price of tender document	Tk. 800.00 (Taka eight hundred only) (Non-refundable).
10	Contact details official	Mobile: 01769719887 Web: www.dewbn.gov.bd E-mail: commercial@dewbn.gov.bd
11	Eligibility and tender	1. Tenderer must be OEM/distributor/local agent. 2. Experience of supply, supply of goods as mentioned (if any). 3. Document required: a. Trade license. b. TIN certificate. c. VAT Registration d. Bank Statement e. Experience certificate if any
12	Earnest money	All bidders must submit earnest money 03% (Three percent) of the actual quoted. Total value of the stores either by Bangladesh currency or equivalent to any International Trading currencies favoring the Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., in Bank Draft/Pay Order/Bank guarantee/which will be issued by any scheduled bank of Bangladesh. (Not applicable to enlisted suppliers).
13	Special instructions	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all or any part of the tender prior to acceptance without showing any reason.

GD-1682 For Managing Director

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Tourist Police Headquarters
House No# 32, Road No# 1, Block #A, Banasree, Rampura, Dhaka-1219.
Memo NO.44.01.2667.976.02.062.21-4792 Date: 19/09/2021

Request for Expression of Interest (EoI)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	
1.	Ministry/Division Ministry of Home Affairs
2.	Agency Tourist Police
3.	Procuring Entity Name DIG, Tourist Police, Dhaka.
4.	Expression of Interest for Selection of
5.	EoI Ref. No. 44.01.2667.976.02.062.21-4792
6.	Date 19/09/2021
Key Information	
7.	Procurement Method Quality and Cost Base Selection (QCBS) Method
Funding Information	
8.	Budget and Source of Funds Revenue budget Research head
9.	Development Partners (if applicable) N/A
Particular Information	
10.	Project/Programme Name (if applicable) Title: The Role of Tourist Police to Enhance Economic Prospect and Showcasing Heritage of Bangladesh
11.	EoI Closing Date and Time 06/10/2021, Time: 12:30
12.	EoI submission place Tourist Police Headquarters, House No# 32, Road No# 1, Block #A, Banasree, Rampura, Dhaka-1219.
13.	EoI Pre-submission meeting and place 28/09/2021, Conference Room 1 st Floor, Tourist Police Headquarters, House No# 32, Road No# 1, Block #A, Banasree, Rampura, Dhaka-1219. 11:00 AM
Procuring entity details	
14.	Name of Official inviting expression of interest Md. Ashrafur Rahman, Ph.D.
15.	Designation of Official Inviting Expression of Interest Superintendent of Police (Planning and Operations)
16.	Address of Official Inviting Expression of Interest Tourist Police Headquarters, House No# 32, Road No# 1, Block #A, Banasree, Rampura, Dhaka-1219.
17.	Contact details of Official Inviting Expression of Interest 01320157618 spoptp@police.gov.bd
18.	The Procuring entity reserves the right to reject all EoI's.

(Md. Ashrafur Rahman, Ph.D.)
BP-6795009249
Superintendent of Police (Planning and Operations)
Tourist Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
Ph: 839923, Mobile-01320157618

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www.mgi.org



Ramnagar Poshchimpara Primary School in Kushtia's Mirpur upazila could not be reopened after Covid-19 restrictions were lifted recently, as rice cultivation in its playground has made the school inaccessible for all.

PHOTO: AMANUR AMAN

Rice cultivation in school playground!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Schools in the country have recently been reopened following a long break due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, Ramnagar Poshchimpara Primary School in Kushtia's Mirpur upazila is still off limits to its students.

The reason? The school building has turned inaccessible after rice was planted in the school's playground, blocking everyone's access to the school building.

Ruhul Azam, president of the school's managing committee, said it may not be possible to fully reopen the school without harvesting the rice.

On the reason why the playground was used for rice cultivation, he said instead of letting such a large piece of land go unutilised, it will be more beneficial if contributions to the school fund can be made from sale

of rice. "As it was uncertain when the school would open again, it was done upon discussion with teachers."

"It will be like this for the time being. But a process is underway to bring students back to school," he claimed.

Ujjal Hossain, headteacher (in-charge) of the school, said, "The president of the school's managing committee would be able to explain why he cultivated rice in the schoolground. I am unable to comment on this."

Under the circumstances, most of the students, 176 in total, are now reluctant to come to the school, he said, adding that it took a lot of convincing on their part to bring a little over two dozen students to the school on Wednesday (September 15) amid widespread criticism from locals.

Several teachers of the school

seeking anonymity said the entire land of the school including the playground is registered property of the school.

The playground is for the students of the school and no one has the right to use it for other purposes arbitrarily.

The school is in the process of being nationalised and government officials concerned already paid several visits in this connection, they added.

Amid the coronavirus situation, Ruhul Azam, the president of the school's managing committee, in one morning suddenly started using a power tiller on the playground, telling the teachers that rice would be cultivated there, said a teacher of the school, requesting not to be named.

Another teacher said the students have been deprived of outdoor games and other

recreational activities in the playground ever since and there is not even any uncultivated space where students or teachers can stand outside the school building.

Ramnagar village resident Sheikh Askar Hossain, a parent of a student at the school, said the president of the managing committee has no right to occupy the school playground this way. "But he did so by force."

Contacted, Primary Education Officer Masud Rana of Mirpur upazila said they would take necessary action following investigation, as playground of any educational institution cannot be occupied.

Mirpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Lincoln Biswas also assured of due action against the individuals responsible for occupying the school playground for rice cultivation.

CHAPAINAWABGANJ EROSION

Nearly 50 houses lost to Padma

100 families rendered homeless in three weeks

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Over 100 families have been rendered homeless by the Padma river's erosion at Goadubi village under Sadar upazila of Chapainawabganj in last three weeks.

Around fifty houses were swallowed by the river in the meantime, said locals.

According to the locals, over fifty acres of farmlands, bamboo groves and mango orchards at Goadubi village under Char Bagdanga union have been effaced during the last three weeks.

They said the people are shifting their houses from the erosion-hit places as the river is devouring fresh areas every day.

Several hundred structures are facing the threat of being disappeared into the riverbed.

While visiting the affected area of Goadubi village recently, this correspondent found many families moving to safer places with their belongings.

"Severe erosion of the river has forced us to move to a safer place. As I have no land, now I have taken shelter in my sister's house at the village with my family," said Nazrul Islam.

"My house was devoured by the river erosion on Sunday last, since then I have been staying at my in-law's house at Dailpara under Sundarpur union of the upazila with my two sons and wife as I have

no choice," said Rezaul Karim, another resident of the village.

Like the two, many others are taking shelter at their relatives' houses or living on lands belonging to other people making makeshift shelters.

Samjad Ali of the village, alleged that the Water Development Board (WDB) did not take proper steps in time to curb the erosion.

"If they worked timely, river erosion could be protected," he claimed.

My 3.5 bighas of land including a mango orchard have been devoured this season, he said.

The villagers urged the authorities concerned to take steps immediately to protect thousands of people and their properties, including vast areas of cropland and a good number of establishments, from erosion.

Sarwar Jahan Sujon, executive engineer of Chapainawabganj WDB said around 1300-metre-long stretch on the left bank of the Padma river under Char Bagdanga union is facing erosion. Of which, 670 metres at Goadubi village have already gone to the riverbed.

They were dumping sand-filled GEO bags along the 670-metre-long stretch on the left bank to protect some establishments, he added.



Over 100 families have been rendered homeless by the Padma river's erosion at Goadubi village under Sadar upazila of Chapainawabganj in last three weeks.

PHOTO: RABITUL HASAN DOLLAR

Schoolhouse devoured in flood, built overnight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Purba Satunama Aminpara Government Primary School, situated at remote Satunama shoal area along the Teesta river in Dimla upazila, had no physical existence since it was washed away in the last year's flood.

Uncertainty gripped to restore the school's normal activities after the government decided to open all the educational institutions across the country from September 12, after 543 days of closure due to Covid-19 pandemic.

But, thanks to the teachers, guardians and local people, who collected donations and voluntarily built a four-roomed makeshift schoolhouse overnight at a new location, in a spur on the right embankment of the Teesta river, on September 11.

The new schoolhouse is about three and half kilometres away from the previous location.

While visiting the newly built school on Tuesday this correspondent saw boundless joy among the kids, mostly from poverty stricken families, as they attended their classes wading through knee-deep water.

Khalilur Rahman, headmaster of the school, said the school, on 46 decimals of land, was nationalized in 2013 and had 250 students and 4 teachers.



Teachers, guardians and locals voluntarily built this makeshift schoolhouse of Purba Satunama Aminpara Government Primary School on the right embankment of the Teesta river on September 11.

PHOTO: STAR

"In August last year, when the school was closed due to the first spell of the corona pandemic, swelling Teesta devoured most part of Satunama shoal along with 200 homesteads and the schoolhouse," the headmaster added.

Locals, somehow, managed to save some corrugated iron sheets and bamboo poles of the devoured school, and kept those at Uttar Sonakhuli village, which is three and a half kilometres away from the previous location.

"We looked for land at a new place to rebuild the school, but failed as

none agreed to donate their land and there was no government khas land nearby," Khalilur said.

Mohammad Nuruzzaman, a guardian, said they were baffled thinking their children's future after the government announced to open the educational institutions from 12 September.

He said driven by the eagerness to start the kid's schooling, teachers, guardians and locals joined hands on Saturday afternoon, only a few hours before the school opening, and voluntarily set up a makeshift schoolhouse before next dawn.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাংলাদেশ আবহাওয়া অধিদপ্তর

আবহাওয়া ভবন

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পুন:দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

নম্বর-২৩.০৯.০০০০.১২৭.১১.০০৪.১৭.৩৮৫৫

তারিখ: ১৯ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২১

আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে জনবল সরবরাহের দরপত্র/প্রস্তাব বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ক্র.সং.	বিভাগ/বিভাগ	বিবরণ
১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়
২.	অধিদপ্তর/সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ আবহাওয়া অধিদপ্তর
৩.	প্রকিউরমেন্ট এনটিটি	পরিচালক, বাংলাদেশ আবহাওয়া অধিদপ্তর
৪.	যে কাজের জন্য দরপত্র	আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে জনবল সরবরাহ।
৫.	দরপত্র সূত্র ও তারিখ	নম্বর- ২৩.০৯.০০০০.১২৭.১১.০০৪.১৭.৩৮৫৫, তারিখ: ১৯ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২১
৬.	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।
৭.	বাজেট/অর্থের উৎস	রাজস্ব বাজেট (জিওবি)।
৮.	কাজের বিবরণ	"শীকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠান" হতে আউট-সোর্সিং এর মাধ্যমে মেকানিক গ্রেড-২ পদে ০৩ জন, মালী পদে- ০১ জন ও পরিচ্ছন্নতা কর্মী পদে- ১২ জনসহ সর্বমোট ১৬ জন কর্মী সরবরাহ।
৯.	জনবল সরবরাহের সময়সীমা	কার্যদেশ প্রাপ্তির ১৫ দিনের মধ্যে
১০.	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের সময়সীমা	২১ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২১ তারিখ হতে ৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২১ তারিখ (অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত)।
১১.	দরপত্র পাঠানোর তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	০৩ অক্টোবর ২০২১ তারিখ সকাল ৯টা হতে দুপুর ০২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত, হল রুম, আবহাওয়া সদর দপ্তর (২য় তলা), আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭ এবং হল গেট, প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, গণভবন কমপ্লেক্স, শেরে বাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭। (স্টোর বাস রাখা থাকবে)
১২.	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	০৩ অক্টোবর ২০২১ তারিখ বেলা ০৩:০০ ঘটিকায় হল রুম, আবহাওয়া সদর দপ্তর (২য় তলা), আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭।
১৩.	চুক্তির মেয়াদকাল	জনবল সরবরাহের তারিখ থেকে ৩০ জুন ২০২২ পর্যন্ত।
১৪.	পদের নাম	শিক্ষাপত্র যোগ্যতা
	মেকানিক গ্রেড-২	Certificate in General Mechanics/Welding/Turning etc. from a recognized Institute
	মালী	৮ম শ্রেণী পাস
	পরিচ্ছন্নতা কর্মী	৮ম শ্রেণী পাস
	বয়স	১৮-৪৫ বছর (সুস্থাস্থ্যের অধিকারী হতে হবে)
	অভিজ্ঞতা	সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানে ০২ বছরের চাকরির অভিজ্ঞতা
১৫.	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য
	কক্ষ নং-২১৫, সংস্থাপন শাখা (২য় তলা), আবহাওয়া ভবন, আবহাওয়া সদর দপ্তর, ই-২৪, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা।	টাকা ১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) মাত্র অফেরতযোগ্য। বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক/সোনালী ব্যাংক দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য বাবদ ১ ১৯১৩ ০০০০ ২৩৬৬ কোড নম্বরে ঢালানোর মাধ্যমে জমা করে সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করবেন।
	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	১৮-৪৫ বছর (সুস্থাস্থ্যের অধিকারী হতে হবে)
	দরপত্র জামানতের মূল্য	১৮-৪৫ বছর (সুস্থাস্থ্যের অধিকারী হতে হবে)
	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	১৮-৪৫ বছর (সুস্থাস্থ্যের অধিকারী হতে হবে)
১৬.	শর্তাবলী	(১) জনবল সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান সরকার অনুমোদিত কোনো শীকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে হবে। (২) মূল্যায়নের পর যে সকল শীকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠানের দরপত্র/প্রস্তাব যোগ্য বলে বিবেচিত হবে কেবলমাত্র সে সকল শীকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রার্থীদের যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা যাচাইয়ের জন্য কর্তৃপক্ষ ইচ্ছা করলে পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করতে পারবেন। (৩) সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানে জনবল সরবরাহকারী হিসেবে ৩(তিন) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। (৪) সরকারি বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় বেতন-ভাতা হতে ভাট ও আয়কর কটন করা হবে। (৫) দরপত্রের সাথে ১ম শ্রেণির কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত প্রতিষ্ঠানের হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন ও আয়কর পরিশোধের সার্টিফিকেট ইত্যাদি দাখিল করতে হবে।
১৭.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম ও পদবী	সাম্মুদ্দিন আহমেদ, পরিচালক
১৮.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা	পরিচালক, বাংলাদেশ আবহাওয়া অধিদপ্তর, ই-২৪, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭। ফোন: ৮৮১১২৪৫৬ (অফিস), ফ্যাক্স: ৮১১৮২০০, ই-মেইল: info@bmd.gov.bd
১৯.	দরপত্রের যোগ্যতা	দরপত্র সিডিউলে উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে।
২০.	দরপত্র/প্রস্তাব কার্যক্রম পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন, ২০০৬ ও বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর শর্তাবলী অনুযায়ী পরিচালিত হবে।	
২১.	আউটসোর্সিং এর মাধ্যমে সেবা গ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে সরকার কর্তৃক সময় সময় জারীকৃত আইন, বিধিমালা, নির্দেশনা ইত্যাদি অনুসরণযোগ্য হবে।	
২২.	নির্বাচিত জনবল সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের সাথে চুক্তি সম্পাদিত হবে, কোন ব্যক্তির সাথে চুক্তি হবে না বা কোন নিয়োগপত্র ইস্যু হবে না।	
২৩.	নিয়োজিত কর্মচারীগণ প্রয়োজনে ছুটির দিনে বা স্বাভাবিক অফিস সময়ের পরেও দাপ্তরিক কাজ করতে বাধ্য থাকবে।	
২৪.	কোনো কারণ দর্শানো প্রদর্শন ব্যতিরেকে যে কোনো বা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল বা গ্রহণের ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।	

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Cabinet Division
Common Service Branch

Ref: 04.00.0000.412.30.172.19-1641

Date: 19 September 2021

e- Tender Notice
Tender Notice no.3/2021-22

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of Stationary and miscellaneous Goods. The Tender ID number 609391 and method of tender is OTM. Only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no off-line/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration is required in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd). The fee for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal has to be deposited online through any registered bank. Tender documents publication date is 15/09/2021.

(Rubaiyat-E-Ashique)
Deputy Secretary
Cabinet Division
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka
Phone- 02-9511038

GD-1679

GD-1681

সাম্মুদ্দিন আহমেদ
পরিচালক
ফোন: ৮৮১১২৪৫৬

MORE NEWS

Pro-Putin party heads for Russian election win

President Vladimir Putin's party was set to retain a majority in parliament as Russia yesterday concluded a three-day election in which most Kremlin critics were barred from running. The vote comes in the wake of an unprecedented crackdown on the opposition this year, with Russian authorities jailing Putin's best-known domestic foe Alexei Navalny and banning his organisations as "extremist". In the lead-up to this weekend's vote, all of his top allies were arrested or had fled the country, with anyone associated with his groups kept from running in the parliamentary and local polls scheduled to close at 8:00 pm.

SpaceX all-civilian orbital crew completes historic mission

Four SpaceX tourists returned to Earth safely on Saturday after spending three days in space, successfully concluding the first orbital mission in history with no professional astronauts on board. The SpaceX Dragon capsule, whose heat shield allowed it to withstand descent, was slowed down by four large parachutes before splashing into the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Florida at 7:06 pm (23:06 GMT), according to a video feed by the company. "That was a heck of a ride for us, and we're just getting started," billionaire captain Jared Isaacman, who financed the trip with a goal of making space a bit more accessible, said shortly after landing.



Iceland eruption the longest in half a century

It became six months yesterday that the volcanic eruption currently mesmerising spectators near Reykjavik first began, making it the longest Iceland has witnessed in more than 50 years. The first lava began spewing out of a fissure close to Mount Fagradalsfjall on the evening of March 19 on the Reykjanes peninsula to the southwest of Reykjavik. And the ensuing spectacle -- ranging from just a slow trickle of lava at times to more dramatic geyser-like spurts of rocks and stones at others -- has become a major tourist attraction, drawing 300,000 visitors so far, according to the Iceland Tourist Board.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



A Taliban fighter watches as Afghan women hold placards during a demonstration demanding better rights for women in front of the former ministry of women affairs in Kabul yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Stay home
Taliban to female Kabul city workers; blast targets truck in Jalalabad

AGENCIES

The interim mayor of Afghanistan's capital said many female city employees have been ordered to stay home by the country's new Taliban rulers.

Hamdullah Namony told reporters yesterday that only women who could not be replaced by men have been permitted to report to work. He said this includes skilled workers in the design and engineering departments as well as female attendants of public toilets for women, reports AP. Namony's comments were another sign that the Taliban are enforcing their harsh interpretation of Islam, including restrictions on women in public life, despite their initial promises of tolerance and inclusion.

In their previous rule in the 1990s, the Taliban had barred girls and women from schools and jobs. The mayor said a final decision about female employees in Kabul municipal departments is still pending, and that they would draw their salaries in the meantime.

He said that before the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan last month, just under one-third of close to 3,000 city employees were women who worked in all departments.

Meanwhile, a pickup truck carrying Taliban fighters was the target of a bomb in the Afghan city of Jalalabad yesterday, local media reported, a day after at least two people were killed in a series of blasts in the area.

Witnesses said several wounded Taliban fighters were taken to hospital after the explosion, which one journalist said happened near an interchange for transport to and from the capital, Kabul, reports AFP.

North Korea expanding Yongbyon nuke facility

Recent satellite images show

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

Recent satellite images show North Korea is expanding a uranium enrichment plant at its main Yongbyon nuclear complex, a sign that it is intent on boosting the production of bomb materials, experts say.

A report from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey said photos taken by satellite imagery company Maxar showed construction in an area adjoining the uranium enrichment plant at Yongbyon.

"The expansion of the enrichment plant probably indicates that North Korea plans to increase its production of weapons-grade uranium at the Yongbyon site by as much as 25 percent," Jeffrey Lewis and two other experts at the institute said in their report.

North Korea recently announced its first ballistic missile tests in six months with nuclear negotiations with the United States stalled since 2019.

The Middlebury report said a satellite image taken on September 1 showed North Korea cleared trees and prepared the ground for construction, and that a construction excavator was also visible. The report said a second image taken two weeks later showed a wall had been built to enclose the area, and panels removed from the side of the enrichment building to provide access to the newly enclosed area.

Australia had 'deep concerns'

Says PM Morrison over French subs, rejects accusations of lying over defence deal with US, UK

AGENCIES

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said yesterday the French government would have known Canberra had "deep and grave concerns" about French submarines before the deal was torn up last week.

France is furious at Australia's decision to withdraw from a multibillion-dollar deal to build French submarines in favour of American nuclear-powered vessels, recalling its ambassadors from Canberra and Washington and accusing its allies of "lying" about their plans.

Morrison said he understood the French government's "disappointment" but said he had raised issues with the deal "some months ago", as had other Australian government ministers.

- » Macron, Biden to talk in 'coming days' about subs spat
- » Australia was 'upfront' with France over deal: defence minister

"I think they would have had every reason to know that we had deep and grave concerns that the capability being delivered by the Attack Class submarine was not going to meet our strategic interests and we made very clear that we would be making a decision based on our strategic national interest," he told a press conference in Sydney.

Morrison said it would have been "negligent" to proceed with the deal against intelligence and defence advice and that doing so would be counter to Australia's strategic interests.

Speaking to Sky News Australia earlier yesterday, Defence Minister Peter Dutton said his government had been "upfront, open and honest" with France that it had concerns about the deal, which was over-budget and years behind schedule.

A French government spokesman said yesterday that US President Joe Biden and President Emmanuel Macron will talk on the phone in the coming days amid high tension over the tripartite submarines contract signed among Australia, US and UK, reports AFP.

"There will be an exchange on the phone in the coming days," spokesman Gabriel Attal told the BFM news channel, adding that the request for the conversation had come from Biden.



An anti-government protester waves a flag during a demonstration to mark the 15-year anniversary of the 2006 military takeover in Bangkok, Thailand yesterday as they urge the resignation of the current administration over its handling of the coronavirus crisis.

PHOTO: AFP

IS claims Syria gas pipeline attack

AFP, Beirut

The Islamic State group on Saturday claimed an attack on a major natural gas pipeline southeast of the Syrian capital that led to power outages in the city and surrounding areas.

IS fighters "were able to plant and detonate explosives on the gas pipeline feeding the Tishreen and Deir Ali plants," the group said in a statement.

The Deir Ali station southeast of Damascus generates half of Syria's power needs, Electricity Minister Ghassan al-Zamel said Saturday in comments carried by the official SANA news agency.

He said an attack on the gas pipeline on Friday evening with explosive devices caused the station to go out of service temporarily.

The outage affected several other stations, causing blackouts in Damascus, its outskirts and other areas, Zamel said, before power was restored some thirty minutes later.

He said maintenance works had started Saturday but warned of severe rationing until the pipeline is repaired and power plants resume normal operations.

The Deir Ali and Tishreen plants remain out of service.

The IS group's so-called caliphate in Syria was declared defeated in the riverside hamlet of Baghouz in 2019 following a gruelling US-backed offensive.

World leaders return to UN with focus on Covid, climate

REUTERS, United Nations

World leaders are returning to the United Nations in New York this week with a focus on boosting efforts to fight both climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic, which last year forced them to send video statements for the annual gathering.

As the coronavirus still rages amid an inequitable vaccine rollout, about a third of the 193 UN states are planning to again send videos, but presidents, prime ministers and foreign ministers for the remainder are due to travel to the US.

The United States tried to dissuade leaders from coming to New York in a bid to stop the UN General Assembly from becoming a "super-spreader event," although President Joe Biden will address the assembly in person, his first UN visit since taking office. A so-called UN honor

system means that anyone entering the assembly hall effectively declares they are vaccinated, but they do not have to show proof.

This system will be broken when the first country speaks - Brazil. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro is a vaccine skeptic, who last week declared that he does not need the shot because he is already immune after being infected with Covid-19.

Demonstrating US Covid-19 concerns about the UN gathering, Biden will be in New York only for about 24 hours, meeting with Guterres today and making his first UN address tomorrow, directly after Bolsonaro.

His UN envoy, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said Biden would "speak to our top priorities: ending the pandemic; combating climate change ... and defending human rights, democracy, and the international rules-based order."



Quote of the day



"I no longer want to talk about climate change. I want to talk about the climate crisis, it's already here. And in order to address it, we need horizontal policies which essentially permeate every aspect of our economic and our social life."

GREEK PRIME MINISTER KYRIAKOS MITSOTAKIS

World's tallest nation getting shorter

CNN ONLINE

The Netherlands has long been the world's tallest nation -- but its people are getting shorter, according to Dutch researchers.

Although height has increased over the last 100 years, the study showed Dutch men born in 2001 were 1 centimeter (.39 inches) shorter than their 1980 counterparts. For women, the difference was more pronounced with a difference of 1.4 centimeters (.55 inches).

The 1980 generation may have been the tallest ever, benefiting from a huge increase in height.

Dutch men born in 1980 stood at an average height of 183.9 centimeters (6 feet), and were 8.3 centimeters (3.27 inches) taller than those born in 1930. Women born in 1980 were also significantly taller at 170.7 centimeters (5.6 feet), compared to 165.4 centimeters (5.4 feet) for those born in 1930.

The study by Statistics Netherlands, municipal health service the GGD and the National Institute for Public Health, the RIVM, analyzed 719,000 Dutch-born individuals between the ages of 19 and 60 who self-reported their height, and used the average height at age 19 as a benchmark.

The reason for the height decrease is partly related to increased levels of immigration from shorter population groups, according to researchers. However, growth also tapered off for individuals whose parents were both born in the Netherlands, and for those whose four grandparents were all Dutch-born.

Dutch men with no family history of migration did not show any increase in height, while Dutch women without any migration in their family got shorter.

However, the Dutch have stood head and shoulders above the rest of the world for their height increases over the past 70 years, with the streets of the Netherlands showing a very different picture in 2020 compared to the early 1950s, according to researchers.

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BANGABANDHU AND HIS UNREALISED DREAMS

DR M M AKASH

The murder and its political background

It's been a long, painful and rather eventful 46 years since Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated alongside his family in their Dhanmondi home on August 15, 1975. Some call it a "military coup", while others undermine the event further by claiming that just a few "misguided" members of the then army committed a "misdeed" or a "crime" due to personal reasons. It was a crime indeed, but it has a complex historical background with grave consequences felt even today.

At the time of the murder, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the President of newly independent Bangladesh, founder of the BAKSAL (Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League), and most importantly, the nation's father figure. But that night, nobody responsible for his protection except Colonel Jamil came forward when it mattered the most. The brave colonel alone rushed to the spot to protect the President and was killed by the merciless killers.

We also now know that on that night, the President of Bangladesh had reportedly asked the Army Chief of Staff, Major General KM Shafiqullah, to protect him. However, he failed to carry out his duties properly.

Even the independent militia, the Rakkhi Bahini, which the President himself formed for special missions against armed civilian miscreants and

war -- Jamaat-e-Islami, Muslim League (ML), Nizam-e-Islami (NI), Al-Badr and Razakars had gone underground after December 16, 1971. From there, they started to join hands with the conspirators against Mujib government in all manners. They were, therefore, only too happy to support the new Mostaq government. Some old ministers also joined the cabinet led by Mostaq, probably out of fear or to save their skin. But a few loyal men like Tajuddin Ahmad and others did not join and were immediately arrested and sent to jail, and later on, murdered inside the prison. Many others dedicated to Mujib were seeking safe hideouts in that uncertain time all over the country, and some even tried to flee to take political asylum in India. The pro-Moscow left was one of those who went deep underground immediately and started planning how to strike back. Many ordinary people were quite mournful, shocked and panic-stricken. But what happened to the wealthy elites of the society, especially the newly developed rich and the traditional Bangalee capitalists whose big industrial assets were nationalised by the Mujib government?

By the year 1975, a neo-rich class rapidly developed within and outside Awami League. They had been able to become rich at rocket speed after independence mainly through commercial speculation in the market, reselling the trade licenses they got due to their political connections, indenting business, hoarding, smuggling, monopoly trading and rampant corruption. When in 1975, Bangabandhu called for a "Second Revolution" against them, they had become quite apprehensive. They did not seem to appreciate Mujib's sharp left turn through the BAKSAL programme and his increasingly harsh pronouncements against corruption. In a famous speech delivered during that time, he made a strong indictment against the new middle class. Both the right-wing liberals and the left-wing radicals were pulling Mujib from opposite sides since the independence and assumption of his power in Bangladesh.

Just like all intermediate regimes, his responses were also often contradictory. As a result, the right-wingers thought that Mujib was against them. On the other hand, left-wingers thought that his BAKSAL move was uncertain and inadequate or did not like the nonhomogeneous composition of forces within BAKSAL. In addition, some extreme pro-Peking left groups working under Maulana Bhashani refused to join BAKSAL at that time. They had always believed that Mujib was a stooge of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and India. Consequently, both ultra-left and ultra-right became happy mates for some time after the death of Mujib. Some opportunists and beneficiaries immediately welcomed the brutal murder or at least preferred to keep silence!

Human weakness of Bangabandhu

David Frost once asked Sheikh Mujibur Rahman what his greatest strength was. He replied that he loved his people a lot. Frost then proceeded to ask him about his greatest weakness. Quite surprisingly, Bangabandhu said that he loved his people too much. We do not know whether he could guess that his unconditional love would probably one day become the cause of his death and those dear to him.

Professor Rehman Sobhan, in his book "Untranquil Recollections: Nation-building in post-Liberation Bangladesh" (2021, SAGE Publications, New Delhi), highly acclaimed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's several progressive pro-socialist economic and foreign policies and achievements in post-liberation Bangladesh. Alongside, he did not forget to point out a single most crucial limitation of Bangabandhu. According to him, Bangabandhu did not judge individuals from an abstract point of view. He considered every person as a complex combination of both vice and virtue. According to Sobhan, "This was his (Bangabandhu's) greatest asset, but it was also a source of his vulnerability". [pg:305]

Some may question how such a truly balanced and humanist attitude towards human beings can be a source of "vulnerability" in real practice, especially in Bangladesh. In Bangabandhu's case, the specific arguments and inferences that Sobhan puts forward to support his general statement are worth quoting. He says, "With such an understanding, when a person commits a conspicuous 'wrong', Bangabandhu was willing to take action against the person. But after a while, when that same person's wife and three children came to him and fell at his feet, wailing copiously and pleading for forgiveness for their errant family member, Bangabandhu would dig up the memory of whatever good that person

once did and, motivated by compassion, would relent and release the wrongdoer. This human quality was exploited by the people and eventually led to the final acts of betrayal by some of those whom he trusted despite evidence to the contrary. This not only cost him his own life but that of so many he held so dear." [pg. 305]



Bangabandhu addressing the nation over radio on March 26, 1972.

Once in an interview with Bangabandhu, Fidel Castro suggested something similar to him. He had said if Bangabandhu wants to rebuild a society in socialist principles, he should not reinstate the old state machine, especially the former Pakistani repatriated officers in the Bangladesh Army. The most crucial organ of the state machine containing people with old ideologies would be a significant source of trouble in the future. Many of those army officers did not join the liberation war in 1971 and waited in Pakistan to see the final outcome. The new Bangladesh Army was composed of such repatriated opportunist forces and forces who took all the risks and defected from the Pakistan Army in the earliest possible opportunity to join the liberation war. In this case, the compassionate attitude of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman prevented him from heeding to Fidel's judicious advice to purge the army clean before it was too late.

Strong historical commitments of Bangabandhu

When Bangabandhu had visited China and seen the excellent system of managing one of the largest textile mills in Asia with his own eyes in 1956, he decided (as stated in his accounts) that he would follow socialist principles. Later on, he became an influential proponent against monopoly ownership of the 22 affluent families of Pakistan. He also openly promised to establish an exploitation-free egalitarian society in East Bengal. He even pledged on several occasions to ensure fair income share for the workers and farmers, stopping all kinds of unearned income opportunities, arranging universal education and



Bangabandhu addressing the 29th Session of the UNGA on September 25, 1974

healthcare for all, and fulfilling many other dreams of the mass people. These promises were not mere words; he was ready for a radical redistribution of not only income but also wealth. To achieve this goal, he especially considered nationalising the privately owned large-scale industries and banks of the Pakistanis and the Bangalee capitalists. Such a programme is popularly known in socialist literature as capturing the economy's "commanding heights" and serves as the beginning of socialism. But he also used to say that his socialism will always be socialism with Bangladeshi characteristics. Until 1975, he had tried to build his promised socialism democratically.

In the 1954 election, Jukta Front's manifesto included the proposition to nationalise the large corporations. So did the 11-point charter of demands that had led to the mass upsurge of 1969 in the country. In the 1970 election, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in his election speech on the radio, had promised to build an economic system based on "scientific socialism" if he could win the election. History did not allow a peaceful democratic transition to our independence. And later on, all these promises were ultimately reflected in the original 1972 constitution of post-independence Bangladesh.

Under the original constitution, three types of ownership were permitted: State Ownership, Collective Ownership and Private Ownership. While the constitution had put no constraint against accumulating wealth through state and collective enterprises, certain limits were imposed against private accumulation. Before independence, the entire economic system of Pakistan was controlled by 22 monopoly houses that had concentrated a significant share of the nation's wealth in their hands. Bangabandhu had always wanted to avoid this monopolisation of wealth in his ideal "Shonar Bangla". He wanted food, clothes, education, accommodation and healthcare to be fundamental human rights for all citizens.

Most laypeople look at the formation of BAKSAL as a power grab and suspension of democracy. However, they often fail to perceive the more critical aspects of BAKSAL, i.e. its very radical programmes of decentralising the state, ensuring participatory democracy at the district level, and most significantly, establishing a far-reaching unique programme for agrarian transformation based on threefold sharing of the gross agricultural output. Bangabandhu also felt that the middle-class, educated bureaucrats (and not the poor working-class people) were the most corrupt factions in the country. So in 1975, when at last he decided to go for a radical programme of the second revolution, he was desperately in search of honest and committed educated cadres. While visiting the Moscow State University, he called on Bangladeshi non-resident students to return after finishing their studies and serve the country to build socialism.

At this point, it's evident that he wanted to dilute the power of the bureaucracy in favour of a decentralised governmental body primarily run by educated cadres, farmers and workers. To make democracy more participatory, he proposed the election of district governors instead of traditional centralised government. These district governors would govern the districts while the bureaucrats at the secretariat would provide them with necessary macro supplies and finances. This form of democracy can be referred to as "grassroots democracy" or "democratic

them to exercise their political rights without any economic threat or narrow political interest.

Initial mistakes of Bangabandhu

Initially, Bangabandhu introduced a ceiling of only 100 Bigha of landholdings per family in the agrarian sector, i.e., no family could own more than 100 Bigha of land. That ceiling was too high, and Prof. Mosharraf Hossain from the planning commission prepared a proposal of redistributive land reform with a much lower ceiling. But even after introducing the high ceiling law, Mujib came under immense pressure from the landlords of North Bengal. As they were once his comrades in arms, Bangabandhu had to give in to their demands. He changed the definition of the family, suggesting each adult member in a family would be considered to form their own family. Hence, if a family had three adult members, they would be entitled to a 300 Bigha property. Consequently, the land reform initiatives were not much of a success.

In the case of nationalising urban industries, Bangabandhu injudiciously put the very people who used to own these companies in charge of the newly-nationalised ventures. Out of grievances for losing their proprietorship, most of these Bangalee owners never committed fully to the company's development. Conversely, companies previously owned by Pakistani capitalists were also nationalised and managed by some poorly paid Bangalee managers. But these ventures were relatively more well-managed as they did not have similar grievances over the nationalisation policy. This has been testified in the book of Prof. Rehman Sobhan mentioned before.

In the initial period just after independence, the economy was going through a short supply of essential products, and inflation was going beyond the reach of the laypeople. Bangladesh also had a dwindling foreign reserve, most of which would be spent on essential fuels like petrol and food imports. The nationalised ventures had to operate in a scarcity regime and could sell their output with high markup and profit. Unfortunately, the wrong policy of fixing a low factory price reduced the earnings of the nationalised industries and created an opportunity to earn substantial scarcity premiums for the middlemen in the market. They also quickly became the member of the neo-rich class at the cost of poor performance of the nationalised enterprises.

When Bangladesh achieved its independence, every upper-class bourgeoisie and top middle-class bureaucrat thought they could now take over the posts and properties left behind by Pakistani citizens and enjoy high salaries and profits. The working-class people felt they did not have to work as hard anymore since they fought in the liberation war and were treated inhumanly during the Pakistani regime. So, most people did not care whether the state-owned firms succeeded or not. Corruption entered into many fields of the state mechanism. The private greed was soon engulfing the short-lived social spirit of the liberation war.

Tragic timing of Second Revolution

Bangabandhu understood that he could not attain his goals by being a soft-core leader and decided to initiate the second revolution for "economic freedom". By that time, his political allies were already disgruntled with him. The leftists in his own party left Awami League arguing Sheikh Mujibur Rahman wasn't socialist enough while the likes of Khondakar Mostaq Ahmad remained with him but thought that he was too left-leaning. Other profiteers of the corrupt bureaucracy and the neo-rich class were also frightened of losing most of the money and influence if stricter measures were introduced through the second revolution. The peasants misunderstood the programme of compulsory cooperative and saw it as a "plan to" abolish their ownership of land. These cultural and ideological gaps coupled with questionable economic policies and nonhomogeneous composition of BAKSAL fostered a precarious unstable political and economic environment and a high degree of isolation of Bangabandhu from his beloved people.

The cruel killers calculated shrewdly the time to kill him when he was isolated and had not yet started his campaigns for the second revolution in a full-fledged manner to dispel the cultural and ideological doubts of allies and regular people. Bangabandhu did brilliantly succeed in carrying out the first revolution for political independence, but history, unfortunately, did not give him a second chance. The second revolution might have been the key to the economic independence of a golden Bengal, for which we are still waiting.

The author is a Professor of the Department of Economics, University of Dhaka.



Painting: Shahabuddin Ahmed

political terrorists, failed to come to his aid. His political advisor, Tofail Ahmed, who was in charge of the Rakkhi Bahini, could not do anything due to a lack of orders from the top.

Major General Khaled Mosharraf and Colonel Shafaat Jamil attempted to avenge Bangabandhu's death three months later in November by carrying out an offensive against the tank and artillery units that carried out the assassination in August. They were forcing these murderers to flee from the Bangabhaban and eventually from the country. But before they left the country, their men carried out a gruesome killing of the four genuine leaders of the war of independence inside the Dhaka Central Jail. At the same time, the attempts to restore discipline within the army were only short-lived as Major General Khaled Mosharraf was also murdered by the unruly soldiers misguided by a wrong doctrine of so-called "class struggle" between soldiers and officers. The other faction of the military also captured Colonel Shafaat Jamil on November 7, 1975.

The questions were raised immediately: why didn't the other political followers and adherents of Mujib outside the army come out directly onto the streets protesting his assassination and the subsequent overhaul in the government? How could Khondakar Mostaq Ahmad, one of Mujib's own cabinet members, immediately assume power when he should have organised countrywide processions against the murderers? Why did he call the assassins "Shurja Shontan", i.e., brave sons of the nation? Also, why did The Daily Ittefaq, a well-known daily newspaper historically attached to the Awami League (AL) political line since the days of Pakistan, write that the country had been saved from the "Feraoon" (Satan)?

These are decades-old questions, but we can take a brief look at them again. The defeated forces in the liberation

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA MONDAY SEPTEMBER 20, 2021, ASHWIN 5, 1428 BS

When opinions become culpable

The woes of Jhumon Das are a case in point

IT is disquieting to learn of Jhumon Das' travails from a report by this daily that has, once again, exposed the urgent need for the government to revisit the most draconian piece of legislation in the country's parliamentary history—the Digital Security Act (DSA), 2018. It also highlights the need to ensure that laws are applied equitably, and no one is treated above or below it.

Jhumon has been in jail for the last six months. Police showed him arrested and produced him before a Sunamganj court on March 17, after which he was sent to jail. He has been there since then, without bail. The reason for his arrest is a Facebook status he posted, where he questioned the activities of a Hefazat leader. It was merely an opinion which any free person in a free society should be entitled to. But not in case of Jhumon, who was handed over to the police, reportedly to assuage a violent mob that set upon the houses of the Hindu minorities at Noagaon village in Sunamganj's Shalla upazila. The so-called Hefazat supporters vandalised and looted about 90 Hindu houses following Jhumon's comments on Facebook. While Jhumon has been rotting in jail, and his family suffering unimaginable hardship, the perpetrators of the vandalism are roaming with impunity. Why is it so?

Interestingly, it was not under the DSA that Jhumon was arrested initially, but under another equally punitive law: Section 54 of the Penal Code. The undesirable and deplorable aspects of the DSA have been highlighted in all sections of the media, and we deem it unnecessary to repeat those. Suffice it to say that human rights activists and watchdogs, both at home and abroad, have repeatedly called for its revocation as several of its provisions strike at the fundamental rights enshrined in the country's constitution, as well as the universal principles of freedom of expression. Since the law came into effect, the randomness of its application has been painfully experienced by various sections of society—the media in particular, but also individuals. Such unfair and indiscriminate application has vindicated our position that this law is not for the benefit of the citizens, but rather to serve the interests of those in power.

This becomes further evident when we consider that no palpable steps have been taken as yet to fulfil the assurances the law minister gave in March this year. He promised to undertake measures to ensure that no one would be arrested or sued under the Digital Security Act before the investigation or formation of a monitoring team, and prevent abuse or misuse of the law and its rules regarding when to provide bail and when not to. Regrettably, nothing noticeable has been done in that respect over the last six months.

Shortage of manpower could jeopardise vaccine drives

More healthcare workers must be urgently recruited

THE planned inoculation of two crore people against Covid-19 every month starting from October, along with that of 2.5 to 3 crore children annually under different immunisation campaigns, will be quite an impossible task for the government's workforce commissioned under the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI), health officials have warned. They said the workforce and logistics under the EPI were already overtaxed—mainly due to their active involvement in the nationwide Covid-19 vaccination campaign, making the planned inoculation an insurmountable task for them.

Besides regular immunisation of children, around 15,000 field-level EPI health assistants in the country have been assigned for Covid-19 inoculation. Additionally, they are having to collect samples for tests, enter data into the system, administer jabs, and ensure that people are quarantining at home. The tasks they are having to do are already a huge burden—especially in the absence of any additional manpower. Ultimately, this will hamper both the Covid-19 vaccination drive as well as the regular countrywide immunisation of children against other diseases.

That is not a scenario anyone would like to see. Given our enormous struggles with the Covid-19 pandemic over the last year and a half, it has become clear that we must do everything to protect the population from the disease—including and especially through mass vaccination. At the same time, it is essential not to become careless about other diseases, which is why the authorities must not neglect the regular immunisation of children in the country. However, as the health officials have expressed, achieving both with the current resources is a pipe dream.

We have previously seen the government's mass vaccination drive against Covid-19 stumble and stall due to vaccine shortage. Now we cannot afford another botched drive due to a lack of manpower. That is why we call on the government to immediately recruit more healthcare workers under the EPI. In that regard, we understand that the Directorate General of Health Services has submitted a proposal to recruit 11,500 health assistants to the Ministry of Health. The proposal should be reviewed and approved—with any necessary changes—on an urgent basis. The government should also consider setting up a dedicated Covid-19 cell to keep the government's vaccination programme running smoothly, and to also ensure that none of the vaccines that the government is planning to procure ends up in the black market.

Are you sure you're not suffering from unconscious bias?



LAILA KHONDKAR

"MY business partner and the co-founder of the company is female. She is every bit my equal in the company and in the design of the products and services we are

rolling out. She has to fight twice as hard, and for twice as long as me for anything. Nine out of 10 emails to the company are to me, even when replying to a query or question raised by her. We play meeting 'tag' because the technical questions invariably get asked to me. I then defer to her (as she is far more competent than I on many of the technical aspects we deal with) only for the next question related to the answer she gave to be asked to me again."

The remarks above are from a segment of a post by a man on LinkedIn, a professional networking site. They are a powerful example of unconscious bias in the workplace, prevalent everywhere in the world. Research works in the fields of neuroscience and social psychology have helped in developing the understanding on this concept. Unconscious biases are formed through how we socialise, the experiences we go through in life, and the representation of different groups in the media. These experiences act as social filters, through which we make assessments of and judgements about people around us. Human beings have a natural tendency to put individuals into social categories. These categories are often based on visual cues such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, height, body type, etc. We also categorise based on social backgrounds, job roles, religious identities or political affiliations.

Social psychologist Dr Jennifer Eberhardt and her team at Stanford University have explored the roots and implications of unconscious bias. Through experiments, she has shown how social conditions can influence the function of our brain to determine our responses to other people. For example, if we are constantly exposed to women as primary school teachers or receptionists, or men as engineers and organisational leaders, these associations become wired into the human brain.

A common form of unconscious bias is affinity bias, which has an impact on organisational decision-making processes. This includes how managers hire and promote staff. This can lead to limited creativity, diversity, and inclusivity in the workplace. Unconscious bias can also affect collaboration between employees, as well as prevent innovation and productivity. In millisecond, people judge whether somebody is like us and

what kind of impact their behaviour may have on other individuals. For example, a woman who gets upset about a sexist comment may also carry stereotyped perceptions about people of indigenous groups, without even understanding that that, too, is a form of bias.

Unconscious biases against various groups lead to discriminatory attitude and behaviour, violation of rights, stress, and an adverse effect on people's well-being.

she talked to Ruth Abrahams about the challenges we face in combining futuristic solutions with values of trust, openness and equality. Alexa, Amazon's voice-controlled assistant, has the voice of a woman. The report states: "As children and adults shout instructions, questions and demands at Alexa, what messages are being reinforced? Professor Neff asks if this is how we would secretly like to treat women." In the realm of law or finance, AI assistance is coded as male. This gives the male computer voice a context of authority and professionalism, the research article says.

AI is about algorithms, and the bias of the person involved in developing the algorithms will continue to influence the products. This could be addressed by engaging a diverse team (comprised of members of different genders, races, ethnicities, etc) in designing AI. Human beings may go to Mars and establish the same prejudiced, discriminatory and unjust system of the present world if we are not thoughtful enough to eradicate such biases.

The first step in combating unconscious bias is to be aware of the various types of biases that we have. We should examine our own assumptions and challenge ourselves when we begin to make stereotyped associations. Do we assume that senior staff members are not good at computer skills, or all young people are wasting their time online? Do you make fun of someone when they speak in the dialect of a particular district?

Each of us can speak up against jokes, comments and behaviours that reinforce stereotypes in our families, workplaces and social settings. In interviews, panel members can deliberately slow down decision-making, reconsider reasons for decisions, question stereotypes and monitor each other for unconscious bias.

I am reminded of a few lines by London-based Nigerian poet Ben Okri: "Each new era begins without/It is an inward event/With unsuspected possibilities/For inner liberation/We could use the new era/To clean our eyes/To see the world differently/To see ourselves more clearly/Only free people can make a free world." We must free ourselves from unconscious biases if we are to create an inclusive society, where all men, women and children will be treated with respect and dignity.

Laila Khondkar is an international development worker.



We need to look within ourselves and root out the unconscious biases we may have if we want to progress as a society.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

belongs to our "inner circle"—those whom we usually favour. Men might favour men, while women might favour women. However, people can belong to different groups, and they like to belong to the "in-crowds" that are powerful. This could mean a woman favouring a man over a woman.

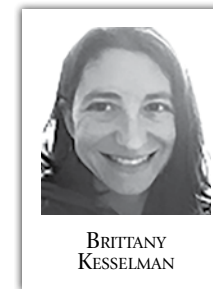
In Bangladesh, we witness different types of unconscious biases; people get constantly judged based on age, gender, skin tone, height, weight, ethnicity, religion, disability, marital status, etc—and insensitive jokes and comments based on these biases are very common. In many cases, people who are victims of such biases—and they might even know when they are—may do the same thing to others without even realising it, or recognising

I have known people whose self-esteem was severely affected because of the negative comments they were subjected to because of their skin colour. I have noticed how highly capable professional women have been dismissed as being "aggressive," while men exhibiting the same behaviour have been praised for their leadership qualities.

Unconscious bias may continue to dominate our future and affect various aspects of our lives if we don't address it soon. Gina Neff, professor at the department of sociology in the University of Oxford, has been asking questions about bias and the balance of power in the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems. In a study report titled "Alexa, does AI have gender?",

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What Covid-19 revealed about hunger



BRITTANY KESSELMAN

IN South Africa, many people struggle to access sufficient quantities of healthy food. Because their diets are high in processed foods, refined starch, sugar, and fat, they

face a double burden of malnutrition and obesity, or what is known as "hidden hunger." It is hidden because it does not fit the stereotypical image of hunger created by media coverage of famines. But it is everywhere.

To be clear, the problem is not a shortage of food. In South Africa, hunger is a result of lack of access. Getting enough calories and adequate nutrients is largely tied to income. Beyond the high cost of healthy food, hidden hunger in the country reflects the limited availability of nutritious products in low-income areas, the cost of energy for cooking, food storage, and the lack of access to land for household food production.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the strict measures imposed to contain its spread brought hidden hunger out of hiding, as many people who had been able to afford just enough food to survive suddenly found themselves going without. According to one study, 47 percent of households in South Africa ran out of money to buy food during the early stages of the initial lockdown in April 2020. Job losses, a crackdown on informal vendors, and price increases caused by interruptions in global food and agriculture supply chains all contributed to a sharp rise in food insecurity. Images of long lines for emergency food assistance brought the issue into public view. Increased levels of child hunger in particular were worrying, but unsurprising, given the abrupt closure of schools and school-based nutrition programmes.

The pandemic also made the consequences of hidden hunger more apparent. Because adequate nutrition is necessary for a healthy immune system, food-insecure individuals are more likely to become ill. Additionally, there is a correlation between the severity of Covid-19 and diabetes, a disease associated with poor diets. Data from Cape Town suggests that Covid-19 patients with diabetes were almost four times more likely to be hospitalised and over three times more likely to die from the pandemic, than patients without diabetes.

But while Covid-19 increased food insecurity and highlighted the consequences of hunger, it also produced potential solutions for increasing access

to affordable, healthy food. In the face of disruptions to global supply chains, more localised food systems began to emerge. Where the government failed to implement adequate measures to offset the economic repercussions of lockdowns or the closure of school nutrition programmes, civil society groups sought to fill the void. Across South Africa, community action networks sprang up to address hunger, with volunteers providing

together with the civil society to tackle food insecurity.

In Belo Horizonte, a city in Brazil, dubbed "the city that ended hunger," some of the notable programmes include "popular restaurants" that serve thousands of subsidised healthy meals every day, subsidised fruit and vegetable shops, a food bank that salvages food waste and distributes prepared meals to social organisations, and farm

companies, agrochemical producers, food processors, and retailers—do not have real solutions to hunger. Treating food as a commodity to be sold for profit, rather than as a fundamental human right, is precisely what has led to the crisis of hidden hunger. Shockingly, South Africa's largest supermarket chains managed to generate profits during 2020, even as half of the country's households were unable to afford food. Retailers boasted



Children wait in line for food at a school near Cape Town, South Africa in 2020, during the Covid-19 lockdown.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

meals and other assistance to fellow community members.

Around Johannesburg, for example, the C19 People's Coalition sought to link small-scale farmers, who lost access to their usual markets, to communities in need of food assistance. Unlike most government food packages, which were procured from large corporations and contained non-perishable items with almost no nutritional value, these vegetable packages sought to support the livelihoods of small-scale farmers while also promoting the health of the vulnerable households.

And yet, the state bears significant responsibility for addressing hidden hunger, particularly in South Africa, where the right to food is enshrined in the constitution. And examples from around the world demonstrate what is possible when a committed government works

stalls to connect small-scale producers directly to urban consumers. These and other programmes support farmers' livelihoods and consumer health, while also delivering economic benefits and strengthening communities.

The upcoming United Nations Food Systems Summit claims that it will bring together different stakeholders to create more sustainable and equitable food systems, but grassroots movements, academics, and civil society groups have criticised the summit for bypassing the existing UN Committee on World Food Security to create a new forum tarnished by undue corporate influence, a lack of transparency, and unaccountable decision-making. These groups have called for a boycott and are organising a global counter-mobilization.

The big corporations that are set to dominate the UN summit—seed

about their food donations while paying their workers—who were designated "essential"—some of the lowest wages in the country.

The real solutions to the crisis of hidden hunger must come from those most affected: the small-scale farmers producing healthy food for their communities, and the low-income consumers who struggle to access adequate nutrition. These voices have been sidelined from the UN summit, yet the solidarity-based initiatives they created during the pandemic represent the most secure foundation on which to build a more just and resilient food system.

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(Exclusive to The Daily Star)

A case for regulatory oversight of online apparel retailers

Online fashion retailers have to be brought under the same regulations that other apparel businesses have to follow



RMG NOTES

As a clothing manufacturer, there are a great many legal and regulatory hoops I must jump through in order to remain in operation without falling foul of the law. Like the government regulations, there are mandates from my customers

around environmental and social standards. Environmental and social compliance are basic requirements of doing business in the RMG sector of Bangladesh these days, and I, personally, have no complaints if this means we are moving towards a more responsible industry. We must all play our part.

While manufacturers have been compelled to operate more responsibly over the past decade—otherwise they risk being closed down or losing business—the same cannot be said of retailers. Many fashion retailers have also become responsible and ethically minded in recent years, but there are others in the market who appear to be working to a completely different set of rules. And what's frustrating is that there appear to be no consequences.

I should clarify that my personal concern here is about online fashion retailers. This is an area where regulators appear to be failing to keep pace with its rapid development.

Let's take the example of the rapidly growing Chinese online-only fashion brand Shein, which is capturing market share from traditional rivals such as H&M and Zara. Shein is now valued by some analysts at more than USD 30 billion. And yet, analysis by international news agency Reuters found that Shein has not made public disclosures about the working conditions along its supply chain, despite such disclosures being a legal requirement in one of their key markets, the United Kingdom.

In addition, it has been found that, until

recently, Shein falsely stated on its website that the conditions in the factories it uses were certified by international labour standards bodies. Shein sources from China.

Shein also claims that it never engages in child or forced labour, but the company does not provide the full supply chain disclosures required by the British law. In fact, unlike many major brands such as H&M, Shein does not share its supplier list with the general public.

I use the example of Shein, but this is

compliance issues.

The issue here is one of accountability, which sadly seems to be lacking in the online fashion space. Online brands can quickly become operational across multiple markets around the world, and the regulatory oversight of their activities becomes difficult—if not impossible. Where is their tax jurisdiction? Which environmental and social standards are they adhering to?

While some online-only retailers seem to operate to their own set of regulations,

The advent of online buying has opened up the fashion industry to many smaller, online-only sellers who are able to evade compliance rules.



Online fashion retail is one area where regulators appear to be failing to keep pace with its rapid development.

PHOTO: REUTERS

not the only online fashion retailer that lacks transparency when it comes to ethical and environmentally responsible business practices. In fact, the advent of online buying has opened up the fashion industry to many smaller, online-only sellers who are able to use their fleetness to evade regulators on

more established names continue to push the needle forward on sustainability. Big brands such as H&M have led the industry for years—be it by setting science-based targets around climate reduction, working with more sustainable materials, introducing consumer-facing transparency on products

by providing better information on how and where the clothes are made, or by putting emphasis on bettering workers' rights in supply chains.

Meanwhile, as a manufacturer—certainly as a garment exporter from Bangladesh—it is difficult these days to operate irresponsibly. Our customers would simply shop elsewhere, and the many audits we have to undergo each year would soon expose and flush out the bad practices. We are under the microscope like never before, but at least that has the effect of raising standards.

There is a major difference in the online-only fashion space and it is that the public is the end customer. The problem is that end consumers often lack the knowledge or understanding to ask proper questions about the clothes they buy. It is easy for online sellers to pull the wool over their customers' eyes on sustainability issues; for evidence of that, one only has to look at the rapid growth of Shein these past few years.

The point, then, is that while manufacturers are accountable in areas of compliance, it is hard to say with a great confidence that it's the same for the rapidly growing online fashion market? Who is checking where their supplier factories are, whether they are sub-contracting, whether child labour is involved and whether these factories are even safe? The global apparel supply chain is huge. If one is not ethically minded, it is easy to cut corners.

There is always somebody who will produce for a lower price—especially if one is happy to not ask many questions about where and how their clothes were made. A new, online fashion seller could easily source irresponsibly and unethically, and there would likely be very few repercussions.

If fashion is to become more responsible, there must be consistency and a level playing field for all—this includes manufacturers, traditional brands and retailers, and the new breed of online-only brands.

A start here would be for the governments of major markets—such as the US and Germany—to make it mandatory that any online retailer selling to their respective general customer bases should be obliged to illustrate full supply chain transparency. This would include detailing the full supplier lists on their websites and adherence to appropriate industry standards. Do people buying from the likes of Shein have any idea about where their products were made, and under what conditions?

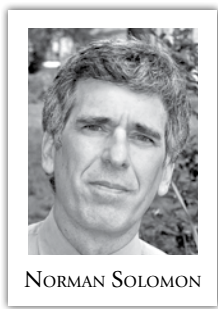
I am under no illusion that there are any easy solutions here. The broader point is that at a time when we, as an industry, are trying to drive improvement across the board, it is easier than ever to set up an online fashion business which has little or no regulatory oversight. I feel for responsible brands and retailers, which have spent years investing in doing the right thing, only to find that they are being undercut by newcomers who care little for ethics and sustainability.

There is only so much that such brands can do if new online operators simply refuse to play fair and by the rules. In such circumstances, they as well as we, responsible manufacturers, are dependent on firm, global regulations to ensure a level playing field for all.

A few cowboys cannot be allowed to undo all the good work we have achieved.

Mostafiz Uddin is the managing director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

As war keeps poisoning humanity, organising continues to be the antidote



NORMAN SOLOMON

EARLIER this month, the US corporate media continued a 20-year repetition compulsion to evade the central role of the US in causing vast carnage and misery due to the so-called War on Terror. But millions of Americans fervently

oppose the military-industrial complex and its extremely immoral nonstop warfare. CodePink and Massachusetts Peace Action hosted a national webinar to mark the 20th anniversary of 9/11—the day before the launch of the Cut the Pentagon campaign—and the resulting video includes more than 20 speakers who directly challenged the lethal orthodoxy of the warfare state. As part of the mix, here's the gist of what I had to say.

When we hear all the media coverage and retrospectives, we rarely hear—and certainly almost never in the mass media—that when people are killed, whether it's intentional or predictable, those are atrocities that are being financed by US taxpayers.

And so we hear about the evils of al-Qaeda and 9/11—and certainly those were evils—but we are not hearing about the predictable as well as the intentional deaths: the tens of thousands of civilians killed by US air strikes alone in the last two decades, and the injuries, and the terrorising of people with drones and other US weapons. We are hearing very little about that.

A part of the role of activists is to make

those realities heard—make them heard loud and clear, as forcefully and as emphatically and as powerfully as possible. Activist roles can sometimes get blurred in terms of becoming conflated with the roles of some of the best members of Congress.

When progressive legislators push for peace and social justice, they deserve our praise and support. When they succumb to the foreign policy "Blob"—when they start to be more a representative of the establishment to the movements, rather than a representative of the movements to the establishment—we've got a problem.

It's vital for progressive activists to be clear about what our goals are, and to be willing to challenge even our friends in Capitol Hill.

I'll give you a very recent example. Two leaders of anti-war forces in the House of Representatives, a few weeks ago, circulated a "Dear Colleague" message encouraging the members of the House to sign a letter urging the chair of the House Armed Services Committee, Adam Smith, to stand firm behind President Joe Biden's 1.6 percent increase in the Pentagon budget, over the budget that Trump had gotten the year before.

It's vital for progressive activists be clear about what our goals are, and to be willing to challenge even our friends in Capitol Hill.



In the long run, peace activism is essential to overcome militarism and stop warfare.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

The point of the letter was this: Chairman Smith, we want you to defend the Biden budget's increase of 1.6 percent, against the budget that has just been approved by the Senate Armed Services Committee with a 3.3 percent increase.

That kind of a letter moves the goalposts further and further to the liking of the military-industrial complex, to the liking of war profiteers, to the liking of the warfare

state. And so, when people we admire and support—in this case Rep Mark Pocan and Rep Barbara Lee—circulate such a Dear Colleague letter, there's a tendency for organisations to say: "Yeah, we're going to get behind you; we will respond affirmatively to the call to urge our members to urge their representatives in Congress to sign this letter."

What that creates is a jump-off point that moves the frame of reference farther and

farther into the militarism that we're trying to push back against. For that reason, my colleagues and I at RootsAction decided to decline an invitation to sign in.

I bring up that episode because it's indicative of the pathways and the crossroads that we face to create momentum for a stronger and more effective peace and social justice movement. And it's replicated in many respects.

When we're told that it's not practical on Capitol Hill to urge a cut-off of military funding and assistance to all countries that violate human rights—and when we're told that Israel is off the table—it's not our job to internalise those limits that have been internalised by almost everyone in Congress, except for the Squad and a precious few others. It's our job to speak not only truth to power, but also about power—and to be clear and candid, even when that means challenging some of our usual allies. And to organise.

At RootsAction, we've launched a site called Progressive Hub as an activism tool to combine the need-to-know with the imperative to act.

It's not easy, to put it mildly, to go against the powerful flood of megamedia, of big money in politics, of the ways that issues are constantly framed by powerful elites. But in the long run, peace activism is essential to overcome militarism. And organising is what makes that possible.

Norman Solomon is national director of RootsAction.org and founder of the Institute for Public Accuracy. He is the author of "War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death."

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QUOTABLE Quote

LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY
Canadian author (1874–1942)

We must have ideals and try to live up to them, even if we never quite succeed.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Takes care of the final details
- 7 Told tales
- 11 Playwright Eugene
- 12 Not busy
- 13 Doorway hanging
- 15 Bona fide
- 16 Saloon quaff
- 18 Word of action
- 21 Edges
- 22 Kitchen gadgets
- 24 Phone download
- 25 Brooks of film
- 26 Director Spike
- 27 Tie up
- 29 Chess win
- 30 Did a textile job
- 31 Printed matter
- 32 Flexible
- 34 Absolutely sure
- 40 Pearl Harbor
- 41 Origin
- 42 Snare
- 43 Quartet plus trio

DOWN

- 1 Unruly crowd
- 2 Low digit
- 3 Stew sphere
- 4 Moves like a crab
- 5 Peptic problem
- 6 Cord end
- 7 Refuse
- 8 Writer Tarbell
- 9 Yale rooster
- 10 Bear's lair
- 14 Competitor
- 16 Human, for one
- 17 Unoccupied
- 19 Take it easy
- 20 Quarterback Favre
- 21 Sewer dweller
- 22 Apiece
- 23 Notice
- 25 Army healer
- 28 Delayed
- 29 Get together
- 31 Painful spasm
- 33 Thomas Hardy heroine
- 34 Morse bit
- 35 Lobed organ
- 36 Cry of insight
- 37 Museum focus
- 38 Drink cubes
- 39 Rink material

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SATURDAY'S ANSWERS

F	E	N	C	E	L	A	C	E	S
A	T	A	L	L	E	X	A	C	T
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BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



Bangladesh cricket's three stalwarts train yesterday, each with different mission in mind. Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal returns to training in Mirpur following two months of recovery from injury. The left-hander is set to feature in a T20 franchise tournament in Nepal, starting next week. Bangladesh's ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and West Indies' star spinner Sunil Narine show thumbs-up at the training session of Kolkata Knight Riders, ahead of their opening match of the second phase of the Indian Premier League against Royal Challengers Bangalore today. Mushfiqur Rahim characteristically began training earlier than everyone else even though the national cricketers are currently enjoying an extended break ahead of their camp in Oman next month for the upcoming T20 World Cup.

PHOTO: STAR/TWITTER



'I try to provide balance for my team'

Off-spinner Mahedi Hasan's emergence as the new-ball bowler for Bangladesh has turned out to be quite a revolution. The 26-year-old is set to participate in his maiden ICC World T20 where the cricketer from Khulna is expected to play a crucial role, both with bat and ball for the Tigers. Mahedi opens up about his game along with a few other topics during an interview with The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin. The excerpts of the interview are given below:



Daily Star (DS): How's the feeling of getting into Bangladesh's World Cup squad for the first time?

Mahedi Hasan (MH): Alhamdulillah. If everything goes well, I'll be playing my maiden World Cup for Bangladesh. It's a great feeling for any player, to be honest. Previously, I used to watch world cup games on TV and thought about playing in this mega event myself. It's a matter of huge pride indeed and I'm totally looking forward to making this opportunity count.

DS: You've a crucial role of bowling in the power-plays with the new ball where you often pick up early wickets as well. Is there any specific role which the team management expects from you in the upcoming World Cup?

MH: I think it's the player's duty to prepare himself in a manner that the team can utilise him for whatever role, according to the demand. Obviously, I've a run-containing role with the ball in the power-play, where the batters come hard at you. Therefore, during that period, it's important to bowl as many dot balls as possible. To be honest, I never think about wickets but prioritise on what's best for my team. For example, I'll choose a positive contribution of 20 runs from four overs instead of five wickets for 50 runs that doesn't help my team's cause.

DS: Obviously, the pitches during the home series against Australia and New Zealand favoured the bowlers and the upcoming World Cup in Oman and the UAE is expected to feature sporting tracks. How will you adjust to such surfaces?

MH: We all know the ICC events offer

sporting tracks, where there'll be big scores. But if you notice, a good ball is always a good ball regardless of the pitch and so, my focus is to bowl at the right areas consistently. I've some knowledge about the conditions at UAE from my experience of playing in the T10 league there.

DS: How much is Shakib Al Hasan's influence in the spin department?

MH: Shakib bhai leads the spin department whenever we are on the field. He's like our on-field spin bowling coach who reads the game and gives us the appropriate feedback in a flash. When he comes and tells you

exactly where to bowl by targeting a batsman's strengths and weaknesses, I think that's simply incredible.

DS: According to the head coach, you're the free-player in the side, where the team management can use your batting ability in any position based on the situation. How do you see your batting role?

MH: Look, I've always seen myself contributing as an all-rounder. I love batting and I also like to charge the bowlers. So, if the team requires something like that early in the innings, I am all up for it. At the same time, it's equally important to rotate the strike in the middle overs and use the long handle in the latter stages of an innings. I try to provide balance for my team where I can be utilised in any means possible.

DS: Who do you see as your idol?

MH: Shakib bhai [Shakib Al Hasan], whose aggressive attitude I'm really fond of. I still remember being thrilled to take a picture with him when I first saw him. When I first played alongside him in the national league, I recall looking at him the entire day. He is the best.



Abahani make hay in the eye of the storm

SPORTS REPORTER

While defending league champions Mohammedan SC and 2016 champions Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club were at loggerheads over the possession of a player -- a dispute that led to the former lodging a complaint at the police station -- four-time champions Abahani were free to complete their players' registration formalities in a calm and festive environment at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

A festive mood enveloped the stadium on the first of the five-day transfer window, which featured movement of familiar faces and new blood for the first time since the 12th Premier Hockey League was held in 2018.

Former national goalkeeper Zahid Hossain came to sign for Shadhara Bima with a big smile



on his face, eager to get back with his stick to his treasured blue turf after a long gap. However, he could count himself more fortunate than some others as he played two tournaments in Dhaka and in Rajshahi during this time.

Apart from the sporadic movement of individual players, there was a big rush among the title contenders.

Abahani formed a side that can

contest all trophies this season after roping in 18 players, including current national team players Abu Sayeed Nippon, Khorshedur Rahman, Farhad Ahmed Shitul, Rezaul Karim Babu, Rumman Sarkar, Arshad Hossain, Mahabub Hossain, Hasan Jubair Niloy and Pushkor Khisha Mimo.

"We all player are really happy that we will play the Premier Hockey League after three years

and we are also happy with our transfers," said Mimo, who returned to Abahani after two seasons away at Usha KC and Mariner Youngs Club.

"It is true that players, especially those outside service teams, have been out of action for a long time. But we are hoping to return to the turf with good practice before the start of the Club Cup.

"Apart from the players' quote [five players from service teams], Abahani roped in a good number of players who are capable of delivering results. I think Abahani formed a champion caliber team and we will fight to regain the title we last won in 2014," added Mimo, who believes Abahani are the best team on paper.

Abahani advisory coach Mahabub Harun added that they had communicated with players from India, Pakistan and Malaysia but their registration would depend on the Covid-19 situation.

Lingard, De Gea conjure late heroics

REUTERS, LONDON



Jesse Lingard scored a stunning late goal and David de Gea saved a stoppage-time penalty as Manchester United beat West Ham United 2-1 in a dramatic Premier League match on Sunday.

Substitute Lingard hit a thumping shot into the top corner in the 89th minute against his former club but West Ham were awarded a penalty moments later for a handball by defender Luke Shaw.

Mark Noble stepped up to take the penalty immediately after coming off the bench but De Gea guessed correctly and dived to turn his spot-kick away.

West Ham had gone ahead on the half-hour mark with a deflected strike from Said Benrahma but the visitors responded five minutes later,

Cristiano Ronaldo heading a Bruno Fernandes cross at Lukasz Fabianski and following up to tap the ball into the net.

It was Ronaldo's fourth goal in three games after netting twice on his second debut for the club against Newcastle United and once in the 2-1 Champions League defeat at Young Boys on Tuesday.

The Portuguese had a chance in the second half before Lingard's strike when he was again played in by Portugal team mate Fernandes but Fabianski thwarted the attempt with his legs.

Ronaldo was also denied a penalty following a challenge from Vladimir Coufal.

Manchester United are second in the Premier League standings with 13 points from five games while West Ham have eight after suffering their first defeat of the season.



After overturning a 1-0 deficit against West Ham United at the London Stadium, courtesy of a 35th-minute strike from Cristiano Ronaldo and Jesse Lingard's 89th-minute strike, Manchester United still needed goalkeeper David de Gea's stoppage time heroics to keep out a penalty and ensure three points.

PHOTO: TWITTER/AFP



Jordan too strong for women

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh started their AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers on a miserable note, suffering a massive 5-0 defeat to Jordan at the Bunyodkor Stadium in Tashkent, Uzbekistan yesterday.

Determined to fight against Jordan, who are 74 places ahead of Bangladesh in the FIFA rankings, the women battled hard for 35 minutes before forward Shahnaz Jebreen broke the deadlock.

Despite conceding, Bangladesh launched attacks and even had attempts on goal once before Bina Zaid Bitar doubled the lead in the 45th minute.

Jordan overwhelmed Bangladesh in the second half, justifying their 63rd-place FIFA ranking. Forward Maysa Ziad Jbarah made it 3-0 in the 62nd minute before firing her second five minutes later. She then completed her hat-trick, wrapping up a massive victory in the 77th minute.

Broad backs England's Ashes trip

AFP, LONDON

England pace bowler Stuart Broad insists he will go on the Ashes tour of Australia this winter despite concerns over coronavirus restrictions.

Broad, 35, is "working tirelessly" to be included in the travelling party for the Australia series, which starts in December. "If you ask me if I would be happy to get on a plane to Australia in November, I would say yes."

Jimmy Greaves, England's most lethal striker, passes away

AFP, London

Injury denied him a role in England's greatest triumph, but Jimmy Greaves, who died on Sunday aged 81, will be remembered as one of the most prolific strikers in English football history.

With 366 goals in 528 top-flight appearances for Chelsea, AC Milan, Tottenham and West Ham, he scored more goals in Europe's five major championships than any other player until Cristiano Ronaldo finally surpassed his total in 2017.

Greaves also found the net 44 times for England and while a gashed leg stopped him playing in the 1966 World Cup final win over West Germany, his breath-taking strike rate ensured his legacy remained secure.

Only Bobby Charlton, Gary Lineker and record holder Wayne Rooney have scored more England



goals than Greaves. "I had a goal drought once," Greaves used to quip during after-dinner speeches. "Worst 15 minutes of my career." A short, quick and remarkably sure-footed player, Greaves struck

the ball unerringly with both feet and was renowned for the deliberateness of his finishing, often rounding the goalkeeper to score.

"When he got the ball in the penalty box, the world stopped," remembered Greaves' former West Ham team-mate Harry Redknapp.

"It was like somebody had hit pause on the television screen. The action around him carried on, but Jim appeared to be operating in another dimension; slower, calmer, making his mind up oblivious to the surrounding frenzy."

His 266 goals in 379 games for Tottenham make him the club's all-time leading scorer and he also scored 132 times in 169 games for Chelsea. Fifty years after his retirement from the professional game, his goal-scoring feats still rank alongside the best of the sport's modern stars.



Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman ponders his next move against Swarnavo Choudhury as Grandmaster Enamul Hossain Razib looks on during the first round of the Joytu Sheikh Hasina International Grandmasters Chess Tournament at a hotel in Dhaka yesterday. A total of 60 chess players including 12 GMs and 16 IMs from 10 nations are taking part in the tournament.

PHOTO: STAR



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PLANNED EPZ IN SANTAL PALLI BEPZA to go ahead despite protests

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

The government is forging ahead with its plan to set up the country's largest export processing zone on 1,842 acres of farmland under the Gobindaganj upazila of Gaibandha district that the local santal community says belongs to them.

In 1952, the then-Pakistan government had taken the farmland from the santals for the Rangpur Sugar Mill.

Since the farmland was not in use, the government in November 2019 decided to build the EPZ, which would provide employment to the backward santal community.

But the community would much rather get the land back and has been in a movement since 2013.

"The then-government took the land for the Rangpur Sugar Mill on the condition that if sugar cane was not cultivated on it, it would be handed back to the original owner -- which is us," said Philimon Baske, president of the Shahebganj-Bagda Farm Bumi Udhhar Songram committee.

In the last 60-65 years, the sugar mill only counted losses and leased the land out to the locals for cultivating other crops, he said.

"Therefore, according to the condition, we can get our forefather's land back from the government."

If the government wants to establish the EPZ, then about 1,200 santal families will be destitute from losing their ancestral land as well as their cultural heritage and lifestyle, Baske said.

"Therefore, we are urging the local administration to establish the EPZ in some other place," he added.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Garbage and industrial waste make Chaktai Khal (canal) look like a stream of filth. Land grabbing and siltation choke this and other canals in Chattogram, resulting in waterlogging in the port city. The canals were once used for transporting goods. Now, boats can ply only during high tides. This photo was taken from Chaktai Khal at Fisherighat on Saturday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

BANK ACCOUNTS OF 11 Journo bodies to stage demo on Thursday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalist associations will demonstrate across the country on Thursday, demanding that the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit stop summoning the bank account details of 11 journalist leaders.

Different journalist associations made the announcement yesterday at a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club.

Addressing the rally, Jatiya Press Club President Farida Yasmin said, "The information minister and home minister are not aware of the summoning of bank account details. There is a conspiracy to pit the journalists against the government."

An investigation can be launched against an individual or an organisation over specific allegations. But the wholesale probe targeting the top leaders of established associations seems to be on purpose, she said.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

UN worried over shrinking civic space, inequality

Says Mia Seppo on Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UN is concerned over signs of shrinking civic space, growing inequality, and violence against women in Bangladesh.

"There are areas that the UN is concerned about. We are concerned about the increasing violence against women, we are concerned about growing inequality... we are concerned about the signs of shrinking civic space ...," said UN Resident Coordinator Mia Seppo at the Talk of Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAB), at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

She said growing inequality and shrinking of civic space is a global concern, which has been aggravated during the pandemic -- a reality that triggers the call for global and national actions to address these.

"I don't think for any country that aspires for democracy that that's healthy. So, we obviously encourage protecting civic space," the UN official said.

The review of the Digital Security Act (DSA) from the Universal Periodic Review

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ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Nations urged to recognise Bangladesh

SEPTEMBER 20, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

CABINET MEETING ON DEFENCE BUDGET

The Bangladesh cabinet met today and discussed the budget of the Ministry of Defence.

The acute shortage of winter clothing and other necessary items for the fighting forces and the youth camp trainees was brought to focus. The cabinet decided that the Defence Secretary would immediately prepare estimates for procurement of winter clothing including blankets, covering the requirements of both the fighting forces and the youth camp trainees.

RESOLUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The international conference on Bangladesh today called upon governments of the world to recognise the Bangladesh government and to stop all military assistance to the West Pakistani regime. It declared in a resolution that the political struggle of the people of Bangladesh should be viewed by the international community as a national struggle for freedom.

It appealed to governments and people across the world to offer immediate and effective assistance to the Bangladesh government. Such assistance, the resolution said, might mean military aid to some nations and individuals, to others this might imply economic and non-violent aid.

ON THE WAR FRONT

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Court orders filing of case against imo hackers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A Natore court ordered police to file cases against a group in Lalpur upazila that has been hacking into different accounts on social media app "imo" and tricking people into sending them money.

The district's Senior Judicial Magistrate Abu Saeed passed the order yesterday afternoon.

The court has directed the officer-in-charge of Lalpur Police Station to file a regular case against the hackers and to inform the court in writing by September 22, which is also the scheduled date for the next order, court sources said.

Razu Ahmed, the court's bench assistant, said the court issued the order after a video story, titled "How a ring in Natore is pocketing thousands

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French daredevil takes hair-raising tightrope walk



AFP, Paris

A French tightrope walker has crossed the Seine in Paris 70 metres up in a breathtaking feat watched by cheering crowds on the Eiffel Tower and along the riverbanks.

Attached by a strap to a safety lanyard, 27-year-old Nathan Paulin slowly progressed barefoot on a line stretched across the river between the Eiffel Tower and the Chaillot Theatre.

He stopped for a few breaks, sitting or lying on the rope.

"It wasn't easy walking 600 metres, concentrating, with everything around, the pressure ... but it was still beautiful," he said after the performance on Saturday.

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Shipbreaking yard worker dies after fall

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An employee of a shipbreaking yard in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila fell from the stairs of a ship and died on Saturday night.

Abdullah Al Sakib Mubarrat, deputy inspector general of Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments, Chattogram, said the victim was a worker of SN Corporation Yard in the upazila's Shitolpur area.

The dead is Liton Pal, 28, of Sandwip upazila, he added.

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PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 20

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-40 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30
JAMAAT 5-15 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Single mother gang-raped in Rampura

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 25-year-old woman accused three men of forcing her to drink alcohol and raping her at a flat in the capital's Purba Rampura on Sunday night.

The single mother was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as she fell sick yesterday morning.

Her brother said an acquaintance named Sharif invited her to his flat where there were two other men named Ibrahim and Mainuddin. The three men forced her to drink alcohol and raped her, he said, adding that another woman aided and abetted the gang-rape.

She fell sick after they let her go in the morning and her family members then took her to a hospital.

Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Rampura Police Station, said he received a complaint about the gang-rape.

"We will record a case after her treatment [at the hospital]," he said. "We are looking for the suspects."



A reader going through a book at a second-hand bookshop on a pavement in Sylhet city's Chowhatta yesterday. Shop owner Shazid Islam is happy as he could reopen the shop after 18 months. His shop had closed due to the pandemic. It is the only source of his income. He hoped that the number of book lovers coming to his store will rise when all educational institutions reopen.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

POST-COUP MYANMAR Military convoy hit by bomb

Anti-junta dissidents carry out the attack on security forces near Yangon, several killed in ensuing firefight

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar anti-junta dissidents have carried out a bomb attack on security forces near Yangon, with several killed in an ensuing firefight, the military and media said.

The Southeast Asian nation has been in turmoil since the military toppled Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government in February, sparking mass pro-democracy protests and a bloody crackdown by the military.

Various townships across Myanmar have formed so-called "people defence forces" to fight back against the junta, although the majority of clashes have been reported in rural areas.

Security forces were travelling through Khayan, a suburb of Myanmar's commercial hub Yangon on Friday when they were attacked with a homemade bomb, the junta said in a statement.

"Both groups fired back and forth -- a member of the security forces was injured," the statement said, adding that firearms and ammunition were confiscated after the clash.

"Some terrorists were... (killed), one of them was wounded."

Local media reported at least two dissidents were killed and one arrested.

Earlier this month a "National Unity Government" made up mostly of lawmakers affiliated with Suu Kyi's

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