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SECOND EDITION



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Wanton neglect, irreversible loss

Tanneries keep polluting the Dhaleshwari as govt officials, factory owners stay locked in blame game over inadequate, faulty CETP in Savar

PINAKI ROY and RASHIDUL HASAN

After around two decades and countless deadlines, a tannery estate with a fully functioning CETP that would ensure the environment is not ravaged by toxic waste is still a far cry from what was planned.

Untreated industrial waste keeps polluting the Dhaleshwari river as the CETP at the country's lone tannery estate in Savar cannot function at full throttle yet. Also, it has myriad inadequacies.

For many long years, environmentalists called for the government to relocate the tanneries from Hazaribagh, a densely populated area in the city, and set up an estate with a modern effluent treatment plant on the city outskirts.

The much-awaited Savar Tannery Industrial Estate project was initiated in 2003 and the rest is a long sequence of events.

After years of foot-dragging, tanneries

Currently, the CETP can treat 25,000 cubic metres of liquid waste while 132 tanneries produce up to 40,000 cubic metres.

were shifted to Savar in 2016 and got up and running the next year. Since then, they have been releasing waste water into the river with the CETP yet to be ready for use.

The CETP finally went into operation in June this year -- nine years after the project was taken up and five years after the start of physical work.

But things did not improve much. Currently, the CETP can treat 25,000 cubic metres of liquid waste, while 132 factories at the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) tannery estate produce up to 40,000 cubic metres.

So, on a busy day, the authorities have to release an additional 15,000 cubic metres of liquid waste directly into the river through an alternative channel, according to a recent report of the Department of Environment (DoE).

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The tannery estate in Savar releases toxic liquid into the Dhaleshwari as the treatment plant is yet to go full tilt and can not process all the waste generated by the tanneries. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HUQ



Booters bow out after 1-1 draw with Nepal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's hopes of reaching the final of the SAFF Championship after 16 long years were dashed in controversial fashion as a dubious penalty decision late in the game saw the men in red and green relinquish a one-goal lead against Nepal in their last group match at the National Stadium in Male yesterday.

Striker Sumon Reza had given Bangladesh a ninth-minute lead, thanks to an accurate header on

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Business

Bangladesh keeps outpacing India

Bangladesh will remain ahead of India in per capita gross domestic product for the next five years to 2026, powered by buoyancy in remittance, exports and agricultural activities, according to the International Monetary Fund. The country will have an 8 per cent higher per capita GDP at \$3,253 in 2026 than India's \$3,018.

STORY ON B1

INOPERATIVE EDS MACHINE

CAAB's laxity cost exporters

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA and RASHIDUL HASAN

The competition for export orders intensified amid the pandemic and the airport authorities are not making the exporters' lives any easier.

As is practice, goods sent by air through the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) must be passed through the Explosive Detecting System (EDS).

But the two EDS, installed in 2017, at the HSIA are barely functioning for the past year or so thanks to the airport authorities' laxity in their maintenance.

At the same time, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) has failed to make the other two EDS operational eight months after their installation.

As a result, the exporters are facing severe delays in making their shipments at a time when timely delivery is of the essence.

They are opting to pay either higher freight charges to the airlines to avoid facing cancellation and big discounts from their international buyers.

In absence of machines, the exporters have to depend on the dog squad for completing the mandatory scanning and certification.

The dog squad can only scan 110 tonnes of cargoes in a day whereas every day more than 1,200 tonnes of cargoes are coming to the HSIA for shipping.

If the two EDS scanning machines and the dog squad work normally, the exporters can ship about 800 tonnes of cargo through the HSIA in a day.

Recently, the number of exportable goods through the HSIA increased tremendously as the importers want quick delivery of goods to fill their empty shelves

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3 killed in Chandpur

Unrest in Cumilla sparks the incident; many injured; govt orders probe

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed and many others injured yesterday as mob and police clashed in Chandpur's Hajiganj upazila while violence erupted in several districts following reports of "demeaning the Holy Quran" in Cumilla.

Authorities imposed Section 144 in Hajiganj following the violence and deployed two platoons of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) to restore law and order, reports our Chandpur correspondent.

There were also clashes in Cumilla, Chattogram, Kurigram and Moulvibazar,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Dev spree to go on despite odds

PM asks all to act cautiously keeping in mind disasters, risks

BSS, Dhaka

Making a vow to continue the country's development spree, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon all to act cautiously keeping in mind the dangers of disasters.

"We always think the country is ours. So, the development spree will surely be continued whatever risks may arise. We will surely step forward towards the development facing everything. We have been working to pursue this goal," she said.

The PM was addressing a function marking 50 years of the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) and the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction. She joined the event from the Gono Bhaban through videoconferencing.

Hasina said Bangladesh is becoming an ideal country to counter disasters in the world due to the government's tireless efforts.

She called upon all the people concerned to work to uphold Bangladesh's global dignity as a disaster-resilient country.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6



POISONED in their habitat

Dozens of rhesus monkeys killed by farmer who encroached upon Moheshkhali forest



The bodies of two monkeys, poisoned by a farmer in Cox's Bazar, lying on the ground, left while another one is tied to a tree, right.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Dozens of monkeys died in Moheshkhali forest on Tuesday after eating poisoned bananas placed as a trap by a local farmer who encroached upon the forest to cultivate his crop.

The incident took place in Baritilla Ghona area in Cox's Bazar's Moheshkhali upazila around 5:00pm, Dinur Alam, a local environmental activist and president of Green Environment Movement, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Forest department officials visited the spot and found proof that the monkeys, belonging to the rhesus macaque species, had been poisoned and identified the farmer. They did not

disclose the farmer's name as the process to file a case was underway.

They said the farmer was one of many who encroached upon the forest to cultivate their crop, and who viewed wildlife as a nuisance.

One of the monkeys was also seen hanging from a tree.

Dinur Alam said they counted around 50 monkeys killed. Many had been buried by the farmer by the time forest officials reached the spot, he added.

He accused forest officials of negligence in conserving the wildlife in the forest as most of the time they do not take any action against such acts to avoid animosity.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

Ex-minister's APS arrested

STAR REPORT

Detectives arrested AHM Fuad, assistant personal secretary of former Awami League minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, in a murder case from the capital's Bashundhara area early yesterday.

"A team of Detective Branch of police arrested AHM Fuad from the Bashundhara area in Dhaka around 2:20am," Jamal Pasha, additional superintendent of police in Faridpur, told reporters.

Fuad faces eight cases, including those of money laundering and assault, he said, adding that there are also arrest warrants against him in three cases.

"AHM Fuad has been forming various armed terrorist groups, including the 'Helmet Group' and 'Hammer Group', in Faridpur town for about 10 years. He has gained a lot of illicit wealth engaging in terrorist activities," the additional SP said.

Fuad, also a former convener of Faridpur district Jubo League, was shown arrested in a murder case filed with Kotwali Police Station in Faridpur on July 12, 2016, said police.

He was placed on two-day remand in the murder case yesterday after being produced before a court with a 10-day remand appeal, said Abdul Gaffar, sub-inspector of Kotwali Police Station.

Meanwhile, Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka yesterday directed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

WORLD STANDARDS DAY
14 October 2021

COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT

building a safer nation

MAKING RODS OF GLOBAL STANDARDS
MAKES US BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE

The Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation from Russia has chosen the **Country's No. 1 Steel Expert** BSRM to build the infrastructure of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant. This is because BSRM maintains Russian standards (GOST R52544 A500C) for producing rods which are being used to build the project.

This World Standards Day, BSRM is proud to comply with global standards in building these megastructures which are the country's pride.

WHY RETENTION AREAS VITAL

- Manage storm water runoff
- Improve water quality in adjacent bodies
- Prevent flooding, downstream erosion
- Bank stability, aesthetic benefits

KALYANPUR RETENTION AREA

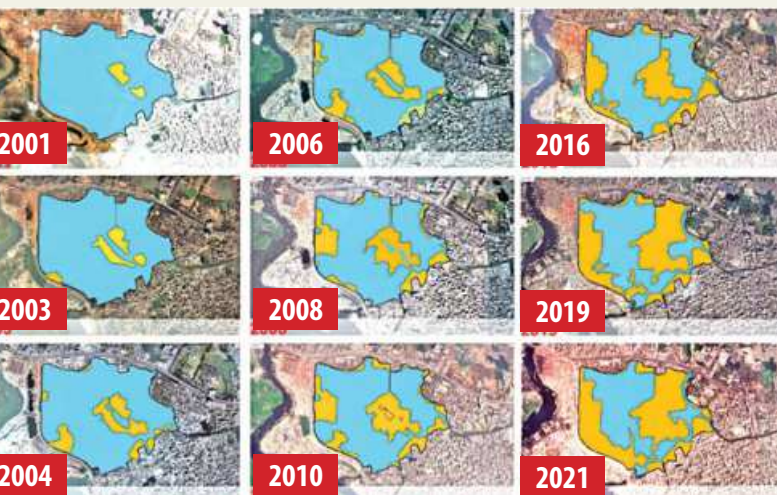
- Total retention space 178.82acre
- Much of the land encroached
- Project to protect retention areas
- Turn the place into recreational spot like Hatirjheel
- Plan to be shown to PM on Nov 4

ECO-PARK AT A GLANCE

- Total Zone 10
- All connected by waterways
- No entrance fee for visitors
- To be able to enter thru 12-14 points



The eco-park will feature attractions such as a lotus pond and ferris wheel.



Over 20 years, much of the retention area (blue) has been encroached (yellow).

There are many encroachers there, so the land and canals have to be recovered based on CS maps, and the water navigation will have to be improved.

ARCHITECT IQBAL HABIB
Adviser of the project

We will recover the land gradually to implement the project. We have already held a meeting with the security exchange commission in this regard.

MD ATIQUIL ISLAM
DNCC mayor

1. Cultivated Area
2. Viaduct
3. Co-management Training Centre
4. Parking
5. Boat Landing
6. Footbridge
7. Boat Club
8. Dhaka Wheel
9. Food Court
10. Parking
11. STP
12. Lotus Pond
13. Pump House
14. Floating restaurant
15. Jamboree Ground
16. Activity Dome
17. Biodiversity Island
18. Swimming Pool
19. Fire Camp

DNCC to build eco-park at Kalyanpur

Project to free canals; set up recreation spot like Hatirjheel

HELEMUL ALAM

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) has taken up an elaborate plan to construct an eco-park using the retention areas at the capital's Kalyanpur, a large part of which are currently encroached.

The project will not only protect the retention areas but also turn the whole place into a recreational spot like Hatirjheel, city corporation officials and experts say.

According to DNCC statistics, the total area of the retention space is 178.82 acres.

Of the total, 98.35 acres belong to Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC), while Bangladesh Water Development Board (WDB) possesses 6.36 acres, and 11.40 acres are government khash land. Dhaka Wasa's own land, 9.71 acres, and acquired land, 53.004 acres, is now under DNCC.

But DNCC currently possesses only three acres out of what it is supposed to have -- 74.114 acres -- as much of the land is now occupied by encroachers, said Shawkat Mahmud, superintendent engineer of DNCC drainage system.

Some parts of the land belonging to BADC and WDB are also occupied, he added.

BUDGET & FUNDING

- Budget Tk 2,000cr
- Projected deadline 2023
- DNCC to fund the project
- To issue "green bonds" to attract investors

Five Kalyanpur canals connected to this retention pond drain water into it. But, in the last two decades, private establishments and residences have choked the pond and canals.

Against this backdrop, DNCC took up the project, with a budget of around Tk 2,000 crore.

THE PROJECT

Of the project's 10 zones, five have been reserved for nature-based establishments, such as a base camp for youths; a biodiversity island with bee colonies, a butterfly garden and bird aviary; and an aquatic park.

All the zones are connected by waterways, and visitors will be able to enjoy the experience on boats.

There will be over 50 types of facilities in the zones, including walkways, bicycle lanes, children's playground, waste disposal and management system, and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Mega projects interfering with DSCC works

Says Taposh, blames lack of co-ordination

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of coordination among different service providing agencies is increasing sufferings of city dwellers, said Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday.



"It is very unfortunate that the metro rail authorities have sought permission to set up the MRT line at Kamalapur where our development work is ongoing," said Taposh.

Different organisations are working in an unplanned way without any coordination with the city corporation, he said.

"Similarly, we have taken huge initiatives for the drainage development work in Shyampur industrial area but the works of Padma Bridge project have blocked all the outlets of passing rain water in the area, which is causing waterlogging," said the mayor.

This is why the entire Shyampur industrial area is now affected by waterlogging, Taposh added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Durga Puja is being celebrated all across the country with due fervour and festivities. Yesterday, Hindu devotees performed the traditional "Kumari Puja" on the occasion of the "Mahashtami". One such devotee was seen seeking blessings from the Goddess Durga at the makeshift puja mandap at the capital's Khamarbari.

PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

DoE fines 3 steel mills Tk 16.2 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined three Chattogram-based steel mills Tk16 lakh for producing rods with their Air Treatment Plants (ATP) shut down.

The companies fined were Benz Industry Limited, CSS Corporation, and Islam Steel, all from the port city's Nasirabad area under Bayazid Bostami Police Station.

DoE Chattogram Office Director Mohammad Nurullah Nuri confirmed the matter, saying the mills

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Dengue claims two more lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least two more dengue patients died and 211 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday, of which 162 are outside Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the new cases, a total of 2,532 patients were diagnosed during the running month out of a total 20,729 infected. Of the total infected, 2,813 are from outside Dhaka.

At least 7,841 were diagnosed in September, 7,698 in August, 2,286 in July, 272 in June while

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Death toll 82
13 died in Oct so far
23 in Sept, 34 in Aug, 12 in July
211 more hospitalised yesterday
Total infected 20,729

'No political events in name of seminars'

Jatiya Press Club issues statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Press club authorities yesterday decided not to allow any political programmes in name of discussions or seminars.

A press release signed by press club joint secretary Mainul Alam mentioned that the decision came in a meeting of the management committee chaired by club president Farida Yasmin.

The press release also said the meeting discussed that some "chaotic and untoward incidents" took place on October 10 on the club premises.

On that day, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir participated in a programme where BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman virtually joined as the chief guest.

On October 11, Awami League joint secretary and Information Minister Hasan Mahmud commented that the standard and dignity of the press club is being hampered due to meetings of BNP. He said "press club should not be a place of rallies like Naya Paltan [the central office of BNP]".

On the same day, the press club president issued a statement

where she said the virtual meeting with Tarique Rahman is contrary to the laws of Bangladesh.

Meanwhile on October 12, Awami League secretary general and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader also said BNP has made the press club a political podium. BNP's political gathering inside the press club is totally illegal and unacceptable, he added.

A day later, the decision of banning the political programmes came from the management committee.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

AL men behind e-commerce scams

Alleges Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday alleged that the "ruling party men" are involved in swindling money from online shoppers in the name of e-commerce.

"Huge amount of money has been swindled from people in the name of e-commerce. Who're the looters in e-commerce? Who're pampering the looters and who're giving them protection? The ruling party men are involved in it," said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir.

The BNP leader made the allegation while speaking at a discussion arranged by Afsar Ahmed Siddiqui Smriti Foundation at Dhaka Reporters' Unity, marking the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



In the last couple of days, the capital has experienced a bout of tremendous heat, with the mercury reaching as high as 34°C yesterday. Amidst this swelter, business has picked up for street-side juice sellers, as customers thronged their outlets in search of relief throughout the day. This photo was taken recently from Sadarghat area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Terminal turmoil on Savar road

People suffer for indiscriminate loading-unloading of goods on busy thoroughfare; authorities keep passing the buck

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

Savar's Namabazar Road is a busy place. Every day, people from at least 20 areas of Dhamrai upazila and Savar municipality use the road, which connects to different points of Dhaka-Aricha highway and Savar-Singair regional highway.

The number of commuters on the road would round up well over lakhs, and all of them have to face extreme difficulty throughout the day due to the indiscriminate loading and unloading of goods from thousands of vehicles.

The area is a wholesale hub thanks to a nearby market that houses numerous businesses -- including pulse, corn, oil and saw mills, and wholesale grocery stores. As the area lacks a truck terminal, trucks, container trucks, and pickups basically use the road as a terminal.

Mohon Mia, a medical representative by profession, said he



This particular spot at Namabazar road is thronged by large vehicles loading and unloading goods right on the street throughout the day. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

has been commuting on the road every day for the last two years. "I have to spend around two hours a day on the road waiting for the traffic to clear," he told this correspondent recently.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Missing Saleh Ahmed's son gets job at city corporation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Son of Saleh Ahmed, who went missing after falling into a drain in Chattogram in August, has got a job at the city corporation.

Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury handed over the appointment letter to Sadequallah Mohim on Tuesday, said mayor's personal secretary Abul Hasem.

Sadequallah (21) has been appointed as the workshop helper at Chattogram City Corporation, he said.

Sadequallah, an HSC candidate, said, "My father was the only earning member of our family. I want to study more and at the same time want to support my family."

On August 25, Saleh Ahmed fell into an open drain at Shulak Bahar near Muradpur Police Box in Chattogram city.

Since then the vegetable trader has been missing.



On a warm Ashwin noon, anglers set out on Sylhet Sadar's Chengerkhal river. Holding umbrellas, they fish all day and take the day's catch to the Mogolgaon or Badaghat bazars, selling their array of fish -- including eels, catfish, seer fish and more -- for up to Tk 2,000. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Mega projects interfering

FROM PAGE 3 The mayor also said he becomes frightened when he thinks about what will happen during the rainy season. "We have requested the authorities concerned time and again so that they at least construct a culvert for water to pass until they [DSCC] finish the works.

But they are not paying any heed," he said. "Our extensive work to solve the city's drainage system and waterlogging problem is ongoing. We have started a Tk 103 crore work to solve the problems, and this year we have kept Tk 74 crore budget in this regard in DSCC's own fund," said Taposh.

DNCC to build eco-park

FROM PAGE 3 rehabilitation facility (housing area) for those evicted from the area. The housing area will have 900 sq ft flats for 200 families in Zone 7.

The project will be shown to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 4 for approval.

The youth camp will be in zone-1. A food court, boat club, parking, deck, angling space and ferris wheel will be constructed in zone-2. The biodiversity island will be in zone-4. A floating restaurant and food hut will be built in zone-5; and a lotus pond, footbridge and sitting area in zone-6.

In addition, there will be farmland, and BADC's cold storage and seed warehouse in zone-8. Zone-9 will contain a training centre, multipurpose hall, and exhibition space; and a solar-aquatic treatment plant and park will be built in zone-10.

At the learning centre, youths will be trained on different environmental aspects, and they will receive first-hand experience of working with nature.

Iqbal Habib, adviser of the project, said the government had acquired 173 acres of land earlier, but now, most of it is occupied by land grabbers.

In the dry season, the canals retain water from the pond, and during monsoon, they bring water into it, he said.

There are many encroachers there, so the land and canals have to be recovered based on CS maps, and water navigation will have to improve,

he added.

With the DNCC mayor's vision, authorities are planning to properly develop the retention area, so people can see it as a recreational spot. The project is being designed to not just be sustainable financially but in terms of maintenance as well.

Habib said "Solar Aquatic Technology" will be used to treat lake water and make it drinkable, and the entire park will run using electricity generated from solar power.

A ferris wheel, called "Dhaka Eye", would be installed at the entrance point, he added.

No entrance fee will be taken from visitors, but they will be required to pay fares for availing the facilities, Habib said.

People will be able to enter the area through 12 to 14 points, he said.

The project will not be funded by the government but rather by DNCC, which is expected to issue municipal bonds or "green bonds" in a bid to attract investments for the projects.

Contacted, DNCC mayor Md Atiqul Islam said they will recover the land gradually to implement the project, as it will not be possible to recover the whole area at once.

"We have already held a meeting with the security exchange commission to implement the project with green bonds and will not take any money from the government," he said.

They want to complete the project by the next two years, he added.

DoE fines 3 steel

FROM PAGE 3 were fined after a hearing over environmental pollution held yesterday.

He also said the chemist of Chattogram DoE conducted the drive at the three mills on October 12 and found evidence of making iron rods by shutting down the ATPs.

"Each of the three mills were fined Tk 5.4 lakh, totaling Tk 16.2 lakh," Nuri informed.

Meanwhile, two more industrial establishments, Haji Washing and Popular Washing, were fined Tk 1.72 lakh for operating factories while shutting down their effluent treatment plant (ETP).

Dengue claims

FROM PAGE 3 43 were infected in May and rest are from January to April.

According to the DGHS, 82 people have died of dengue infection in the country this year. Twelve people died in July, 34 in August, 23 in September and 13 in October so far.

Among the deaths, 76 people have died in Dhaka division, two in Chattogram and Khulna and one each in Rajshahi and Mymensingh divisions.

Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 928 are still undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka, and 48 outside the capital, the DGHS data shows.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines Project & Works Department Invitation for Tender (Works) e-Tender Notice. Ref: 30.34.0000.023.04.001.21. Date: 13/10/2021. This is an online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

Terminal turmoil on Savar road

FROM PAGE 3 "No one cares about keeping the road free. That the area has no traffic police only adds to our woes," he said.

This is all the more frustrating given that the load-unload spot is right next to Savar Model Police Station, he said.

General secretary of Savar Bazar Byabshayi Kallyan Samity Anwar Mondol, also a trader in Namabazar area, said, "The stagnancy of the road

affects our businesses as well, but we are forced to load and unload this way as there's no terminal nearby."

"We have requested the authorities concerned, including the mayor and the local MP, in this regard, but we are yet to get a terminal," he added.

Contacted, Savar municipality mayor Hazi Abdul Goni said they have not been able to build a terminal due to unavailability of a suitable piece of land.

"If they [the market authority] gave us a land today, we would start building the terminal right away," the mayor said.

He said they've asked the market authorities to carry out loading and unloading activities at night, but it only fell upon deaf ears.

The mayor also said they've requested the regional police to deploy traffic personnel at the area, but this is yet to take place.

However, traffic inspector

(admin) of Dhaka District North Traffic Police Station Abdus Salam said they did not get any application from the municipality.

Besides, he said, they are faced with a shortage of personnel, which would make the deployment difficult anyway.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach local MP Dr Enamur Rahman, also state minister for Disaster Management and Relief, for comments.

AL men behind e-commerce

FROM PAGE 3 20th death anniversary of former BNP leader Afsar Ahmed Siddiqui.

Stating that he "saw the photograph of a CEO of an e-commerce company with the prime minister", Fakhru said some people are cutting deep into the pockets of people and plundering money with the "patronage of the government and the ruling party".

He said the "ruling party men" also shattered the banking system and depleted the banks through widespread plundering.

"Every bank is now at stake. If you talk to bankers you'll have an idea about the real situation. I've a friend who happens to be an economist. He knows this system very well. He says those who keep money in banks or are involved in the banking system are the worst affected ones as every bank is in a state of bankruptcy," the BNP leader claimed.

He also alleged that general people except the ruling party leaders are now denied loans by banks as all bank directors

belong to Awami League.

"For a loan of Tk 10 crore, one has to pay a bribe of Tk 5 crore while the rest Tk 5 crore is hardly needed to be returned."

Fakhru said it is a pity that some people are plundering public money and making their fortunes in this country where many people live alongside roads and footpaths as they have no shelter.

"Today we see many people building new houses and buying cars though they had lived a very ordinary life 10 years back. This has been possible because of their involvement with the ruling party. This is the reality everywhere, even at the upazila level," he observed.

Criticising AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader for his comment that BNP's plan to create another mass uprising like the 90s is a daydream, Fakhru said the ruling party has in fact got unnerved with the possibility of losing power.

He called upon BNP leaders and activists to get united to oust the government and "restore democracy" in the country.

No political

FROM PAGE 3 The press release mentioned that "the meeting said the management committee is committed to maintaining the discipline and orderliness at any cost for the interest of club members."

"The rules and conditions prescribed for the rent of various halls and auditoriums of the club must be complied with," it said.

The meeting also decided to ban the programmes in name of Jihad Smriti Parishad, Zia Parishad and any political party's rallies and events.

The committee sought cooperation from all concerned in this regard.

Contacted, Press Club general secretary Elias Khan said there were some chaotic incidents that took place on that day.

"I was abroad at the time but learned that many people were present at the programme -- more than our auditorium capacity. We have many auditoriums where every day various events take place and the whole area becomes crowded."

"Besides, our limited parking space gets full due to so many gatherings. Also, the ongoing metro rail project has already narrowed the road in front of the club. Due to all of these reasons, we have decided to discourage mass gatherings on the premises."

Asked, he said, "There is no connection between the virtual meeting with Tarique Rahman and the current decision."

BIRDEM GENERAL HOSPITAL (An Enterprise of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh) 122, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh. INVITATION FOR TENDER. 01. Name of Works: Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Electro Medical Equipment for BIRDEM General Hospital & BIRDEM General Hospital-02.

Invitation to submit proposals for the following two (2) Request for Proposals (RFPs) issued by UNICEF Bangladesh. 1) RFP No. LRPS-2021-9170672: Integration of Ventilation & Centralized Control System with the existing Air Conditioning System of UNICEF Country Office.

BANGLADESH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES National Museum of Science & Technology Bhavan, Agargaon, Dhaka 1207 Website: www.bas.org.bd Election of Associate Fellows (AF) of BAS 2021

ন্যাশনাল টি কোম্পানী লিমিটেড "বিজিআইসি টাওয়ার" (৮ম তলা) ৩৪, ভোপখানা রোড, ঢাকা- ১০০০। আবশ্যিক (নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি) ন্যাশনাল টি কোম্পানী লিমিটেডের জন্য মহাব্যবস্থাপক পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে আত্মই যোগ্য বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।



An operator lights up a kerosene-run lamp, which is part of a British-era signalling device installed at Mobarakganj railway station in Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila.

PHOTO: AZIBOR RAHMAN

BRITISH ERA SIGNALLING LAMPS

Lives at stake at 13 rly stations

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

It might come as a surprise, but 13 out of around 440 railway stations in the country are still using night-time switching signal lights run by kerosene oil and manual track switching mechanisms -- all installed during the British era.

A railroad switching mechanism -- referred to as 'points' by railway employees in the country -- at a railway station or a junction guides an incoming train onto a free track to avoid collision with a stationary train.

Switching signal lights are illuminated at night to inform the driver of an incoming train as to whether the train can approach a station or pass through a junction.

Both cargo and passenger trains passing through these 13 stations -- located in the districts of Chuadanga, Jhenidah, Jessore and Khulna -- at night run the risk of serious accidents and fatalities, as the switching signals are often blown out by strong wind.

In 2020, four trains were derailed at railway stations in Jhenidah and Jashore. In one of the accidents that took place at Saffardpur station in Jhenidah that year, an estimated damage worth around Tk 3 crore was incurred when a freight train loaded with stones collided head-on with another oil laden freight train.

This year, on February 22, two compartments of the Sundarbans Express were derailed at Kotchandpur station in Jhenidah.

According to data from Signal and Telecommunications office at Pakshi Division of Bangladesh Railway (west zone), 22 trains pass back and forth every day through the 13 stations from Chuadanga's Darshana to Khulna city. There are nearly 160 kerosene signalling lights at these stations, with each station having around 10 to 12 signals and around 9 to 10 switch points on both sides.

All the kerosene lamps inside the signal casings are lit up by an operator called

'point man' before a train is given clearance to approach a station at night. But before that, the same operator has to select a designated track for the incoming train by manually flipping all the tumbler of point levers, each weighing 26 kilograms.

In case the lamps in the signals are blown out by wind, the driver stops the train abruptly to avert an accident. When such occurrences happen in the middle of nowhere and in the dead of night, passengers are often gripped by fear and panic.

Sanjoy Biswas, point operator at Kotchandpur station in Jhenidah, said passengers on the route suffer immensely as the kerosene lamps at the station go off frequently.

For the safety of all, the lamps need to be replaced with a modern and computerised signalling system, he added.

Assistant Cabin Master Anisur Rahman and Point Man Ashrafuzzaman Liton of Jashore railway station said it is quite difficult for even the strongest of the employees to unlock and set nearly a dozen of point levers at a station, especially during adverse weather conditions.

Asked, Station Master Shahjahan Sheikh of Mobarakganj station in Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila said though the current signalling system is not flawless, it does not pose too much risk.

Talking to this correspondent over phone, MM Rajib Billah, a signal and telecommunications engineer at Pakshi Division office of Bangladesh Railway (west zone), said the signalling and track switching systems have been modernised along the rail tracks between Rajshahi city and Darshana when the tracks were converted to double tracks.

Approval has already been given to upgrade the single rail track between Darshana and Khulna city rail stations into double tracks and the signalling and track switching systems along the tracks will also be modernised during the work, he added.

DEFAMING A WOMAN DSA case filed against upazila chairman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A case has been filed under the Digital Security Act against two people, including an upazila parishad chairman, for defaming a woman on Facebook.

Shima Rani Sheel, an activist of the ruling Awami League, filed the case with the Cyber Tribunal in Rajshahi on September 26.

The case came into the limelight after a month as Rezaul Haque Babu, chairman of Bera Upazila Parishad in Pabna, was quizzed by police in this regard.

Besides Babu, who is also the president of Jatsakini union AL, one named Molla Arman was also made accused in the case.

According to the plaintiff, Arman, the key accused in the case, posted a defamatory comment about her character on his Facebook on September, 19.

The second accused shared the post to defame her in society, she added.

The Cyber Tribunal accepted the case and directed the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) to investigate the incident.

Md Fazole Elahi, superintendent of PBI, Pabna, told The Daily Star that they were investigating the case.

"After getting court order we have started the investigation," he said.

Meanwhile, Babu said that the case was politically motivated and filed to harass him.

Free eye camp for underprivileged people

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Distressed Children & Infants International (DCI) and Rights and Sight for Children (RSC), in partnership with Faraz Hossain Foundation, organized a free eye screening camp for the underprivileged people in coastal area of Patuakhali's Bauphal upazila on Tuesday, marking the World Sight Day-2021.

A team of doctors from Ishani Islamia Eye Institute & Hospital, Barisal provided treatment, from 10:00am to 4:00pm, to the underprivileged patients at the eye camp, according to a press release.

The free eye screening camp was aiming to identify and treat every underprivileged people, mostly financially unable to seek treatment, in the coastal areas who were in need of eye surgery, medicine or eyeglasses.

As many as 757 underprivileged children and adults received free eye treatment at the camp.

Of them, 106 patients were diagnosed with cataracts and 286 patients with refractive errors. About 195 eye glasses were also provided free of cost during the day-long camp while the rest of the refractive error patients will receive their eye glasses on October 22 from RSC Learning Centre (Opposite of Kalaiya Hayatunnesha Girls High School).

Besides, cataract patients will undergo surgery at Ishani Islamia Eye Institute & Hospital, Barisal, while about 365 patients were given medicines from the camp.

Founder and Executive Director of DCI Dr Ehsan Hoque in a special message said, "The goal of this eye camp is to provide the light of vision and new hope to the unfortunate and underprivileged people in memory of Faraz."

Mr SM Faisal Ahmed, chairman of 10-Kalaya Union Parishad (UP), attended the eye camp as chief guest.

FEUD OVER PROPERTY

Schoolteacher arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police on Tuesday night arrested a schoolteacher in connection with a case for assaulting his father in Chatmohar upazila of the district earlier in the day.

The matter draws attention among general people after photos of incident went viral in the social media.

The arrestee is Mohammad Mojnur Rahman, a teacher at RCN & BSN Government Model Pilot High School.

Meanwhile, police produced the arrestee before a Pabna court yesterday that sent him to jail, rejecting his bail prayer.

Officer in Charge (OC) of Chatmohar Police Station Anwar Hossain said Mojnur entered Mohela Post Office in Chatmohar on Tuesday noon and forced his father Ataur Rahman, a sub-postmaster, to register all his ancestral properties in his name.

When Ataur denied to do so, the arrestee beat his father at his office and later in a huge crowd when he tried to leave the place to avoid further humiliation, the OC said.

Police arrested the culprit after Ataur filed a case with Chatmohar Police Station against his son the same day.

Booters bow out

FROM PAGE 1

A free-kick from captain Jamal Bhuiyan, but Oscar Bruzoz's charges, who needed victory to advance to the title decider, were left shell-shocked when the referee pointed to the spot following a collision inside the Bangladesh box in the 86th minute of the game.

Bangladesh winger Saad Uddin seemed to have come in contact with a Nepalese forward, who made most of the incident, diving on to the pitch.

The Bangladesh team, who were down to 10 men on 79 minutes following goalkeeper Anisur Rahman's sending off, protested vehemently, but to no avail.

Anjan Bista converted the spot-kick past substitute goalkeeper Ashrafur Islam Rana to equalise with two minutes of normal time remaining.

With a man down and morale shattered, there was no coming back for Bangladesh while the Nepalese players and officials were ecstatic on having made it to their final of the regional competition.

Nepal will play the final on October 16 against either Maldives or India, with the qualifier slated to be decided following the group's final match late last night.

Poisoned in their habitat

FROM PAGE 1

"They [forest officials] could not go to the spot until Wednesday morning, although the incident took place around 5:00pm on Tuesday. They sometimes hold awareness campaigns at the upazila auditorium despite our request to hold those near forest areas," he said.

Abhijit Kumar Barua, range officer of Moheskhalia Range under Chattogram Coastal Division, told The Daily Star that they found proof of the brutality upon a visit to the area on Wednesday morning.

"We found a total of three monkeys 500 yards away from where the killing took place. Bananas laced with toxins were found around the field. A troop of monkeys came out from the nearby forest and died within hours of consuming the fruit," he said.

Abhijit said usually 30 to 50 monkeys roam together in a group.

He said they identified the accused and collected the necessary proof of the crime to file a case under the Wildlife Conservation Act-2012.

Mentioning the area as a habitat for wildlife, Abhijit said some influential locals encroach upon the forest, start farming there and view wildlife as a nuisance. When monkeys and other wildlife feast on the crop, they lay snares to kill them.

"We have seen various crop fields including those cultivating bottle gourd, eggplant and other crops there. Due to poor

manpower, it becomes tough to evict those ... a few months ago, one of our colleagues died after being attacked by grabbers in Moheskhalia," he said.

Elephants, monkeys, fishing cats and badgers have been falling victim to illegal grabbers of forestland in greater Chattogram for some time.

As per the Wildlife Conservation Act-2012, if a person commits any crime against wildlife, he or she will be jailed for one year or pay a fine of Tk 50,000, or both in case of the first crime. The penalties are doubled for repeat offences.

Wildlife Biologist Monirul H Khan, also professor of Zoology at Jahangirnagar University, said it was a truly sad incident.

"Forest department must stop farming inside the forest and take necessary steps to protect wildlife, which has been facing severe onslaught across their range," he said.

Mohammed Abdur Rahman, divisional forest officer of Chattogram coastal forest division, told The Daily Star that his range officer went to the spot with a veterinary surgeon.

"We will sue the accused, who has already been identified, after receiving autopsy report," he said.

Abdul Hai, officer-in-charge of Moheskhalia Police Station, told The Daily Star they heard around 50 monkeys were killed, but no one came to lodge any complaint as of yesterday evening.

Dev spree to go on despite odds

FROM PAGE 1

Highlighting various initiatives taken by her government to reduce disaster risks, the premier said they were doing their part while the people would have to do theirs in this regard.

"People need to be careful and take some measures accordingly. While constructing houses, offices, and business establishments, you have to keep in mind that disasters such as fire, storm and flood can strike any time. So, everyone should follow the building code while constructing those to stay away from the risks."

Referring to BNP's arson attack (in 2014 to thwart the national election), the premier urged all to remain alert to man-made disasters.

She mentioned the measures taken by her government such as giving cash incentive to the people and businessmen as well as relief materials to the masses, providing treatment to the people, purchasing vaccines to minimise people's hardship and keeping the wheels of the economy moving amid the pandemic.

Hasina said her government has launched the mass Covid vaccination campaign with a target of bringing 80 percent citizens under vaccination coverage.

She called upon all to follow health protocols as anyone can become infected with Covid even after taking the vaccine.

The PM opened CPP's four units -- Druto Saradan Unit (quick response unit), Pani Theke Uddar Kora Unit (rescue from water unit), Oti Joar Monitoring O Saradan Unit (high-tide monitoring and response unit) and Khelaj Khelaj Durjog Prostoti Unit (disaster preparedness with fun).

She hoped that these units will help CPP accelerate disaster management work. State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Enamur Rahman and Secretary Md Mohsin spoke on the occasion from Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital.

Lawmakers, government officials and other dignitaries joined the programme from the Muktiyoddha Math, Cox's Bazar. Hasina earlier unveiled the cover of a book titled "Durjog Sahonshil Bangladesh Binirmama Sheikh Hasina".

On behalf of the PM, the state minister for disaster management and relief distributed "lifetime honorary medal" to three best organisers and six volunteers, including three women, for their outstanding contribution to the field of disaster risk management.

The lifetime awardees are: organisers Saidur Rahman, AKM Hasan Al Rashid, and AJM Golam Rabbani, and volunteers Shova Rani Das, Ratna Rani Dey, Hawa Begum, Fazlul Karim, Abdul Hasim Siraj Kazi, and Md Hanif.

Zila Parishad Mymensingh Invitation for Tender (Works) e-Tender Notice No. 05/2021-2022 (NCT, LTM) Memo No. 46.42.6100.002.07.001.20-966 Date: 13 October, 2021

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ কমান্ডারের (পুলিশ সুপার) এর কার্যালয় ইন-সার্ভিস ট্রেনিং সেন্টার, বগুড়া উন্মুক্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM) দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০২/২০২১-২০২২

COVER DESIGN: MAMUN HOSSAIN
COVER PHOTO: TANVIR HASAN CHOWDHURY

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

Is Bhashan Char really the answer to the Rohingya crisis?

SHAHAB ENAM KHAN

Bhashan Char has lately become a topic of critical debate in the refugee relocation discourse. It is a reality that comes with a harsh reminder of demographic changes within the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar and the limits of a highly populated state in supporting an incredibly high number of foreign nationals living in its territory. After the textbook case of ethnic cleansing and genocide committed by the Burmese authorities in August 2017, as documented in the UN proceedings and noted by the International Court of Justice, more than 723,000 Rohingyas fled the province of Rakhine in Myanmar and took refuge in Bangladesh. Bangladesh was already hosting between 300,000 to 500,000 Rohingyas by then.

Bangladesh now hosts Kutupalong refugee camp, the largest refugee camp in the world, set up in 1991 for a meagre refugee settlement. This camp, along with some others in Cox's Bazar, is built on steep hillsides and prone to flooding and landslides during monsoons. Even though international agencies and the government have improved the situation in recent years, in July 2021, as per UNHCR, more than six refugees were killed, 12,000 refugees were affected, and an estimated 2,500 shelters were damaged or destroyed due to landslides and flash floods.

Another critical problem that remains for the government of Bangladesh and the international community is the population expansion in the camps. While the country is hosting 860,175 Rohingyas from 187,530 families, each with an average of 4.6 family members, most of whom live in a single room per family, one should note that camps present a staggeringly high population density of 40,000 people per square kilometre. This puts the entire community at risk, both in terms of public health and security; the latter due to the drug, human, and arms

smuggling in Teknaf and Ukhiya Upazilas and intra-camp violence between refugee groups. Hence, providing temporary alternative shelters for the refugees often becomes a necessity for the host governments.

Amid these complex debates, Al Masum Molla, a young and versatile journalist, embarked on an ambitious project to document the life and livelihoods of the Rohingyas in newly built refugee facilities in Bhashan Char. His book, *Bhashan Char: Bastion in the Bay* (Agamee Prokashoni, 2021) is impressive and the first of its kind, available in both Bangla and English editions. Based on interviews and research conducted over several years' worth of visits to Bhashan Char and supplemented by an intelligent observation, the book offers balanced views between the realities and perceptions, facts and myths, and gaps and needs.

Molla identifies that the government, as a temporary solution to the expanding population problem, built a USD 350 million facility on Bhashan Char island, which has fresh water supply, uninterrupted power supply, agricultural facilities, cyclone shelters, health facilities, civic and teaching facilities, and a police station. In addition, Bangladesh's coastal disaster management capacities are well regarded, making the government confident that refugees will be safe and secure like any other Bangladeshi coastal community.

While the government's concerns and responses are clearly valid and transparent, the criticism primarily lies in whether Rohingyas are willing to go there, leaving their near and dear ones in Cox's Bazar. Many have raised concerns regarding Bhashan Char's emergency and logistical response preparations for refugees, humanitarian workers, Bangladeshi officials, and security personnel. Some would

argue that relocations from mainland camps should be fully informed and voluntary, and the authorities should allow any refugee who wants to return to Cox's Bazar to do so on humanitarian grounds. In addition, sea-level rise, sustainability of fresh water supply and environment, and the psycho-social effect of "isolation" as a cause of "unrest" and crime source are being debated.

I was particularly intrigued by Molla's geomorphological argument favouring Bhashan Char in the Meghna Estuary on the Bay of Bengal. He discusses that Bhashan Char can be a global model of protection from natural disasters, but the test lies in whether they will be as resilient as the coastal people. He aptly reminds us of the age of information and globalization, in which stifling information can lead to confusion and become a source of malicious rumours. The victim will be the Bhashan Char initiative itself. Molla nevertheless shows a sense of optimism that Bhashan Char can become an economic model if it can be linked with Bangladesh's blue economy and agricultural and entrepreneurial policies. Time will tell.

I think the book has critically addressed the problems that the Rohingyas and the international community raised, and Molla attempts to offer solutions to the issues that plague Bhashan Char or the complexity of the refugee crisis in Bangladesh. To his credit, the book succeeds in humanizing the rather dire situation. In his own words, "It is a strange love-hate relationship that the Bay has with Bangladesh. Yet, Bhashan Char, amid all that, has risen from the sea like a beacon of hope."

Shahab Enam Khan is Professor of International Relations, Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka.

BOOKS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Gilgamesh through the sands of time

In this new series of articles, we discuss books that changed the course of history.

JAHANARA TARIQ

Unlike the blind, brilliant bard who is thought to have conceived *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, or Ved Vyas who put the tale of *Mahabharata* on paper with the help of a potbellied deity, and unlike, also, Virgil's oscillating between a tortured artist and corporate parrot in *The Aeneid*, there are no fabled traces of the artist behind *Gilgamesh*. Yet the text itself stands tall as a myth and seems to almost shed the need for a solitary author. Michael Schmidt, author of *Gilgamesh: The Life of a Poem* (Princeton University Press, 2019), has said in an interview that, "Gilgamesh is made by a river, by fire, by generations of scribes, by shepherds, ruin-robbers, archaeologists, and scholars. In all the debris there are

east. The epic has resurfaced through time in various ways, sometimes quite literally and at others through known tropes and similar narrative plot lines. The fragmented tablets of this ancient poesy are still frozen in fluidity, perhaps still seeking its next puzzle piece.

In the final sections of the tale, Gilgamesh is desolate in the grief of his friend's death, and nowhere near to defeating mortality. After returning to Uruk, however, the sight of the colossal walls of his city incites him to stand in awe at this enduring work of mortal men. And suddenly the readers are back to where they started, too, admiring the prosaic excellence of the city walls. The implication is obvious—that mortals



COLLAGE: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRVAR

literally no vestiges of an identifiable poet to be found."

The epic antedates even the depiction of the famous Trojan war; it is, in effect, the oldest epic found till date. Originating as a series of five Sumerian poems about the adventures of the mythological hero Gilgamesh, the "Epic of Gilgamesh" was sewn together into a 12-tablet Akkadian language epic—decades, or even centuries, later. Most of the poems were written down in the first centuries of the second millennium BC. The most complete edition comes from the 7th century library of Assurbanipal, antiquary and last king of the Assyrian Empire. The debris of the poem was first discovered in the mid-1800s by two Englishmen when archaeologists began uncovering the buried cities of the Middle-East. Since then, scholars and archaeologists have laboured to put the shards together into a unified whole. The main body of the Assyrian epic has not been altered in essentials since the mammoth publications of the text, accompanied with commentary by Campbell Thompson, around 1930.

Its story tells of how Gilgamesh, the king of Uruk (present day Iraq), battles with and later befriends a giant by the name of Enkidu. They then feud with the gods, causing Enkidu to lose his life, and Gilgamesh to embark upon a quest to conquer death.

With time, was buried the Assurbanipal library completely. Historians assume that the Babylonian gods and their universes went underground only to reappear in later Mediterranean religions and that the heroes transformed and survived by travelling westwards as well as to the

can achieve immortality only through dazzling creations and art which will stand tall through the passage of time, unlike fragile, perishable physical bodies; that is the knowledge that Gilgamesh discovers in his conquest over death.

A few weeks ago, news headlines announced that a 3,500-year-old "Dream Tablet" recounting the epic of Gilgamesh was returned to Iraq after it was stolen three decades ago and illegally imported to the United States. One can't help but juxtapose this story of loot and of the tablet returning home to Gilgamesh's own journey against the ticking clock. The clay tablets, like the wounded hero himself, have come back full circle, weathering through terrible wars during the US invasions and attempted erasure by Islamic militants. They have survived the test of time, existing in fragmented echoes of engraved cuneiform, clay tablets; existing, despite the changing topography of the world and despite being dispersed in a wide strip from Turkey to Iraq; existing, despite being written, composed and recomposed, reformed and transformed over a period of more than a thousand years. The tale of it spreading and resurfacing and moving from one time zone to another, from one space to another, is strangely synonymous to the ethos of the epic itself.

To find out more about the story of *Gilgamesh*, read an extended version of this article on *The Daily Star* website, or on *Daily Star Books'* Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn pages.

Jahanara Tariq is a postgraduate student of English Literature.

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

The afterlife of colonialism, unveiled

Reading into the most recent novel of Abdulrazak Gurnah, this year's Nobel laureate in literature, announced on October 7, 2021

ISRAR HASAN

Abdulrazak Gurnah, this year's Nobel laureate in literature, seems to come as an admirable choice compared to the Nobel Prize's controversial recent history. The Nobel committee has, at times, stepped over viable candidates who in their words were "too predictable, too popular", or at others have selected candidates who were allegedly genocide deniers or apologists, such as the Norwegian master, Knut Hamsun, and the controversial 2019 laureate from Austria, Peter Handke. The prize has been credited for bringing literary lights out of relative obscurity and propelling them to superstardom, while at the same time overlooking some of history's literary heavyweights, such as Tolstoy and Proust. It has also selected only 16 women out of the 118 winners of the award since 1901, and is often critiqued for featuring white, Western authors too often.

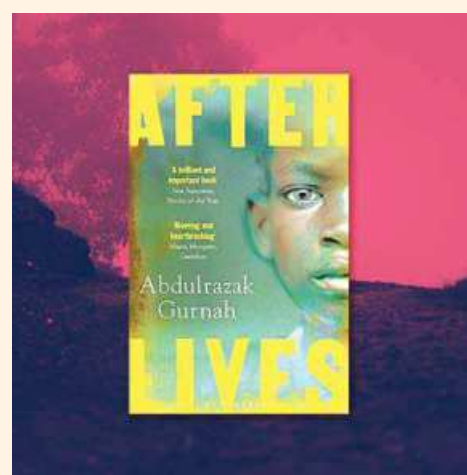
Gurnah, a Zanzibar-born Tanzanian writer living in the United Kingdom, has been chosen for his "uncompromising and

compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee in the gulf between cultures and continents." In many ways, Gurnah's own story paves the way for his novels, as the author escaped the Zanzibar Revolution in the 1960s when the ruling Arab classes were being hunted down by Black African revolutionaries.

Afterlives (Bloomsbury, 2020), his most recent novel, showcases a darker and humane side of the complex relationship between the realms of the oppressor, the oppressed, and the by-standers. It takes us to the region of Tanzania, East Africa comprising Uganda, and Kenya that is expanding under German colonial forces and wrestling with other colonial powers such as Britain, in the early 20th century.

Gurnah presents a host of diverse characters, such as Khalifa, a merchant-clerk of Gujrati-African heritage; Khalifa's wife, Asha; Hamza and Ilyas, voluntary soldiers in the German Colonial Army (*Schutztruppe*); and Ilyas's orphaned sister, Afya.

Together, they paint a devastating canvas of terror, warfare, bloodshed, and



DESIGN: SARAH ANJUM BARI

exploitation, which occurs in the name of bringing civilisation to Africa. All of this is personified in the rather ambiguous conduct of one despondent German officer sent to the region to lead the military forces. He treats his African soldier, Hamza, with a conflicting mix of contempt and affection—deriding him

for his "savage" backwardness while having hopes of him learning the ways of Europe. It is only after learning German and reading the philosophy of CF Von Schiller that Hamza earns the approval of his superior, but his relationship with the German Colonial Army remains a major site of contestation for which he struggles to reaffirm his sense of worth and identity.

It is Hamza's complexity of character which makes the novel a mediator between the colonial and post-colonial experience, evoking the themes of love, estrangement, uprooting, and reconciliation. And through Hamza's interaction with the Khalifas, and with Afya, the woman of his dreams, we see the impact of war on African soldiers who were either coerced or compelled into fighting for the colonists.

Written in a third person narrative, Gurnah's prose is just as piercing as his observation is deep and jarring. He humanizes the colonists and the subjects rather than impose constrained binaries. As in his previous books, he brings to life the experiences of Muslims residing near

the Indian Ocean amidst its multicultural setting—the sounds, the tastes, and the smells of their daily lives in East Africa come through in vivid amalgamation. And he creates a sense of intimacy using a smattering of Swahili and Arabic phrases to mesh the worlds of natives, migrants, and colonists into a world of fluid literary imagination.

In *By the Sea* (2011), Gurnah's previous novel, we see Zanzibari refugees fleeing to England; one of the characters refuses to speak in the language of the colonists as a sign of resistance. In each of Gurnah's novels, we find this sense of radical self-imagination and self-invention of the coloniser-oppressor and colonised-victim dynamic in nuanced portrayals, with exquisite attention to detail. Gurnah breathes into his writing a fiery incense in an effort to understand the "afterlives" of the colonial period, whose past can be felt by the needs of today's world. In many ways, we too are the afterlives of colonialism.

Israr Hasan is a research assistant at BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health.

A cosmetic exercise at the cost of road victims

Board formed to settle compensation claims cannot function without the RTA rules

THE government has finally formed a trustee board to settle compensation claims over road accidents. While this is good news, one must wonder why it took so much time to form this board—three long years after the enactment of the Road Transport Act, 2018 (RTA), and around a year after the board's chairman and member secretary were appointed. Even worse, the formation of the board is now appearing to be a case of putting the horse before the cart: while the process of seeking compensation can now be started, the applications will not be processed until the RTA rules (which are yet to be formulated) determine the amounts and procedures to collect contributions for a government fund to pay for the compensation.

In this sense, the newly-formed board is purely cosmetic. Since the passing of the RTA, the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has missed four submission deadlines for a draft of the rules, submitted an incomplete draft in 2019, and is now in the process of going back and forth with the law ministry with the "completed" rules. The latest update is that they are still working on the queries that have been sent to them, and it will take "some more time." We must ask: How much more time can be afforded to road accident victims who have been disabled for life, or have become insolvent while trying to pay for their hospital bills?

It is also frustrating to find that the board that has been formed does not include a single representative from organisations campaigning for road safety and victims' compensation, even though it includes representatives of transport owners and workers. Given that the delays in making the RTA functional have been a result of pressure from transport associations—and that the rules will determine how much these associations will contribute to the compensation fund—it was imperative to include board members who can keep such vested interests in check.

According to a police report in September, a total of 3,095 people were killed in 3,259 road crashes in the first seven months of this year alone. While deaths and injuries from road accidents continue to soar, justice for road accident victims faces one obstacle after another. This sluggish progress in providing compensation is an affront to their sufferings. The government must do everything in its power to ensure that there are no more delays in fully implementing the Road Transport Act as soon as possible.

Another burglary in the garb of e-commerce

The menace must be stopped

THE Bengali mind is known for its innovativeness. The Dholai Khal initiative is well-known nearly all over the world. While Dholai Khal brought relief to many and had a positive impact on the economy, innovativeness in other sectors of business has had the most damaging consequences. The business that is hogging the news currently is e-commerce—not for its positive contribution to society and the economy, but for the manner in which a perfectly novel way of trading has been corrupted to exploit people through fraud and deceit.

Another name has been added to the long list of fraudster companies that have cheated unsuspecting customers out of thousands of crores of taka: 24tk.com, an e-ticketing agency. Reportedly, this particular company has swindled Tk 50 crore out of smaller agencies and customers. What surprises us is that it is not one or two or even a dozen people that 24tk.com have managed to swindle, but 2,000—yes, 2,000 people. And they have been at it since 2019. The question is: how come? How has it been possible if the custodians have, as they claim, been keeping their antennae honed and their eyes open?

24tk.com made the best of both worlds. They bought thousands of tickets from larger agencies on credit and sold them to smaller agencies and individuals on cash. And it never paid their creditors. Thus, the ticket was not confirmed—something that the unwary travellers found to their chagrin once they went to check in. We would like to point out that while the amount is comparatively smaller than what the other e-commerce companies like Evaly have swindled out of people, here the sufferers are the expatriates; many of them are workers whose jobs are on the line if they don't report to their workplace in time.

We are happy to know that two of the owners of the company have been arrested. Interestingly, nearly 30 e-commerce agencies are currently under surveillance, according to the CID. Unfortunately, there must be loopholes in the system, since so many of them have escaped the net. Our opinion is that the fraudulent ones must be identified and caught before they can do more damage to people. What is the point of arresting a few operatives when the masterminds manage to flee the country? Nipping them *ab initio* is essential, since the long-drawn legal process allows very little of the swindled money to be returned to the rightful owners.

The deadly urban heat that can cripple our city



NAZNIN TITHI

IN yet another sign of rapid deterioration in the quality of life in Dhaka, a recent study, published by the US-based scientific journal PNAS, has found the city to be the worst-affected around the world due to extreme urban heat. According to the study, the dramatic rise of population in Dhaka between 1983 and 2016 is one of the key reasons behind the increasing heat the city has been experiencing. It's not just Dhaka; exposure to deadly urban heat now affects around a quarter of the world's population. Some other affected

million people in Dhaka have lost their productivity, the study has revealed. Apart from Dhaka, cities like Cumilla and Chattogram are also affected by severe urban heat.

Around the same time, a report by the World Bank, titled "Climate Afflictions Report," has revealed yet another worrying fact. It has found that infectious diseases are increasing in Bangladesh due to hotter and longer summers, warmer winters, and extended monsoons. The report found erratic weather conditions to be the main factor behind the 2019 dengue outbreak in Dhaka.

It's mid-October now. During this time of the year, we usually expect the temperature to drop a little in the city areas. But there is hardly any sign in nature that the weather will cool down anytime soon. Rather, the city dwellers

depression, and anxiety disorders, which will become more common in the future.

The PNAS study has pointed out that global warming due to climate change has played only a 20 percent role in the temperature rise in Dhaka between 1983 and 2016, while rapid population growth and unplanned urbanisation has had an 80 percent role behind it.

Currently, the population growth rate is 2.7 percent in Dhaka, which is the highest in the world. The city's population was four million in 1983, which increased to 20 million by 2016. In addition, people are continuously coming to the capital for different purposes, so on any given day, around 60 million people live in the city, the study has revealed.

Moreover, with rapid and unplanned urbanisation, the greenery of the city has

According to the lead researcher of the study, in addition to increasing morbidity and mortality, extreme heat reduces people's productivity or their ability to work, resulting in lower economic output.



Unplanned urbanisation and development have made Dhaka a concrete jungle that traps heat.

FILE PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

cities are Shanghai and Guangzhou in China, Yangon in Myanmar, Bangkok in Thailand, and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates—which also experienced rapid population growth.

Scientists have found that rising temperatures and growing numbers of people living in urban areas combined have led to this situation, and warned that extreme heat would have devastating consequences for the urban population.

What happens when urban areas face increasing heat? According to the lead researcher of the study, in addition to increasing morbidity and mortality, extreme heat reduces people's productivity or their ability to work, resulting in lower economic output. Due to extreme heat, a total of 57.5

are now experiencing sweltering heat, which is affecting their ability to function properly. The World Bank report has found that not only are the summers getting hotter and the winters warmer, the monsoon is getting longer too—it now spans from February to October.

Bangladesh's temperature has increased by 0.5 degrees Celsius over the last 44 years, and is predicted to rise by another 1.4 degrees by 2050. With a one-degree rise in temperature, 9.3 percent more people are likely to suffer from respiratory diseases, while for one percent increase in humidity, there may be a 12.5 percent increase in the number of such patients, as the report has found. Extreme weather conditions can also cause mental illnesses, such as mood swings,

decreased to a minimum level, while the rivers and wetlands surrounding it have been filled up for illegal purposes as well as to make room for the growing population. The result of that is: Dhaka has literally become a concrete jungle. According to the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), 75 percent of the city area is now covered with concrete structures. With its greenery gone and concrete structures and asphalt surfaces trapping and concentrating heat, the temperature of the city has increased significantly.

Research has found that many areas in Dhaka, Chattogram, and Khulna are turning into "urban heat islands" due to unplanned urbanisation and development. It is feared that more of such heat islands will be created in the

future if the issue is not addressed by the city authorities urgently. By now, 70 percent areas of the capital city and 60 percent areas of the port city have turned into heat islands. If the trend continues, Dhaka and Chattogram will soon become extremely climate vulnerable (Prothom Alo, April 22, 2021).

With Dhaka being severely affected by extreme heat and adverse weather patterns, and its population being exposed to infectious diseases, the residents' ability to work will decrease inevitably. The exposure to extreme heat will particularly affect the urban poor who live in slums in cramped conditions, without basic healthcare and other facilities.

If people are not able to work and function properly, if their productivity decreases from being exposed to extreme heat, what purpose will our big infrastructure development projects serve? If all our wetlands are filled up and rivers are grabbed, and all the greenery in the city is stolen, will the metro rail, the giant concrete structures mushrooming everywhere in the city, the big shopping malls and housing projects erected illegally on filled-up land let this city breathe?

To stop this worrying trend of temperature rise in Dhaka and other major cities, urgent action needs to be taken. Enough damage has already been done to our cities due to our ignorance and inaction. We have no time to waste. While we must have a national plan to fight against the impacts of climate change—which is one of the reasons behind the rise in Dhaka's temperature—reducing the population growth, focusing on planned urbanisation, increasing the greenery and reclaiming the wetlands in the city must also be given due importance if we want to save Dhaka from becoming a crippled city.

Naznin Tithi is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star.

The third era of climate change is upon us



SALEEMUL HUQ

THE issue of climate change was first identified by the scientific community three decades ago, through the first assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),

and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was agreed upon back in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Since then, the issue has grown in importance, and the way that it is understood by different groups of people around the world has changed several times. Here, I will describe my take on the evolution of the understanding and perception of climate change, which has now become a global emergency.

The first era of climate change viewed the problem through the first assessment report of the IPCC, and led to the environmental perspective where the problem was defined as a result of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and, therefore, the solution was to reduce those emissions. The process of doing so was termed "mitigation" and denoted the first era of perceptions and pledges of action. It led to all countries agreeing to take actions to reduce emissions under the UNFCCC. However, despite that promise, the GHG emissions continued to rise, and are still doing so today.

This, then, was followed by the second era of climate change, through the third assessment report of the IPCC, which was published in 2001 and highlighted the failure of mitigation actions. The report cautioned about the failure leading to the adverse impacts of climate change, which would be unavoidable in the near future. Hence, there was a need to prepare for those adverse impacts by adaptation to climate change. I had the privilege of being a lead author of that report, which

highlighted the importance of adaptation for the first time.

An important corollary of this message was that not every community in every country would be adversely affected immediately—the poorest communities in the poorest countries would be the first to experience the impact; hence, tackling climate change was no longer just an environmental issue, but a development issue as well. This era of climate change drew in development actors both globally

and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was agreed upon back in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Since then, the issue has grown in importance, and the way that it is understood by different groups of people around the world has changed several times. Here, I will describe my take on the evolution of the understanding and perception of climate change, which has now become a global emergency.

After the publication of the sixth assessment report of the IPCC in August this year, we have now entered the third era of climate change, which is about the

which is completely unjust and indeed immoral.

We still need to continue—and do much more of—mitigation and adaptation, but we also have to address the inevitable loss and damage from human-induced climate change going forward. Thus, COP26 will be the first climate summit of this new era, and all countries will need to rise to this new challenge.

I will conclude by making a few suggestions on how to do so.

Firstly, the objective of the UNFCCC, the actions to reduce emissions, and adapting to climate change is no longer about the future, but about the present as we are already seeing the costs of loss and damage occurring in almost every country. These costs will rise exponentially, at least in the near term, so the new metric for measuring success is how much the loss and damage of climate change is minimised, as it can no longer be avoided or prevented. This will be a major paradigm shift, for which COP26 will have to lay the foundations to deal with it in every COP onwards.

The second point to recognise is that, as of 2021, the loss and damage of climate change is no longer a developing-country-centric issue, but a global issue as rich countries are beginning to feel the hurt as well.

The third and final point is that a significant paradigm shift is necessary to treat the climate change emergency as an issue of injustice where poor people are suffering due to the pollution caused by rich people—this is immoral and unacceptable. It is, therefore, time for every conscious citizen on Planet Earth to think in terms of solidarity for all the victims of loss and damage, and extend a helping hand towards their fellow human beings. Hence, in this new era, everyone, everywhere, needs to take actions to reach that goal every day; we cannot wait for the leaders alone to act.

Dr Saleemul Huq is director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) at the Independent University, Bangladesh.



A climate activist calls for immediate action during the Global March for Climate Justice in Milan, Italy, on October 2, 2021.

PHOTO: REUTERS

through the United Nations agencies and multilateral development banks, and nationally with the government authorities of planning and development.

The era of adaptation has been pursued since then, in parallel with the era of mitigation, which still continues.

Both mitigation and adaptation were enshrined in the Paris Agreement on climate change at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) in 2015, where the goal of keeping the global temperature

loss and damage attributable to GHG emissions since the Industrial Revolution, which has already raised global mean temperature over one degree Celsius, which is already causing severe adverse impacts around the world.

While the first era was under an environmental paradigm and the second era under a development paradigm, the third era is under a climate justice paradigm as the problems are caused by the rich and the victims are the poor—

We must stand firm against threats to academic freedom

CR ABRAR, JYOTIRMOY BARUA and REZAUZ RAHMAN LENIN

WHAT is academic freedom? Why is academic freedom a necessary condition for educational institutions? What role should the education administrators play in ensuring academic freedom? What have been the experiences of academic institutions in Bangladesh, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic? These are some of the questions that were confronted by students and teachers of several academic institutions at a webinar recently organised by the human rights organisation Nagorik.

Given how crucial academic freedom is, we will present a brief summary of their observations below, with the expectation that it will lead to a greater awareness of this issue. Unesco defines academic freedom as "the right, without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom to express freely their opinion about the institution or system in which they work, freedom from institutional censorship, and freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies."

However, in Bangladesh, there have been mounting incidents of faculty members of universities being sent on forced leave or leave without pay, being suspended and not being fairly assessed for research grants and scholarships, and being subjected to various forms of harassment and intimidation for expressing their opinions through articles and social media posts. Though, in most cases, the faculty members claimed they were just exercising their right to free speech, the authorities of the universities—instead of standing up for their academic freedom—exerted pressure on them to retract the opinions expressed. In a few instances, explanations or even expressions of regret did little to assuage those who claimed to have been "aggrieved." In several instances, the wrongfully treated faculty members secured relief by moving the High Court.

Over the years, instead of transforming into a space that promotes free thinking and pluralism through debate and discussion, university campuses appear to have become a hotbed of conservatism promoting and patronising particular narratives. This

perpetuates a condition in which academics feel hesitant to express freely and share and facilitate views on history, politics, society and culture, for fear of retribution from religious bigots on the one hand and intolerant partisan zealots on the other hand. Sharing of scientific research findings—including one on the likely scenario of the spread of Covid-19—also came under severe institutional assault, which forced the researchers to make amends.

Likewise, allegations are rife about partisan appointments of teachers, compromising the quality of teaching staff. There is a widely held perception that it is partisan loyalty, and not academic and administrative experiences, that

closure of academic institutions which, according to Unesco, was one of the longest in the world. While the decision to resume in-person classes was welcomed, concerns were expressed about the adequacy in making arrangements for the vaccination of students and staff members. The inability to lead a regular life with friends and peers might have contributed to the suicide of as many as 151 students of education institutions of various tiers.

During the pandemic, as students were unable to attend schools, the contingency arrangement to hold online classes particularly affected those who did not

irregular payment of salaries; on the other hand, many teachers were suspended. The extent of the hardship faced by teachers was amply reflected when a former teacher was forced to take up the position of a road cleaner to maintain bare subsistence in Bogura (Prothom Alo, August 10, 2021).

A primary school teacher stated at the webinar that local teachers enjoyed no breaks during the Covid-19 period, and had to attend schools regularly. He bemoaned that they had to perform a number of tasks, including making door-to-door visits, without any protective gear. Even pregnant and sick teachers were not relieved of the responsibility. This resulted in many teachers contracting the coronavirus. He stated that there was little scope for promotion of school teachers, and thus their salaries remained the same for as long as 10-15 years—until they moved to the next grade. "How can we survive on the same salary, when the prices of all essential commodities rise every year?" he asked. Lack of monitoring and accountability, and the absence of media reporting on the state of affairs in local schools and colleges, provide the administrators of those institutions near-complete impunity, the teacher said.

Overall, teachers faced a number of challenges and restrictions, including suspension. On May 7, the Ministry of Public Administration issued the revised "Social Media Usage Guidelines in Government Offices, 2019." Following that, staff members and students of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet) were instructed to follow the guidelines, despite the fact that Kuet is an autonomous institution. Likewise, on May 2, the staff of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) were advised not to give any statement to the media without prior permission.

During the tenure of the immediate past vice-chancellor of a public university, 140 teachers and other staff members were recruited against 39 UGC-authorized posts. The absurdity of the process of selection was evident when 1,649 applicants for the position of laboratory assistants were interviewed over a period of two days. The high-handedness of the university administration was evident in a case where it selectively harassed a group of teachers after they expressed solidarity with students protesting against an increase of fees by 423 percent over a period of three years, and demanding rescinding of the rule that requires them to secure advance clearance

from the intriguingly titled DSA (Department of Student Affairs) before publishing any creative work (essays, poems, short stories, and the like) and pursuing any cultural interests such as playing flute, sitar or singing songs and reciting poems.

The Nagorik panellists deplored that, despite changes in the university administration, the "guest rooms" and the concomitant abuse of fresh students have continued to take place in Dhaka University for decades. This manifested that the administrators had essentially abdicated their moral, ethical, and administrative responsibilities in ensuring the well-being of students.

Arguing that conditions in academic institutions cannot be decoupled from the national reality, a faculty member of another public university stated how the university authority caters to the whims of the local political establishment. He claimed that teachers and students with dissenting views feel the "invisible presence" of actors monitoring their actions and words. Elaborating the point further, the representative of the University Teachers' Network stated that academic freedom and broader fundamental rights were inseparable, and spaces for both had shrunk over the years. While some university authorities take actions on dissenting students and teachers directly, others encourage groups affiliated with the administration to perform the task. Referring to Amartya Sen's advice to Dhaka University students that they should probe and think critically, the professor asked how that could be possible in campuses that are patently intolerant of diverse views, and in a country that uses the repressive Digital Security Act.

The webinar participants agreed that academic institutions played a crucial role in shaping the nation. Creating an enabling environment through fair recruitment and necessary administrative arrangements, and ensuring that teachers and students are able to freely express their views and challenge dominant ideas and narratives, are essential for academic freedom. Therefore, the onus rests on the administrators of academic establishments, and those at the helm of the state, to ensure that such conditions prevail in all educational institutions across Bangladesh.

CR Abrar is an academic, Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua is a Supreme Court advocate, and Rezaur Rahman Lenin is an academic activist.



Students and teachers should not have to be afraid of expressing their opinions.

PHOTO: STAR

counts for the selection of top administrators of universities nowadays. Merit and academic excellence are no longer the principal criteria for securing nominations for deanship or membership of syndicates, senates, or selection committees for faculty recruitment. Even recruitment and promotion of the faculty members often depend on political lineage and institutional affiliation. All these contribute to the lowering of the standard of academic excellence.

At the Nagorik webinar, the panellists expressed concerns about the long 61-week

own or have access to computers and smartphones. In addition, poor internet facilities and connectivity—especially in rural, haor, and hilly areas—put the students in a disadvantageous situation. Their inability to make up for classes (missed due to poor internet connection and other reasons) and to consult teachers and peers in person further compounded their problems.

The situation was particularly dire for the teachers of schools and colleges. On the one hand, teachers of many private institutions endured hardships due to non-payment or

Buying of a football club, geopolitics and sportswashing



KAMAL AHMED

THE takeover of Newcastle United, an ailing English club, by a consortium led by a Saudi-backed investment fund, has once again stoked a passionate debate on sportswashing. As a result of the approval of the buyout, the

struggling club has suddenly become the richest club in the world's richest football league, the English Premier League (EPL), where Newcastle currently ranks 19th out of 20 teams in the league's point table. The change of ownership, though largely welcomed by the fans of Newcastle, has prompted widespread criticism from human rights groups, and raised some critical geopolitical questions.

These supporters, who have been demanding the ouster of Mike Ashley, who bought the club in 2007 but has done little to lift it out of mediocrity, have celebrated the takeover and are now darning to dream of trophies after more than a decade. But the deal has enraged human rights defenders due to the appalling records of human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia. The majority owner of the consortium, the Public Investment Fund (PIF), is providing 80 percent of the fund in the GBP 300 million deal. The PIF chairman is Mohammed bin Salman, the

crow prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who has been accused of ordering the death of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, which the kingdom's leader denies. A number of rights groups and Western intelligence agencies have directly implicated him in ordering the assassination of the dissident journalist. Prior to the takeover of the club, Khashoggi's fiancée Haticce Cengiz had also urged the Premier League not to allow the move to go through, citing the involvement of the crown prince in Khashoggi's murder.

There's further controversy surrounding the deal, as news reports suggest that the EPL's approval came after Saudi Arabia settled an alleged piracy dispute with Qatar-based broadcaster beIN Sports, which owns rights to show Premier League matches in the Middle East. It was reported earlier in the year that beIN Sports had asked the Premier League clubs to block the deal because of piracy concerns. This piracy dispute remained as an impediment to the Saudi takeover bid for quite some time. Quoting sources, BBC Sport reported that an agreement between the Premier League and the consortium was found prior to the news emerging on October 7 this year.

Concerns about ignoring issues related to human rights were raised around the same time. The UK-based human rights organisation Amnesty International wrote to the Premier League to express its disquiet over the purchase of the Magpies, asking its chief executive, Richard Masters, to scrutinise Saudi Arabia's

The change of ownership, though largely welcomed by the fans of Newcastle, has prompted widespread criticism from human rights groups, and raised some critical geopolitical questions.

human rights records as part of the Premier League's owners' and directors' test. According to Amnesty, the phrase "human rights" doesn't even appear in the owners' and directors' test of the Premier League, despite English football supposedly adhering to FIFA standards. It said, "As with Formula One, elite boxing, golf or tennis, an association with top-tier football is a very attractive means of rebranding a country or person with a tarnished reputation. The Premier League needs to better understand the dynamic of sportswashing and tighten its ownership rules."

Finally, on October 7, the Premier League concluded that "the Saudi PIF was separate from the state," and therefore it had allowed the takeover to pass its owners' and directors' test. It said that it had received sound legal advice about adhering to rules. But the

controversy drags on. The role of a sovereign state in another country's football league is bound to be under intense scrutiny.

The 19 other top-flight clubs have called for an emergency meeting this week. Media reports suggest that these clubs got united in opposition to the takeover of Newcastle and demanded to know whether any rules had been waived, and why they received so little notice. Despite these clubs' concern that the Premier League's brand could be damaged, it is too late to derail the takeover. Instead, with the arrival of a new set of billionaire owners, their immediate worry would be the prospect of pushing transfer fees and wages to new heights.

Supporters of the deal, however, argue that singling out football and the buying of Newcastle United by the Saudis is unfair as countries around the world continue all other trade and business activities with the kingdom. A BBC report says that the PIF has invested in some big names, such as Disney, Uber, Facebook, Starbucks, and pharmaceutical company Pfizer. Mark Middling, a senior lecturer of accounting at Northumbria University, who specialises in financial transparency in football, told *The Guardian*, "The UK still sells arms to Saudi Arabia and has business arrangements within the country. If you're going to trade with Saudi Arabia, to turn around and say they can't own one of our football clubs would be a bit hypocritical."

Amid this controversy, British Prime

Minister Boris Johnson had a telephone conversation with the Saudi crown prince on the upcoming G20 and COP26 on October 11. A press release issued by 10 Downing Street noted, "They also discussed the opportunities for further boosting trade and investment between the UK and Saudi Arabia, ahead of next week's Global Investment Summit in London. The prime minister welcomed the recent launch of a consultation on a UK-Gulf Cooperation Council Free Trade Agreement."

Rights groups like Amnesty have been arguing for quite some time that some countries are opting to invest in sports to divert attention from their poor human rights records. They know that owning a football club allows you to build a relationship with key stakeholders. The term "sportswashing" has been increasingly used in relation to the changing of ownerships of Manchester City and Paris Saint Germain by the UAE and Qatar, respectively, or Chelsea by Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich. A leading newspaper in Ireland, *The Irish Times*, cited a story about a match played three weeks ago between Manchester United and the Swiss club Young Boys of Bern, where the travelling fans unveiled a banner in the second half that read, "Beautiful Game." But immediately, the home fans unveiled a choreographed response, "Ugly Business."

Is football really becoming an ugly business?

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

QUOTABLE Quote



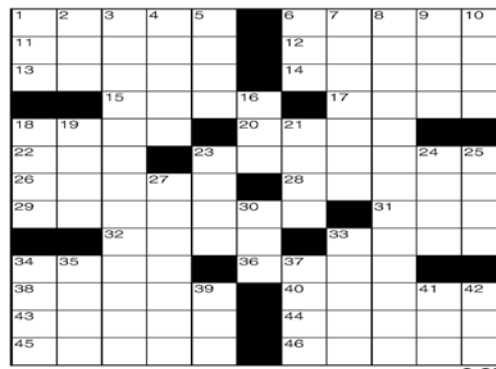
WILL DURANT (1885 - 1981) American writer

To say nothing, especially when speaking, is half the art of diplomacy.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Appear unexpectedly
 - 6 Israel's Meir
 - 11 Plain silly
 - 12 Top players
 - 13 Time being
 - 14 Mailing need
 - 15 Make well
 - 17 Lofty poems
 - 18 Coup d'—
 - 20 Long ride
 - 22 Shaggy ox
 - 23 Tall grazer
 - 26 Kagan of the Supreme Court
 - 28 Surmise
 - 29 Pre-election events
 - 31 Hotel feature
 - 32 Prayer ender
 - 33 Train units
 - 34 Poker payment
 - 36 Blowgun ammo
 - 38 Words to live by
 - 40 Admit
 - 43 Tatum of "Paper Moon"
 - 44 Sung story
 - 45 Suit material
 - 46 Towel material
- DOWN**
- 1 Wrestling win
 - 2 Lennon's love
 - 3 Breakfast mix
 - 4 Free of censorship
 - 5 Jury member
 - 6 Empty talk
 - 7 Padded footstool
 - 8 First at the plate
 - 9 Titled woman
 - 10 Band boosters
 - 16 Yale rooster
 - 18 Took in
 - 19 Account
 - 21 Crocus cousin
 - 23 Airport area
 - 24 Dread
 - 25 Goes astray
 - 27 Convention ID
 - 30 Conclude
 - 33 Pancake's kin
 - 34 Novelist Oz
 - 35 Less than any
 - 37 Oodles
 - 39 Flamenco cry
 - 41 Bruins legend
 - 42 Dissenter's vote

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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

BETLE BAILEY



BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES



BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



SPORT



Rakib Hossain's (L) tears and the crouched figure of Tapu Barman says it all. Bangladesh were so close to ending 16-year-wait for a berth in SAFF Championship final, but eventually had to bow out in tragic fashion following a 1-1 draw against Nepal in their last group match last night.

Spot-kick shatters Bangladesh's dreams

ANISUR RAHMAN from Male

Anjan Bista's penalty, awarded by Uzbekistan referee Akhrol Riskullaev in a controversial fashion, in the dying minutes of the game broke the hearts of Bangladesh as Nepal came from behind to draw 1-1 in their final group fixture of the SAFF Championship at the National Football Stadium in Male yesterday.

The outcome also saw Nepal reach the final of the regional championship for the first time in its 28-year history.

Bangladesh players gathered around the Uzbek referee for about five minutes after his controversial decision. A spectator, disappointed with the decision that denied Bangladesh an entry into the competition's final for the first time in 16 years, stormed into the ground and the referee and his assistants needed police to escort them out of the ground.

Bangladesh were reduced to 10 men when goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico was given marching orders in the 78th minute after he had handled the ball outside the box. Nepal, who were a goal down at that point, put pressure on Bangladesh for an equaliser.

A Nepalese forward, who tried to connect Maish Dangi's cross but went down following the slightest of touches from Saad Uddin inside the box, prompted the referee to point



to the spot.

Coach Oscar Bruzon brought four chances to the squad that lost 0-2 to the Maldives. Defender Bishwanath Ghosh and winger Rakib Hossain returned to the playing eleven after missing the previous match due to the suspensions.

Meanwhile, forward Suman Reza and defender Tutul Hossain Badsha came in place of Martin Miah and Rahmat Mia as the Spanish coach chose to play with two strikers.

The change of the players and the formation clicked for the charges of Bruzon as they took

a lead inside the first ten minutes of the game.

With deafening roars from more than 2500 thousand fans from the galleries, the men in red and green looked more energetic following a five-day gap as Jamal Bhuiyan, Biplu Ahmed, Saad Uddin and Rakib tried to establish the stranglehold in the central area.

Suman Reza nodded in a header off a Jamal Bhuiyan freekick in the 10th minute, sending the fans into a frenzy and also raising hopes of playing the regional football extravaganza final after 16 years.

Nepal started to press hard through both flanks for the equaliser but Rohit Chand drove wide inside the box in the 15th minute, much to the relief of goalkeeper Anisur Rahman.

From a counter, Suman Reza came close to doubling the lead but he struck straight to goalkeeper Kiran Kumar Limbu while a square-pass to unmarked Ibrahim could have given the forward a better option to shoot on the target in the 22nd minute.

Afterwards, Nepal mounted more pressure from the left flank with Tariq struggling in his new position but no damages were done in the first half.

After resumption, Nepal kept their dominance intact in the midfield to put tremendous pressure on the Bangladesh backline while Bangladesh concentrated on counter to widen the margin.

'Dark forces were at work'

SPORTS REPORTER from Male



Oscar Bruzon believes the controversial decision to send off goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico was the turning point of the game before another dubious decision to award Nepal penalty killed off Bangladesh's dream of playing the final of the SAFF Championship at the National Football Stadium in Male yesterday.

Nepal came from a goal behind to level the margin in the 88th minute broke Bangladesh supporters' hearts as the Himalayan nation went on to book the seat of the SAFF Championship final for the first time in the 28-year history of the regional football extravaganza.

"You are talking about one controversial decision of the penalty and I think the penalty was not the only turning point, rather the sending-off of Zico was the [major] turning point of the game."

happened on the pitch today, and the dressing room has been in complete chaos and we understand why," said a frustrated Bruzon.

About the penalty in the dying moments, Bruzon said: "It was a very critical action of the game where the referee was 30 meters away [from the box] but he called for the kick [penalty]."

"But it was a cheating move from the Nepalese player, who had a false dive in the area and of course the referee wasn't in doubt because they don't want Bangladesh to be in the final."

The successful coach in Bangladesh domestic competition informed that their intention was to play attacking football till the last minute despite taking the lead, so that they can kill off the game by scoring the second goal.

"The message to the boys during the interval was to keep playing attacking football and create chances. I want to say



"But Zico didn't handle the ball intentionally; rather, the ball first hit his legs and then it came up to his hands. I think that was the first controversial decision and in the last moment of the game, the referee awarded a silly and controversial penalty to Nepal," said a disappointed Bruzon at the post-match conference.

"Bangladesh is not the best but are one of the best teams in the tournament. We deserved to be in the final," said the 44-year-old coach.

"Since we played against India, the dark forces were at work. We [Bashundhara Kings] could not progress to the AFC Cup and it happened today again."

"From my side, it's all right from the professional ground but it wasn't fair, what

the performance of the boys was really excellent," said the Spaniard.

Wiping his tears, winger Rakib said: "We worked hard for the tournament and everyone was crying in the dressing room. We wouldn't regret it [result] if the call of the referee was fair but it was not and that's why we can't accept it."

Nepal coach Almutairi Abdullah congratulated Bangladesh for giving a tough fight and echoed the same sentiment of Bruzon that the marching order of Zico was the turning point of the game.

Abdullah, however, did not present a clear stance on the penalty decision.

"If I say yes or no, then I'll be a liar. I think it was a penalty but I am not sure," said the Nepal coach.



'Confident that Tigers will get into a good shape'

SPORTS REPORTER

Following a four-wicket defeat against Sri Lanka in the first official practise game on Tuesday, Bangladesh will be looking to rectify their mistakes and get into the groove when they take on Ireland in the second and final warm-up game today ahead of the qualifier round of the ICC World T20.

The match will begin at 12:00pm (BST) at Tolerance Oval in Abu Dhabi -- the same where the first warm-up game was played.

Bangladesh posted 147 for seven against Sri Lanka. However, courtesy of Avishka Fernando's unbeaten fifty, the Lankans managed to chase down the total with an over to spare.

Tigers' head coach Russell Domingo will surely be expecting the batters to step up before the mega event as apart from Soumya Sarkar, who scored a 26-ball 34, none of the other Bangladesh batsmen were able to make an impact in their game against the Lankans.

According to chief selector Minhajul Abedin, it will take some time for the players to adjust as they are frequently moving from one city to another.

"The pitch here at home was a bit slow and as the players are continuously on the move from one city to another, it will take some time for them to adjust. It is not just about the openers. In shorter formats, every

single batsman in the side needs to step up and give their best on the given day," Minhajul told the media yesterday.

Bangladesh, however, at one point were in a good position in their previous game. Sri Lanka were struggling at 75 for six inside eleven overs before Avishka Fernando and Chamika Karunaratne added a match-winning unbeaten 72-run eighth-wicket stand to take the game away from the Tigers.

According to Minhajul there are a lot of things that can be addressed and rectified from the defeat against Sri Lanka.

"There will be ups and downs in practise games as you try and experiment many things through these matches in order to evaluate the batting, bowling and fielding department. Everyone is preparing themselves and it was a good opportunity for all the players to play a few back-to-back games."

"We are very confident and the team is expected to get into a good shape ahead of the World Cup. We still have a game to play and we hope to start our World Cup mission on a positive note," he said.

Meanwhile, skipper Mahmudullah Riyad, who was rested in the unofficial warm-up game against Oman A and also in the following game against Sri Lanka due to slight back pain, is expected to be available from the first qualifier game against Scotland on October 17.

'Promised I would always be looking for more and more'

REUTERS, Euro



A 58th career hat-trick from Cristiano Ronaldo helped Portugal stroll to a 5-0 home win over Luxembourg in Group A of World Cup qualifying on Tuesday.

The treble, which meant Ronaldo became the first man to net 10 international hat-tricks, takes his tally to 115 international goals from 182 caps as he continues to pull away as the top men's international goalscorer of all-time.

Victory ensures Portugal remain a point behind leaders Serbia, who moved onto 17 points with a 3-1 home win over Azerbaijan, with a game in hand and superior goal difference.

Portugal had the game all but won within the first 18 minutes.

Ronaldo struck twice from the penalty spot before his Manchester United team mate Bruno Fernandes made it three as he fired in following



good work from Bernardo Silva.

The forward then missed two gilt-edged chances either side of the break as he sought a third, before being denied a spectacular hat-trick goal when Anthony Morris kept out his acrobatic overhead kick.

Portugal did not have to wait long for their

fourth, however, as midfielder Joao Palhinha headed in from the resulting corner with just over 20 minutes to go.

Ronaldo was not to be denied as the hosts pushed on, netting three minutes from time with a header from close range.

Next month Fernando Santos's Portugal side travel to Ireland before then hosting Serbia in what could be a winner-takes-all fixture to qualify for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

"Another victory, another step towards our goal, another historic night in defence of our colours!" Ronaldo wrote on Instagram after the Luxembourg game. "Everything becomes easier when we play at home and in front of an audience that cares for us from the first to the last minute..."

"I had promised that I would always be looking for more and more and more! It's in my DNA and in our DNA, we're never content, we never lower our arms and we always go."

Denmark book World Cup ticket

AFP, Paris



Denmark became the second team to qualify for the 2022 World Cup finals when they beat Austria by a single goal on Tuesday as England were frustrated by Hungary at Wembley.

Joakim Maehle scored in the 53rd minute to send the Danes to Qatar as they build on their surprise run at Euro 2020 this summer when they reached the semi-finals.

"You can only dream about things like this," said Denmark midfielder Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg. "It's crazy. This is huge for me, it's huge for the team, for Danish football and for Denmark. With the age and quality we have, we will only keep growing."

The Danes join Germany, who qualified on Monday, in the finals. Host nation Qatar qualify automatically.

England sputtered as a combative Hungarian side held them to a 1-1 draw. The match was marred by ugly scenes at Wembley



as Hungarian supporters clashed with stewards and police.

Gareth Southgate's side fell behind to Roland Sallai's disputed first-half penalty before John Stones stuck out a boot to score the equaliser in the 37th minute from Phil Foden's cross.

Harry Kane failed to score in a qualifier for the first time in 16 games and was substituted as Hungary's resolute defence kept a

disjointed England side at bay.

"We did not play at the level we need to, simple as that," said Southgate.

England defender Tyrone Mings called for harsher punishments for racism in football after it emerged the trouble at Wembley had flared after police had moved in to arrest a Hungarian supporter for what police called a "racially aggravated public order offence".

Mings said: "Every time we speak on racial abuse the punishments that follow never seem in line with what has happened."

"I sincerely hope that if that is the case, the punishments fall in line with what happened this time." England will be sure of reaching next year's finals if they take four points from their final qualifiers against Albania and San Marino in November.

Poland are second behind England in Group I after a stormy win in Albania.

Play was halted and the teams left the pitch as fans threw bottles after Karol Swiderski scored the winning goal in the 77th minute. The teams later returned to complete the game.

Sweden stayed two points ahead of Spain in Group B thanks to a 2-0 win against Greece.

Scotland got a desperately-needed 1-0 win over the Faroe Islands, meaning they need one more victory from their last two games to secure a playoff spot as they seek to reach a World Cup finals for the first time since 1998.

Bangabandhu Tunnel
is being built with BSRM

COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT **BSRM**
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Work in progress using Shah Cement

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'Little' efforts, big dream

Tangail youths run schools for slum children with pocket money



MIRZA SHAKIL

Our intentions create our reality, said the celebrated American motivational speaker Wayne Dyer. And this saying could not be more apropos than in the case of the ten college students behind Doshomik Pathshala in Tangail. They dreamed of educating and empowering underprivileged children and they made it happen by saving up on their lunch money. Two years ago, they formed the Doshomik Foundation, which in October last year established the Doshomik Pathshala, a free school for slum children under the open sky.

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Temporary structures set up along the railway tracks poses a serious risk to both trains and passers-by. Even after repeated attempts, the authorities failed to evict such illegal structures that have sprouted beside the Dhaka-Narayanganj rail line. The photo was taken in the capital's Kamalapur-Jurain link.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Khaleda's treatment continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's follow-up treatment is going on at the city's Evercare Hospital where she was admitted on Tuesday. The former premier's various tests, including CT scan and multiple MRIs, are underway, said her family sources. They said till now her health condition is stable and nothing alarming was found except high blood sugar and infection in urine. "We hope that the tests will be completed soon and she can return home within two to three days," the source added.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

World's tallest living woman is 24-yr-old from Turkey



CNN ONLINE

A 24-year-old Turkish woman who stands 215.16 centimeters (7 feet, 0.7 inches) tall has been confirmed as the world's tallest living woman by Guinness World Records. Rumeysa Gelgi's phenomenal height is due to a condition called Weaver syndrome, which causes accelerated growth and other abnormalities, Guinness World Records said in a statement. Gelgi was re-measured this year after being named the world's tallest living female teenager in

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Grocer turns top human trafficker

Rab busts gang which trafficked people to Middle Eastern countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Driven by his desire to become rich, Saiful Islam Tutul, a grocer in a small village of Meherpur's Gangni, moved to the capital around nine years ago.

Soon, that desire would turn into greed. He started working as an illegal broker of recruiting agencies, luring people into going abroad with fake promises of lucrative jobs. At one point, he became involved in human trafficking.

Years later, Tutul, who studied up to the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level, established three overseas recruitment agencies -- all unauthorised -- in the capital's Badda. Using those agencies -- Tutul Overseas, Limon Overseas and Loyal Overseas -- he swindled a huge amount of money from job seekers promising them good jobs in the Middle East.

Many of the job seekers were trafficked. Many ended up with low-paid jobs in a foreign land.

Recently, families of several such victims complained to Rab about the matter. Following the complaint, a team from Rab-4 raided the three offices early yesterday and arrested eight people, including Tutul, 38, and his accomplice Toiyob Ali, 45, for their involvement in human trafficking and swindling money, said Mozammel Haque, commanding officer of Rab-4.

The law enforcers seized 10 passports, four stamp seals, three mobile phone SIM cards, cheque books of four banks, two computers and Tk 10,070 in cash, the Rab officer told a press briefing at the Rab Media Centre

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



STUDENTS AGED 12-17 Trial run of Covid vaccine shots today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate will conduct a trial run of Covid-19 vaccination of school students at Colonel Malek Medical College Hospital in Manikganj today.

Prof Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, made the announcement in a Facebook Live yesterday afternoon.

As more and more countries around the world are beginning to roll out Covid vaccines to children aged over 12, Bangladesh will also join the list through today's vaccination.

"We will inoculate a group of students, aged 12-17, from two schools with Pfizer vaccine. We will observe them for 10-14 days to see whether there is any side effect," Prof Khurshid said.

According to health officials, the DGHS has planned to vaccinate 100 schoolchildren as part of the trial run scheduled to start at noon.

The DG said, "We have selected the medical college hospital as the vaccination centre for technical reasons."

If the trial run is successful, the child vaccination campaign will be launched in a large scale in Dhaka, he said.

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ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Senate body votes for ban on all aid to Pakistan

OCTOBER 14, 1971 SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

SENATE COMMITTEE DISAPPROVES FOREIGN AID TO PAKISTAN

Trimming millions of dollars from President Richard Nixon's foreign aid requests, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee agreed today to end all assistance to Pakistan. The committee voted to ban all forms of foreign aid to Pakistan until the president informed Congress that the situation in East Pakistan was reasonably stable and refugees were allowed to return.

TEN DAYS IN PIPE CITY Lafayette Park in Washington DC got an opportunity to experience a mock-up of the greatest misery of that time. A miniature refugee city sprung up in the park to offer citizens of Washington a closer view of the refugee camps in India. Organised by the Philadelphia Friends of East Bengal and supported by a number of Bangladesh groups in the region, a series of drainpipe shelters had been set up for a period of 10 days beginning from October 14. This dramatisation of the refugee situation attracted the attention of the public and the press in Washington.

Scores of volunteers from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston arrived in Washington to join the participants in the 10-day programme. The "refugee camp" was run by "camp director" Dick Taylor, who organised the "naval blockade" of the arms-carrying Pakistani ship Padma.

SADRUDDIN LAUNCHES DRIVE TO RAISE FUND FOR REFUGEES

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EVALY BOARD Commerce ministry sends 3 names

STAR REPORT

The commerce ministry yesterday forwarded the names of three former secretaries who can serve as a member of the interim board being formed by the High Court to assess the liabilities of the controversial e-commerce platform Evaly.

Maksudur Rahman Patwari, former land secretary; Md Rezaul Ahsan, former secretary to the ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-

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PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 14

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-45 12-45 4-15 5-45 7-15
JAMAT 5-20 1-15 4-30 5-50 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



The teachers of schools for children with special needs have been staging a protest to press home 11-point demands, including adding them to the list of MPO enlisted schools, in the capital's Shahbagh area since Monday. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Taliban warn US, EU of refugee wave

Say weakening Afghan govt will affect the world

AFP, Kabul

Afghanistan's new Taliban government has warned US and European envoys that continued attempts to pressure them through sanctions will undermine security and could trigger a wave of economic refugees.

Acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi told Western diplomats at talks in Doha that "weakening the Afghan government is not in the interest of anyone because its negative effects will directly affect the world in (the) security sector and economic migration from the country", according to a statement published late Tuesday.

The Taliban overthrew Afghanistan's former US-backed government in August after a two-decade-long conflict, and have declared an Islamic emirate governed under the movement's hardline interpretation of religious law.

But efforts to stabilise the country, still facing attacks from the Taliban's rival, the extremist group the Islamic State-Khorasan, have been undermined by international sanctions: banks are running out of cash and civil servants are going unpaid.

According to the statement from his spokesman, Muttaqi told the Doha meeting: "We urge world countries to end existing sanctions and let banks operate normally so that charity groups, organisations and the government can pay salaries to their staff with their own reserves and international financial assistance."

European nations in particular are concerned that if the

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