

MYANMAR ARMY OFFENSIVES IN CHIN STATE
More than 500 civil rights groups urge UN intervention
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"They [AL leaders] are indulging in plundering by repeatedly hiking prices of commodities, diesel and electricity. Those directly involved in the looting will cash in on the increased fuel prices."
SENIOR BNP LEADER AMIR KHASRU MAHMUD CHOWDHURY



"We need to help support a free and fair global press to hold leaders to account."
USAID CHIEF SAMANTHA POWER WHILE ANNOUNCING FINANCIAL HELP FOR OVERSEAS JOURNALISTS TO SURVIVE LAWSUITS MEANT TO SILENCE THEM



"Those who forget their ancestors, betray their motherland and split the country will not come to a good end."
CHINA SPOKESWOMAN ZHU FENGLIAN SAYS BEIJING WILL SHOW NO MERCY FOR TAIWAN'S INDEPENDENCE 'DIEHARDS'

HOSTAGE to mindless moves

People suffer as transport owners, workers enforce strike over fuel price hike; veg, fish get costlier

STAR REPORT

Commuters and businesses suffered heavily yesterday as buses and trucks stayed off the roads to protest the abrupt 23 percent hike in the prices of kerosene and diesel.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader urged the transport owners and workers to withdraw their strike considering the people's sufferings, but his words rang hollow to them.

The city dwellers woke up to find the thoroughfares were largely devoid of buses and minibuses. Only some state-owned BRTC buses operated in the capital, but those were packed with passengers.

This left most with the costlier auto-rickshaws or motorcycles as their only means to get around.

When a journey would cost only Tk 30, it cost Nazrul Islam, a resident of Shewrapara, Tk 350 yesterday.

"We are simply held hostage -- nobody cares for us," said Mizan Rahman, who had to pay three times the regular rickshaw fare yesterday to reach his workplace in Gulshan-1 from his Malibagh home for his workplace.

To avoid paying the higher fare, people were seen walking to their destinations in most of the areas.

But many did not have the luxury of time: candidates for the admission test of the seven Dhaka University-affiliated colleges and two dozen government recruitment tests struggled to reach their exam centres on time for the transport scarcity.

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A countrywide strike by transport owners and workers over the fuel price hike caused huge suffering to passengers yesterday. People heading for the capital are seen crossing the Gabtoli bridge on foot as buses are off the road. **Top right, a woman along with a child is waiting to catch a three-wheeler near Barishal Kendrio Bus Terminal in the city's Nothullabad area. Bottom right, the Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover is largely empty while buses are parked near the Sayedabad bus terminal in the capital.**



PHOTO: STAR

LEARNING LOSS

Redress it, right now

Experts urge measures as govt yet to assess gaps caused by school closure amid pandemic

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

A report last month said nearly eight million students across the country were at risk of learning loss due to the prolonged school closure caused by the pandemic, but the government still appears to be in the dark about the situation on the ground.

It has recently tasked the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) and the Bangladesh Examination Development Unit (BEDU) with assessing the Covid-induced academic loss of primary and secondary students. It also asked them to figure out ways to recoup the losses.

The NCTB plans to carry out its own study to learn about the educational opportunities lost by primary students due to the closure for about 18 months. The BEDU, which mainly deals with evaluations at the secondary level, is likely to have its assessment done by the end of next month, officials of the two organisations told The Daily Star.

Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk, director general of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), said, "We are



working on analysing the learning loss. It will take time to complete the work.

"After getting the findings, we will take up programmes to recover the loss."

The term learning loss refers to any specific or general loss of knowledge and skills or to reversals in academic progress, most commonly due to extended gaps or discontinuities in a student's education, according to the UK-based education and development forum, UKFIET.

As their attention was drawn to the matter, several educationists said the government should already have completed the assessment and started taking measures.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Excellent resources for researchers

PM on 2 new publications on Bangabandhu

UNB, London

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the publication of "Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation, Bangladesh: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" will be excellent resources for researchers on Bangladesh's politics and history as these unveiled how the Pakistani government spied on Bangabandhu and his family.

"The real and complete history of the country from Language Movement to Independence will be found here; people across the globe will get ideas about the sacrifice and struggle of Bangabandhu," she said.

Hasina said this at the international launching ceremony of the two publications titled "Secret Documents" and "Mujib & Introduction" at a hotel in London on Thursday.

The Secret Documents is a collection of the Intelligence Branch Reports on the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Bangladesh during the Pakistani period. The prime minister unveiled the cover of the two publications at the programme.

Talking about the newly-published volumes of secret documents, she said these volumes will provide useful insight for political leaders across nations and generations.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



CLIMATE SUMMIT 2021

If not now, when?

Youth groups protest lack of action at climate summit; Thunberg brands COP26 a 'failure'

AGENCIES

Thousands of young people marched through the streets of Glasgow yesterday to protest a lack of climate action with a clear message to negotiators at the COP26 summit: "If not now, when?"

Inside the COP26 conference venue in the Scottish city, civil society leaders took over discussions at the end of a week of government speeches and pledges that included promises to phase out coal, slash emissions of the potent greenhouse gas methane and reduce deforestation.

"We must not declare victory here," said former US Vice President Al Gore, who shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for his work informing the world about climate change. "We know that we have made progress, but we are far from the goals that we need to reach."

Campaigners and pressure groups have been underwhelmed by the commitments made so far, many of which are voluntary, exclude the biggest polluters, or set deadlines decades away.

Swedish teenage activist Greta Thunberg said that pledges from some nations made during COP26 to accelerate their emissions cuts amounted to little more than "a two-week long celebration of business as usual and 'blah, blah, blah.'"

"It is not a secret that COP26 is a failure," she told the thousands of people gathered at the protest.

"This is no longer a climate conference. This is now a global greenwashing festival."

Campaigners say they expect up to 50,000 demonstrators in the Scottish city today as part of a global round of climate protests.

Onlookers to yesterday's march lined the streets and hung out of windows to watch the stream of protestors, who held banners reading "No Planet B" and "Climate Action Now".

Sixteen-year-old protester Hannah McInnes called climate change "the most universally devastating problem in the world", adding: "It's our lives and our futures that are on the line."

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POLLS VIOLENCE Don't want any mother to lose child

Election commissioner seeks help from all candidates in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Election Commissioner Md Rafiqul Islam yesterday sought cooperation from all the candidates to hold union parishad polls in Narayanganj in a peaceful manner.

"If you [candidates] work fairly, you all together can maintain a healthy election atmosphere. I can firmly say that we don't need to deploy Rab, BGB or police if you all act rightly," he said while addressing a meeting as the chief guest.

Rafiqul was exchanging views with chairman and member aspirants at Narayanganj Sadar Upazila Parishad auditorium in the town.

"We want to see fair and peaceful elections in Narayanganj. We will take legal actions against those who will try to make the situation volatile. Whoever the person is either

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Firefighters put out pockets of fire at a shoe factory in the capital's Swarighat. The fire, which swept through the factory early yesterday, claimed the lives of five workers.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Five perish in Old Dhaka factory fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people were killed as a fire ravaged an unauthorised shoe sole manufacturing factory, stashed with flammable polymer and glue, in Old Dhaka's Swarighat area early yesterday.

All the victims are believed to be staffers of the factory. The bodies, charred beyond recognition, were kept at the morgue of Sir Salimullah Medical College and would be handed to families after DNA tests.

Police, fire service and local sources said the fire broke out around 1:15am. At that time, seven factory staffers were in their sleep on the first floor of the factory named Rumana Rubber Industry.

Some 50 people work at the factory in two shifts. The building also houses a warehouse. All machines were kept on the 6500sqft ground floor.

"I woke up hearing screams for help. I saw flames engulfing both the ground and first floors," Abdur Razzak, a labourer working at an adjacent rubber factory, told The Daily Star. The man lives nearby.

Dinomoni Sharma, deputy director (Dhaka) of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said they rushed to the spot immediately after being informed, but the fire had already spread inside the two floors.

"The fire spread fast as there was a huge stash of combustible polymer and glue. The factory does not have any authorisation to run. Its structure is faulty. Besides, it did not have any fire safety gear," he told this daily.

Eight fire engines brought the blaze under control around 3:00am. The bodies were recovered around an hour later.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

BANGLADESH UPDATE



196

New cases in 24hrs



15,70,681

Total cases



27,890

Deaths



15,34,478

Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE



50,48,489

Deaths



249,506,051

Total cases

Dhaka optimistic about climate cash flow

Bangladesh takes very strong leadership role in COP26, says FM

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday expressed optimism about adequate flow of funds to address climate change-related challenges, noting that Bangladesh has taken a very strong leadership role in COP26.

"We've got a lot of good assurance from the private sector and the governments. We're hopeful," Momen told reporters at a virtual briefing joining from London.

He said Bangladesh needs to work a lot, especially in preparing good proposals, which he sees as a challenge but achievable.

"We've a long way to go. We've a challenge but we can manage to get plenty of funds," he said, adding that there is willingness to provide funds. The minister noted that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has become a moral voice on climate issues.

She told the COP26 that Bangladesh cancelled 10 coal-based power plants

involving 12 billion dollars of foreign investment, just to supplement its efforts against the adverse impacts of climate change.

"Bangladesh has taken a leadership role and the prime minister has made a very decisive action [cancelling coal power plants]. We showed the rest of the world," Momen said, adding that their collective aim is to save the planet.

Responding to a question on fugitive convicts, the foreign minister said he raised it and it will further be discussed in detail in the home minister-level meeting.

"We want good governance. We want the rule of law. You [the UK] should be supportive of us," he conveyed to the British side.

Responding to a question on those spreading disinformation, Dr Momen said some people do not want to see the development of Bangladesh.

"Hopefully, they'll understand their mistakes. False propaganda never sustains."



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana looking at a photo of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman displayed at the international launching ceremony of two publications titled "Secret Documents" and "Mujib & Introduction" in London on Thursday.

PHOTO: PID

Excellent resources for researchers

FROM PAGE 1

Mentioning that seven volumes of the publication were being released, Hasina said these are documents and records kept by the Pakistan Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman since Pakistan had been created.

Stating that the Pakistan Intelligence Branch official followed his every movement and activity, the prime minister said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib served in prison for 3,053 days during the 24 years of Pakistan.

She also said it was not only Bangabandhu who was under watch, but also her mother Bangamata, Begum Fazilatun Nesa Mujib, who was under surveillance. "She had been under watch especially after the

announcement of Six-Point Demand in 1966," Hasina added.

She said these Secret Documents are not just a record of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib's political struggle, rather these are historical accounts of how an independent nation was born. These documents are of critical importance for Bangladesh's national history, she added.

Hasina said all these documents show how Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib's political career took shape over the years and also showcase the immense sufferings and sacrifices of the Father of the Nation. These are narratives of the making of a national leader, a Statesman and an international political figure, she said.

The prime minister said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib was targeted from the early days of his

political life by those who opposed the values and principles he stood for. The same forces were responsible for the brutal end to his life, along with most of his family members, in August 1975, she added.

Hasina, the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu, conveyed thanks to Taylor and Francis Group for coming forward to partner with Hakkani Publishers of Bangladesh on these publications.

The prime minister said, "We renew our pledge to do justice to his struggles by realising his dream of building a Sonar Bangla."

Hasina also inaugurated an art exhibition titled "Bangabandhu and Britain: A Centenary Collection".

PM's younger sister Sheikh Rehana and her daughter Saima Wazed were present.

German Covid cases soar as WHO warns over Europe deaths

AFP, Frankfurt

Daily Covid infections hit an all-time high in Germany Thursday as the World Health Organization warned that another 500,000 people could die across Europe, with cases once again on the rise.

The dire projection came as the UK became the first country to approve an anti-Covid pill and the US announced strict new rules for businesses to strongarm employees into getting vaccines, as countries scramble to

avoid another deadly winter wave of the virus.

But with rising infections in Europe, WHO Emergencies Director Michael Ryan cautioned: "I think it's a warning shot for the world to see what's happening in Europe despite the availability of vaccination."

The EU's most populous country Germany set a new record for daily infections, with nearly 34,000 new cases over the past 24 hours, according to the Robert Koch Institute.

Hostage to mindless moves

FROM PAGE 1

For Sathi Akhter, a student from the Jagir area in Manikganj, the strike was particularly costly.

Yesterday, she waited at the bus stop for four hours for a vehicle to take her to Dhaka to sit her recruitment test at 10 am. Unfortunately, she found none and was a no-show for her test.

"I need the job -- who will compensate for my loss?" a frustrated Akhter told our Manikganj correspondent.

The government actually does not bother about people's suffering, said Shakhwat Hossain, another job seeker. "They knew about recruitment tests but did not take any measures to stop the strike," he said.

Their sufferings will go on for two more days as the government body responsible for re-fixing bus fare in light of the fuel price hike set Sunday for discussing the issue.

"There is no possibility of the situation becoming normal until then," said Khondaker Enayet Ullah, the secretary-general of the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association.

The transport leaders are demanding the government either change the decision of fuel price hike or increase the bus fare.

No inter-district bus operated to and from the capital, so those who needed to leave Dhaka for emergency reasons were seen hiring minibuses with higher fares.

The strike also affected those who did not need to travel far on a Friday: the prices of fish and vegetables went up in the capital's kitchen markets as the vehicles that bring them supplies each day did not operate.

As a result, the supply of vegetables was low, said Lokman Hossain, manager of Gausia Bhandar at the capital's Karwan Bazar.

Truck driver Salahuddin, who operates between the northern districts and Dhaka, said the sudden increase in fuel price by Tk 15 a litre also put them in trouble.

"The government has increased the fuel price, but not the truck fare. Now it is difficult for us to ask people for paying higher fares."

DELIVERY OF IMPORTED GOODS HAMPERED

The delivery of imported goods from the Chittagong Port was hampered badly since yesterday morning due to the transport strike, reports our Chattogram staff correspondent.

As of yesterday noon, only 204 trucks and covered vans entered the port to take the imported goods from the port yards, said an on-duty officer at the port's security department.

Many vehicles, including trucks and covered vans, arrived to take deliveries but could not enter the port due to obstacles created by transport workers enforcing the strike, said Md Omar Faruq, secretary of the Chittagong Port Authority.

The loading and unloading of containers at the port jetties may slow down if the strike lingers, he added.

STRIKE HITS EXPORT

The transport strike has put the fear of missed shipments in the hearts of garment exporters, who are just emerging from the downturn in business brought on by the global coronavirus pandemic.

Most of the shipments were deferred due to the strike, said Shahidullah Azim, vice-president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

"We will have to go for expensive air shipment if we cannot ship goods by sea on time due to the transport strike," said Mohammad Hatem, executive president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

The fuel price hike will also increase the production costs: nearly 80 percent of the dyeing and printing plants in the textile and garment industries are run with diesel generators, Azim said.

"We will face a serious crisis," said Syed Nurul Islam, director of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association.

SITUATION OUTSIDE DHAKA

Like Dhaka, people in other parts of the country suffered from the strike.

Tamalika Mitra and her younger brother Shyamal Mitra came to visit their aunt's house at Chattogram city's Jamal Khan area from their village at Hathazari upazila yesterday to celebrate the Dipaboli festival.

"We have been waiting here for an hour but we don't see any bus," Tamalika said while waiting at the port city's Muradpur bus stop in the morning.

She said she needed to return by yesterday as her brother, a student of class-VIII, needs to prepare for his annual examination.

A similar situation prevailed in Cumilla.

Trucks and buses were not operating in the district, while the movement of transport on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway remained almost halted, reports our local correspondent.

In Barisal, no long-haul bus was operating from Nathulabad and Rupatli bus terminals in the city. No trucks were seen running in those areas.

However, launch services were not halted.

Saidur Rahman Rintu, vice-president of the launch owners' association, said they are fearing huge losses due to the sudden rise in fuel prices.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Inland Waterways (passenger carriers) Association yesterday demanded the government double the launch fare from Tk 1.7 per kilometre to Tk 3.4 for the first 100 km and from Tk 1.4 per km to Tk 2.8 per km for travelling the distance beyond the first 100 km.

Efforts will be made to keep the extra pressure on the people at a tolerable level through a realistic price adjustment in consultation with the stakeholders concerned, said Obaidul Quader, also the Awami League general secretary, yesterday.

Redress it, right now

FROM PAGE 1

"We did not see any initiative from the government to assess the learning loss. We need the assessment done as early as possible. Recouping the loss should be a priority of the government," Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive director of Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), told The Daily Star.

Learning loss causes students to lose their skills, eventually making it hard for them to become human resources in future.

"Early and effective redress is urgently needed. Otherwise, the loss will be more severe," he warned.

On March 17 last year, the government closed schools and other educational institutions across the country to contain the spread of Covid-19. In-person classes resumed partially at the institutions this September 12 after the situation improved.

A joint study by PPRC and Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), published on October 19, said that about 22 percent of primary school students and 30 percent secondary school students surveyed were at risk of learning loss.

"It means 3.96 million primary and 3.9 million secondary students -- a total of 7.86 million students -- are at the risk of learning loss," Hossain Zillur Rahman said at the report-unveiling programme.

"As a result, the dropout rate might go higher... The decision to reopen the schools was accurate and timely, but only reopening will not be enough to recover from learning loss."

"Supplementary remedial programmes are essential for both

primary and secondary level students," he had said.

The study carried out in August and September said the learning loss has worsened in six months.

In a previous study in March, PPRC and BIGD had said 5.92 million primary and secondary students in the country were at risk of learning loss because of the closure. It showed that 17 percent primary and 25 percent secondary students were at risk of learning loss in March.

The recent survey was based on telephone interviews of heads of 4,872 households and the one done in March was based on interviews of heads of 6,099 households. Both the survey covered rural and urban slum households with school-going children.

There are 2.16 crore students at 1,33,002 primary educational institutions and 1.02 crore students at 20,849 secondary schools, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics and Directorate of Primary Education.

A World Bank report, published in April, said the prolonged closure of schools is causing an education crisis that may cost Bangladesh and other South Asian countries over \$1 trillion in lost earnings in the long run.

Speaking on the report, Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the WB's Dhaka office, told The Daily Star at that time, "A Bangladeshi student may lose as much as Tk 3,000 per month as a result of lost schooling. This is a serious loss. It could increase poverty."

After closing down the educational institutions, the education ministry and primary and mass education

ministry took some measures so that students did not suffer.

The ministries launched TV education programmes through state-run Sangsad television channel for secondary and primary students. Later, they asked all schools to introduce online education.

Most of the students in urban areas have access to learning through the internet, but the digital divide has so far proved to be a great disadvantage for the underprivileged learners, mainly for a lack of devices and poor access to the internet.

At the end of last year, the DSHE asked all secondary schools to start giving assignments to students.

Contacted, BEDU chief Rabiul Kabir Chowdhury said an assessment on learning loss was necessary to learn about the learning gaps and figure out ways to address it.

"We are planning to hold a special test in the first week of December. About 42,000 students will sit for the test. This is how we will assess the students' learning loss."

"We hope that the assessment will be completed by the end of December."

He said they were now working on preparing the questions keeping in mind what students learned through TV and online classes and assignments given to them.

"We will also make some recommendations to address the learning gap," he said.

NCTB Chairman Prof Narayan Chandra Saha said they were planning on launching a study to know the situation on the ground regarding primary students.

"We will eventually find out ways to recover the learning loss," he added.

Five perish in Old Dhaka factory fire

FROM PAGE 1

Dinomoni said they found the five bodies lying one after another. "They died probably after inhaling smoke. Later, their bodies got burnt beyond recognition."

He said they were working to find out how the fire originated. "The authorities will form a committee on Sunday [tomorrow] to look into it."

Police suspect the victims are the factory's manager Kamrul Islam, 22, machine operators Aminul Mia, 36, Mirza Monir Hossain, 35, Abdur Rahman, 34, and Shamim Mia, 35. They have been missing since the incident and are feared dead.

Deputy Commissioner Jashim Uddin Mollah of police (Lalbagh Division) said they would hand over the bodies to the families following identification through DNA tests.

At the morgue of Sir Salimullah Medical College, family members of the five missing kept crying and wailing throughout the day.

"Abba called over the phone hours before the fire and told us that he

would visit us tomorrow [today]. He had not come home in two months," missing Monir Hossain's 12-year-old son Nahid Hossain sobbed.

Nahid, along with his mother and other relatives, rushed to Dhaka yesterday morning from their village home in Chandpur's Kachua.

Monir, a father of two sons and a daughter, has been working at the factory for the last 17 years. He earned around 20,000 monthly.

Another missing man, Aminul Mia, is from Manikganj Sadar upazila. He had returned to work on Thursday after a one-month leave, said his elder sister Bilkis Begum.

She claimed that she identified his brother's body through his teeth. But the authorities would hand over the body only after the DNA tests.

Sub-inspector of Chawkbarazar Police Station Nur Uddin said he heard from witnesses that two of the seven workers sleeping on the first floor managed to come out safely.

"Police would interrogate the factory owner Haji Rafiq," he added.

Dinajpur elderly couple found murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An elderly couple was found murdered at their residence in Dinajpur's Nawabganj upazila yesterday morning, said police.

The dead are Hafizul Islam, 75, and his wife Fensi Ara Begum, 60, of Shira Polashbari village in the upazila.

The couple has seven children but nobody stayed with them at their home, said police.

Moinul Islam, a local of the village, said that villagers found the couple's bodies in separate rooms at their residence around 10:30pm. Later, they informed the incident to Nawabganj police.

On information, a police team came there and recovered both bodies.

Ferdous Wahid, officer-in-charge of Nawabganj Police Station, said the entrance door of the couple's residence was found open after police arrived there. The victims' mouths were taped and their hands were found tied.

Their houses were also found ransacked, said police.

Preparing an inquest report, police sent the body to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Police have yet to ascertain the motive behind the couple's murder till filing the report. But, police was suspecting the criminals strangled the couple to death.

If not now, when?

FROM PAGE 1

The talks aim to secure enough national promises to cut greenhouse gas emissions - mainly from fossil fuels - to keep the rise in the average global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Countries came into COP26 with national climate plans that, when brought together, put Earth on course to warm 2.7C this century, according to the UN.

With just 1.1C of warming so far, communities across the world are already facing ever more intense fire and drought, displacement and economic ruin wrought by the Earth's heating climate.

To that end, the United Nations wants countries to halve their emissions from 1990 levels by 2030, on their way to net-zero emissions by 2050. That would mean the world would release no more climate-warming gases than the amount it is simultaneously recapturing from the atmosphere.

The summit on Thursday saw 23 additional countries pledge to try to phase out coal - albeit over the next three decades, and without the world's biggest consumer, China.

A pledge to reduce deforestation brought a hasty about-turn from Indonesia, home to vast and endangered tropical forests.

But a plan to curb emissions of methane by 30% did appear to strike a blow against greenhouse gases that should produce rapid results.

And city mayors have been working out what they can do to advance climate action more quickly and nimbly than governments.

The Glasgow talks also have showcased a jumble of financial pledges, buoying hopes that national commitments to bring down emissions can actually be implemented.

But time was running short. "It is not possible for a large number of unresolved issues to continue into week 2," COP26 President Alok Sharma said in a note to negotiators published by the United Nations.

Efforts to set a global pricing framework for carbon, as a way to make polluters pay fairly for their emissions and ideally finance efforts to offset them, are likely to continue to the very end of the two-week conference.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern yesterday warned that the Glasgow climate summit was "make or break" in the fight to curb global warming, saying the world is now paying the price for decades of procrastination.

She called for the UN-brokered talks to result in immediate and meaningful action, adding "we're definitely at a point now where it's moved beyond targets".

However, US climate envoy John Kerry said that it was still possible to reach a deal at the summit settling the final details of the rulebook for how to interpret the 2015 Paris Agreement.

He said the United States was in favour of "the most frequent possible" assessments of whether countries were meeting their goals to reduce emissions.

Don't want

FROM PAGE 1

candidates or election officials," he said.

Termining some electoral areas "risky" (violence-prone), the election commissioner said, "We don't want to see any mother lose her child anymore because of electoral violence. Please, cooperate with me to hold the elections in a peaceful manner."

He also vowed to create a congenial election atmosphere for all the candidates there.

Elections to 16 union parishads under three upazilas -- Sadar, Rupganj and Bandor -- are scheduled to be held on November 11.

Senior officials of the district administration, Election Commission and law enforcement agencies were present at the meeting.

On November 2, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda while talking to reporters at his office said the Election Commission was embarrassed by the violence taking place during the ongoing union parishad elections.

He made the comments as more than a dozen people were killed across the country over the union parishad polls in the last few days.

Some 846 union parishads across the country are set to go to the polls on November 11.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Sun Days

The year was 1989. Right after I started working at Silicon Valley's Sun Microsystems, I was at a dinner party. My friends were inquisitive about this high-flying company. I offered two observations: every other car in the parking lot was a Porsche, BMW or Mercedes; and every other (male) engineer had a ponytail.

My comments were meant to be a joke. But after many years, it seems the joke foreshadowed two things about Sun: runaway success and iconoclastic engineering.

Sun was my fourth engineering job in Silicon Valley. Founded in 1982, Sun designed and manufactured computers based on its own hardware and software. These computers were used by professionals who needed powerful, secure and fail-safe computers: engineers, scientists, architects, financial analysts etc. They were seamlessly networked together. Sun's cryptic motto "The network is the computer" was about this seamlessness – the desktop computer, the servers behind it, and their entire network became one and the same to the computer user.

I started there as a software engineer in the engineering research and development organization. For the next fifteen years I held architectural and managerial roles there.

Technological innovation was prized: engineers held great influence over the company. They broke boundaries and pioneered technologies we take for granted today – cloud computing, fast pixel processing, web services, self-driving cars, internet of things, to name a few. Sun was easily a decade or two ahead of its time.

Today Sun is remembered most for Java, a programming language which breathed life into a static and boring Web in its infancy. Java was invented by James Gosling, a computer scientist at Sun. In the early 1990s all the pieces needed for the World Wide Web (browsers, HTML, websites, network connectivity) were in place. The first web browsers, however, very limited. Java enabled web browsers to come alive.



The Java logo on a Sun T shirt.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

What happened next was astonishing. Java became hugely popular among programmers – the *de facto* language of the World Wide Web. Being inside, I was aware of Java's popularity but perhaps not the zeal around it. But, when I presented Java in a technical standards conference in Tokyo in 1995, I was almost mobbed by dozens of engineers and scientists from all over the world eager to learn more.

There is little doubt in my mind that Java was a big reason behind the Web's success and subsequent ubiquity.

Sun was an arrogant company. We joked that our salesmen's job was to sit by the fax machine and collect purchase orders as they poured in. The company's culture was "work hard, play hard." Outrageous April Fool's jokes were planned and executed. An

executive's Ferrari was dismantled and reassembled in a pond while another's office was turned into a miniature golf course. We laughed at the news of a robbery in a massive computer server warehouse in London. It had computers from all major computer manufacturers, but the thieves had stolen only Sun's computers and left the others behind in a mess.

Because of Sun's fame in innovation, I was able to hire the brightest and the best engineers. Working with them was a rewarding chapter of my life.

Sun's success eventually came to an end – largely because the market changed faster than it did. But for many, including myself, it was the shining star of their careers.

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

NO HAPPY ENDING

She trafficked herself to rescue her daughter, but death threats from the traffickers continue to haunt her

SHARIFUL ISLAM

After the incredibly brave rescue efforts to retrieve her daughter from traffickers in India – an extraordinary story that stunned people in Bangladesh and the neighbouring country alike – the mother from the capital's Pallabi thought her ordeals were over.

And it came as a relief when Rab members arrested three traffickers of the cross-border gang on August 16 following her complaints.

Her euphoria, however, did not last long.

The 35-year-old mother is allegedly receiving death threats from family members and associates of two leaders of the trafficking gang – Sohagh alias "Nagin Sohagh" and his uncle Iqbal Hossain Kalu of the nearby area in Pallabi's Baunia Bandh.

"They are threatening us with dire consequences," she told The Daily Star recently.

She mentioned that Kalu's sister and Sohagh's mother, Bithy alias "Nagin Bithi", and Kalu's wife are issuing threats. Both Kalu and his nephew Sohagh are behind bars.

The mother alleged that she came to know from two locals, who were released from prison, that Kalu and Sohagh had told them that they would soon come out of jail and gun her and all her family members down.

To make matters worse, three masked men, equipped with knives, attacked her bus helper husband on October 25 night on his way home.

"Riding an auto-rickshaw, three people, one of whom was bulky, stopped near my husband and grabbed his shirt. Two of them were holding switchgear (knives). My husband managed to run away with part of his shirt torn," she said.

Since then, her husband has not left the house, even for work. Scared, she along with their children mostly remain indoors too, she said.

"To rescue my daughter, I got myself trafficked to India. It was as if a turbulent storm had blown over me. Now in my own country, my troubles seem to be even more severe," said the mother, a worker in a Jamdani Patti in Pallabi.

The mother and her daughter's shocking tale of kidnapping, human trafficking, and the rescue efforts hogged the headlines after the pair were caught trying to re-enter Bangladesh from India in June.

Sohagh and Kalu lured the girl with promises of a good job and trafficked

her to India on January 17 through the Sathkhira border. She was sold at a brothel for Tk 2.5 lakh.

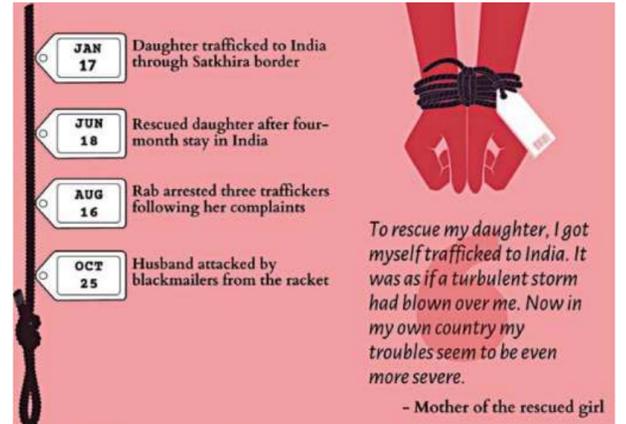
As the victim somehow managed to inform her mother about the trafficking and subsequent torture, the desperate mother willingly trafficked herself to India by the same gang around 40 days later.

The gang sold the mother at Tk 1.5 lakh. She also had to undergo sexual violence during her four-month stay in India. One day she jumped out of

"Both Sohagh and Kalu amassed a huge amount of money earned through human trafficking, muscle power and gang members. I am really scared," she said.

Asked whether she lodged any complaint with the police, the woman said she informed the matter to an officer of Rab-4 who led the operation to arrest the four members of the human trafficking gang.

She would also lodge a general diary with Pallabi Police Station soon.



a running train while being taken to Mumbai from Delhi by the gang and managed to flee.

Finally, she reached Panjipara of Dinajpur North district in West Bengal and rescued her daughter with the help of locals on June 18.

After the return, the mother filed a case against Sohagh, Kalu, Billal Hossain, his wife Razia Khatun, another woman named Asma and eight to nine other unidentified members of the gang. Following the case, Rab arrested Sohagh, Kalu, Billal and Razia.

But now the mother and her family members are living in constant fear.

"How will we live? From where will we manage food if we do not go out for work?" she asked, in a choked voice.

The woman said they have already left their house at Shah Poran Slum fearing attacks and moved to a rented home. She did not disclose her present address when she talked to this correspondent at a neighbour's home in Shahporan Slum at Baunia Bandh on October 31.

Rab-4 Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) Abdullah Al Mamun said she called him on October 25 night and informed him about the incident.

"She along with her daughter visited our office on Sunday and informed our senior officer and showed the torn shirt. She, however, could not recognise anyone," Mamun told The Daily Star.

Rab-4 Company Commander Zahidul Islam said, "We have taken measures to ensure the security of her and her family members." As part of the measures, Rab has increased its presence in the area, he added.

Getting exact data about the numbers of women and children trafficked to India is hard to come by. Following the arrests, Rab, however, claimed that Kalu along with his accomplices so far trafficked around 200 girls and women in the last eight to 10 years.

According to a 2018 BSF study, around 50,000 Bangladeshi girls are trafficked to or through India every year, media reported.

Torchbearers of hope

6 receive 'Alokito Grameen Nari Sammanana-2021' in recognition of their contributions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamila Begum has been working as a butcher for more than two decades to raise her two children, after her husband abandoned them.

Defying all obstacles along the way, she now has a meat shop of her own in Dinajpur's Birganj upazila, where nine workers are employed.

She was one of the six recipients of "Alokito Grameen Nari Sammanana-2021", as recognition of their economic and leadership roles.

Voluntary organisations Alokito Shishu and Volunteer Opportunities, with support from UK Aid and Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), organised the event in this regard yesterday at the capital's Krishibid Institution Bangladesh.

At the ceremony, the six were awarded in two categories: "rural women entrepreneur" and "rural women leader".

The "rural women leader" recipients are Khojista Begum Jonaky of Kishoreganj, Sabitri Hembrom of Rajshahi, and trans rights activist Manisha Mim.

The "rural women entrepreneur" recipients are Jamila Begum of Dinajpur, Shapla Debi Tripura of Khagrachhari, and Shirin Akhter of Nilphamari.

The event also observed International Day of Rural Women, which was on October 15.

At the ceremony, speakers said women's unpaid work needs to be economically recognised to uphold their dignity in

society.

They said such recognition will also help reduce gender-based violence in the country.

Addressing the ceremony, MJF Gender Advisor Banasree Mitra Neogi said they have been campaigning for social and economic recognition of women's unpaid work with the slogan "equity through dignity" since 2012.

The state needs to come forward for such recognition, she said.

Besides, other family members should share the load of household work, she added.

If women get official recognition of their different contributions, it will help reduce gender-based violence in the country, said Maasranga Television Chief News Editor Rezwana Haque.

Rezwanaul Haque Jami, head of e-commerce at Access to Information (a2i), said various opportunities for women should be made available in one platform, so women can know about them easily.

Addressing as chief guest, reserved seat lawmaker Aroma Dutta said the government has been tirelessly working to ensure equal rights for the country's women.

Actress Shampa Reza said besides fighting for due recognition and dignity, women should build themselves to be good human beings.

Alokito Shishu Founder and Chairman Mithun Das Kabbo and MJF Programme Manager Zahed Hasan, among others, spoke at the ceremony.



Award recipients -- Khojista Begum Jonaky, Sabitri Hembrom, Manisha Mim, Jamila Begum, Shapla Debi Tripura and Shirin Akhter -- with organisers and guests at the ceremony.

PHOTO: STAR

Primates in peril

How loss of Sadhana Aushadhalaya's business spilled over to Gendaria's monkey population

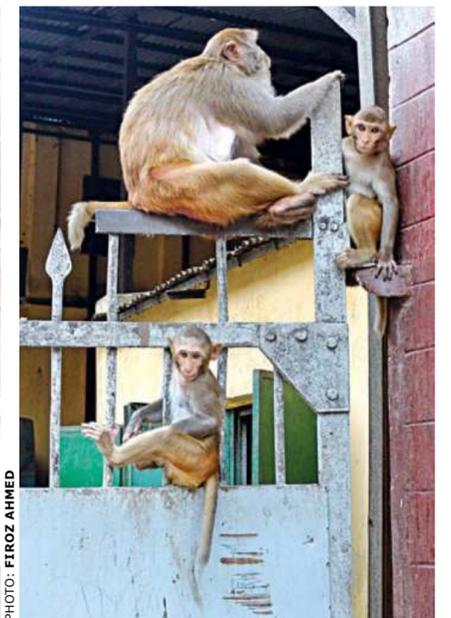


PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

A barrel of monkeys gather in feast hosted by Sadhana Aushadhalaya, a once famous ayurvedic pharmaceutical located in Gendaria in the capital's Old Dhaka. As demand for ayurvedic medicines decrease so does the company's capacity to accommodate the monkeys.

DIPAN NANDY

Since the early 20th century, Gendaria gained popularity in the city for hosting Sadhana Aushadhalaya -- the once-famed, now-fondly remembered ayurvedic pharmaceutical company.

There was another thing that got Gendaria's name on the map: its population of monkeys. Interestingly, the monkeys and Sadhana had a common beginning.

The primates of Gendaria dropped anchor in the area at the beginning of its reconstruction in the early years of the last century, when the then-British rulers started developing it as a residential hub.

The monkeys were such an ever-present part of the community that, in 1914, Sadhana founder Principal Jogesh Chandra Ghosh

dedicated one of his rooms to the beloved apes. He used to feed them regularly too, and even a century later, Sadhana still keeps up this practice, albeit at a much narrower scope.

The fault is not Sadhana's -- one thing that's changed over these years is business itself. As demand for ayurvedic medicines has fallen, so has the company's capacity to accommodate the monkeys.

From their number in the thousands, their population has now dwindled to a meagre 100 to 150, according to local estimates. Shortage of food is the prime reason, which compels the primates to cross Sadhana's boundaries and plunder nearby houses in the neighbourhood.

And this is not a safe adventure. As the monkeys approach the houses, some people try to repel them with force, with stories abound of throwing hot water or

hitting them with heavy objects.

Besides this, some die by falling while jumping from roof to roof, while electrocution is a persistent cause of death as well.

Retired government official Manik Chandra Dey has been a resident of Gendaria for the last half a century. "There was once a time when they used to roam freely," he told this correspondent recently.

"Sadhana's medicines required molasses. Its smell drove the monkeys crazy, and they'd gather on the premises in numbers. Since Sadhana is no longer in its former glory, the monkeys aren't doing all that well either," he lamented.

According to the Asiatic Society's "Encyclopedia of Dhaka", Jogesh Chandra Ghosh -- a disciple of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray -- founded Sadhana after wrapping up his academic sojourns to Kolkata, the United

Kingdom and the United States.

Beginning life as a small establishment, it turned into a full-fledged factory by 1917. It started expanding operations soon, opening up branches and securing agencies in then East Bengal, India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, China, Iran, England, the Philippines, and the US.

Tragically, during the Liberation War, Jogesh Chandra died at the hands of the Pakistani forces. This severely hampered Sadhana's operations and triggered its gradual decline.

Although Jogesh Chandra's successors tried to keep up the tradition, soon enough, their ration for the monkeys started falling. These days, the company can only provide 10kg of chickpeas every day, staffers said.

But of course, for all the monkeys here and those that

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Admission seekers left stranded

JU hall authorities fail to accommodate candidates, fearing Covid-19

Md ASADUZ ZAMAN, JU

Almost 3.07 lakh admission seekers, divided under 10 units, are likely to sit for the Jahangirnagar University (JU) admission tests, scheduled to be held in five shifts per day from November 9 - 21.

Preceding the Covid-19 outbreak, JU's halls welcomed thousands of admission seekers from all over the country, particularly students from low-income families. Presently, their futures hang on the balance due to the authority's decision to refuse accommodation to them.

Rubaiyat Jahan Monisha, a candidate for admission from Netrakona Government College, had applied to sit for four out of the 10 units.

Since the administration imposed a ban on any applicants residing in the campus to curb Covid infections among residential students, she couldn't manage any accommodation, even though she had a relative staying at the dormitories.

Due to lack of appropriate housing, she scrapped her plan to attend all four exams and settled for appearing in just one unit.

"It's uncertain if I can attend all the tests. I don't know what I should do now," she said, expressing her frustration.

Tanvir Shuvo, a candidate from the southern-most corner of Khulna district, said he too decided to attend only one unit, even though he had applied for three.

"I've managed a hotel room in Savar at a high price (Tk 1,200 per day) and my family cannot bear the cost of spending seven nights here," he added.

Nilufa Yesmin, the guardian of an admission seeker from

ADMISSIONS AT A GLANCE		
3,08,040 vying for 1,889 seats; 163 candidates for each seat		
APPLICANTS FOR EACH UNIT		
A	Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences	68,202
B	Faculty of Social Sciences	37,847
C	Faculty of Arts and Humanities	41,677
C-1	Only for drama and dramatics, and fine arts depts	10,268
D	Faculty of Biological Sciences	69,129
E	Faculty of Business Studies	18,033
F	Faculty of Law	24,073
G	Institute of Business Administration	8,861
H	Institute of Information Technology	23,240
I	Institute of Bangabandhu Comparative Literature and Culture	6,710

Joypurhat, told The Daily Star that she's yet to find suitable housing for her daughter.

"At this point, it's uncertain how we will manage," she added.

Another guardian from Kurigram complained, "I failed to rent a room near the university campus and I'm yet to find a way for my daughter to attend the admission test."

Rahima Kaneez, JU's acting registrar, said, "We've reduced the examination duration and broadened the inter-shift duration so that candidates can attend them maintaining adequate safety measures."

Admission seekers have been protesting the authorities' decision, stating that they should have made arrangements to reduce their sufferings.

JU houses eight residential halls for men and women respectively. All of them can accommodate a total of 8,000 students at regular

times.

Sagar Siddiki, Secretary of Kurigram Students' Welfare Association, said, "Around 70 students and guardians contacted me to arrange accommodations. I had nothing to say except 'I'm sorry.'"

The majority of these students come from low-income families, some of whom will be unable to sit for the tests as a result.

General Secretary of JU Gopalganj District Students' Welfare Association, Bikash Mallik, echoed the same concern.

The central problem is that the number of private dorms or hotels in Savar region is inadequate.

Savar Municipality mayor, Abdul Gani said, "There are only two residential hotels in Savar and they lack the capacity to accommodate so many students."

"This is the result of authority's indifference. If they had the least concern in this regard, they would

seek other alternatives," said Professor of Economics at JU, Anu Muhammad.

The authorities could have followed in the footsteps of Dhaka University and decentralised the admission test or merged the 10 units into three or four units, he argued.

"The university could use the auditorium, hall room or gymnasium to accommodate the candidates ensuring proper hygiene. Otherwise, countless candidates, especially female students, will suffer," he added.

Meanwhile, the university unit of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front and Chhatra Union in separate statements demanded proper management regarding the accommodation of admission seekers before holding any test.

Prof. Md Muzibur Rahman, president of the JU hall provost committee, said, "We can only provide additional transportation services to bring candidates from nearby areas to minimise their sufferings."

Earlier, education minister Dipu Moni warned that educational institutions will be shut down again, if the infection rate rises. Contamination rates have skyrocketed in India and it has triggered fear within the administration.

"We don't want to shut down the campus again," he added.

He informed that the administration only granted accommodation to regular students who've received at least one shot of vaccine. "Allowing unknown people to remain in the halls during the pandemic would be hazardous. We made the decision keeping the wellbeing of our students in mind," he said.

Transport strike takes toll on Ctg residents



STAFF CORRESPONDENTS

People suffered immensely in Chattogram yesterday, due to the unavailability of public transports and spiked fare of CNG-run auto rickshaws amidst the transport strike.

Moreover, an unusual rush of commuters at the port city's bus stops during the holiday also contributed to their woes. Transport owners' associations enforced the strike, protesting the government's move on increasing the fuel price.

Tamalika Mitra and her younger brother Shyamal Mitra, who visited their aunt's residence from Hathazari to celebrate Dipabali, had to return home the same day. "We have been waiting here for an hour!" said Tamalika, spotted at the Muradpur bus stop, adding, "We have to head back as my brother, an eighth-grader, has to prepare for a final exam."

Tamalika said they reached the bus stop via CNG-run auto-rickshaw from Jamal Khan Road paying double the regular fare. "It's usually Tk 100 -120 but today, we had

to pay Tk 200," she said.

A similar scene was noticed at Bahaddarhat Intersection, GEC Intersection, Sholashahar Gate No. 2 Intersection, Tigerpass, Dewan Hat and Agrabad Badamtal intersections, and Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge area.

After failing to get a bus, Tanvir Ahmed was seen trying to hire a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge area. "The regular fare of CNG-run auto-rickshaw from here to Jaldi in Banshkhal is Tk 350 to Tk 400 but the drivers are demanding twice the fare, capitalising on the situation," he said.

When asked about the doubled fare, CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver Abdul Khalek responded that they've been incurring a loss since the onset of the pandemic and so they are trying to recover.

Ali Hossain, deputy commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (traffic), north zone, said that strict legal action will be taken against the drivers.

RU female students protest hall rules

OUR CORRESPONDENT, RU

Hundreds of female students of Rajshahi University (RU) held a demonstration yesterday to protest some rules the authorities put in place for residential students.

Around 5:30pm, the residential students took position in front of Tapashi Rabeya Hall to protest.

In a notice released recently, the hall's authorities said students who have been staying in "gono rooms" cannot cook and must take food from hall dining. If any student disobeys the rules, their seats to the hall will be cancelled.

Sabina Binte Yasmin, a student from the hall, said authorities closed the cooking facilities for students who are staying in gono rooms, and the quality of food at hall dining is below standard. "So why would we eat that food by paying more?"

Contacted, the hall's provost Prof

Ferdaws Mahal said, "Since cooking food in gono rooms creates an unhealthy environment and might lead to fires, we have taken the decision."

Another student, Mahmuda Islam, said students of all female halls must return to the dormitory by 7pm. "We cannot go out after this time, even if we have an emergency. If students can't return by 7pm, the guards and hall supervisors harass us. They even call our parents."

Later, around 7:30pm, students withdrew their movement, after the authorities assured them of relaxing the rules.

While talking to The Daily Star, Prof Ferdaws said, "We set up those rules for our students' safety. But as they demanded scrapping some rules, we will try to relax them."

The decision came after a discussion with university proctor Leakot Ali, student advisor M Tareq Nur and some of the demonstrators.

Savar cultural activists yet to get Shilpakala Academy

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

It's been a long-standing resolve of cultural activists in Savar to get a mandated cultural platform like Shilpakala Academy.

Starting from human chains to processions, numerous programmes were held by activists but their efforts came to a halt due to land crisis and other administrative issues.

In May 2017, their dreams were about to come true when the then local MP and present state minister for disaster management and relief, Dr Md Enamur Rahman, laid down the foundation stone for the construction of the academy with a piece of land next to the Bangshi river and Savar Model Police Station.

However, there has been little progress ever since due to a land dispute.

In 2017, the LGRD ministry approved Tk 1,88,97,975 for the academy, which was later cancelled and the land was returned due to the dispute.

Disappointed once again, the cultural activists started raising their demands anew, focusing on the selection of a new site. But their concerns were yet to be resolved.

Saran Kumar Saha, general secretary of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote in Savar, said there are around 300 cultural activists affiliated with various organisations in Savar, going through a rough time due to the lack of rehearsal spaces and an auditorium.

Savar UNO Majharul Islam said, "We're trying our best to allocate 40 decimals of government land in an area suitable for constructing the academy. Hopefully, we will be able to complete the project soon."

Bringing animals back from the edge

Locals form forum to save wildlife in Netrakona



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Susang, once a home for wild animals, has seen a massive displacement of wildlife, due to natural and man-made calamities. Local journalist Rifat Ahmed Rasel and his cohorts have formed a forum to rescue and protect these animals, and are working relentlessly for the cause.

Md AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Netrakona's Durgapur upazila is home to a forest area that stretches across both sides of the border with India. Also known as Susang Durgapur, it plays host to a diversity of wild animals.

As Susang is some five kilometres away from the Indian Border, the smaller of the forest animals and reptiles make frequent forays into different areas of Durgapur, such as Ranikhong, Chandigarh, Bagichapara, Char Muktarpara, Chak Lengura, Gopalpur, and Teribazar.

Once upon a time, Susang used to be a sanctuary for wild animals. But as deforestation set in and its forest area started to disappear, it has started to lose all sense of serenity it once provided to its inhabitants, said local journalist Rifat Ahmed Rasel.

Another reason behind their displacement and loss of habitat is flash floods, during which many animals have to flee from their shelters on the Indian side,

getting washed away through Durgapur's Someswari river.

Tragically, in many cases, locals capture the animals and either torture them -- sometimes to death -- or sell them, Rasel said.

Faced with their predicament, Rasel and a bunch of his cohorts started a forum called "Save the Animals of Susang" in August last year.

So far, they've rescued some 25 animals, including six pythons, four endangered slow loris monkeys (locally known Lojjaboti Banor), several wild cats and a fox, said sources.

Talking to this correspondent, Rasel, also president of the forum, said it all began with a view to protecting the wild animals that come over to Bangladesh crossing the adjacent Border at Meghalaya's Baghmara area.

"During the early stages of our operation, we faced tremendous opposition from catchers when we went to rescue the animals. But the scenario has changed somewhat now. People are more

aware of our efforts and the importance of it. These days, locals themselves inform us whenever they come across an animal in distress," said Masum Billah Ovi, secretary of the forum.

Recalling a memory from August this year, Ovi, a school teacher by profession, said they rescued an injured Gangchil from Someswari river that got beat-up by locals. "We tended to it for three days, but it still succumbed to its wounds," he said despondently.

Afrin Jahan Beauty, a councillor of Durgapur Municipality and member of the forum, said she is impressed by the forum's work and finds it a necessity for a balanced ecosystem. She said they have been campaigning against the practice of catching and beating up these wild animals.

"We have good contacts with the local administration, police, forest and livestock officials. As a result, they respond to our calls whenever it's needed," she said.

The rescuers publicise their activities through a Facebook page. Concurrently, they distribute leaflets and put up banners to make people aware of the animals' plight.

Forum members said they do all this from their own coffers.

Though a stressful job, their efforts have started to make an impression on everyone. Md Saidul Islam, forest officer of Durgapur Range, said he appreciates the forum's work and has supported them in rescue and release operations.

Contacted, Rajib Ul Ahshan, upazila nirbahi officer of Durgapur, said when the wild animals come out of the Indian side of the forest and go into neighbouring localities, people catch or torture them, without knowing the necessity of these animals from an ecological standpoint.

"It's great that we now have forum members to come rescue such animals who find themselves in a tight spot," the UNO said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Govt. Barisal College
Kalibari Road, Barishal
Website: www.gbc.gov.bd

Memo No: CEDP/GBC/OTM/G9

Date: 7.11.2021

e-Tender Notice: 01/2021-2022

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of works	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & time
1.	626198	Procurement of Equipment and all Accessories for Digital Multipurpose Language cum ICT Lab with complete installation and Supply of Laptop for departments of Govt. Barisal College, Barishal	22 Nov, 2021 14.00 PM	22 Nov, 2021 16.00 PM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to 22 November, 2021 and time 14.00 PM.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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GD-2006

Primates in peril

FROM PAGE 3

come over from neighbouring areas, this is not nearly enough.

Bhabatosh Dey has been working for Sadhana for close to two decades. "There aren't as many monkeys here anymore," he told The Daily Star.

"As there isn't enough food for them, they fight among themselves a lot. Some of them have migrated to other areas as well," he added. These areas include Lakshimbazar, Ray Shaheb Bazar, Tipu Sultan Road, Narinda, Banogram, Tantibazar, and Sutrapur, where other monkey communities can be found.

"In the past, people used to come to visit in the afternoon and feed the monkeys. This place almost felt like a zoo every afternoon. But even this has become rare since the pandemic," said Nazrul Islam, an Ansar member posted at Sadhana.

Out of concern, various socio-cultural organisations started to act. Dhaka Youth Club International has been campaigning for the

conservation of Old Dhaka's monkeys for some time, with demands for their safe habitation and food ration from the city corporation.

"We've been calling for their rehabilitation for a long time. We're asking for this to be done at Sadhana as well. All that's needed is enough food. If they get that from here, they won't feel the need to go outside," said general secretary Sohag Mohajon. "There was a time when the government had planned to shift them to a zoo. But they later decided against it, as a cage would be no substitute for their free movement out in the open," he said.

During the lockdown last May, socio-cultural organisation Sammilita Sangskritik Jote stepped up with bread, bananas, carrots, and cucumbers for the area's monkeys for two weeks.

President of the Jote Ghulam Quddus told The Daily Star, "We came in and saw the monkeys in a tragic state of desperation over food. Scattered everywhere, they all swooped in every

time we brought in the food, showing how hungry they were."

"Amazingly, some locals stood by our side too, and what's best is that a lot of them took inspiration from this and kept up the practice long after we were done."

Jahangirnagar University's zoology department chair and wildlife researcher prof Monirul H Khan said some of Old Dhaka's monkeys are of the Rhesus Macaque species.

"Their numbers are on the decline mostly due to lack of food. In addition, people have started to become antagonistic towards them, which is why the instances of violence have increased. Electrocuting is another prime reason for their decline in the age of urbanisation," he said.

"We have to ensure they have enough to eat, there's simply no other alternative," he said. "This has to come from both government and private initiatives. Simultaneously, people have to be made aware so that they stop attacking the monkeys."

China pledges

FROM PAGE 16
independence.”
Speaking extemporaneously before an audience of 400 at Columbia University's School of International Affairs, Indira Gandhi warned that “the limits of [India's] endurance had been reached.”

“India is determined to safeguard her interests, India is united as never before,” said Indira Gandhi. “We want your help. We want your support. We want your sympathy. But India is prepared, to fight alone for what it thinks is worth fighting for.”

ON THE WAR FRONT
In the Rangpur-Dinajpur-Rajshahi sector, Mukti Bahini today raided Pakistani Army position in Paharpur area killing 10 enemy soldiers. During the operation one freedom fighter embraced martyrdom. On the same day, 8 Razakars with 5 Rifles were captured by Freedom fighters in Karnai area of Rangpur district.

In the Dhaka-Cumilla-Chattogram sector, two enemy soldiers were killed and three wounded due to explosion of mine laid by freedom fighters in Chandidwar area. On the same day Mukti Bahini fired on the Pakistani troops in the same area killing 2 enemy soldiers and injuring four.

In the Mymensingh-Sylhet, Mukti Bahini clashed with the occupation troops in Melandaha-Mahmudpur area. During this clash 12 enemy soldiers including one JCO were killed and four were wounded. One of our freedom fighters also laid down his life.

A United Nations vessel loaded with wheat was heavily damaged by a mine deployed by Mukti Bahini at Chandpur. The freedom fighters had been preying heavily on water vessels in East Pakistan in recent weeks, but this was the first report that a United Nations vessel had been attacked. *Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com*

Goitre associated

FROM PAGE 16
iodine. Iodine deficiency may be made worse by a diet high in hormone-inhibiting foods, such as cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower.

The other causes include hyperthyroidism, hypothyroidism, thyroid nodules and thyroid cancer.

A hormone produced during pregnancy -- human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG) -- may also cause thyroid gland to enlarge slightly.

Not all goitres cause signs and symptoms but if it shows, they may include a swelling at the base of neck, tight feeling in throat, coughing, hoarseness and difficulties in swallowing and breathing.

Women are more prone to thyroid disorders especially during pregnancy and menopause. It is more common after 40. A personal or family history of autoimmune disease increases risk of goitre.

Certain medications, including the heart drug amiodarone and the psychiatric drug lithium and others, increase the risk also.

If anyone had radiation treatments to neck or chest area, the person is at risk.

Goitres that result from other conditions, such as hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism, may be associated with a number of symptoms, ranging from fatigue and weight gain to unintended weight loss, irritability and trouble sleeping.

Treatment of goitre depends on its size, symptoms and the cause. Small goitres that aren't noticeable and don't cause problems, usually don't need treatment. But if thyroid hormone levels are too high or too low, then treatment is needed.

Doctors may suggest a wait-and-see approach if goitre is small and doesn't cause problems, and if thyroid is functioning normally.

But a goitre case associated with hyperthyroidism may need medication to normalise hormone levels.

In case of a large goitre, the doctor may remove all or part of thyroid gland.

Anti-Covid pill

FROM PAGE 16
It will submit the data to the Food and Drug Administration as soon as possible as part of its “rolling submission” for Emergency Use Authorization.

“Today's news is a real game-changer in the global efforts to halt the devastation of this pandemic,” said Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla.

“These data suggest that our oral antiviral candidate, if approved or authorized by regulatory authorities, has the potential to save patients' lives, reduce the severity of Covid-19 infections, and eliminate up to nine out of 10 hospitalizations,” he added.

The main analysis of the data looked at numbers from 1,219 adults in North and South America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Several companies are working on so-called oral antivirals, which would mimic what the drug Tamiflu does for influenza and prevent the disease from progressing to severe.

Pfizer started developing its drug in March 2020.

Other companies are also testing existing oral antivirals against Covid -- but Pfizer's is the first specifically designed against the coronavirus.



People sit at a cafe in a flooded St. Mark's Square during seasonally high water in Venice, Italy, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Nasa to deflect asteroid in test of 'planetary defence'

FROM PAGE 16
“Although there isn't a currently known asteroid that's on an impact course with the Earth, we do know that there is a large population of near-Earth asteroids out there,” said Lindley Johnson, Nasa's Planetary Defense Officer.

“The key to planetary defence is finding them well before they are an impact threat,” Johnson said. “We don't want to be in a situation where an asteroid is headed towards Earth and then have to test this capability.”

The DART spacecraft is scheduled to be launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon

9 rocket at 10:20 pm Pacific time on November 23 from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California.

If the launch takes place at or around that time, impact with the asteroid some 6.8 million miles from Earth would occur between September 26 and October 1 of next year.

The target asteroid, Dimorphos, which means “two forms” in Greek, is about 525 feet in diameter and orbits around a larger asteroid named Didymos, “twin” in Greek.

Johnson said that while neither asteroid poses a threat to Earth they are ideal candidates for the test

because of the ability to observe them with ground-based telescopes.

Images will also be collected by a miniature camera-equipped satellite contributed by the Italian Space Agency that will be ejected by the DART spacecraft 10 days before impact.

Nancy Chabot of the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, which built the DART spacecraft, said Dimorphos completes an orbit around Didymos every 11 hours and 55 minutes “just like clockwork.”

The DART spacecraft, which will weigh 1,210 pounds at the time of

impact, will not “destroy” the asteroid, Chabot said.

“It's just going to give it a small nudge,” she said. “It's going to deflect its path around the larger asteroid.”

“It's only going to be a change of about one percent in that orbital period,” Chabot said, “so what was 11 hours and 55 minutes before might be like 11 hours and 45 minutes.”

The test is designed to help scientists understand how much momentum is needed to deflect an asteroid in the event one is headed towards Earth one day.

Slip of tongue!

FROM PAGE 16
public gathering.

Omor Faruk sought votes in favour of the AL-nominated chairman candidate, promised development work and threatened the party's rebel candidate with bad consequences and asked him to refrain from participating in the Kolma union polls, scheduled to be held on November 11.

Such activities of a lawmaker are prohibited in the Electoral Code of Conduct, said local election officials, preferring anonymity.

Contacted, Omor Faruk told The

Daily Star that his speech that violated the Electoral Code of Conduct was a “slip of tongue.”

“I was speaking on the Jail Killing Day, but there is an election in the area. People wanted to know from me whether I was favouring the Awami League-nominated candidate or not. I was replying to people and these words slipped through my tongue,” he said.

“If I cannot speak my mind a little bit at public meetings, it would become difficult for me to do politics,” the lawmaker said.

Mainul Islam has got AL

nomination for the chairman post of Kolma union elections.

Khademun Nabi Chowdhury, former AL president of the union unit, is contesting the polls as a rebel candidate as he failed to secure the party ticket.

The lawmaker also said, “I want to know from him [Nabi Chowdhury] through you [people] what will happen to him after the elections.”

After this, Nabi Chowdhury filed a complaint with the returning officer on Thursday and sought security for participating in the polls.

About the threats, Omor Faruk said he did not issue threats with anyone's life during his speech.

“All I meant that anyone will be defeated in the election, people will reject them and our party will never allow them to return to the party.”

Contacted, Shamimul Islam, the returning officer, said he received the complaints and forwarded it to the executive magistrate for investigating the incident and taking action.

He said he was not aware of any action against the lawmaker till yesterday.

Greek Covid deniers fight back as ICUs fill up

AFP, Thessaloniki

Giannis Sariannidis, a 37-year-old Greek trader, does not believe there's a pandemic. He's so furious with restrictions that he pulled his son out of school. Then he got arrested.

Like thousands of Covid deniers in Greece, especially in the north, he opposes government rules on masks and tests, at all costs.

“There is no pandemic,” he insists, branding as “genocide” requirements that his eight-year-old son submit to self-testing twice a week and mask-up at school because Greece currently offers no vaccinations to children under 12.

In northern Greece, vaccination rates in some areas are lower than 50 percent, compared to national average of 63 percent, and doctors say hospital ICU units have reached capacity.

Teachers, doctors and nurses have been hit with lawsuits from untrusting members of the public and infection rates are growing.

Yet Sariannidis is unrepentant. “We have nothing to fear. It is an inalienable right of every citizen on earth to be free. The wealth and land belong to us,” he tells AFP from the northern city of Thessaloniki.

Last month, he was arrested after causing a commotion at his child's

school over Covid rules and sentenced to 15 months in prison with a three-year suspension. In court, he told judges that he did not recognize their authority.

While anti-vax sentiment spans the world, in Greece observers say it is strongest in the north, traditionally considered a heartland of fervent nationalists and religious hardliners susceptible to conspiracy theories.

Forty percent of new cases recorded on Tuesday were in the north, the public health agency said, even though the region accounts for only 3.1 million of Greece's 10.7 million population.

“There is great pressure on the national health system in northern Greece,” Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis told cabinet on Thursday.

New cases in Greece are now topping 6,000 on a daily basis for the first time since the pandemic began, hitting a new record of more than 6,800 on Thursday.

Nationwide, more than 16,000 people have died as a result of the virus. Around the world, the number is more than five million.

Ioanna, a high school teacher in the northern prefecture of Pella, said one student's parent refused to let their child submit to a Covid test “because, as he said, the swab contains carcinogens.”

“He was threatening us with lawsuits for torture against his child and the police had to intervene,” she told AFP.

Last month in Thessaloniki, a local prosecutor ordered the transport to hospital of a 14-year-old girl with severe Covid symptoms, overruling her parents' wishes.

“Almost every day we see cases of patients refusing to be intubated,” says Nikos Kapravelos, director of one of the intensive care units at Papanikolaou Hospital in Thessaloniki.

“They accuse us of deliberately putting them at risk of hospital infections because we want them dead,” adds Kapravelos.

The Orthodox Church of Greece, whose influence is particularly strong in rural areas, officially encourages worshippers to get vaccinated and heed government safeguards, but bishops are divided and parish clerics mostly act at their discretion.

Under new rules announced this week, the unvaccinated are not required to produce a negative test to enter a place of worship.

At a religious ceremony last month, the bishop of the northern city of Grevena was caught on camera lowering the masks of dignitaries before allowing them to kiss a cross.

“What should I be afraid of here

in church? God protects us”, 60-year-old Chryssa Karypidou said at a recent religious festival to honour Thessaloniki's patron Saint Demetrius.

Communication specialists say contradictory messages allow anti-vax sentiment to flourish.

“In the first quarantine the message was more coherent, but fear was also a driving force for observance,” says Antonis Gardikiotis, associate professor of social psychology and media at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

“Then there were contradictory messages, resulting in a gap that sowed confusion,” he adds.

An “overload” of information about the pandemic can also create negativity, and frequent media references to fake news may also have the opposite effect, Gardikiotis warns.

Recent protests against Covid restrictions in Thessaloniki as well as the capital Athens have degenerated into clashes with riot police.

“It's all lies,” says ‘ostas, a retired police officer who along with his wife have taken part in protests in Thessaloniki.

“All the evidence is posted on the internet. If you drink herbal tea and pay attention to your diet, you have no reason to be afraid, or get vaccinated,” he adds.

Fear never leaves

FROM PAGE 16
establish the EPZ on 1,832.27 acres of land at a governor board meeting of the Bepza.

It was decided that the Ministry of Industries, which claims ownership of the land, would hand over the land to Bepza.

Last year, the local administration set the estimated price of the land at Tk 213.39 crore.

“The ministry of industries is in the final stage to hand over the land to Bepza,” said Ashraful Kabir, project director of the EPZ.

Nazma Binte Alamgir, general manager (public relations) at Bepza, said construction work would begin soon at the site.

Backed by local influential people, police on November 6, 2016, opened fire on the Santals, leaving three people dead and many others injured. Their huts and shacks were torn down and eventually 2,500 Santal families got evicted.

Contacted, Philimon Baske, president of the Sahebganj-Bagda Farn Bhumii-Uddhar Sangram Committee, said, “The Santal people have no experience of other jobs. They don't have education or property. If the government evicts them again, they will have no place to live. We can't let the EPZ be built here.

“The land is ours, but the ministry of industries is selling it to Bepza. We will stop this by any means.”

India, NZ stay

FROM PAGE 16
Kohli's men snapped their losing streak against Afghanistan but must handsomely win Monday's final group match against Namibia and hope Afghanistan beat New Zealand to have any hope of reaching the last four.

Earlier in the day, New Zealand batsmen Glenn Phillips and Jimmy Neesham launched a late assault on Namibia that secured an important 52-run win in Sharjah on Friday and boosted their hopes of reaching the semifinals.

The middle-order duo blasted 67 runs in the last four overs to take New Zealand to 163-4 after the team appeared to be in a touch of trouble at 96-4 at the end of the 16th over.

Phillips made an unbeaten 39 off 21 balls, a knock under pressure that included a boundary and three sixes, while Neesham stayed with him to the end on 35 from 23 balls with two huge hits over the ropes.

Namibia managed only 111-7 from 20 overs as Tim Southee (2-15) and Trent Boult (2-20) ensured there would be no upset.

Global food

FROM PAGE 16
especially Canada, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, continued to put upward pressure on prices,” FAO said of wheat.

Wheat futures started November at new peaks, with U.S. prices at fresh highs since 2012 and Paris front-month futures at a record high as import demand remained brisk.

World vegetable oil prices jumped 9.6 percent on the month to set a record high, supported by further strength in palm oil prices as labour shortages in Malaysia continued to hamper production, FAO said.

In contrast, global sugar prices eased 1.8 percent in October, ending a run of six straight monthly rises, according to FAO.

Rome-based FAO cut its projection of global cereal production in 2021, to 2.793 billion tonnes from 2.800 billion estimated a month ago, according to its cereal supply and demand outlook.

Bodies

FROM PAGE 16
in the head and another in the forehead. Both the bodies were sent to Sylhet MAG Medical College Hospital for autopsies.

“Those youths might have crossed the border and were shot in the no man's land for this reason,” he added.

Locals claimed that BSF shot them dead, he said.

Regarding the incident, the Indian High Commission in Dhaka yesterday provided a statement from BSF saying that “no such incident had taken place on the Indian side.”

The bodies were found inside the Bangladesh territory, it added.

“A company commander-level flag meeting was held yesterday and BCB's claim of BSF shooting down the two men was refuted,” read the statement.

Contacted, the commanding officer of 19th BGB Battalion and BGB headquarters denied commenting on the issue.

Hungary used Pegasus phone spyware: ruling party official

AFP, Budapest

Hungary used the invasive Pegasus spy software, a senior ruling party official said Thursday, but insisted the government had not spied on citizens illegally.

In July Hungary was the only EU country listed by an investigative journalism consortium as a potential user of the spyware, with hundreds of targets including journalists, lawyers and other public figures.

Biden seeks right balance on Iran pressure as talks resume

AFP, Washington

With nuclear talks set to resume this month with Iran, an increasingly skeptical US President Joe Biden is seeking the right balance between threats and incentives to bring Tehran back into compliance with a 2015 deal.

Iran has agreed to resume talks on November 29 with world powers after a five-month gap to salvage the agreement in which it promised to scale back nuclear work drastically in return for economic relief.

Much has changed since the talks broke off in June, notably Iran's election of an ultraconservative president, Ebrahim Raisi.

During the break, Iran has kept pursuing its nuclear work, leading even Western supporters of the 2015 accord to warn that the deal could become

useless due to Tehran's advances.

“The Biden administration has to walk a fine line between demonstrating to Iran that Tehran will benefit from sanctions relief if the deal is restored, while not giving in to Iranian leverage,” said Kelsey Davenport, director for nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association.

“The United States cannot reward Iran for continuing to violate the nuclear deal,” she said, while adding that the Biden administration also needs to show “concrete and immediate benefits.”

Biden entered the talks in Vienna -- held indirectly, with Iran refusing direct meetings with US envoy Rob Malley -- in hopes of a quick revival of the agreement from which former president Donald Trump withdrew the United States.

Trump slapped sweeping sanctions on Iran, including a unilateral ban on its oil exports, leading Iran to move away from its commitments.

In one key point of friction, Iran is seeking a lifting of all sanctions while the Biden administration says the only measures on the table are those imposed by Trump over the nuclear program when exiting the deal.

But the task is not simple as the Trump administration in its final months duplicated many sanctions on Iran, so measures taken over nuclear work are also in force over other concerns.

Iran, for its part, wants a guarantee that the United States will maintain its commitments -- an unlikely promise for Biden, whose rivals in Trump's Republican Party have made no secret that they would shift course if they

win back the White House in 2024.

Biden, nonetheless, appeared to hint at such a promise in a joint statement Saturday on the sidelines of a Group of 20 summit in Rome with the leaders of Britain, France and Germany -- nations that, along with Russia and China, remain part of the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The three European leaders said they “welcome President Biden's clearly demonstrated commitment to return the US to full compliance with the JCPOA and to stay in full compliance, so long as Iran does the same.”

Russia's ambassador to international organizations in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, called Biden's pledge “a significant step towards assurances and guarantees Iran is looking for.”

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

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Mobilise aid to help the new poor

Immediate action needed to tackle the alarming rise of poverty

ACCORDING to the findings of a survey done by the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) and Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), the number of new poor reached 32.4 million in August, after the second wave of the pandemic. In March, before the second wave of Covid led to another round of lockdown, the percentage of people counted as new poor was 14.75, according to an earlier edition of the study. In the latest study, that number has gone up to 19.54 percent.

This study once again confirms what a number of others have previously suggested—that the shock from the second wave of the pandemic has led to a further rise of poverty. Since the Covid pandemic started, a number of studies conducted by different organisations have indicated that poverty in Bangladesh has risen due to the pandemic-induced lockdowns, as well as other factors. In the meantime, we have seen high-level government officials refuting these numbers, while failing to provide any of their own or without giving reasons as to why these numbers weren't acceptable.

In any case, what is clear as day is that poverty in the country has gotten worse, and people are struggling as a result. On top of that, due to international supply chain disruptions and the workings of various local trade syndicates, prices of essential commodities have gone through the roof in recent times. All these combined is causing huge sufferings to people—particularly those who have been pushed into the poverty trap during the time of the pandemic.

Amid such circumstances, we fail to understand why the government is raising fuel prices, which will surely have a knock-on effect on all other goods and services. What is required is for the government to provide all forms of support to the people who are economically struggling, not measures that will increase their financial burden.

In line with that, the government should immediately consult with experts to formulate strategies that can quickly help those who have become newly poor, to get back on their feet. A big factor that has led to the rise in poverty is the loss of jobs. The government should, on the one hand, provide some sort of unemployment benefit to them, while on the other, take measures that can help them get reemployed. Moreover, the government should also provide financial aid in terms of direct cash transfer to these people, and for that, it needs to identify who are in most need of such assistance, through consultations with different NGOs and think tanks.

Do more to de-escalate unrest in Rohingya camps

Authorities must step in to investigate and resolve internal conflicts

IT seems that tensions in Rohingya refugee camps are only increasing as this daily recently reported the death of an alleged Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) leader in Whykong camp in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila. Though it is unclear as to what really transpired, police suspect that Mohammad Hashim, a refugee himself, may have been the victim of a mob beating. It has also been alleged that the self-proclaimed ARSA leader was one of the masterminds in the assassination of Rohingya leader Mohib Ullah in September, and may also have been involved in the October 22 killings of six people in a camp madrasa.

One thing that Hashim's alleged murder makes clear is that it is high time for the government to step in and put a stop to such violence and unrest in the refugee camps. The unopposed expansion of an insurgent group such as ARSA is certainly a concern for our national security, as they are often involved in criminal activities such as drug peddling and weapons trafficking along our borders, besides also causing mayhem in the lives of Rohingya refugees through attacks, human trafficking, and even murder. Earlier reports by this daily have stated how refugees spend their nights fearing criminal attacks in the overcrowded camps.

We reiterate our concern, from our earlier columns, about whether only three battalions of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) are enough to effectively maintain law and order in the camps that are housing over a million refugees. Though patrolling by security forces increased after the killing of Mohib Ullah, it is clearly not enough to make the camps safe for their inhabitants.

We also urge the government to be proactive in de-escalating the tensions in Rohingya refugee camps, instead of reacting to gruesome incidents after they occur. If such incidents are allowed to continue without thorough investigation and strict resistance from authorities, the conflicts between groups within the camps will only increase and may even reach a tipping point that will be difficult to turn back from. Security in the camps must be consolidated significantly if we are to avoid more violence and loss of lives. Authorities must prioritise the safety of the Rohingyas seeking refuge in the camps, until their peaceful and dignified repatriation is achieved.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Don't raise fuel price

In the last six years, the average crude oil price was about USD 50, when BPC didn't reduce local fuel price, hence it made significant profits. I suggest that, with the higher crude oil price now, the BPC not increase local fuel price in a Covid-distressed economy. Rather, if needed, it should redeem some of its earlier made profits to maintain the current price level at least for the next two years. This would be useful for the economy, business and even for the government.

Dr Moazzem Hossain, Dept of Civil Engineering, Buat

A lemonade for the illusion of confidence



SHAMSAD MORTUZA

WHEN life gives you lemons, make lemonade. If lemonade can help you go invisible, do something insane: rob a bank, perhaps. In 1995, a middle-aged man named McArthur Wheeler walked into two banks in Pittsburgh doing just that. He even smiled at the security cameras during the heist. Later when police arrested him, he muttered: "But I wore the juice." Wheeler thought that by rubbing lemon juice all over his face—as lemon juice can be used as invisible ink—he would be unseen to surveillance cameras. Police later confirmed that the man was not deranged, but "incredibly mistaken." Psychologist Prof David Dunning and his student Justin Kruger at Cornell University studied this curious

played in strategically customised, spin-friendly, slow wickets. They scored low, but defended such low scores against worthy opponents. The slowness of the pitch allowed our batters to toy with their shots: scoops, reverse sweeps, or cross-bats (some of these shots were agricultural enough to be reminiscent of our indigenous games, such as *danguti*). These matches were designed to boost team confidence ahead of the tournament. Our formidable win against Sri Lanka, Australia, and New Zealand gave us false self-assurance.

Our Tigers flew from the soggy fields of Mirpur to the dry deserts of Dubai in a hot air balloon. It did not take much for Great Britain (Scotland, Ireland, and England) and Australia to remind us of the reality of the colonial game. Agricultural shots against the colonial powers worked well in films such as "Lagaan." Illusion reigns supreme in movies. In reality, such shots reduced our Mirpur Tigers to kittens who were simply found playing with a ball of

incompetence calculus.

I blame my middle-class sentiment for my whimsical support for the Tigers of Mirpur. My love-hate pendulum with which I approach our national team is probably common to most of the people that I know. We love to be associated with victory, but dissociate the moment there is defeat. Then again, as a nation, we don't get too many opportunities to be proud of our own. Team Tigers have given us a few such occasions. We pin our hopes on their success. It pains us to see our balloons of hope being burst by their irresponsibility and incompetence. Probably, by now, the incorrigible Tigers have made most of us indifferent to sports.

However, while watching the gallery, another reality dawned on me. The expatriate Bangladeshi audience went to every match to enthusiastically support their team. The match for them was a lemon that promised lemonade. Most of them are probably humiliated by their affluent hosts on a daily basis. The matches were a respite from the daily

who took the admission test under the "Ka" unit at Dhaka University, have failed. The pass percentage in the "Kha" unit is slightly better: 16.89 percent. Ironically, 75 percent of these admission-seekers scored a perfect GPA of 5 in their HSC or equivalent exams. The admission tests have exploded the bubble of confidence these applicants have been living in. As someone who used to set questions for these tests, I know that the question-setters are under strict instructions to

Our Tigers flew from the soggy fields of Mirpur to the dry deserts of Dubai in a hot air balloon. It did not take much to remind them of the reality of the game.



If the Tigers see international tournaments as platforms to learn at best, they must be the most educated team in the world.

FILE PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

case and came up with a theory, which is now known as the Dunning-Kruger effect. It talks about the "illusion of confidence."

In their research paper, Dunning and Kruger wrote: "When people are incompetent in the strategies they adopt to achieve success and satisfaction, they suffer a dual burden: Not only do they reach erroneous conclusions and make unfortunate choices, but their incompetence robs them of the ability to realise it. Instead, like Mr Wheeler, they are left with the mistaken impression that they are doing just fine."

Our national men's cricket team went to the ICC T20 World Cup with similar over-confidence buoyed by the success attained in the preparatory matches

hope during the entire competition. The Dunning-Kruger effect could be seen in action as the reverse bell curve exposed the over-confidence and incompetence of our team. The hyperbole with which we cite stats to describe our non-performing stars sounded horrible (pun unintended), especially in the shrieks of an over-enthusiast commentator. The blame game of the board bosses sounded equally empty as they had failed miserably over the years to spread cricket outside of Mirpur or to create a high-performing talent pool. Instead, they prematurely bring in players from the Under-19 team to play for the senior team, only to break their confidence once and for all. Political considerations add further to the

drudgery. They probably spent a fortune to be in the fields to support their team, hoping for a moment of glory which would allow them to hold their heads high among the people who have little or no respect for them in their professional sphere. The game was more than runs and wickets. It was a *lagan* (appropriate time) for them to be proud of their nation in an international setting. But provided with the lemon, our team managed to turn it sour for its fellow compatriots. I guess we are making over-confidence a national habit.

You can take my lemonade saga with a grain of salt. Let me garnish it with a mint-condition example.

Around 90 percent of the applicants,

judge the knowledge of the students at an intermediate level. Then why would so many students fail? True, the selection process demands a high number of eliminations, but that does not justify the failure of so many students in the tests.

According to one report, many of the students failed due to their lack of proficiency in compulsory English language. English is important as students are expected to read texts and supplementary resources in English at the tertiary level. Without linguistic competence, they will be forced either to express in a faulty language or to memorise their answers. Maybe it is rote learning that has improved their academic portfolios at the secondary level. The GPA is a result of a rehearsed performance or a faulty assessment system that gives false hope to our young ones. As our cricket stars have shown, grades are not always true reflectors of one's abilities.

The coaching centres and publishing houses spoon-feed our students with false confidence that falls short at the first sight of a real-life test. The high GPAs are nothing but a manipulation of the market. Similarly, why are we not surprised when our top-ranked player is given chance to play in IPL not for his performance, but for his ability to lure the Bangladeshi market?

Isn't it uncanny that the Dunning-Kruger effect can be traced in both our education and our cricket? Well, our cricket gods have once again consoled us saying that these games on the global platforms are but occasions to learn. One meme has it right: the learning curve of the Bangladesh team makes Tigers the most educated team in the world.

Meanwhile, someone in Cricinfo wryly wrote: "You are the weakest link, goodbye."

Shamsad Mortuza is the pro-vice-chancellor of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).

Celebrating cooperatives, reimagining economies



DEBRA EFROGMSON

ON the first Saturday in November, Bangladesh observes the National Cooperatives Day. In these times of domination by giant corporations, it may be hard to imagine

the role of cooperatives. Yet, the Bangladesh government is supporting the development and growth of cooperatives, resulting in a growing number of cooperatives and their members, and their increased importance to the economy.

The dominance of giant corporations on the global economy is not something to celebrate. The fact that corporations are richer than many national governments gives the former far too much power. Back when I worked on tobacco control, I was shocked that governments around the world were reluctant to pass laws that might harm the business of tobacco companies. Wait— isn't it the government's duty to make laws to protect health and the environment? Isn't controlling corporations a major part of their duties? But even in countries which score low on the corruption index, corporate lobbying still influences policy.

Giant corporations have a well-deserved notoriety for lobbying against any number of regulations that would protect the environment and people's health but harm corporate profit. Examples of corporate malfeasance include lobbying that contributes to major oil spills, Facebook spreading misinformation about Covid-19 vaccines and contributing to the January 6 insurrection at the US Capitol, and Amazon crushing unions. Giant corporations are also known for their effect on small businesses: when a

Walmart comes to town, a tsunami of shop closures follows in its wake, as small businesses have no way to match Walmart's prices. With Amazon delivering ever more goods—and there are various smaller versions of Amazon fulfilling the same role here in Bangladesh—fewer people go to shops, which also helps put those shops out of business. But with those closures of local shops comes a devastating effect on the local economy, from which many small towns never

Allow me a brief lapse into fantasy. You know how there are all those cheap Chinese goods for sale—toys and sandals and other junk that lasts perhaps a few weeks or months at most? But people buy them because they are "affordable." Well, obviously, mass-producing plastic products for consumption by the poor is not great for the environment, nor does it particularly contribute to human happiness. Imagine, instead, a world in which more of our goods were hand-



Successful cooperatives have changed the fate of many communities all around Bangladesh.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

recover. Fewer people have traditional jobs. More people work for the gig economy, where they have no worker protection, no health insurance, and no pension.

It might seem that the only direction in which we can move is towards ever greater consolidation of the economy into the hands of a few corporations, and thus ever more billionaires controlling most of the world's wealth—as well as its governments. But there is a brighter alternative.

produced by craftspeople, who have some interest and pride in their work. Rather than shop regularly, we would own a lot fewer things, but they would be of better quality. Rather than work for giant corporations where, too often, we are merely interchangeable parts easily discarded if, heaven forbid, we raise our voices for better working conditions, we would belong to a local cooperative of people interested in using their skills to earn their livelihood—but also in contributing to the community.

Cooperation is an essential quality that enables people to live together and local economies to thrive.

Another fantasy, based on a Bangla novel I read, is of local communal kitchens that buy food in bulk, hire local people to cook it, then sell it at low cost to those in the community. If you can't afford even that price, you can contribute labour to eat for free. Communal kitchens would save people money and time. Working together to cook and serve the food would also strengthen communities.

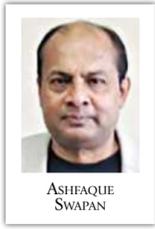
There are many organisations, like the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and Local Futures, that study and promote a more localised approach that emphasises cooperation over competition, the local over the global, and concern for all life over selfishness. There is no reason to allow giant corporations to continue to dominate our economies and our lives. We can support the local—both in terms of individual and small businesses and cooperatives. Truth be told, competition is overrated in economics; cooperation is an essential quality that enables people to live together and local economies to thrive.

If you agree, try to ensure that your shopping matches your convictions by supporting cooperatives and small local businesses, rather than giant corporations. We all can contribute to creating the society that we wish to live in.

Debra Efrogmson is the executive director of the Institute of Wellbeing, Bangladesh, and author of "Beyond Apologies: Defining and Achieving an Economics of Wellbeing."

For communal violence, the burden of guilt falls on the majority too

An open letter to the Hindu community



ASHFAQ SWAPAN

MY dearest Hindu sisters and brothers, I am overcome with grief, outrage and shame as I write to you. I live in the United States, on the other side of the world, but the heart-breaking anguish that I feel is so real, that the terrible events that took place

Our celebration of Ekushey—and yes, I call it a celebration of our culture and our language—is a truly inclusive celebration that late author Sunil Gangopadhyay once described, tongue-in-cheek, as the first truly secular Bengali festival. We celebrate Pabala Baisakh with gusto. Our reverence of Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam is widespread.

In the bureaucracy and government, after decades of unspoken discrimination, the presence of minorities is impressive and encouraging—full credit to the government for that.

But all of it feels utterly hollow when such terrible depredations befall you, our Hindu brethren. It reminds me of the furious rage that my African-American brethren in the United States felt when they asked: What good is it to have Barack Obama as the nation's first African-American president, when a police officer in Minnesota can throttle George Floyd to death?

In Bangladesh, it is my hope that the government will eschew the temptation to sweep the incidents under the rug. It would do well to remember that the attacks against our Hindu brethren are as much an attack on the government itself as well as on our nation's lofty goal of a plural, tolerant, and humane society.

Rather than blaming the government, with deep anguish and shame, I would much rather point an accusing finger at broader society. It is the majority community which has to shoulder the blame. And yes, I include myself among the accused.

While it is heart-warming to see the fairly widespread expressions of protest and condemnation of the horrific attacks on Hindus, that, alas, is not the full story.

There is a chilling lack of outrage that borders on apathy in the broader majority community that encourages these bigoted



What does it say about us when we play silent bystanders as our Hindu brethren's homes burn in the fire of bigotry and mindless hatred?

PHOTO: COLLECTED

miscreants. Is this the same country where the killing of a few students galvanised the nation in February 1952?

Humane, conscientious Muslims—and I do believe they constitute an overwhelming majority in Bangladesh—can no longer afford the unconscionable luxury of remaining bystanders as violent bigots take over their faith. The attackers—like bigots of every faith—are unprincipled scoundrels. They used an incendiary excuse to launch widespread attacks on innocent Hindus, knowing full well that they had nothing to do with the alleged incident.

Muslims must realise that the honour of their faith does not only rest on its teachings alone. How Muslims conduct themselves can sully its reputation grievously. The destruction of the Bamiyan sculptures by the Taliban in Afghanistan, the mass rape of Iraq's Yazidi women by the Islamic State soldiers are, among other things, also a direct attack on Islam's reputation as a tolerant, humane faith.

"When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle," warned Edmund Burke, an 18th century Irish

philosopher and statesman.

It is not enough to express our condemnation. As the majority community, let's take a page out of history. I have heard old-timers recount to me how, during the Pakistan era, they went on nightly vigils to protect Hindus during riots. Next Durga Puja, let's set up a multi-faith infrastructure to protect the freedom of religion.

The majority community needs to ensure the safety and honour of all minorities as if the honour of our faith depended on it. Because it does.

But I would like to believe that we will protect you, my sisters and brothers, for a simpler reason. We will protect you because for millennia we have shared this land, and shared together all the joys and sorrows that life offers. We will protect you because regardless of your faith, you are part of our family.

Over a hundred years ago, Rabindranath Tagore returned the knighthood following the 1919 massacre in Jallianwala Bagh in Punjab.

In a letter to Lord Chelmsford, the erstwhile viceroy, Tagore wrote: "The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings."

Tagore's protest was against the British colonial government, but mine is a call to arms to the majority community.

My Hindu sisters and brothers, I share your grief, pain, and outrage. What I cannot share with you is a terrible burden of guilt that is mine alone.

We failed to protect you.

Ashfaq Swapan is a writer and editor based in Atlanta, US.

a few weeks ago might as well have happened in front of my eyes.

As time passes by, such events begin to recede from our collective memory.

But that is most certainly not true in my case.

In fact, it is our collective moral duty to keep this harrowing memory alive and fresh in our minds—as a warning about the depths to which human depravity can descend in the name of religion.

I wince every time I revisit the ghastly experience you have gone through, my sisters and brothers.

The desecration of your idols. Attacks on defenceless fishermen a long distance away.

The fear, humiliation and helplessness that all of you feel.

The desolate feeling of being all alone and helpless in your own country, where you have lived for generations.

What support and consolation can I offer, when words seem so woefully inadequate? What use are tears of grief, when there is no substantive sign that the culprits will be brought to book?

The recent events have laid bare an awful paradox.

Bangladesh today has all the accoutrements of a plural, tolerant society—and the achievements are not inconsiderable.

Will Glasgow fix the broken climate finance promises?

ANIS CHOWDHURY and JOMO KWAME SUNDARAM

THE current climate mitigation plans will result in a catastrophic 2.7 degrees Celsius rise in world temperature. USD 1.6-3.8 trillion is needed annually to avoid global warming exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Rich countries have long broken their COP15 pledge, made in Copenhagen in 2009, to mobilise "USD 100 billion per year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries." The Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the situation, reducing available finance. Poor countries, many of whom are already caught in debt traps, struggle to cope.

While minuscule compared to the finance needed to adequately address climate change, it was considered a good start. The number includes both public and private finance, but with sources—public or private, grants or loans, etc—unspecified. Such ambiguity has enabled double-counting, poor transparency, and creative accounting, the UN Independent Expert Group on Climate Finance has noted. Thus, the rich countries' Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported USD 80 billion in climate finance for developing countries in 2019.

Fudging numbers

But the OECD climate finance numbers include non-concessional commercial loans, "rolled-over" loans and private finance. Some donor governments count most development aid, even when not primarily for "climate action." Also, the dispute over which funds are to be considered "new and additional" has not been resolved since the 1992 adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the Rio Earth Summit.

Official development assistance redesignated as climate finance should be categorised as "reallocated," rather than "additional" funding. Consequently, poor countries are losing aid for education, healthcare, and other public goods. India has disputed the OECD claim of USD 57 billion climate finance in 2013-14, suggesting

a paltry USD 2.2 billion instead! Other developing countries have also challenged such creative accounting and "greenwashing."

Climate finance anarchy

Developing countries expected the promised USD 100 billion yearly to be largely public grants disbursed via the then new UNFCCC Green Climate Fund. Oxfam estimates public climate financing at only USD 19-22.5 billion in 2017-18, with little effective coordination

Development Programme (UNDP), and Global Environment Facility (GEF). But all are underfunded, requiring frequent replenishment. Uncertain financing and the developing countries' lack of meaningful involvement in disbursements make planning all the more difficult.

Financialisation has meant that climate funding increasingly involves private financial interests. Claims of private climate finance from rich to poor countries are much

Putting profits first

The poorest countries desperately need to rebuild resilience and adapt human environments and livelihoods. Adaptation funds are required to better cope with the new circumstances created by global warming. The needed adaptation—such as improving drainage, water catchment and infrastructure—is costly, but nonetheless desperately necessary. But donors prefer publicisable "easy wins" from climate mitigation, especially as they increasingly gave loans, rather than grants. Thus, although the Paris Agreement at COP21 sought to balance mitigation with adaptation, most climate finance still seeks to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

As climate adaptation is rarely lucrative, it is of less interest to private investors. Rather, private finance favours mitigation investments generating higher returns. Thus, only USD 20 billion was for adaptation in 2019—less than half the sum for mitigation. Unsurprisingly, the OECD report acknowledges that only three percent of private climate finance has been for adaptation.

Chasing profits, most climate finance goes to middle-income countries, not the poorest or most vulnerable. Only USD 5.9 billion—less than a fifth of the total adaptation finance—has gone to the UN's 46 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) during 2014-18! This is "less than three percent of [poorly] estimated LDCs annual adaptation finance needs between 2020-2030."

Cruel ironies

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recognises the "unequal burden of rising temperatures." It is indeed a "cruel irony" that those far less responsible for global warming bear the brunt of its costs. Meanwhile, providing climate finance via loans is pushing poor countries deeper into debt.

Increasingly frequent extreme weather disasters are often followed by much more borrowing due to the poor countries' limited fiscal space. But loans for low-income countries (LICs) cost much more than for

high-income ones. Hence, LICs spend five times more on debt than on coping with climate change and cutting GHG emissions.

Four-fifths of the most damaging disasters since 2000 have been due to tropical storms. The worst disasters have raised government debt in 90 percent of cases within two years—with no prospect of debt relief. As many LICs are already heavily indebted, climate disasters have been truly catastrophic—as in Belize, Grenada and Mozambique. Little has trickled down to the worst affected, and other vulnerable, needy and poor communities.

Funding gap

Based on the countries' own long-term goals for mitigation and adaptation, the UNFCCC's Standing Committee on Finance estimated that developing countries need USD 5.8-5.9 trillion in all until 2030. The UN estimates that the developing countries currently need USD 70 billion yearly for adaptation, rising to USD 140-300 billion by 2030.

In July, the "V20" of finance ministers from 48 climate-vulnerable countries urged delivery of the 2009 pledge of USD 100 billion to affirm a commitment to improve climate finance. This should include increased funds, more in grants, and with at least half for adaptation, but the UNFCCC chief has noted a lack of progress since.

Only strong enforcement of rigorous climate finance criteria can stop rich countries from abusing the existing ambiguous reporting requirements. Currently, fragmented climate financing urgently needs more coherence and strategic prioritisation of support to those most distressed and vulnerable.

This month's UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland can and must set things right before it is too late. Will the new Cold War drive the North to do the unexpected to win the rest of the world to its side, instead of further militarising tensions?

Anis Chowdhury is adjunct professor at Western Sydney University and the University of New South Wales, Australia. Jomo Kwame Sundaram is a former economics professor and a former assistant secretary-general for economic development at the United Nations.

Copyright: Inter Press Service



The big emitters' promise to ramp up aid for the developing countries to USD 100 billion per year by 2020 was first made at the 15th UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, in 2009. That promise has yet to be fulfilled.

PHOTO: AFP

of public finance. The developing countries believed that their representatives would help decide disbursement, ensuring equity, efficacy, and efficiency. But little is actually managed by developing countries themselves. Instead, climate finance is disbursed via many channels: rich countries' aid and export promotion agencies, private banks, equity funds, and multilateral institutions' loans and grants.

Several UN programmes also support climate action, including the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UN

contested. Even the OECD estimate has not been rising steadily, instead fluctuating directionless from USD 16.7 billion in 2014 to USD 10.1 billion in 2016 and USD 14.6 billion in 2018.

The actual role and impact of private finance are also much disputed. Unsurprisingly, private funding is unlikely to help countries most in need, address policy priorities, or compensate for damages beyond repair. Instead, "blended finance" often uses public finance to de-risk private investments.

QUOTABLE Quote

KHALIL GIBRAN
(1883-1931)
Lebanese writer

The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Russian legislature
- 5 Role for Peck
- 9 Printer need
- 10 Chops finely
- 12 Chance to swing
- 13 Baja buddy
- 14 Garden activity
- 16 Singer Henley
- 17 Great weight
- 18 Apparent
- 20 Corner
- 22 Secures
- 23 Prank
- 25 Ready for business

DOWN

- 1 Adore
- 2 Straight
- 3 Honeyed drink
- 4 Skilled worker
- 5 Wise words

28 Anxious feeling

32 Looking for

34 Bridge action

35 One or more

36 Slow flow

38 Rounded hill

40 Grassy plant

41 Eagle abode

42 Grove makeup

43 Office div.

44 Beer, slangily

6 Yonder fellow

7 Tart

8 "Shoo!"

9 Critical asset

11 Airs

15 Triton circles it

19 Late runners

21 Army level

24 Eats

25 Honshu city

26 Wrote

27 Pal of Pooh

29 Tolerated

30 Burns a bit

31 Periphery

33 Spot in the ocean

37 Andean nation

39 Gloss target

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SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

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

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

GET ME A CUP OF COFFEE. HOW WOULD YOU LIKE IT? YOU KNOW HOW I LIKE IT. BUT I LIKE HEARING YOU SAY "LIGHT AND SWEET"

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

SQUEEEK! OH IT'S DAD. THANKS, IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU TOO! YOUR CAR'S BRAKES SOUND JUST LIKE THE UPS VAN.

'Aly Zaker's absence is still hard to fathom'

Colleagues and friends remember the legendary actor on his birth anniversary

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Renowned television actor and thespian Aly Zaker is a household name, resounding through the hearts of the audience for decades, with his brilliant stage and screen presence. Be it acting or directing, the Ekushey Padak awardee's contribution to defining the culture and art scene of the country remains unparalleled.

Today marks the 77th birth anniversary of the legendary artist, his first after he passed away on November 27, 2020. He had succumbed to his long and hard battle against cancer, and had also tested positive for Covid-19.

The star has garnered his career with many prestigious awards, including the Bangabandhu Award, Noren Biswas Padak, Munir Chowdhury Medal, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Award, Medal, Meril Prothom-Alo Lifetime Achievement Award, and The Daily Star- Standard Chartered Lifetime Achievement award, among many others.

Aly Zaker first appeared on stage with Aranyak



PHOTO: STAR

Natya Dal in Mamunur Rashid's play, "Kabor".

"During the Liberation War, while we were in Kolkata, I once asked Aly Zaker what he would do after the war ends. He said he wants to join theatre," shares Mamunur Rashid. After the war, Rashid approached Zaker for the play.

"We cannot even fathom that Aly Zaker is no longer with us," he shared. "His absence is still hard to fathom. It is his birthday, and it pains my heart when I speak about him now. Be it as a person, or as an actor, he was amazing!"

Being one of the founding members of Nagorik Natya Sampradaya, one of the pioneers in this field, Aly Zaker's directorial ventures "Dewan Gazir Kissa", "Nurul Din-er Shara Jibon", and "Galileo" are still praised during dinner table discussions and theatre circles. His other works as a director includes "Macbeth", "Toilo Sankat", "Ei Nishiddho Polli Te", "Baki Iti hash", and "Ochloyoton", among many others. A few of his exemplary films include "Lalsalu", "Nodir Naam Modhumoti" and "Rabeya", amongst many others.

Born in 1944, the Freedom Fighter is remembered for his impeccable performance in the Humayun Ahmed directorial tele-fictions "Bohubrihi" and "Aaj Robibar".

"His absence is an irreversible loss to us," says eminent actor Abul Hayat. "We were like a family."

"He gave his all to the theatre, and never expected anything in return. His contribution to television dramas is also undeniable," he adds.

His "Aaj Robibar" co-actor Faruque Ahmed also shares his experience of working with him. "I used to address Aly Zaker as 'Mama', and the audience would go crazy every time Mama slapped Moti, the character I played," shares the actor. "The audience still enjoys our performances together."

"He was a kind soul, and a library of knowledge to learn from. It still feels like yesterday that we had a chat," adds Faruque Ahmed. Aly Zaker tied the knot to renowned cultural persona, Sara Zaker. Their son, Iresh Zaker is a noted television face today.

In honour of the legendary artist, Nagorik Natya Sampradaya will host a celebration programme today at the Jatiya Natyashala of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, which starts at 7 pm. Eminent guests, colleagues and family members of Aly Zaker will attend the programme.

Translated by Akhlakur Rahman

I expected Bangladesh to qualify for the semifinals: Srabonno Towhida

Srabonno Towhida is an anchor, model and actress. She is now a household name, due to being featured in many popular anchoring stints over the years. The multifaceted artiste is also a doctor by profession. In a candid chat with The Daily Star, she spoke about balancing her two professions, personal goals, and more.

SHARMIN JOYA

Srabonno's first media appearance was modeling for a cover of a fashion outlet. She made her anchoring debut in 2013, with a show on Channel 24.

"Since I am also a doctor, I have to stay long hours at the hospital," says the actress. "My family is strict about the fact that whatever I do, my medical profession should not suffer. Thus, I had to reject some big-budget films as well." Srabonno informs that she will not miss the opportunity for a film, if she gets an offer for a character that is strong and empowering.

She has been hosting her signature show, Cricket Extra, since 2015. The ongoing T20 World Cup, alongside her regular television programmes in five other channels, has made her life hectic. However, her passion for cricket has not dwindled even after that. "I expected Bangladesh to qualify for the semifinals, but unfortunately, we couldn't make it!"

Srabonno made her acting debut in 2016 with the tele-fiction "Dourer Upor Prem", starring opposite Apurba. The project was directed by Tanvir Hossain. She earned appreciation after her appearance in the Mahmud Didar directorial, "Dakbaksho".

"At times, I feel extremely exhausted due to workload; I wish we had 48 hours a day," laughs the actress. "However, I meditate and maintain a balanced diet which is the secret to my calm and cool nature."

Being a mother of a three and a half year old child, she also manages to go to gym with her toddler. "I am a fitness freak, and I also need to spend time with my child, thus I take him to the gym with me." The actress will be seen in occasional projects for television, including a special Valentine's Day project. "I am also interested in working on web content, if it doesn't hamper my hospital duties," she concludes.



PHOTO: ABU NASER PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF TOWHIDA SRABONNO

Showcasing Bangladesh through the lens

Asaf Ud Daula's exhibition kicks off in Italy

MD MIZANUR RAHMAN HIMADRI

Bangladeshi photographer Asaf Ud Daula's solo exhibition "Emotion to Generate Change" commenced in the beautiful city of St Peter's Square (Vatican City) on October 31.

The exhibition showcased 40 photographs by Asaf which will be on exhibition till November 9.

Pope Francis inaugurated the photography exhibition while the photographs were curated by Italian filmmaker and writer Lia Beltrami. Asaf Ud Daula will be connected online throughout the exhibition.

Photographer Asaf Ud Daula said "For the first time in history, such a big photography exhibition has been organized here where the works of



a Bangladeshi photographer like me are being showcased," mentions the photographer.

"I have tried to depict the picturesque beauty of Bangladesh and the smiling countenance of her people. I feel thrilled thinking that people from all over the world are getting familiar with Bangladesh through the photos. I feel proud as a Bangladeshi to be able to raise the red and green flag of Bangladesh all over the world," adds Asaf Ud Daula.

This is the second solo exhibition by the young photographer on the Italian soil. In 2018, Asaf's first solo photo exhibition was held in "Religion Today Film Festival" in Trento, Italy where 33 photographs were showcased.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ASAF UD DAULA

Moving Bangladesh, Making Waves

Nuhash Humayun's vision before cameras start rolling

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

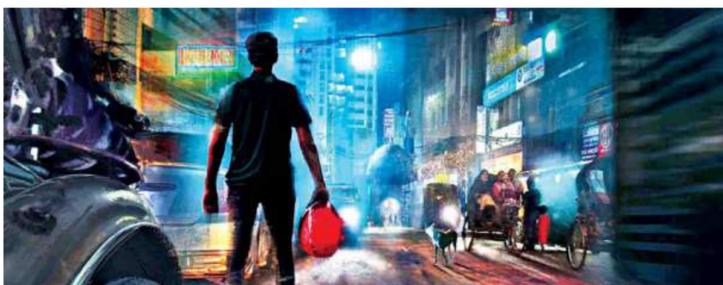
Exemplifying the day-to-day struggle of Dhaka city dwellers, Nuhash Humayun's is set to start shooting for his feature film "Moving Bangladesh".

Being the first film to bag the BDT 76 lakhs from the Taipei Film Fund, the production embodies the boredom of being stuck in traffic for hours and how a simple idea of ride sharing transformed the scenario for students, job-holders and entrepreneurs.

In a candid chat with The Daily Star, Nuhash shares how he came up with this concept, and developed it over time, his expectations from this venture, and more.

"Moving Bangladesh" is based on ride sharing app Pathao's becoming. However, Pathao will not have any creative or financial stake on the project. "This is a creative work of fiction based on facts," he shares.

The international project is a supported by Arifur Rahman and Bijon Imtiaz from



Concept Art by Shafayet Nabi Tamal.

Bangladesh's Goopy Bagha Productions, Bich-Quan Tran from France's Dissidenz Films and Patrick Mao Huang from Taiwan's Flash Forward Entertainment.

Following the fame brought to Nuhash by "Sincerely Yours, Dhaka", the director took a time of two years during this pandemic to

develop the script of "Moving Bangladesh".

"When I visited the Busan International Film Festival, I realised most of the questions that came my way were about Bangladesh, not even my film. I thought it could be interesting to depict the cultural shift that's happening right now in terms of the South



PHOTO: TAHSIN RAHMAN. COURTESY OF NUHASH HUMAYUN

Asian start-up scene. Solving local problems are becoming a global phenomenon."

Nuhash's "Moving Bangladesh" has already managed to keep uplift hopes as it made way some of the most prestigious platforms including Film Independent's Producer Lab 2022, Cannes Marche du Film

2021, Locarno Film Festival's Open Doors Consultancy 2020 and NFDC Film Bazaar Coproduction Market 2020.

"I was sitting in my bedroom, hyperactively describing the sights, sounds and world of 'Moving Bangladesh' to the Taipei Film Fund committee over Zoom, while my words were simultaneously being translated to Taiwanese. It was surreal," laughs Nuhash.

"It's not the amount, it's the respect that comes with Taipei Film Commission backing 'Moving Bangladesh' that fills me with joy" he mentions.

The director is looking for fresh faces for this production. "Echoing the theme of innovation, I was looking for a bit of origination in casting too. Thus, like all my productions, this film will treasure a combination the expertise of veteran artistes while a tint of freshness from young performers," concludes a hopeful Nuhash.



Sundarbans refuses to let in any more 'tigers'

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

After a successfully failed mission of "at least semifinal", the cricket team are home, the place where tigers roam.

As usual, they failed to show their potential as they yet again longed for the Merepoor Cricket Ground (MCG), also known as the Sundarbans of tigers.

They now seem destined to keep missing it as the Sundarbans has refused to give

shelter to more tigers as it has reached maximum capacity with its own tigers.

On behalf of the Sundarbans, a press release was released where it expressed its distinct reluctance to take more tigers of another race, also known as cricketers, as it is already over-crowded with its own. "We need some space. Our own tigers have been facing accommodation problems for your constant accommodation," Sundarbans said in the press release.

After the cricketer tigers put up an abject show in the T20 World Cup, people of Chapasthan supported Sundarbans' refusal. Lablu Mia from Dhoka believes that a country doesn't need too many tigers to protect its ecological balance.

"I support Sundarbans' decision. Why do we need so many tigers who cannot even hunt a cock? Let Sundarbans live with its existing ones. We may convert our new tigers to something else!"

"I think, they are not actually tigers. Tiger catches its prey sharply, but ours one cannot even catch a sloth," a conscious citizen of Chapasthan expressed his ire in one of his Facebook posts.

Sundarbans' decision had a massive impact. New tigers are constantly claiming the place to be their own.

"We are tigers, no matter what people say. How could Sundarbans reach maximum capacity when tigers are hardly seen there?"

We are here to fill the void Chapasthan has been feeling over the decades," a self-claimed tiger said.

Sundarbans may eventually allow those tigers, but it has pleaded to the people of the country very politely. "We have decided that they are not tigers, but we will review it whenever they win a match. So it may not be long before we let these tigers in. In the meantime, for forest's sake, be careful when you call someone 'the tigers'!"

WORLD CUP ROUNDUP

Bangladesh frontrunners for next time, says a coach; India guaranteed place in 2022 final



MAKING NEWS CORRESPONDENT

The T20 World Cup has taken the world by a storm in a teacup, setting tongues wagging as some return with tails distinctly unwagging and tucked between their legs, while others shoot upwards and onwards into the spheres of limited, forgettable glory.

We at Star Satireday have gotten the inside scoops on many of the comings and goings in the United Arab Emirates, and present them below before any other news organisation even catches wind of developments. As such, to protect our sources, we would like to mention that all information provided below is unsecured.

"This World Cup was preparation for the next one"

A coach associated with the Bangladesh side, can't say who it is, has told us that the Bangladesh's five played, five lost in the Super 12 stage of the World Cup was just preparation for the next World Cup next year. And the preparation was of a special sort.

"We all know what fanboys Bangladeshi supporters are," said the coach, who recently had his contract renewed as reward for overseeing a period of crushing failure. "When you win, even if the pitches you are winning on are basically unfit even for what you guys call 'rastar cricket', fans will get on your side regardless of whether you very recently lost against rookies."

"I like to plan for the future. And I knew

that even if we won one match in the Super 12 stage, we are back to square one, with people supporting the same old players who can't really win a T20 match to save their lives. And we all know that all the board cares about is throwing the public a bone once in a while, so it can spend the rest of the time not doing anything, other than renewing contracts.

"So, I helped pick all the wrong players for specific matches, deployed all the wrong tactics, and here we are... Square Zero."

A former player with celebrated leadership qualities, however, called hogwash on the coach's comments.

"The truth is, he doesn't know better. Even trying his best, he will make all the wrong calls. But me, since I moved away from the team, I at least waited to comment till the

team failed abjectly, so as not to disturb the spirit, unlike another politician... What's that? I commented smack in the middle of the tournament? Oh, okay. I really don't care."

INDIA GUARANTEED SPOT IN THE 2022 FINAL

An uninformed and imaginary source in the International Cricket Council (ICC) told us that they have come up with a surefire format for the next T20 World Cup in 2022 - India will be in the final.

"You see, in the 2007 50-over World Cup, Bangladesh knocked India out in the first round, and TV revenues took a historic hit.

"We have since changed up the format, and we found success in the 2011 World Cup, when India made the final and won the trophy. But in three T20 World Cups and two

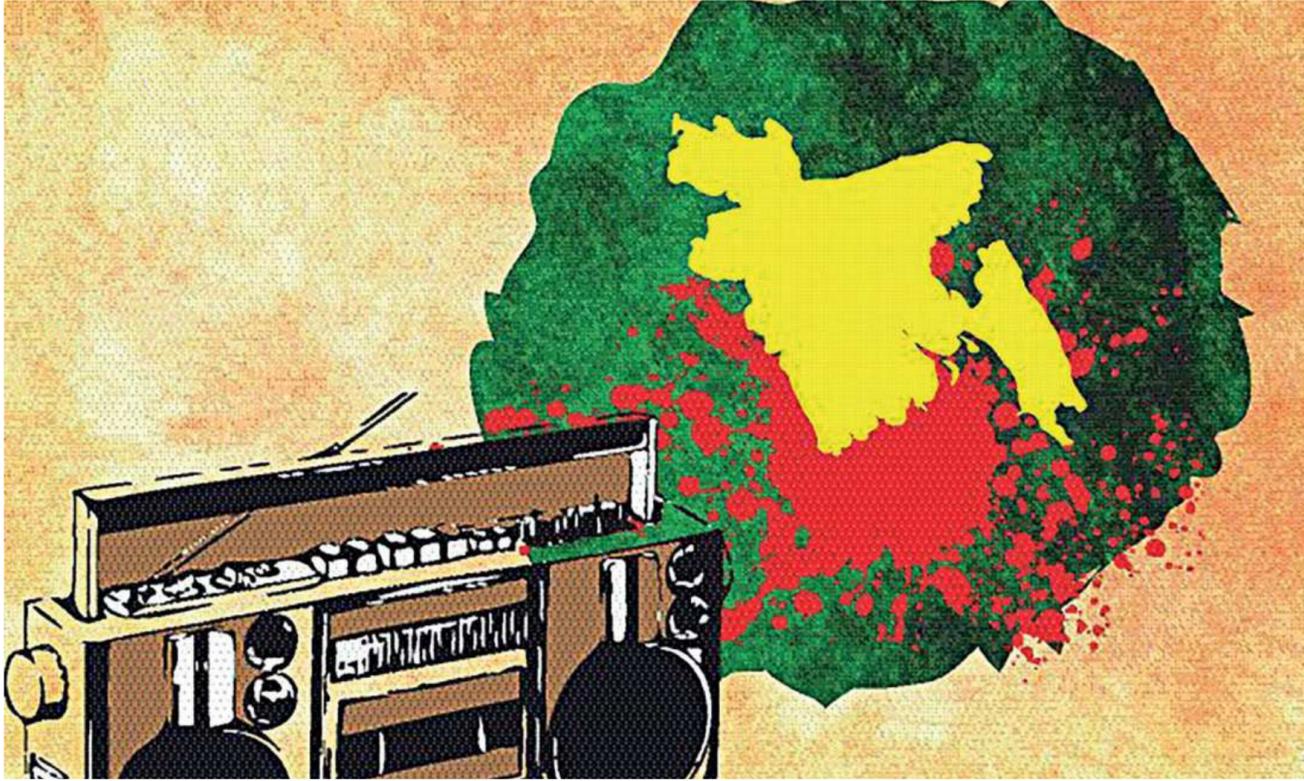
50-over World Cups since, India have not made the final.

"So, after Pakistan and New Zealand wiped the floor with them in the first two matches, we knew it was time to act. We had a meeting of the executive committee and it was decided that henceforth, India will play the final of all ICC events."

Another uninformed source of the Indian Premier League said that from the next season of the tournament, India will allow Pakistan players to play in the league.

"It is unfair that Pakistani players are the only ones who we don't know... ahem... the only ones who cannot practise in the best T20 tournament in the world."

Not all information in this article is accurate



Scenes from a Radio-Active Age

FAKRUL ALAM

As my siblings and I grew up in the first half of the 1960s, the radio set was the most sought-after device in our house. Till Baba bought a television set for us towards the end of the decade, it was our main source of entertainment, news and small talk.

Waking up in the morning then, we would hear Baba listening to devotional songs on India's Akashvani. Somewhat later, he would be tuning on to Rabindra Sangeet being played on its Calcutta station. Quite often he would hear folk songs—Abbasuddin was his great favorite. On Sunday mornings Baba would listen to Pankaj Mallick teaching Rabindra Sangeet songs (when Pankaj died in 1978, a very grief-stricken Baba told me that he had listened to this particular program almost without fail every Sunday—for over 30 years!). The radio was what he went to sleep with as well, for he would listen to Indian classical music at night till he dozed off.

It was only in early evening that Amma would claim the radio set to listen to her favorite programs about the countryside and ways of growing plants and raising poultry. If we children had refreshments with her then, we would be amused by what she was hearing, but not totally indifferent to her fondness for the mofussil town ambience that the radio program revived for her through such broadcasts. Another memory I have of her is listening to the radio as she prepared Iftar to break our fasts during Ramadan. We children would look forward eagerly to the siren sounding or the radio announcing it was time to have the special delicacies she was preparing then after the mandatory glass of water had been gulped.

For some time, we siblings were quite indifferent to these so, so solemn songs, seemingly monotonous tunes, and the quaint programs that my parents paid attention to. We children were mostly indifferent as well

middle of the decade, however, we were all overwhelmed by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. We would argue about our favorites before class, during tiffin and on our way home. "Is there a song like "I wanna hold your hand?" one of us would declare. Someone else would immediately counter: "Satisfaction" is so much better and soulful!" The radio and sports events seemed to be all the stuff of entertainment and conversation we boys needed outside studies.

On weekends and holidays when we stayed home, the transistor radio set in our house kept changing hands. Saturdays and Sundays, Baba would monopolize the radio till mid-morning. But when he snoozed off around 9 we siblings would take turns in listening to the radio. My eldest sister had the first claim; she would listen to Binaca Geetmala on Radio Ceylon's Hindi songs station—the weekly countdown of the Hindi film songs that had been most acclaimed invariably enchanted her. Then it was my turn to take over the radio so that I could listen to Radio Ceylon's English station "Hit Parade" songs. I listened to the station as long as I could, till my father would reclaim his constant weekend companion for another round of his kind of music, or news on either Akash Vani or Dhaka radio.

By the mid-60s, and with increasing frequency, we started to listen regularly to the songs being played on Dhaka radio station on weekends. Rabindranath had made a comeback on the station, and it was no coincidence that Nazrul's patriotic songs, especially songs about breaking prison shackles and becoming free, were being played over and over on the radio, at times sung by someone so animated and exhortatory like Abdul Latif. The Bangladesh movement was gathering momentum and the Bengali men and women running Dhaka radio station were doing their

the sixties I would increasingly feel left out of the vibrant conversation going on amongst us friends about what had excited them the most the previous evening. Invariably, it was what they had watched on Dhaka television then that mattered now. Except for a few class friends, who remained addicted to music and ready to share stories about favorite songs and singers in between classes and the basketball court in St. Joseph's School, most would talk only about what they had seen and not heard! Wasn't last night's episode of *Danger Man* or *Fugitive* so very thrilling? And could there be anything as crazily funny as the *Three Stooges* episode aired last evening?

Until Baba purchased a television set for us in 1969, I felt mostly left out of all the enjoyment being generated by the television sets in my friends' drawing rooms. Inevitably, radio programs became peripheral to school conversations. After the 6-point movement had gathered immense momentum and when Bangabandhu had been incarcerated, Akashvani's news still claimed attention as a source of alternative news and we still listened to the Binaca hit parade songs on Radio Ceylon or Rabindra Sangeet and Modern Bengali songs on weekend afternoons when Dhaka television had no broadcasting sessions, but that was all the attention time Radio could claim on us now.

And this was the way it was till 1 March 1971, when Radio once again became the main attraction in every Bangladeshi home till the end of the year. On March 8, we all were swept away by Bangabandhu's 7th March speech, broadcast a day late but in a splendid show of defiance by Bangladeshis in Dhaka radio station. True, after March 26 of the year, we had to make sure that the radio set was tuned at a low volume; the slightest sound of troop movements outside would lead to us shutting down the radio completely. But whenever we could, all day long we would listen to the radio whenever we could. From the time we heard the first broadcast of Shadheen Bangladesh Betar, we were hooked to it, for it played only what mattered for us. The narrative being strung together by Radio Pakistan radio and television broadcasts was so despicable!

I remember the excitement with which we tuned in to Shadheen Bangla Betar Kendra day after day during our 9 months' liberation war. The declaration of independence, the stirring songs, the satiric, sarcastic, exhortatory skits under the rubric of Charam Patra, news items about Mukti Bahini victories and Pakistani army casualties gave us all hope and made those of us in occupied Bangladesh look forward to the end of the war. We would listen to Dhaka radio or watch Pakistani television only to get stuff for derisive comments. Much better alternatives other than Shadheen Bangla Betar Kendra appeared to be BBC and/or Akashvani radio broadcasts. All day long, it was radio that sustained us and gave us hope in the at times agonizing, always suspense-filled, and occasionally frightening moments of those nine months.

And that was how it went till December 16, 1971 when finally, and decisively, radio became relegated to a distant second place as the source of news and entertainment. The television set became the supreme source for relaxation from the moment Dhaka TV broadcast news about the mukhtis taking over Dhaka and showed the Pakistanis surrendering sullen-facedly. Radio was only what we would listen to occasionally from then on!

And now? I listen to FM stations only when doing my constitutions. But it was on one such occasion that these scenes from a radio-active age that had claimed a permanent place in my memory's corridor felt worth sharing with my readers!

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to the news broadcasts we would have to hear in succession on the Indian station and on Radio Pakistan's Dhaka station almost every hour when at home. Only when Dhaka was tensing up every now and then because of one of the many turbulent events of the 60s did I and my siblings pay attention to the news broadcasts—after all, we just might hear on those occasions that schools would be shut down—giving us a day off from the homework to be submitted on that day!

On weekdays, we would have no further exposure to the radio till evening since we would be off to school immediately after breakfast. But the first thing I did there when I met a few of my school buddies was to share our excitement about what we had heard on Radio Ceylon the previous evening. In the early part of the decade we would swap our feelings about the latest songs by Pat Boone, Elvis Presley, Jimmy Reeves, Cliff Richards or Connie Francis and Nancy Sinatra. After the

bit to subvert the Pakistanis and support the points movement and the hartals and strikes being called in their own ways!

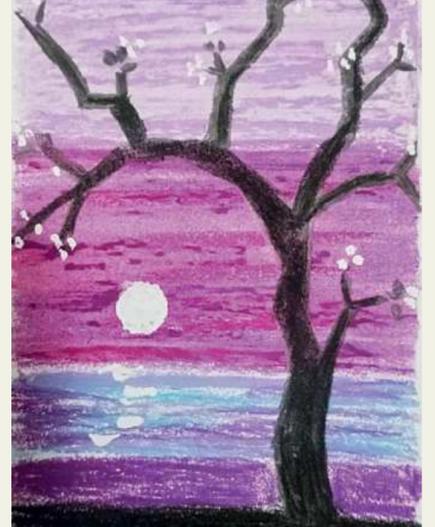
On Monday and back in school, I would swap stories about the songs and the singers we had heard with my friends, each of us gushing about what we had heard the previous evening. But our conversation was increasingly being punctuated by news events as well—filtered stories about confrontations taking place between the Pakistani authorities and Bangladeshi demonstrators. Radio entertainment was still everything to us outside schoolwork, friends and sports, but everyday news items on Akashvani and BBC about what was happening in Pakistan were becoming more and more worth listening to!

In 1964, however, Dhaka got its first television station. For a while it did not matter to me and my siblings that we had no television set in our house for the radio still sufficed for entertainment. But in the second half of

POETRY

Echoes

BY TASNEEM HOSSAIN



I roll and roll and roll,
Till I reach my desired goal.
The branches grow forth,
Till my body aches and is sore.
My body turns old.

The fruits on the branches grow ripe,
It's time for flight,
Time to hit the roads,
Repeats many more folds;
A story that never grows old.

Tasneem Hossain is a multilingual poet, columnist, op ed columnist and training consultant. She is the director of Continuing Education Centre, Bangladesh.

SHARING MY NIGHT

BY JESMIN ABEDIN



Sharing my night
In this mild low light,
With ice and fire,
Puzzled by the riddle of the gyre,

Hiding behind you
By turning into your shadow,
Hiding from what or whom
I really don't know.

Chasing you from dawn to dusk,
Have you ever wanted to ask
What I want from you?
I'm looking for you.

No sense of the world,
I'm ashamed of my own sigh,
Your voice in my ear makes me fly.

Waiting to be your prisoner,
Oh, waiting is an embarrassing hassle,
Your arms are my castle.

Confession of my restless heart:
I don't want to lose you,
Can you hear me?
I'm looking for you.

Diurnal dreams can easily
Turn into infatuation,
Perhaps it's just my craziness,
For me it's more than desire,
Enjoy my love, it is my passion.

I pray that the essence
Of my presence
Becomes a Tsunami in your mind,
Be my Braille, my devotion is blind.....!!

Jesmin Abedin has an MA in English from ULAB and is the author of a collection of poems in Bangla. She runs her own business but her passion is in writing.

LAW OPINION

Legality and legitimacy of Bangladesh Constitution

MD. JOHIR UDDIN SHOHAG

What is the source of legality or legal validity ('*Boidhota*' in Bengali) of a constitution? A superior law? India and Pakistan got their independence and established two constituent assemblies via the enactment of the Indian Independence Act, 1947. This Act was passed in the British parliament in Westminster. So, the Indian Constitution of 1949 and the Pakistani Constitution of 1956 got their validity from an Act of the British parliament.

All the members of the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh were elected under the Legal Framework Order, 1970. Was that Order the source of legality of the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh? The answer is no. The reason is that the Legal Framework Order, 1970 arranged elections for making a constitution for Pakistan, not for Bangladesh. This fact was not denied in the Proclamation of Independence, 1971. The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan was 'arbitrarily and illegally postponed for indefinite period' and 'Pakistan authorities declared an unjust and treacherous war'. Until the very war, the representatives of Bangladesh tried to make a constitution of Pakistan. The just and successful war established the Constituent Assembly as a sovereign and independent authority for Bangladesh. Hence, Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury called Bangladesh Constitution an 'autochthonous constitution' in his opinion in the case of *Anwar Hossain Chowdhury v Bangladesh* (1989) BLD (Spl) 1, because it got its power not from the *above* i.e. the colonial superior authority, but from the very people.

One might argue that Bangladesh got its validity from the *above* i.e. from international law because Bangladesh declared independence 'in due fulfillment of the legitimate right of self-determination of the people of Bangladesh'. The right to self-determination is a right recognised in public international law. Hans Kelsen argues that a domestic constitution and international law are part of the same legal system where international law is *above* i.e. hierarchically superior to the domestic constitution. The Constitution of the United States of America also got its validity from the *above*. But this *above* is not international law, but natural law (God). This might be called a transcendental argument. The other argument might be called social contract argument. The idea 'w[e] the people', although fictitiously constructed, expresses the general will. The

validity of the Bangladesh Constitution came from it. The representatives of the people of Bangladesh constituted themselves into a Constituent Assembly because '[w]e the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh' had the people's mandate. Later their authority was not successfully challenged.

Carl Schmitt would argue that if a constitution is not successfully resisted, it will be considered as accepted by the people. The opposition parties failed to resist it. The question of successful resistance and revolution is not a question of law, but a question of politics. A certain kind of politics would give birth to a certain kind of constitution. One might ask what the role morality plays in this regard. The answer is

Everything evolves. So does the constitution making process. Earlier people's participation in constitution-making process was very limited. But the scenario is changing. This change might be characterised as the constitutional evolutionism. We might insist that the draft Constitution of Bangladesh should have been sent to the people for getting their approval via plebiscite. But it did not happen. Even the proposal of Suranjit Sengupta to send the draft Constitution for assessing the public opinion was rejected by the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh. It did not destroy the legality of Bangladesh Constitution but weaken its legitimacy.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had a huge popularity in 1972. Neamat



that politics might be influenced by morality.

Yuval Noah Harari thinks that '[w]e the people' is a useful fiction. It resides in our imagination and gives meaning to our lives. I quote from Harari's *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (2015): "The value of money is not the only thing that might evaporate once people stop believing in it." He asserts that nation and religion are also fictions. Antonio Gramsci's idea of hegemony is a concept closer to it. The civil society members tell a *network of stories* to the poor people and get their consent. If you want to grab the power, you need to tell better and credible stories.

Imam comments in his novel *The Black Coat* (2013): "Sheikh Mujib was more popular with Bangladeshis than Mohammad the prophet; he was supported by people of all religions and creeds." Whatever constitution his party made would have been accepted by the people in a plebiscite. Still this process would have created a new precedent to help the future generations avoid abusive constitutionalism by way of constitutional amendments for the party interests and, in most of the cases, without having proper public deliberation.

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LAW LETTER

Wife's right to dower in case of divorce initiated by wife

MD. MAHMUDUL ISLAM SHAKIL

There exists a wide misbelief among the general people of the society that the payment of any unpaid dower is avoidable or non-payable where the process of dissolution of marriage is initiated by the wife. The right of dower is so prominent that the provision of payment is ensured both by the religion and by the operation of law and is referred to as a debt on the husband until payment in full in his lifetime and even after his death unless the wife relinquishes or gives up her right to dower. The wife's right of dower is mentioned in many verses of the Al-Qur'an, where it says that upon marriage a gift or dowry shall be paid graciously to the wife, unless waived by her willingly (4:4), and the wife shall become lawful upon payment of her full dowries (33:50).

Right of dower is guaranteed under the applicable laws of Bangladesh. Section 3 of the Muslim Marriages and Divorces (Registration) Act, 1974, states that every marriage solemnised under Muslim law shall be registered to be considered as valid marriage. Accordingly, the law requires the fulfillment of the standardised form of *Nikahnama* or the marriage contract under the Muslim Marriages and Divorces Registration Rules, 2009, which contains the mandatory field of the details of dower, such as, the amount and mode of payment. Furthermore, section 10 of the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961 states that dower is payable upon demand of the wife, and if the mode of payment is not mentioned specifically in the *Nikahnama* or the marriage contract, as the case may be, the entire amount is payable. In case of disregard or refusal to make the payment, the wife has the right to bring legal actions for recovery of dower under the Family

Courts Ordinance, 1985.

There are two popular and largely accepted mode of payment of dower: prompt and deferred. The prompt dower is payable right away on the wedding taking place, hence, there prevails no conflict. However, the dispute arises in the case of deferred dower, since the whole or part of the amount is due and is payable on the agreed future date, even if the marriage is dissolved for divorce or death. The same is also mentioned in the Quran (2:236), that it is an obligation to pay a suitable compensation upon divorce even where the marriage is not consummated or the dower is not fixed. Therefore, there remains no space for debate anymore that where the dower has been fixed or not, and the mode of payment is deferred, it does not terminate the obligation of the husband to pay the wife's dower even in the case when the dissolution of marriage is initiated by the wife and not by the husband.

Most of the women in our society lack the knowledge of the existence of their basic rights in marriage not only as citizen but also as women, as important as the right of dower for instance. Therefore, it is the duty of the concerned authority of the government and the non-governmental organisations to introduce more awareness programmes and activities regarding the matter concerned. Also, the government may take necessary steps to add or insert a clause under the dower section of the standardised form of the *Nikahnama*, stating that the right to recover dower is absolute even where the dissolution of marriage is initiated by either party in the contract of marriage.

THE WRITER IS AN APPRENTICE LAWYER, DHAKA BAR ASSOCIATION.

LAW WATCH

MLM on digital platforms: Legality and efficient enforcement of law

ZUBAIR AHOSAN

Generally, Multi-level Marketing (MLM) refers to a business scheme where a company's revenue derives from selling the products or services of a company where the participants or workforce of that company achieve their earnings through a pyramid scheme. Section 2(8) of the Multi-Level Marketing Activities Control (MLMAC) Act, 2013 defines MLM activity as a marketing activity by establishing two or more levels of a product or service marketing procedure with a commitment or plan to provide specific commissions or dividends or any other benefit. Though the definition does not directly refer to the pyramid scheme, this Act subsequently discusses it elaborately.

Recently, CID has arrested several officials, including CEO and MD of an MLM group conducting their MLM business, disguising them as an e-commerce platform. According to the investigation made by the Cyber and Special Crime unit of DMP, it has stated that only this SPC group has allegedly embezzled 268 crore taka within this year. Therefore, a question arises whether the existing MLMAC Act is adequate in restricting these activities.

According to section 4 of the MLMAC Act, no MLM company can run their business without a license. Also, section 4(2) of the said Act delineates the industries in which MLM business may be conducted to ten criteria for consumable products. However, the e-commerce sector sells a range of products and there is little law enforcement or regulatory oversight on their compliance with the existing laws. Besides, section 21 of the MLMAC Act requires every product or service to have a visual presence within a credible environment. But the catchy offers of many e-commerce platform and their advertisement modules show that most products and services have no visual presence. Instead, those advertisements of products are made in relation to products that may be produced in the future.

The fundamental problem with those online-based digital MLM activities is that their business is based on a pyramid scheme that is inherently an integral part of MLM

business and declared illegal under section 15 of the MLMAC Act. Firstly, this section explicitly bans pyramid or any similar kind of pyramid module-based business system. Secondly, it hinders any illusory or non-materialistic products manufactured or produced on a time-to-time base cycle in the future. Under this section, all the digital-based MLM companies can be taken into question whether their business can run beyond all those legal restrictions or should be taken under immediate legal sanction. However, it is a matter of concern that those MLM companies frequently disguise themselves as e-commerce platforms for which they remain out of sight for most of the consumers. They have also managed to convince many public figures and celebrities as their well-wishers and ambassadors by the passage of time. As a result, the rapid involvement of mass people cannot be controlled within due course.

Besides, MLMAC Act is a law that involves many shortcomings and loopholes that should be amended within the due period of time. The mostly contraband fraudulent Ponzi Scheme is not explicitly banned or defined. In addition, the penalty for violation of the provisions is fixed in case of a monetary fine. For instance, section 26 penalises any person for the infringement of section 15, with a monetary penalty not exceeding fifty lakhs of taka. The question arises when an MLM company has the scope of seizing millions of taka, how much it is justifiable to penalise them within a fixed monetary fine. Rather inserting ad valorem fine would be a more sensible and pragmatic step to put a stumbling block for those scams. Moreover, this Act remains tongue-tied regarding how the victims will get remedy in case they face any infringement and swindling experience.

The authority should admit the gravity of this issue and take some urgent action over the expanding digital MLM market and revisit the provisions in question to enhance a compact and strict regulatory system for wiping out any further probability of MLM scam in Bangladesh.

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LAW REFORM

Proposal to improve the current state of recording confessional statement

SHISHIR MANIR

In our criminal legal framework, confession is a valuable piece of evidence. Many death sentences have been awarded solely based on confession. This can be defined as a statement made voluntarily by a person charged with a crime, stating or suggesting an inference that he committed the crime. Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) bestows the power upon Magistrates to record confession and section 364 specifies the procedure. A confession is evidence against its maker unless its admissibility is excluded by provisions embodied in the Evidence Act 1872. The 1872 Act makes confessions irrelevant in a criminal proceeding when it appears to be obtained by inducement, threat, or promise.

Article 35(4) of the Constitution protects each individual from being compelled to act on self-incrimination. Article 35(5) strictly prohibits torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment or treatment in any circumstance. Confession is an exception to the general rule embraced in the Constitution. The objective of the law is to make sure confession is given voluntarily out of guilt and as repentance.

Despite having good protection in the law, allegations of custodial torture are rampant. When we raised the issue of forceful extraction of confession from a minor before the Supreme Court, it had commented forcing a confessional statement out of the accused was unfortunate for the country.

Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Court convicted five police personnel for killing 'Jony' in custody under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013. The boy died in consequence of tragic custodial torture that created uproar throughout the

country. According to a report of Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), 1,474 incidents of custodial deaths took place from January 2016 to July 2021.

In *BLAST v Bangladesh* 69 DLR (AD) 63, the Supreme Court addressed the issue of unlawful arrest, remand and custodial torture in detail. The Apex Court gave directions to prevent the same. The Court tried to check abuse of the statutory power conferred on police.



The Court in the case directed the law enforcing officer, to take the arrested person to the nearest hospital for treatment and to obtain a certificate from the doctor if he finds any marks of injury on the person arrested. The officer shall record the reasons for such injuries. The Court also directed the Magistrate that if there is information to him that a person has been subjected to torture, he shall refer the victim to the nearest doctor. If the medical evidence reveals that the person detained has been tortured, the Magistrate shall take cognizance of the

offence *suo-moto* under section 190(1)(c) of the CrPC without awaiting the filing of a case.

The United Nations Committee Against Torture (CAT) in its '*Concluding observations on the initial report of Bangladesh, 2019*' expressed concern over the information it had received alleging the widespread and routine commission of torture and ill-treatment in the country by law enforcement officials to obtain confessions.

The nature of the process of recording confession is very sensitive. There is a thin line between protection of fundamental rights and their encroachment. Considering the sensitivity of the issue, countries including the USA, Australia, Netherlands, South Korea, European Union countries recognise the presence of counsel in the course of the interrogation to ensure the accused is not subjected to any maltreatment. In 2009, India amended section 164 of its CrPC and inserted provisions to empower Magistrates to record confessions by audio-video electronic means and in the presence of the advocate of the person accused.

In our Constitution, we have a fundamental right to be defended by a lawyer. Interrogation in presence of a lawyer is a worldwide recognised practice. We can introduce the provision of lawyers' presence, at least, at the time of recording confession, so that the accused may be made aware of the gravity of the confession he is making. Recording confession in audio-video electronic means may be added to ensure the legal requirements for future reference. Sooner or later, we have to introduce similar provisions in our law to protect the fundamental rights of our citizens.

THE WRITER IS AN ADVOCATE, SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH.

'It kills me inside'

Activists sound alarm on climate anxiety over world's inaction

AFP, Hong Kong

From Bangladesh to Britain to Nigeria, many young campaigners on the frontlines of the global fight for climate justice now face a new problem: the impact the crisis is having on their mental health.

As thousands of delegates converged at the COP26 summit in Glasgow to discuss ways to tackle the environmental emergency, AFP interviewed three youth activists around the world who spoke candidly of their experience of climate anxiety.

In Bangladesh, ranked seventh for countries most affected by extreme weather, activist Sohanur Rahman said he feels overwhelmed with concern over what he sees as a lack of political will to stop the destruction.

"(The) climate crisis is to me a mental stress, trauma and nightmare," says the 24-year-old, who now lives in the town of Barisal and who remembers a 2007 super cyclone that killed thousands of people in the South Asian nation.

"It kills me inside," he says softly, adding that he fears for his parents who live in the village of Nathullabad that was levelled by the cyclone.

The American Psychological Association has described climate or eco-anxiety as a "chronic fear of environmental doom".

As with other forms of anxiety, living with it long-term can impair people's daily ability to function, while exacerbating underlying mental health issues.

Researchers have warned children and young people are particularly vulnerable, as they contemplate a future mired with scorching heatwaves, devastating floods and storms, and rising seas.

A recent report led by researchers at the University of Bath in Britain, surveying 10,000 young people in 10 countries, found that 77 percent viewed the future as frightening



YOUTH PROTEST AT COP26

Demonstrators holding placards attend the Fridays for Future march during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), in Glasgow, Scotland, Britain, yesterday. Thousands of young campaigners marched through the streets of Glasgow yesterday to demand that world leaders safeguard their future against climate change.

PHOTO: REUTERS



AFP, Glasgow

With science warning that only swift action can avoid cataclysmic global warming, countries already feeling the lash of climate change are demanding that the timetable for updating national carbon-cutting pledges be radically accelerated.

Currently, the nearly 200 nations that submitted voluntary emissions reduction schemes under the 2015 Paris Agreement have agreed to update those plans every five years, a process described as a "ratchet mechanism".

The first set of revisions came due at the end of 2020, but most were not submitted until this year because of the Covid pandemic.

China, by far the world's top carbon polluter, filed its update only last week, and India -- the number four emitter -- did so at the COP26 summit in Glasgow on Monday.

But even if all national pledges are honoured -- a big "if" -- Earth's surface would still warm a "catastrophic" 2.7 degrees above pre-industrial levels, according to the UN, a far cry from the Paris treaty target of 1.5C.

The next scheduled rendezvous for upping ambition isn't until 2025.

because of climate change. Around half of the respondents told researchers their fears over environmental change were affecting their daily lives.

Speaking to AFP in London, activist Dominique Palmer said: "I'm looking at the future, and what we face in the future, and there is a lot of fear and anxiety. And there is anger."

"Young people, myself included, feel betrayed by world leaders," the 22-year-old said at a climate protest ahead of the COP26 summit.

In the eyes of many young activists, that concrete action is lacking. At the COP26 summit, dozens of countries this week joined a United States and European Union pledge to cut methane emissions. It was followed by an agreement by 100 nations to end deforestation by 2030.

But a simmering diplomatic spat between the United States, China and Russia over their climate action ambitions showed the fragile nature of the talks.

"We bear the burden of climate change, even though we contributed the least to it," eco-feminist Jennifer Uchendu, 29, in Lagos.

Progress made, but not enough

Sobering projections, however, from the UN's science authority along with a crescendo of unprecedented heatwaves, flooding and wildfires, strongly suggest this is not soon enough.

Leading the charge for a more compressed timetable is UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

"Let's have no illusions," he said on the opening day of the talks. "If commitments fall short by the end of the COP, countries must revisit their national climate plans and policies. Not every five years. Every year, until keeping 1.5C is assured."

The idea got further backing on Thursday from Bangladeshi Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, who said "major emitters" should raise their 2030 targets at every annual climate conference until they are aligned with the 1.5C goal.

Various proposals for including a call for nations to review and improve plans to shrink their carbon footprints are already "on the table" in preliminary discussions among negotiators, according several sources at the talks.

A first draft -- known as a "non-paper" in UN climate jargon -- could be circulated as

NATIONAL CARBON-CUTTING PLEDGES

- Nearly 200 nations have submitted voluntary emissions reduction schemes
- Even if all national pledges are honoured, Earth's surface would still warm a "catastrophic" 2.7 degrees
- More than 50 developing countries have called for a pact that would mandate yearly ambition raising for governments

early as Friday, they said.

Momentum has been building on the issue.

More than 50 developing countries in the Climate Vulnerable Forum, have called for a pact that would "mandate yearly ambition raising for governments, and especially major carbon emitters for every year through to 2025".

"It depends on the language," said Alden Meyer, a senior associate at climate policy think tank E3G.

"If it sounds like it's mandatory, then China and other countries will say that is re-interpreting the Paris Agreement -- which is correct."

While signatories are collectively enjoined to reach the treaty's temperature targets, individual contributions are strictly on a voluntary basis.

A call for yearly updates would also run into a practical problem, analysts pointed out. It took years of internal wrangling before the European Union succeeded in increasing its 2030 target for greenhouse reduction from 40 to 55 percent, compared to 1990 levels.

Trying to do that every year -- whether in the EU, the United States or Japan -- would be nearly impossible, they suggest.

A more realistic goal would be picking an interim year by which nations would be asked to submit new plans on a voluntary basis.

"Most people have been talking about 2023," said Meyer.



A couple poses during a pre-wedding photo shoot near India's Presidential Palace which is shrouded in smog, in New Delhi, India, yesterday. New Delhi woke up to a thick blanket of toxic smog yesterday after an overnight barrage of firecrackers for the festival of Diwali in the Indian megacity, despite a ban on selling them.

PHOTO: REUTERS

World's richest 1 percent put climate goals at risk: study

BBC ONLINE

The carbon footprint of the world's richest 1 percent is on track to be 30 times higher than what's needed to limit global warming to 1.5C, a study says.

But emissions of the poorest 50 percent will continue to be below climate goals.

The research, carried out by two European environmental agencies, comes as world leaders meet at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow.

"A tiny elite appear to have a free pass to pollute," says Naftoke Dabi at Oxfam.

The charity commissioned the study from the Stockholm Environment Institute and the Institute for European Environmental Policy.

"Their over-sized emissions are fuelling extreme weather around the world and jeopardising the international goal of limiting global heating."

Climate scientists warn that there is a finite amount of greenhouse gases that we can continue to release into the atmosphere before the planet warms to more than 1.5C from pre-industrial levels. By 2030, they say, we need to only emit as much carbon as the planet can absorb.

If this amount were split evenly and every adult on the planet had a share, by 2030 we could each emit 2.3 tonnes of carbon every year.

The super-rich - many of whom have multiple homes, private jets and superyachts - emit a lot more than others. A recent study that tracked the air travel of celebrities via their social media accounts found some emitted over a thousand tonnes a year.

But the global 1 percent are not just billionaires, or even millionaires - it includes anyone earning over \$172,000.

This study also looked at the world's richest 10 percent - anyone earning over \$55,000 - and found emissions were still high. The richest 10% will emit nine times more carbon than their share.

Oxfam's report found that it's the 40 percent in the middle doing the most to curb emissions.

While their carbon footprint rose significantly between 1990 and 2015, it is set to drop, thanks to changes being made at government level in sectors like transport and energy since the Paris climate agreement in 2015.

But governments need to do more, Oxfam's Naftoke Dabi says, calling for bans and taxes on "carbon-intensive luxury goods, such as mega-mansions, SUVs or space tourism".

"They need to tackle the emissions of the richest because they're hugely responsible for the climate crisis, and it's the poorest that are paying the highest price," she says.

POLLUTION DUE TO INCREASED USE OF COAL

Beijing shuts roads, playgrounds

AFP, Beijing

Highways and school playgrounds in Beijing were closed yesterday due to heavy pollution, as China ramps up coal production and faces scrutiny of its environmental record at make-or-break international climate talks.

China -- the world's largest emitter of the greenhouse gases responsible for climate change -- has ramped up coal output after supply chains in recent months were roiled by an energy crunch owing to strict emissions targets and record prices for the fossil fuel.

A thick haze of smog blanketed swathes of northern China yesterday, with visibility in some areas reduced to less than 200 metres (yards), according to the country's weather forecaster.

Schools in the capital -- which will host the Winter Olympics in February -- were ordered to stop physical education classes and outdoor activities.

Stretches of highways to major cities including Shanghai, Tianjin and Harbin

were closed due to poor visibility.

Pollutants detected yesterday by a monitoring station at the US embassy in Beijing reached levels defined as "very unhealthy" for the general population.

Authorities in Beijing blamed the pollution on a combination of "unfavourable weather conditions and regional pollution spread" and said the smog was likely to persist until at least today evening.

But the "root cause of smog in north China is fossil fuel burning," said Greenpeace East Asia climate and energy manager Danqing Li.

China generates about 60 percent of its energy from burning coal.

China has increased coal output to ease an energy shortage that had forced factories to close in recent months.

Average daily coal production in the middle of October was 1.1 million tonnes higher than the end of September, according to a Sunday statement by the country's top economic planning body.

Coral bleaching impacts 98pc of it

AFP, Brisbane

Coral bleaching has affected 98 percent of Australia's Great Barrier Reef since 1998, leaving just a fraction of the world's largest reef system untouched, according to a study published yesterday.

The paper in the peer-reviewed journal Current Biology found that just two percent of the vast underwater ecosystem had escaped impacts since the first mass coral bleaching event in 1998 -- then the world's hottest year ever, a record that has repeatedly been broken as climate change accelerates.

Lead author Terry Hughes, from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies at James Cook University, said the frequency, intensity and scale of climate-fuelled marine heatwaves that cause coral bleaching are increasing.

"Five bouts of mass bleaching since 1998 have turned the Great Barrier Reef into a checkerboard of reefs with very different recent histories, ranging from two percent of reefs that have escaped

GREAT BARRIER REEF



bleaching altogether, to 80 percent that have now bleached severely at least once since 2016," he said.

Bleaching occurs when healthy corals become stressed by spikes in ocean temperatures, causing them to expel algae living in their tissues which drains them of their vibrant colours.

The Great Barrier Reef has suffered three mass bleaching events during heatwaves in 2016, 2017 and 2020, leaving many affected corals struggling to survive.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



- NOVEMBER 06
- 1813 - Chilpancingo congress declares Mexico independent of Spain.
 - 1860 - Abraham Lincoln of Illinois elected the 16th President of the US.
 - 1913 - Mahatma Gandhi arrested for leading Indian miners' march in South Africa.
 - 1917 - Bolshevik revolution begins with bombardment of the Winter Palace in Petrograd during the Russian October Revolution.
- SOURCE: WEBSITES

ETHIOPIA CIVIL WAR

Rebels to unite to defeat govt

AFP, Addis Ababa

Nine rebel groups battling Ethiopia's government will "collaborate and join forces", they said in a statement announcing the alliance...

The alliance, due to be signed in Washington later yesterday, includes the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)...

The TPLF said Wednesday that its fighters had reached the town of Kemissie in Amhara region, 325 kilometres northeast of the capital...

The nine groups said they were forming a united front "to reverse the harmful effects of the Abiy Ahmed rule on the peoples of Ethiopia..."

It is unclear whether the alliance, named the United Front of Ethiopian Federalist and Confederatist Forces, will affect the trajectory of the conflict...

The TPLF and the OLA, which the government officially designated as terrorist groups in May, are well-known, but the alliance's other seven members are obscure.

Abiy sent troops into Tigray in November 2020 to topple the TPLF, promising a swift victory. But by late June the rebels had retaken most of Tigray and expanded into the neighbouring regions of Afar and Amhara.

The escalating conflict has sparked alarm among the international community. Thousands have been killed and hundreds of thousands forced into famine-like conditions according to the UN.



Demonstrators march in Washington, DC on Thursday, marking the one-year anniversary of the Ethiopian government's decision to deploy troops into the country's northernmost Tigray region.

PHOTO: AFP

US to sell advanced missiles to Saudi Arabia

AFP, Washington

The US State Department announced the approval Thursday of the sale of \$650 million worth of air-to-air missiles to Saudi Arabia to help the country protect itself from drone attacks.

The approval will allow the Saudis to buy up to 280 of the AIM-120C advanced medium-range missiles and related equipment, replenishing an existing supply of the missiles, the department said.

A State Department spokesperson said the Saudis have already been able to use the missiles to intercept unmanned aircraft that threatened both Saudi and US forces inside the country, mainly from Yemen.

The sale comes as President Joe Biden's administration takes a cautious approach to supporting the Saudis, out of concern over their harsh tactics towards the Houthis as well as human rights violations.

TENSION ACROSS TAIWAN STRAIT

China vows no mercy for independence 'diehards'

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday vowed to punish "diehard" Taiwan politicians, saying it would ban several from visiting the mainland, as tensions between Beijing and Taipei spiked to their highest level in years.

China claims Taiwan as its territory -- to be seized one day, by force if necessary -- and has intensified efforts in recent years to isolate the self-ruled island on the international stage.

Yesterday, the Taiwan Affairs Office in Beijing warned that "the mainland will pursue criminal responsibility for Taiwan independence diehards in accordance with the law, to be effective for life."

The statement by spokeswoman Zhu Fengling named Taiwanese Premier Su Tseng-chang, parliament speaker Yu Shyi-kun and Foreign Minister Joseph Wu as among a minority of independence supporters.

She added that Beijing has prohibited them and their family members from entering the mainland, Hong Kong or Macau.

Their affiliates would also be restricted from cooperating with mainland organisations and individuals, she said, without giving more details.

The nationalist Kuomintang party fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing the Chinese civil war. The island of 24 million people has since transformed into a vibrant democracy and major tech hub, leading many -- including President Tsai Ing-wen -- to assert Taiwan's distinct identity, which Beijing attacks as separatism.

"Those who forget their ancestors, betray their motherland and split the country will not come to a good end," Zhu said.

The comments came a day after the head of a visiting European Parliament delegation to Taipei called Taiwan's democracy "a treasure" to be protected, promising to stand with the island.

Israel troops kill teen in West Bank

AFP, Jerusalem

A 13-year-old Palestinian was shot and fatally wounded yesterday by Israeli troops in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian health ministry said.

It said Mohammed Daadas died in hospital after being shot in the stomach during clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli forces in Deir al-Hatab village, east of Nablus.

Two other Palestinians were injured in yesterday's clashes in Beita, another West Bank village.

The clashes come days after Israel announced it would advance plans for 3,000 more homes for Jewish settlers in the West Bank, despite international criticism.

LAWSUITS TO SILENCE CRITICISM

US to financially assist overseas journalists

AFP, Washington

The United States will offer funding to help journalists overseas survive frivolous lawsuits meant to silence them, as part of a campaign to support democracy, USAID chief Samantha Power announced Thursday.

Power, herself a former reporter, said President Joe Biden's administration was setting up the "Global Defamation Defense Fund" to counter the "crude but effective tactic" increasingly used to silence journalists.

"We will offer the coverage to survive defamation claims or deter autocrats and oligarchs from trying to sue them out of business in the first place," she said at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

Democracies need to set rules "as autocrats grow savvier in their attempts to control and manipulate people," she said. "We need to help support a free and fair global press to hold leaders to account."

Power, administrator of the US Agency for International Development, did not outline how the fund would work or whether it would support journalists in countries allied with the United States.

Biden plans next month to hold a summit to back democracy, seeking to show a sharp change from his predecessor Donald Trump who embraced autocratic leaders, denounced the role of independent media and inspired a mob that attacked the US Capitol on January 6 in hopes of undoing Biden's victory.

Critics will likely point to Washington's continued efforts to extradite from Britain the WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who considers himself a journalist and faces the rest of his life in prison for the leak of classified US documents.

Asked if the United States could support democracy in light of its own record at home, Power pointed to the new fund for journalists and said, "In many cases, we're all they have."



A performer accompanying teachers perform a blowing flame stunt during a demonstration demanding higher pay outside the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) in Colombo, Sri Lanka, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

IMMINENT MYANMAR ARMY OFFENSIVE IN CHIN STATE

521 civil rights groups urge UN intervention

REUTERS

More than 500 civil rights groups have called for a United Nations Security Council meeting to stop escalating violence in Myanmar's Chin state, a volatile border region that has become a forefront of resistance against military rule.

Local media, witnesses and the UN have reported a buildup of heavy weapons and troops in Chin, suggesting an imminent army attack to flush out militia groups formed after a Feb. 1 coup.

Human Rights Watch released a statement on behalf of 521 international and domestic organisations that called on the Security Council to adopt a resolution and act before the offensive expands in Chin, which borders India.

"It must convene an urgent meeting on the escalating attacks in Chin State and the overall deepening political, human rights and humanitarian crisis as a result of the Myanmar military leaders' search for power and greed that has caused immense suffering," it said.

Myanmar has been paralysed by protests and violence since the coup, with the junta struggling to govern and facing armed resistance from militias and ethnic minority rebels allied with a shadow government that it calls "terrorists".

Witnesses, aid groups and local media said houses and churches have been burnt in Thantlang town.

The junta has made no comment on the situation in Chin. Reuters has been unable to independently verify reports of an offensive in the region, where internet and other communications have been disrupted.

The UN humanitarian agency in a situation report on Wednesday said clashes between security forces and people's defence forces had intensified in Chin as well as in neighbouring Magway and Sagaing regions.

MORE NEWS

US offers \$10m bounty for DarkSide hackers

The United States announced a \$10 million reward Thursday for help finding leaders of the high-profile ransomware gang DarkSide, authorities' latest try at combating spiking cyber-extortion attacks. Washington blamed the Russia-based group for the online assault that forced the shutdown of the largest oil pipeline in the eastern United States in May. Cyber-extortion heists involve breaking into a company or institution's network to encrypt its data, then demanding a ransom, typically paid via cryptocurrency in exchange for the digital key to unlock it. Washington also offered a \$5 million bounty for information leading to the arrest or conviction in any country of anyone who tries to join in an attack with DarkSide.

At least 69 dead in west Niger jihadist attack

At least 69 people, including a local mayor, have been killed in an attack in Niger's volatile "tri-border" zone with Burkina Faso and Mali, the interior ministry said on Thursday. The assault took place on Tuesday at Adab-Dab, a village about 55 kilometres from Banibanguou in the western region of Tillaberi, but was only confirmed by the government on Thursday. A search was under way for the unidentified attackers. The government declared two days of national mourning from today. Local sources earlier blamed Islamic State in the Greater Sahara group for the attack.

France orders poultry lockdown due to bird flu

French farmers were yesterday ordered to keep their poultry indoors due to the heightened risk of bird flu being spread by migratory birds. The order published in the French official journal follows a similar measure adopted in the Netherlands last week after a case of the highly-contagious H5 strain of bird flu was discovered on a poultry farm and 36,000 birds were culled as a protective measure. The French agricultural ministry said separately that 130 outbreaks of bird flu in wild fowl and farm poultry have been discovered since August in Europe.

Indonesia flash floods kill at least eight

Indonesian rescuers scrambled yesterday to find survivors under mud-swamped hillsides after flash floods on Java island killed at least eight people, the disaster agency said. Torrential rains on Thursday unleashed flash floods in Malang and the highland city of Batu, inundating houses with mud and debris, while a wall of water destroyed local bridges. Yesterday, teams raced to find several more people unaccounted for in Batu, according to Indonesia's national disaster mitigation agency, as the dead were placed in body bags.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

'I'm a woman, I can fight'

Nehru-Gandhi scion aims to revive India's Congress

REUTERS, Gorakhpur

At a recent election rally, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the scion of India's Nehru-Gandhi family that dominates the opposition Congress party, strode on stage and asked the crowd to repeat after her: "I'm a woman, I can fight."

The slogan is at the heart of the party's bid to revive its fortunes in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state that goes to the polls early next year, by winning over women voters who have long been marginalised but are starting to find a voice.

The Uttar Pradesh result will offer a clue as to whether the Congress, which dominated Indian politics for decades, can mount a challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the next general election in 2024.

Modi came to power in 2014 on promises of economic growth and a strong, modern India, and secured a convincing re-election victory in 2019.

His rise has come as the 136-year-old Congress has been mired in decline, in part because of leadership turmoil.

Rahul Gandhi, Gandhi Vadra's brother, was unable to fire up voters and quit as Congress chief in July 2019 after a general election mauling.

The party is now led by their mother, Sonia Gandhi, as interim president, compounding a perception held by some that it is old-fashioned and overly reliant on the Gandhis.

With its secular legacy, the Congress portrays itself as an inclusive national party and it will be hoping an appeal to women led by Gandhi Vadra, who only entered politics in 2019, will strike a chord as it presents an alternative to Modi's hardline Hindu agenda.

A spate of violence against women has alarmed voters across India, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, which according to government data faces the highest number of gender crimes in the country, and Gandhi Vadra promised women change.

"I want to tell the women that I will fight for

them, the Congress party will fight for them," Gandhi Vadra said on Sunday to cheers in the Gorakhpur stronghold of the state's chief minister, a Hindu monk and BJP stalwart, Yogi Adityanath.

In Uttar Pradesh, the well-organised BJP has been criticised for its handling of violence against women as well as the Covid-19 pandemic. It is also facing protests by farmers opposed to Modi's liberalisation of agriculture.

An unusually high proportion of women attended the Gorakhpur rally - about a quarter of the estimated 40,000 people - suggesting the Congress message may be getting through.

Voters had welcomed a Congress pledge to field women in 40% of the state's 403 assembly constituencies, said a party worker.

The party has also promised electric scooters and smartphones to female students, free rides on government buses to all women, three free cooking-gas cylinders per family a year, and gender-based job reservations.

Advertisement for Jashore Govt. City College, Jashore. Includes contact information, date (03/11/2021), and details for an e-Tender Notice (01/2021-2022) for the procurement of AC, IPS and Ceiling Fan for smart classroom and lab. The notice includes a table with columns for Sl. No., Tender ID No., Name of Supply, Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission, and Tender Closing Date & Time.



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'WE'VE GOT OUR MOJO BACK'

AFP, Dubai

KL Rahul's 50 off 19 balls helped India stay alive in the Twenty20 World Cup with an eight-wicket thrashing of Scotland inside seven overs on Friday as birthday boy skipper Virat Kohli claimed: "We've got our mojo back."

Ravindra Jadeja and Mohammed Shami took three wickets each to help bowl out Scotland for 85 in 17.4 overs after India put the opposition into bat in the Super 12 contest in Dubai.

Rahul and Rohit Sharma, who hit 30, then took the Scotland bowling apart as India raced to their target in 6.3 overs to radically improve their run-rate.

They still need to win their last game against Namibia on Monday and depend on the result of Sunday's New Zealand-Afghanistan match to have any chance of making the final four.

Rahul smashed six fours and three sixes in his batting blitz as he raised the fifty in 18 balls before getting out to Mark Watt.

Sharma fell lbw to Brad Wheal who ended the 70-run opening stand.

জাতি উইন

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SCORES IN BRIEF

SCOTLAND
85 all out in 17.4 overs
(Munsey 24, Leask 21; Shami 3-15, Jadeja 3-15)

INDIA
89 for 2 in 6.3 overs

(Rahul 50, Rohit 30; Watt 1-20)

RESULT
India won by 2 wickets

PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH
Ravindra Jadeja

Suryakumar Yadav hit the winning six with Kohli, on his 33rd birthday, relishing the huge win at the other end.

"A dominating performance. It was something we were striving for again," said Kohli after a second successive win followed defeats to old rivals Pakistan and New Zealand. "I don't want to say too much about today because we know how we can play. These little things in T20 cricket (toss, conditions) matter and we're glad to be back in our mojo."

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah bowled Scotland captain Kyle Coetzer before Shami cut short Munsey's stay on 24.

Jadeja made an instant impact with twin strikes to send back Richie Berrington, bowled without scoring a run, and Matthew Cross trapped lbw for two.

With Scotland's top four back in the dugout at 29, Calum MacLeod and Michael Leask put up some resistance during a 29-run stand. Jadeja sent back Leask lbw for 21 and Ashwin got Chris Greaves for one.

MacLeod and Mark Watt attempted to bring some respect to the total but Shami returned to pick up two wickets in one over and Bumrah wrapped up the innings in 17.4 overs.

Saber lashes out at 'most incompetent' Hassan

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Saber Hossain Chowdhury called Nazmul Hassan, the current president of the board, 'incompetent' and blamed him for Bangladesh's awful showing at the ongoing T20 World Cup in the UAE.

Bangladesh have garnered criticism from all around the globe after the Tigers lost six of their eight matches played in the T20 World Cup. The two matches that the Mahmudullah Riyad-led side won were against lightweights Papua New Guinea and co-hosts Oman while they lost against associates Scotland and also all five of their Super 12 clashes on the trot.

The shock defeat against Scotland in their tournament opener also meant the Tigers progressed to the Super 12s as runners-up from a group of low-ranked sides.

While some fans and experts have blamed players for such a poor showing, others have lashed out at the BCB for their lack of planning and foresight. Saber, meanwhile, put the entire blame on current BCB president Hassan for such a plight of the country's cricket.

"Bangladesh has now played 4 World Cups under Mr Papon, things have gone bad to worse. Longest serving President has also been the most incompetent," tweeted Saber after Bangladesh were bundled out for just 73 -- their second-lowest T20I total -- during their eight-wicket thumping at the hands of Australia yesterday.

Saber, who acted as the BCB president from 1996-2001, also said that Hassan would only pass the blame on others.

"It's always someone else's fault as he [Hassan] has run our cricket to the ground. Shame that we have a shameless @BCBTigers," added Saber.



Youngsters Afif Hossain and Shoriful Islam were among the Bangladesh players who returned to the country yesterday after a disastrous T20 World Cup. The Tigers returned to the capital on two different flights. However, four senior cricketers along with the members of the coaching staff stayed back in the UAE and will return in a week.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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New Zealand boost semis hopes

AFP, Sharjah

New Zealand defeated Namibia by 52 runs on Friday to move closer to the T20 World Cup semi-finals. Glenn Phillips and Jimmy Neesham plundered 67 runs off the last four overs as New Zealand made 163-4 after being put into bat. In reply, Namibia were well set at 47-0 in the eighth over before they faded to 111-7.

New Zealand have six points, two ahead of Afghanistan and four in front of India who must win both their remaining games, and improve their run rate, to have any chance of making the semi-finals.

Pakistan have already booked their place in the last four from Group 2.

David Wiese and 18 taken from a wild 10-ball final over from JJ Smit. Namibia had limited New Zealand to 62-2 at the halfway point after winning the toss and electing to field.

One of the early wickets to fall was opener Martin Guptill who had smashed 93 in the 16-run win over Scotland last time out. Namibia saw openers Michael van Lingen (25) and Stephan Baard (21) make a steady start, helping their team reach 56-3 at the midway point.

But experienced seamers Tim Southee (2-15) and Trent Boult (2-20) applied the brakes as Namibia were only able to add 55 more runs off the last 10 overs.

"Afghanistan are a really, really strong



"We knew what to expect here, it was a real scrap," said New Zealand captain Kane Williamson. Phillips hit an undefeated 39 off 21 balls with one four and three sixes while man-of-the-match Neesham made 35 from 23 deliveries with a boundary and two sixes.

The Black Caps, who face fellow semi-final hopefuls Afghanistan on Sunday, were struggling at 96-4 off 16 overs after being put into bat by Namibia, the lowest-ranked team in the tournament.

But Namibia lost their discipline with 21 coming off the 18th over bowled by

side," added Williamson of their next opponents who are still in the hunt for a semi-final place. "They have done so well in this tournament and have got match-winners throughout their side. So we are looking forward to playing them."

Namibia have one win in the Super 12s courtesy of beating Scotland. They bring the curtain down on the group stage on Monday when they tackle India. "We did well for 15-16 overs in the middle today but the death overs didn't go our way," said captain Gerhard Erasmus. "We have got one more game to nail against India.



Australia face slippery Windies in MUST-WIN GAME

AGENCIES

With their campaign back on track with a big win against Bangladesh, Australia will hope to avoid slipping up against West Indies in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

After losing to arch-rival England last week, Australia bounced back with a record eight-wicket win over Bangladesh on Thursday. The margin of the victory boosted their net run-rate to +1.031 (from -0.627). Still, a win may not be enough if the Proteas manage to beat England on Saturday by a margin that would lift its NRR past Australia's.

If lucky, a loss against West Indies still could hand Australia a semifinal spot if England make it five out of five, beating South Africa.

So, there's a lot at stake for both Australia and South Africa. Australia currently occupy the second spot in the points table.

Facing such an uncertain scenario, the Australians cannot afford to be complacent. Moreover, a bruised and battered West Indies

would look to salvage some pride and bow out of the showpiece with a win.

Australia's last semifinal appearance in the T20 World Cup was in 2012 when they were eliminated by eventual champion West Indies.

Australia's last semifinal appearance in the T20 World Cup was in 2012 when they were eliminated by eventual champion West Indies.

The two-time champion West Indies failed to live up to their reputation in this T20 World Cup as they relied heavily on ageing stars like Chris Gayle, Dwayne Bravo, Andre Russell and Kieron

Pollard. Australia, on the other hand, are beginning to peak at the right time in their bid to win their only missing title.

The bowling attack came to the fore in their eight-wicket win over Bangladesh that came with 82 balls to spare -- the biggest T20I win between two full member teams. While the pace duo of Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc gave the opening blows, leg-spinner Adam Zampa polished off the tail end route to a career-best 5 for 19.

Even Glenn Maxwell (2-0-6-1) was tidy with his part-time off-spin and the team would only hope that he starts firing with his bat also. The inconsistent top-order also got some boost with the return of Mitchell Marsh at No 3. Marsh blasted 16 not out off five balls, an innings that included a six off Taskin Ahmed, to seal the issue after skipper Finch laid the foundation with a 40.

The team would hope that David Warner and Maxwell get into the groove against the misfiring Windies as they may stick to an unchanged XI.

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ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021
Australia vs West Indies
Live from 04:00 pm
England vs South Africa
Live from 08:00 pm

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La Liga
Real Madrid vs Rayo Vallecano
Live from 02:00 am (Sunday)
MTV India
La Liga

Celta de Vigo vs Barcelona
Live from 09:15 pm
STAR SPORTS HD1
EPL
Manchester United vs Manchester City
Live from 06:30 pm

Chelsea vs Burnley
Live from 09:00 pm
TEN 2
Bundesliga
Bayern Munich vs Freiburg
Live from 08:30 pm



Confident England look to dash SA's hopes

AGENCIES

A semifinal spot virtually assured, in-form England would look to dent South Africa's hopes of reaching the last-four stage when the two teams meet each other in a high-voltage Group 1 Super 12 match of the ICC T20 World Cup on Saturday. With a net run rate of +3.183, England are more or less through to the semifinals with four wins from as many games, while South Africa are lying in the third spot with six points from four matches.

Both South Africa and Australia are in close race for the second semifinal spot from Group 1 but the Australians are above the Proteas on the basis of a better net run rate, though they have six points each. It will all boil down to Saturday's game and South Africa will know what exactly they need to do before facing England as Australia play West Indies in the first match of the day. The Proteas can't afford to slip even a bit and need a resounding win to keep their hopes alive. But with form

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on their side, an ominous-looking England will definitely start as firm favourites against the Proteas. After three consecutive wins over Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and West Indies, South Africa suffered their first defeat against Australia in their last match, putting questions on their campaign.

England would look to capitalise on it and finish off their group campaign with a perfect record. They have more or less ticked all boxes in their campaign so far. England looked one of the best teams in the tournament other than

Pakistan. While it hasn't been a cakewalk in all the four matches, the Englishmen were clinical in their approach and somebody or the other stepped out to bail the team out whenever in trouble. England's batting revolves around Jos Buttler, Jason Roy, Dawid Malan, Jonny Bairstow and skipper Eoin Morgan.

On the bowling front, the spin duo of Moeen Ali and Adil Rashid have been excellent so far, while Chris Woakes, Chris Jordan and Liam Livingstone have responded well to the team's call in the pace department.

South Africa's fate entirely doesn't lie in their own hands. The Proteas need to win by a big margin against England to go over Australia on NRR or hope West Indies beat Australia by a margin that reduces Australia's NRR. South Africa will depend on Quinton de Kock, Aiden Markram, Rassie van der Dussen, Temba Bavuma and David Miller to deliver the goods in the batting department, while the bowling unit will be led by top-ranked T20 bowler Tabraiz Shamsi with the likes of Anrich Nortje and Dwaine Pretorius in support.

Pressure on United ahead of crunch derby

REUTERS, London

Premier League
A comfortable win at troubled Tottenham Hotspur and then a Cristiano Ronaldo-inspired escape from defeat at the hands of Atalanta have taken some of the heat off under-pressure Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

But a more severe test of his side's health will come this Saturday when they host Premier League champions Manchester City in the derby -- a game fraught with danger for a United side that has been wildly unpredictable this season.

City suffered a surprise home defeat by Crystal Palace last weekend and they have also lost three of their last four Premier League clashes against Solskjaer's United.

Such a poor recent record against their neighbours will not sit well with manager Pep Guardiola and there will be points to prove when the whistle blows at Old Trafford.

United were hammered 5-0 by Liverpool in their last home game -- one of the worst results in their recent history and one that whipped up a media frenzy about Solskjaer's future.

That his side recovered to calmly dispatch Tottenham a week later was admirable, although one of the keys of that victory was the return from injury of defender Raphael Varane as Solskjaer

started with five at the back.

Worryingly for Solskjaer he will be without Varane for the visit of City after he suffered a hamstring injury against Atalanta and will be ruled out for up to a month.

United will have plenty of defending to do against City and will have to do it well. But that, combined with swift counter-attacks, has generally been the blueprint for their success against their local rivals since Solskjaer took the helm.

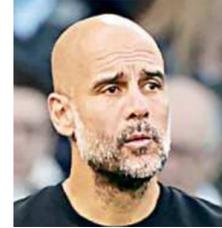
Solskjaer has won four and drawn one of his eight clashes with Guardiola.

City, for their part, will be all too aware that they cannot afford to fall too far behind Chelsea and Liverpool in the title race and after a 4-1 win against Club Brugge in midweek will head across town in confident mood.

Chelsea lead the standings by three points from Liverpool and five from third-placed City

and will aim to continue the momentum they have built when they seek a fifth consecutive league win against Burnley on Saturday. Antonio Conte's first Premier League game in charge of Tottenham is a trip to face Everton who have lost three in a row under Rafael Benitez. Conte replaced the sacked Nuno Espirito Santo on Tuesday.

Liverpool close the weekend with a difficult trip to the London Stadium to face in-form West Ham United who have made their best start to a top flight season in more than 40 years.



Footballers and officials of Bangladesh national team were greeted warmly upon their arrival in Colombo on Friday ahead of a four-nation tournament. Bangladesh will take on Seychelles in the opening match of the tournament, also featuring Maldives and hosts Sri Lanka.

PHOTO: BFF

Conte's winning start with Spurs

REUTERS, London

Antonio Conte got a crash course in what he can expect as Tottenham Hotspur's new manager after the Italian's first game in charge ended

in a 3-2 home victory over Vitesse Arnhem in the Europa Conference League on Thursday.

Conte, who replaced Nuno Espirito Santo this week after the Portuguese was sacked after 10 Premier League games into his first season, watched his side tear into a 3-0 lead after 28 minutes with Son Heung-min and Lucas Moura on target plus an own goal.

He then watched Vitesse score twice in seven minutes before halftime in a frantic tie complete with three red cards and an outbreak of crowd trouble amongst the

visiting supporters.

"It was a crazy game. Usually I don't like this type of game -- a crazy game means anything can happen. But at the same time I think we should win and we won," Conte said.

Conte will have plenty to ponder though ahead of this Sunday's league trip to Everton.

"For sure we have to improve. It's not easy because in two days we prepare for this (Everton) game ... now we have only one day," Conte said. "Tomorrow it's impossible to work with the players who played tonight."

"We need to have a bit of patience because we need to work on many aspects -- tactically and physically. I'm not afraid about the work. I know only through the work you can reach important targets."



Real fighting fit to put pressure on rivals

REUTERS



Real Sociedad may be the surprise LaLiga leaders, but Real Madrid are close to full strength and can begin to steal a march on their rivals this weekend when they face Rayo Vallecano, with Barcelona and Atletico Madrid still underperforming.

Carlo Ancelotti's side are one point behind Sociedad but have a game in hand. Real Madrid are also eight points ahead of old foes Barca, who are yet to announce a permanent successor to sacked coach Ronald Koeman.

Karim Benzema and Vinicius Jr. have been in great form this season for Madrid and forwards Eden Hazard and Gareth Bale are also close to returning to match fitness after lengthy injury layoffs.

That gives Ancelotti a welcome

selection headache ahead of Saturday's match at the Bernabeu.

"Hazard is ready to play, we will see how Bale trains before the game. All players that are not playing need to have faith and work hard," Ancelotti said after Real's 2-1 win over Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Hazard and Bale will have a hard time trying to displace Vinicius Jr. in the starting line-up as the Brazilian, who assisted Benzema twice on Wednesday, has seven goals and three assists in 11 LaLiga games, only two goals behind the Frenchman in the scoring charts.

Real's city rivals Atletico fell flat in their European encounter this week, losing 2-0 to Liverpool, though it could have been more devastating. On Sunday they travel to Valencia, who snapped a seven game winless run in their last match against Villarreal.

On Sunday, Sociedad will face another of the season's surprise packages in Osasuna who have risen to seventh in the standings in their third campaign back in the top flight.

Sevilla travel to bitter rivals Real Betis the same day looking to stay level on points with Real Madrid. Julien Lopetegui's side lost 2-1 to Lille in the Champions League on Tuesday but only have one defeat in 11 league games this season.

Despite a slim victory over Dynamo Kyiv in midweek, Barcelona are still on a dismal run domestically and travel to Celta Vigo on Saturday ninth in the standings on 16 points.

The Catalans have not won in three league matches but are trying to reach an agreement with Qatari club Al-Sadd so they can hire former Barca midfielder Xavi Hernandez as their new manager.

Barca close in on Xavi

AFP, Doha

Barcelona are set to announce Xavi Hernandez's return to the club as coach, after Al Sadd confirmed on Friday a deal has been agreed between the clubs.

The Qatari club said in Barca had paid the release clause for Xavi, who has been coaching in Qatar since 2019 and now rejoins the club where he enjoyed huge success as a player.

Al Sadd chief executive Turki Al-Ali said in a statement: "The Al Sadd



administration has agreed on Xavi's move to Barcelona after the payment of the release clause stipulated in the contract.

"We've agreed on cooperation with Barcelona in the future. Xavi is an important part of Al-Sadd's history and we wish him success." Barcelona sent vice-president Rafa Yuste and director of football Mateu Alemany to Doha for talks on Wednesday.

But Turki Al-Ali insisted on Wednesday that Al Sadd were "committed to keeping Xavi" and they appear to have held their ground in the negotiations, with Barca needing to pay Xavi's release clause, reportedly set at five million euros.





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Fear never leaves them

Still reeling from the shock of 2016 attacks, Bagda farm Santals now 'under threat of eviction' due to proposed EPZ

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

The Santal people whose houses in Gaibandha's Gobindaganj were set on fire in 2016 are now facing homelessness again as they are among the nearly 1,500 families who might be evicted to make way for setting up an export processing zone.

Five years ago today, three Santal men were killed and many others injured during a clash as police tried to evict an entire Santal community from a piece of land that the people say they got from their ancestors. But the authorities of Rangpur Sugar Mills claim that it is theirs.

Following the clash, rickety shacks of the underprivileged people were set on fire and about 2,500 Santal and Bangali families in the area known as Bagda Farm lost all or part of their belongings.

About 1,500 of those families still live there and the nearby Madarpur and Joypurpara areas. The EPZ the government plans to establish will make them homeless and they will lose the land where they grow rice and other crops.

Maj Gen Nazrul Islam, executive chairman of Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza), met the deputy commissioner of Gaibandha and other stakeholders on August 24. But no representative from the Santal community was present at the meeting.

The Santals have been regularly demonstrating against the planned EPZ.

On November 12, 2019, the government decided to

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6



A boy and a woman of the Santal community carrying firewood near Joypurpara village in Gobindaganj, Gaibandha. They are from the nearly 1,500 Santal and Bangali families facing homelessness as the government plans to build an export processing zone on over 1,800 acres of land in the area.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUI

Slip of tongue!

MP 'clarifies' threat he issued at public gathering over polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Awami League lawmaker Omor Faruk Chowdhury of Rajshahi-1 threatened that anyone working and speaking against the party's boat symbol in Kolma Union Parishad elections would not be allowed to stay there.

He issued the threat while addressing a discussion on Jail Killing Day in Tanore's Dorgadanga School and College ground on Wednesday.

"Circulate these words in every village that those who would speak and work against boat would have no place on the soil of Kolma," he was heard speaking in a video footage, which went viral in the last two days.

He also asked the party men to ensure this.

In the video clip, the lawmaker of Godagari-Tanore constituency was seen addressing a huge

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

Global food prices hit 10yr high: FAO

REUTERS, Paris

World food prices rose for a third straight month in October to reach a fresh 10-year peak, led again by increases in cereals and vegetable oils, the UN food agency said on Thursday.

The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) food price index, which tracks international prices of the most globally traded food commodities, averaged 133.2 points last month compared with a revised 129.2 for September.

The September figure was previously given as 130.0.

The October reading was the highest for the index since July 2011. On a year-on-year basis, the index was up 31.3 percent in October.

Agricultural commodity prices have risen steeply in the past year, driven by harvest setbacks and strong demand.

The FAO's cereal price index rose by 3.2 percent in October from the previous month. That was led by a 5 percent jump in wheat prices, which climbed for a fifth consecutive month to reach their highest since November 2012, FAO said.

"Tighter availability in global markets due to reduced harvests in major exporters,

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

China pledges aid to Pakistan

NOVEMBER 6, 1971
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

CHINA PLEDGES 'RESOLUTE SUPPORT' IF PAKISTAN INVADIED

China called on India and Pakistan today to find a peaceful solution to their frontier dispute, but warned that it would "resolutely support" Pakistan in the event of war.

The warning came in a speech by the Acting Foreign Minister, Chi Peng'fei, at a banquet marking the completion of talks between Chinese leaders and a Pakistani delegation led by the former Foreign Minister, Zulfikar, Ali Bhutto.

"Our Pakistan friends may rest assured that should Pakistan be subjected to foreign aggression, the Chinese Government and people will, as always, resolutely support the Pakistan Government and people," Chi declared.

Earlier, Chinese Premier Chou En'lai held a second round of talks today with a Pakistani delegation headed by Zulfikar All Bhutto, special envoy of President Yahya Khan. The discussions, which began yesterday, reportedly dealt with tension on the Indian-Pakistani border. Pakistan shared ideas with the Chinese delegation that would leave shortly for the United Nations on how the Indian-Pakistani crisis could be handled in the Security Council.

INDIRA GANDHI CALLS REFUGEES BURDEN
India Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said today that the flow of refugees from East Bengal had resulted in a "terrific burden" on India and posed "a real threat to our political stability and even our

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Bodies of 2 Bangladeshis recovered from no-man's land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The bodies of two Bangladeshi nationals, who were shot dead allegedly by the Indian Border Security Force on Wednesday, were finally recovered from the no man's land of Sylhet's Kanaighat yesterday.

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) recovered the bodies and handed those over to police following a flag meeting with BSF in the afternoon, said Mohammad Tajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kanaighat Police Station.

BGB, however, did not officially comment on the incident and the flag meeting.

The dead are Arif Uddin, 22, and Askor Uddin, 28, of Eraligul village in Kanaighat upazila.

The policeman said, "One has a bullet wound

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

Nasa to deflect asteroid in test of 'planetary defence'



AFP, Washington

In the 1998 Hollywood blockbuster "Armageddon," Bruce Willis and Ben Affleck race to save the Earth from being pulverized by an asteroid.

While the Earth faces no such immediate danger, Nasa plans to crash a spacecraft traveling at a speed of 15,000 miles per hour (24,000 kph) into an asteroid next year in a test of "planetary defense."

The Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) is to determine whether this is an effective way to deflect the course of an asteroid should one threaten the Earth in the future.

Nasa provided details of the DART mission, which carries a price tag of \$330 million, in a briefing for reporters on Thursday.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

Anti-Covid pill 89pc effective

Says Pfizer

AFP, Washington

Pfizer yesterday said that a clinical trial of its first pill to treat Covid-19 shows it is highly effective.

The drug called Paxlovid achieved an 89 percent reduction in risk of hospitalization or death among adult patients with Covid who are at high risk of progressing to severe illness, Pfizer said.

The results from this middle-to-late stage clinical trial are so good that Pfizer will stop recruiting new people for the trial, the company said.

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PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 6

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:55 12:45 4:00 5:30 7:15
JAMAAT 5:30 1:15 4:15 5:34 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

India, NZ stay in the hunt

REUTERS, Dubai

Former Twenty20 World Cup champions India kept alive their slim chances of making the semifinals with an eight-wicket rout of Scotland in their Super 12 Group II match on Friday.

Virat Kohli elected to field after winning his first toss of the tournament and the 2007 title holders bundled out the Scots for 85 in 17.4 overs at the Dubai International Stadium.

KL Rahul blasted an 18-ball fifty as India chased down the paltry target in 6.3 overs for their second win in four matches.

Unbeaten Pakistan have already qualified from the group with eight points.

Importantly for Kohli's team, they now have the best net run-rate in the group should it be required in case of any qualification logjam.

India's fate in the tournament is beyond their control after thrashings by Pakistan and New Zealand in their first two games.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6



India's Rohit Sharma (L) and KL Rahul bump their fists after a boundary during their T20 World Cup fixture against Scotland at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Friday. India romped to an eight-wicket victory against the Scots, keeping their slim chances of a semifinal berth alive. For more see page 14.

PHOTO: AFP

Star HEALTHLINE

Goitre associated with HYPERTHYROIDISM may need treatment

STAR HEALTH DESK

A goitre is an abnormal enlargement of thyroid gland. The most common cause of goitre worldwide is lack of iodine in the diet.

Iodine is essential for the production of thyroid hormones, and is found primarily in seawater and the soil in coastal areas.

In the developing world, people who live inland or at high elevations are often iodine deficient and can develop goitres when the thyroid enlarges in an effort to obtain more



Hyginex
Instant hand sanitizer

BEACON
Pharmaceuticals Limited

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1