

MODI'S FARM REFORM REVERSAL Indian farmers formally end year-long mass protests SEE PAGE 6

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Your Right to Know

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"It is the responsibility of the state, in particular the government, to create a congenial atmosphere for flourishing media's role against corruption."



"Democracy can only function when all people are fully included, their rights are protected, their voices are heard, and their votes are counted."



"Emerging data from South Africa suggests increased risk of reinfection with Omicron."

SPORTS MINISTRY PROMOTIONS

Political govt, thus political consideration

Says youth dept DG; massive irregularities alleged

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Nazrul Islam joined the Department of Youth Development under the youth and sports ministry in an entry-level post in 1990. He had topped the list in the recruitment test. After 15 years of "satisfactory" performance, he was regularised in 2005.

Now an assistant upazila youth development officer, he has a clean service record.

On a list of 1,175 officers selected for higher posts, Nazrul was sixth. The department's own committee, formed to pick officers for new posts, prepared the gradation list based on the service tenure and records.

The list was originally prepared in 2016 and finalised in October this year after years of court battle.

But when the department issued the order for the posts last month, an utterly dejected Nazrul found his name was not there.

In a November 25 order, the department elevated 112 assistant upazila youth development officers, giving them "current charge" of upazila youth development officer.

"I have no political affiliation, and no bad service record in my career. But I was left out," said Nazrul.

Like him, some 70 officers were denied new posts. Most of them have

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Students demonstrate by the side of DIT Road in the capital's Rampura around 4:00pm yesterday. During the protest, they distributed copies of a leaflet containing their 11-point demand, including safe roads and justice for those killed in road crashes.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



'Boycott the corrupt'

President prescribes

UNB, Dhaka

"The society should boycott the corrupt" -- that's President Abdul Hamid's curt prescription to end corruption in Bangladesh.

"No man is born corrupt. Family, social and surrounding environment have the greatest impact on human life. So, corrupt people should be socially boycotted," he said yesterday at a programme on the occasion of International Anti-Corruption Day.

The programme was organised at the city's Shilapala Academy

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Challenge is to manage natural capital

Speakers tell CPD webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Natural resources and workers at home and abroad bear the cost of development, said speakers at a webinar yesterday.

"By 2041, Bangladesh may well become a high-income country by the measure of GDP," said Iftekhar Iqbal, professor at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. "The gravest challenge is, however, expected from diminishing natural capital, especially water."

He opined that Bangladesh will become a high-income country by exhausting its natural resources. But there is no indication that there will be financial regularities, institutionalisation of democracy, independent judiciary, social justice and a knowledge society.

The use of fertiliser per hectare has doubled in the past decade and most of it ends up polluting water, said Dr Golam Rabbani, head of Climate Bridge Fund Secretariat at Brac.

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Murad leaves the country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Murad Hassan, who resigned on Tuesday as the state minister for information and broadcasting amid severe backlash for his misogynistic remarks, left the country early today.

He boarded an Emirates flight which departed the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport for Dubai around 1:15am, said airport sources.

Law enforcement and ministry sources said Murad's destination is Toronto, Canada.

He reached the Dhaka airport around 9:00pm yesterday, said on-duty law enforcement officials.

Earlier around 6:00pm, he was seen driving a white Land Cruiser which was heading towards Gulshan-2 from Gulshan-1. He was alone in that vehicle.

The Awami League MP from Jamalpur-4 stepped down as the state minister upon an instruction of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The instruction came as outrage poured in over some comments he made.

During an online interview, Murad made offensive comments on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his daughter Zaima Rahman.

He then got embroiled in another controversy when an audio clip of a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Record number of journalists jailed in 2021

Says CPJ; at least 24 killed for their coverage

AFP, New York

The number of journalists jailed around the world hit a new record in 2021, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists said yesterday.

China and Myanmar alone put a quarter of the 293 media workers behind bars, it said.

In its annual report, the CPJ listed 50 journalists imprisoned in China, 26 in Myanmar, 25 in Egypt, 23 in Vietnam and 19 in Belarus.

Adding those jailed in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Russia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the CPJ said a total of 293 journalists were in prison worldwide as of December 1, up from 280 the year before.

"This is the sixth year in a row that CPJ has documented record numbers of journalists imprisoned around the world," said CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Break barriers, move forward

Hasina tells women

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged women in the country to move forward by breaking all the social barriers -- big or small -- and be on the path guided by Begum Rokeya.

"Once you move forward [by] breaking the barriers, there'll be no more obstacles. In Islam, girls have been given rights... there area equal rights [for men and women]. Even then, such obstacles appear and will keep appearing in our country. But we've to overcome them and keep moving forward."

The PM was addressing the Begum Rokeya Padak-2021 award ceremony and Begum Rokeya Day-2021, joining it virtually from her official Gono Bhaban residence.

Five eminent women personalities were honoured with the prestigious Begum Rokeya Padak this year for their outstanding contributions to women empowerment and social development.

On behalf of the Prime Minister, Fazilatun Nessa Indira, state minister for women and children affairs, handed over the medals and certificates to the recipients and their relatives.

Those awarded with the Padak this year are Prof Hasina Zakaria Bela, Archana Biswas, Shamsunnahar Rahman Paran (posthumous), Dr Zinat

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The drains of dread

Body of 12-yr-old boy recovered after 68hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Around 68 hours after he fell into a drain and remained missing, members of Chattogram fire service finally recovered the body of 12-year-old Kamal.

The body was recovered from Mirza Khal in Muradpur area around 11:50am, said Kafil Uddin, mobilising officer of Chattogram Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Kamal and his friend fell into the open sewer around 4:30pm on Monday when they were playing. Rakib managed to get out, but Kamal could not.

Kamal's father Ali Kawsar knew well that after such a long time had

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Rescuers try to console Ali Kawsar as he breaks down in tears in front of the body of his son -- 12-year-old Kamal Uddin -- near Mirza Khal in Chattogram city's Muradpur area. The body was recovered from the canal around noon yesterday, almost 68 hours after the boy had fallen into a nearby drain on Monday afternoon.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

HIGH AIRFARE TO MIDEAST

Bring it down

Expatriates' welfare writes to civil aviation

RASHIDUL HASAN

Expressing concern over the high airfare to different Middle Eastern destinations, the expatriates' welfare ministry yesterday sent a letter to the civil aviation ministry to take measures for reducing the air ticket prices.

"We have taken the issue very seriously. We have already raised the issue before different forums concerned. Our minister gave a demi official (DO) letter to the inter-ministerial meeting to address the issue," Ahmed Munirus Saleheen, secretary of the expatriates' welfare ministry, told The Daily Star.

In the letter, Munirus said they have requested the civil aviation ministry to bring the airfare down to a logical level.

Asked about introducing "labour fare" for the outbound expatriate Bangladeshi workers, Munirus said his ministry is working on it.

Airfares for flights to different Middle Eastern countries have now doubled, adding pressure on migrant workers returning to their workplaces.

In November, airfares for different Middle Eastern countries were between Tk 40,000 and Tk 45,000. At present, the prices are between Tk 70,000 and Tk 90,000, which is totally illogical and unexpected, said Bangladeshi expatriates. In this situation, leaders of Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (Atab) and Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies have demanded that the government form a regulatory board immediately to address the issue.

They said thousands of Bangladeshi workers could not return to their workplaces in different Middle Eastern countries on time due to high airfares.

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BANGLADESH UPDATE

262
New cases in 24hrs

15,78,550
Total cases

28,016
Deaths

15,43,491
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

5,298,933
Deaths

268,326,045
Total cases

Nine get death over 2013 murder of BCL man

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi court yesterday sentenced nine people to death for murdering Chhatra League leader Shahen Shah more than eight years ago.

Metropolitan Sessions Judge OHM Ilias Hossain also handed life imprisonment to 22 other accused in the case, public prosecutor of the court Md Musabbirul Islam said.

All the convicts were present in the court when the judge announced the verdict, he said.

Among those given the capital punishment are: Md Munsur Rahman, a former ward councillor of Rajshahi City Corporation and city unit BNP member; Awami League leaders Hasanuzzaman Himel, former joint secretary of an AL ward unit, and Tawfiqul Islam Chand, former joint secretary of Rajpara thana AL.

The six others sentenced to death are Md Mohosin, Md Sairul, Rajab, Biplob, Md Momin and Md Ariful Islam.

All were fined Tk 1 lakh each while those sentenced to life terms were fined Tk 50,000 each.

The family of the victim would get the fines paid by the convicts, according to the verdict.

The victim -- Shahen Shah of Guripara area in Rajshahi city -- was a former general secretary of Rajshahi Court College unit of Chhatra League and an apprentice lawyer.

According to the public prosecutor, on August 28, 2013, the convicts stopped Shahen Shah's motorcycle in Guripara area and mercilessly hacked



Shahen Shah

the victim, leaving him fatally injured.

Shahen Shah was declared dead after being taken to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Quoting the first information report (FIR) and charge sheet of the murder case, the public

prosecutor said the killing took place due to enmity between Md Munsur Rahman and Shahen Shah's brother Rajab Ali.

An AL leader, Rajab Ali is now the councillor of ward-1 of RCC and also a panel mayor.

During the 2013 RCC polls, Rajab and Munsur were rival ward councillor candidates and the latter won a third term.

According to the case documents, Shahen Shah filed a complaint with the Election Commission alleging that Munsur violated the electoral code of conduct.

On August 27, 2013, Munsur and his supporters attacked and vandalised Rajab Ali's home and private chamber.

Unable to find Rajab and his brothers, the attackers also openly announced that they would be killed wherever found.

The murder occurred the next day. Nahid Akter, another brother of Shahen Shah, filed the murder case with Rajpara Police Station accusing 29 people and 30 unnamed ones.

Police later charge-sheeted 31 people in the case, which was transferred to a speedy trial tribunal and later sent to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court in December 2016.

The drains of dread

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier in August, an elderly vegetable seller Saleh Ahmed went missing after falling into the same drain in which Kamal had fallen.

Saleh has since been missing despite a seven-day rescue operation by Chattogram Fire Service and Civil Defence divers.

On June 30, two people died when a CNG-run auto-rickshaw plunged into a drain in Sholoshahar area of the city.

In 2020, two children died falling into the Maheshkhal canal in Halishahar area.

In June 2018, a seven-year-old boy died after he fell into a drain in Baizid area.

In 2017, a government official died after falling into a sewer near Chattogram Shilpakala.

While in July 2015, two people were killed as a CNG-run auto-rickshaw fell into a drain in Agrabad-CNB area.

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Boycott the corrupt

FROM PAGE 1

"You have to eliminate your own irregularities and dishonesty before identifying the corruption of others and bringing them to justice. Those who abuse the responsibilities and powers vested in them by the state must be strictly controlled and brought to justice through customary law," he added.

The President also said that the confidence of the people in the ACC will increase if the idea is created in the minds of the people that no corrupt will be able to escape.

To mark this date, the ACC has also arranged a human chain in the city's different areas alongside a discussion programme.

On the other hand, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised a cartoon exhibition on the occasion.

On October 31, 2003, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against corruption and designated the office of the secretary general of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as the secretariat for the Convention's Conference of States Parties.

The Assembly also fixed December 9 as International Anti-Corruption Day to raise awareness against corruption and of the role of the Convention in combating and preventing it.

He also urged the employees at all levels of the Commission to show utmost impartiality and ethics in the discharge of their duties.

"You have to eliminate your own irregularities and dishonesty before identifying the corruption of others and bringing them to justice. Those who abuse the responsibilities and powers vested in them by the state must be strictly controlled and brought to justice through customary law," he added.

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Break barriers, move forward

FROM PAGE 1

said she had taken some steps for women's economic freedom after forming her 1996 government.

It made women's education free and kept 60 percent posts of teachers in primary schools reserved for women. Such steps stopped many parents from preventing their daughters to get education, she said.

When the government introduced women's football in the country, it faced many obstacles, Hasina said, adding, "Now women have been given the scope to join every sector, including judiciary, army, naval force, air force and the BCB."

She said the female officers of the Bangladesh Army, air force and police are doing well in UN peacekeeping missions, which is why they are also in high demand for such missions.

"Our girls are now taking up risky jobs as well. They are even operating fighter planes. So, girls are no longer lagging behind in any area. In some cases, women are doing better than men."

Hasina also urged everyone to pray for her daughter Saima Wazed Putul, a globally renowned activist for autism awareness, on her birthday.

She said what hurts her most is violence against women, adding that though the government has enacted laws against rape, repression of women and domestic violence, it is essential to change the mindset of men to stop violence against women.

"We've to change our mentality... We've to believe that women are not objects of enjoyment, women are co-fighters and co-partners and they have to move forward equally and be given equal rights."

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People have to wait in queues for hours to buy daily essentials at subsidised prices from trucks of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB). In this photo taken yesterday in Khulna's Shibbari intersection, a woman in a TCB line is seen furious as others tried to cut in.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Political govt, thus political consideration

FROM PAGE 1

been superseded by those at the bottom of the gradation list, also known as the fit list.

The posts were handed out in violation of the youth and sports ministry order of October 28, 2021, which asked the department to process the promotion based on the gradation list.

The department failed to follow the list, and a senior secretary said the order issuing the posts should have stuck to the fit list.

Officers who have been denied new posts alleged bribery, nepotism and political favouritism.

"Some of my colleagues tried to persuade me to arrange Tk 5 lakh to bribe higher officials. But I refused," said an officer, who was in the top 10 of the fit list.

"Now, I have to work under my junior, which is humiliating," he said, wishing anonymity.

He said he too has a clean service record.

New posts with "current charge" of upazila youth development officer is a crucial step for future promotions. Those carrying out the "current charge" of any post generally get the position whenever a post becomes vacant.

Once promoted as upazila youth development officer, they become first-class officers with higher pay and status.

On November 28, three days after the department issued the order, some aggrieved officers wrote to the parliamentary standing committee

on youth and sports ministry, alleging irregularities and seeking interventions.

They also challenged the order at the Administrative Tribunal-1, Dhaka, two days later.

"Incumbent Director General [of the department] Azharul Islam Khan indulged himself deeply in irregularities and corruption. He has created a syndicate, through which he realised Tk 5 lakh from each and gave posts in current charge to officials who are even at the bottom of the gradation list," reads the letter, seen by The Daily Star.

Parliamentary Committee Chairman Abdullah Al Islam Jakob could not be reached for comments. His personal secretary Monjurul Hossain said Jakob forwarded the letter to the senior secretary of the ministry for necessary actions.

Md Akhter Hossain, senior secretary to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, said they too received a letter from some officers who alleged irregularities in handing out posts.

The ministry would demand an explanation from the department on the matter and take action accordingly, he said. "Current charge is not a promotion. But as per rules, such a charge should be given in line with the gradation list."

He added that the ministry would send a proposal to the Public Service Commission division to promote the officers in line with the fit list.

DG Azharul downplayed the allegations of irregularities. "No money changed hands," he

insisted, saying some poor-performing officers, who had taken out loans but failed to pay, and those who have show-cause notices issued against them were not considered for the new posts.

But multiple officials who did not get new posts said they performed their job without any bad service records. When this was pointed out to him, the DG said, "Since it is a political government, we also kept in mind the political consideration while giving promotions."

Asked about an officer who was the general secretary of a thana unit of the pro-Awami League student body before joining the department, Azharul said, "Political issue was not that serious. Rather, previous service record was considered since they would be in charge of an office."

Asked if 70 people getting superseded was normal, he sidestepped the question and said those who were fit but did not get posts would be considered for new posts in future subject to the availability of vacant posts.

Asked why the fit list was not followed, he said this was not a case of promotion. The fit list was not followed as it was a case of "current charge".

Deprived officers alleged that Md Mokhlesur Rahman, deputy director (admin) of DYD, who signed off the promotion order, played a key role in "giving the posts in exchange of bribes".

Mokhlesur dismissed this as "absolutely false", and said posts in current charge need not be in line with the gradation list.

HC issues arrest warrants for 14 loan defaulters of PLFSL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued arrest warrants for 14 loan defaulters of People's Leasing and Financial Services Ltd (PLFSL), a troubled non-bank financial institution, as they neither refunded the borrowed money nor contacted its board members despite the court's earlier directive.

Among the defaulters, 11 are companies and three individuals, Mejbahur Rahman, lawyer for PLFSL, told The Daily Star.

The bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar ordered the law enforcers to arrest and produce the three individuals and managing directors of the companies, who borrowed around Tk 300 crore but did not pay back the money, before it on January 9 next year.

The bench came up with the directive during hearing an application filed by PLFSL seeking necessary orders on this issue.

The 11 defaulting companies are: three organisations of Nahar International Company, SS Filling Station, Badhon Food Industries Ltd, and Shova International (Pvt) Ltd, two of organisations of Jayson Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Jayson Agrovit Ltd, Jayson Breeders Ltd; and Jayson Natural Products Ltd.

Three individuals are Sameer Quader Chowdhury, Samihah Quader Chowdhury and Sazia Quader Chowdhury.

Challenge

FROM PAGE 1

Iqbal said food grain import has been steadily increasing reflecting the challenges of food production.

"Scientific decision making is not very strong when it comes to environmental resource management," he added.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, which organised the webinar, said power has always affected environmental decisions. "The government could not move the tanneries out of the city because of their [the tanners'] clout. The forest department has neither the efficiency nor the power to stop encroachment. If we are subsidising resources which are scarce there will be a tendency to overconsume. Subsidies lead to overconsumption."

Rizwanul Islam, formerspecial adviser, Employment Sector, International Labour Office, Geneva, pointed out that Bangladesh's trade account is always in the negative, but when remittances is taken into account, the balance of accounts becomes positive.

The labour productivity is a major driver of development as opposed to the quantity of labour, he said, adding, "Surplus labour has not been absorbed and the employment growth rate has declined."

Bring it down

FROM PAGE 1

Monsur Ahmed Kalam, president of Atab, a platform of around 3,500 registered travel agencies, said the airfare for the Dhaka-Dubai or Dhaka-Abu Dhabi route is now Tk 87,000, which was Tk 40,000 just last month.

He added that the airfare for Dhaka-Muscat route is Tk 72,000, which was Tk 35,000 a few months ago.

The airfares for Riyadh, Jeddah and Madina from Dhaka were between Tk 42,000 and 45,000. Now, they are between Tk 75,000 and Tk 80,000, said Atab leaders.

It costs Tk 1.10 lakh to Tk 1.20 lakh to go to Bahrain by Gulf Air, said sources at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

On the contrary, airfare of different Middle Eastern countries in Nepal, Sri Lanka and India is lower than that of Bangladesh, he said.

They also demanded additional flights to Middle Eastern destinations of Biman and other airlines concerned be operated so that the airfare can be brought back to previous rates.

A top official of Biman Bangladesh Airlines said the air ticket price has increased due to high demand and shortage of seats.

"Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we are now flying four flights weekly to different destinations in Saudi Arabia which was seven in the past. For shortage of seats, airfare has gone up," he said, wishing anonymity.

M Mahubb Ali, state minister for civil aviation, yesterday told this correspondent that they would request different airlines to reduce the airfare.

Record number

FROM PAGE 1

"Imprisoning journalists for reporting the news is the hallmark of an authoritarian regime," he said in a statement.

For 40 years, the CPJ has denounced journalists being murdered, imprisoned, censored, physically hurt and threatened.

"It's distressing to see many countries on the list year after year, but it is especially horrifying that Myanmar and Ethiopia have so brutally slammed the door on press freedom."

The association also counted at least 24 journalists killed around the world this year.

Mexico "remained the Western hemisphere's deadliest country for journalists, with three murdered for their reporting and the motives for six other killings under investigation," the CPJ said.

India was also high on the list, with four journalists killed this year.

The CPJ said the number of journalists behind bars reflects "increasing intolerance for independent reporting around the world."

Murad leaves the country

FROM PAGE 1

phone call between him and film actors Emon and Mahiya Mahi leaked and went viral on social media.

During the conversation with Mahi, Murad was heard passing abusive comments and pressing her to come to a city hotel where he was staying.

As she was refusing, Murad threatened to haul her to the hotel by members of law enforcement and intelligence agencies. He even threatened to rape her.

Before this, the state minister had asked Emon to hold the actress by the neck and bring her to him.

On Monday noon, Murad along with a couple of his aides went to Chattogram from Dhaka and checked in at Radisson Blu hotel.

He was informed about the prime minister's instruction in the evening. He left the hotel just after 2:00am Tuesday, said a top police official in the port city.

Until yesterday, Murad's close aides, ministry officials and even law enforcement agency members could not provide any information on his whereabouts.



Murad inside the Dhaka airport last night.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said he was not aware whether lawmaker Murad was going abroad.

Talking to journalists at his Secretariat office, he said, "I don't know whether he [Murad] will go abroad or stay here. It's his business. We have nothing to say about it."

Since Wednesday night, news started to circulate that Murad purchased an air ticket and would fly to Canada last night.

Contacted, MA Kamal Billah,

personal secretary to Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, said a lawmaker needs to inform the speaker before leaving the country when parliament remains in session.

"As parliament is not in session now, they [lawmakers] don't have to inform anything to the speaker," he told The Daily Star.

A Supreme Court lawyer on Wednesday filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging the legality of JS membership of Murad.

Murad was appointed state minister for health following the formation of the new cabinet on January 7, 2019. He was transferred to the information ministry a few months later.

Meanwhile, Facebook has removed 94 video links of obscene and vulgar remarks of Murad.

BTRC Director General of Systems and Services Nasim Parvez shared the information in an exchange of views between Telecom Reporters Network Bangladesh (TRNB) and BTRC Chairman Shyam Sunder Sikder yesterday. The exchange of views was held at the BTRC office in the capital.

HC commutes jail sentence of BNP MP Harun

FROM PAGE 12

Harunur's lawyer AM Mahubb Uddin Khokon told The Daily Star that there was no legal bar for his client to remain as a lawmaker and to contest elections for the same post in future as the HC has upheld his 16 months' jail sentence.

"We will move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the High Court verdict and seeking acquittal of the case," he added.

Meanwhile, Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told this correspondent

that five years' imprisonment of lawmaker Harunur Rashid has been upheld as the HC has dismissed his appeal and therefore, he cannot remain as a member of parliament following the HC verdict.

Yesterday, the HC also dismissed two separate appeals filed by Enayetur Rahman Bappi, former managing director of NTV, and Istiaq Sadek, owner of Sky Autos, who were also convicted and sentenced to imprisonments for separate periods in the same case.

The HC bench of Justice Md Salim delivered the verdict holding

hearing on all the three appeals filed by Harunur, Enayetur and Istiaq challenging the trial court verdict.

"All three appeals are dismissed. However, the sentence is served out," the bench said in the short verdict.

A Dhaka court on October 21, 2019, sentenced Harunur Rashid to five years' imprisonment, Enayetur Rahman Bappi to two years' imprisonment and Istiaq Sadek to three years' imprisonment in the case filed for tax evasion.

The tax was dodged by abusing the MPs' duty-free car import facilities, according to the case statement.

Should you floss?

FROM PAGE 12

Here's where flossing comes in. When flossing is done properly, it remains the most effective way to remove damaging plaque from between two teeth, dentists say.

Each of our teeth has five surfaces. The three of these -- front, back and biting edge -- can be cleaned with a toothbrush.

It is important to clean these areas as failure to do so can cause gum disease, such as gingivitis or periodontitis. Dentists also suggest flossing at least once every 24 hours as otherwise plaque may harden which will later require

expert help to clean. However, flossing properly is important to reap its benefits.

If you find thin, soft threaded floss hard to use, you can try dental tape, which is thicker. Do not be too aggressive with the floss to avoid harming your gums.

Gums sometimes bleed when you first begin to floss. It usually stops after a few days. If it does not, see your dentist.

Images of carnage, hope and victory

Exhibition of unseen photos of war, independence taken by Anne de Henning starts at Shilpakala Academy

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

April 11, 1971. Anne de Henning, a French photojournalist in her early twenties, crossed the Indo-Bangladesh border secretly to reveal the plight of the Bangladeshis to the world.

As she crossed the border through Jashore, she captured scenes of horrified refugees fleeing for their life, villages destroyed by occupation forces and courageous freedom fighters determined to resist the Pakistan army at all cost.

In Kushtia's Pangsha upazila, she took a photo of several freedom fighters, some of them being teenagers, who were demonstrating their determination and readiness to fight with bows and arrows, saying that they were willing to die to achieve an independent Bangladesh.

A speciality of the photos Anne had taken is that they are extremely rare, as foreign journalists were not allowed to enter the country when Anne visited, and these photos were never exhibited before.

Today, Anne's photos will be exhibited for the first time at an exhibition titled "Witnessing History in the Making: Photographs by Anne de Henning", jointly



organised by Samdani Art Foundation and Centre for Research and Information (CRI) to mark the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence.

The event will take place at Shilpakala Academy till December 31.

Anne took great risks to take the historic photos, as she felt committed to show the world the massacre committed by the Pakistan army and the sufferings of innocent Bangladeshis.

"I felt that the foreign press had a responsibility to convey to the outside world the plight of the Bengali people, who were ruthlessly denied their democratic rights following the December 1970 elections," Anne told this correspondent.

The photographer, who is now in her seventies, is currently in France and communicated with this correspondent via email.

She witnessed how Pakistani fighters were bombing villages in Kushtia and Pakistan army attacked innocent civilians and fleeing refugees.

She recounted, "In Goalundo Ghat on Padma river, which I intended to cross and push on to Dhaka, the silence was broken in the middle of the night by the rattle of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Some of the pictures taken by the photojournalist. Counter-clockwise, women and children rush to board a train in Kushtia's Kumarkali upazila. A group of freedom fighters ready to battle with bows and arrows in Pangsha upazila, and locals chanting for independence. Far left, the photojournalist herself taking a selfie with others.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ANNE DE HENNING



METRO RAIL

Agargaon to Motijheel by Dec 2023

Experts say partial launch to have little impact on Dhaka traffic; commuters fear transport scarcity at Agargaon point; BRTC to provide special bus service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While metro rail operation from Uttara to Agargaon is scheduled to begin in December next year, people have to wait till December 2023 to use the metro to travel to and from Motijheel.

Although the partial operation will be helpful for commuting to and from Uttara and Mirpur, it would have little impact on the capital's overall traffic situation, experts said.

Rather, passengers may face a scarcity of transport options, especially at Agargaon, to go to other parts of the city, because more pressure will be put on other forms of public transport, as people will get off the metro and get on buses. Besides, there is no full-fledged bus stop at Agargaon.

Metro authorities, however, said they have already reached an understanding with Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC), which will operate buses from Uttara and Agargaon dedicatedly for metro passengers.

"On basis of the progress made so far, it is possible to meet the target [of operating from Uttara to Agargaon by December 2022]," MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd, which is implementing the metro rail project, said yesterday.



FIRST METRO RAIL

- Overall progress of MRT-6 73pc till Nov
- Progress: first phase 89.88pc; second phase 71.82pc
- Works related to track installation and procurement related works 68.80pc
- BRTC buses to be operated from Uttara, Agargaon to facilitate metro passengers
- Recruitment, training of manpower for partial operation of metro train to be completed by Aug 2022
- All tests for partial operation to be completed by Sept 2022
- Finance ministry approved 357 manpower for metro police
- DMTC to submit metro fare proposal this month

He, however, said the Uttara-Motijheel route will be operational by December 2023.

As part of the preparation, performance test between Uttara and Agargaon will be carried out on Sunday for the first time, he said.

Siddique was speaking at an online news briefing to inform about the progress.

The Mass Rapid Transit Line 6 or MRT-6 is being constructed between Uttara Third Phase to Motijheel at a cost of around Tk 22,000 crores. Once completed, it will be able to transport 60,000 people per hour and would reduce travel time from Uttara to Motijheel from about two hours to only 40 minutes.

PARTIAL OPERATION WILL HAVE LITTLE IMPACT

Prominent transport expert Prof Moazzem Hossain said taking the capital's current traffic situation into account, launching of a single metro line would have very little impact.

"And partial operation of a single line would be just for the sake of launching something," he said.

Authorities will have to launch at least two or three lines to see some impact on traffic, said Prof Moazzem, who teaches at the Buet's civil engineering department.

Talking about the authority's move to launch BRTC bus service,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

WE WANT SAFE ROAD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



FILE PHOTO

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Students of several schools and colleges yesterday continued their protests demanding safe roads, justice for victims of road crashes and half public transport fares for students all across the country.

Around 11:30am, police obstructed a student rally in Nilkhet which proceeded towards the Prime Minister's Office to

LEMON'S DEATH ON ROAD Lorry driver held in Sandwip

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives have arrested the prime accused -- driver of a lorry -- in a case filed over the death of a Green Rizvi Korayeshi, additional deputy commissioner of Detective Branch of police in Dhaka on December 4.

Md Yusuf Ali was arrested from Chattogram's Sandwip around 4:30am on Wednesday, said Md Kaisar Rizvi Korayeshi, additional deputy commissioner of Detective Branch of police (Uttara division).

A team of DB, during a drive, arrested Yusuf in Sandwip's Banglabazar, he said. Yusuf was produced before the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

10-year-old killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Two persons including a student were killed and five injured in road accidents in Kalmakanda upazila of Netrakona Wednesday evening.

In the upazila's Bahadurkanda, Md Morsalin (10), a third grader, died after a truck ran him over, said OC Md Habibur Khan of Kalmakanda Police Station.

He was declared dead at a local health complex.

In Chatrongpur, Monwara Begum (40) was killed and five injured when a battery-run auto-rickshaw and motorbike collided around 6:00pm.

The injured were rushed to the local health complex.

INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY

State must facilitate media's fight against corruption

Says TIB executive director

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is the responsibility of the state, in particular the government, to create a congenial atmosphere for the media to flourish in its role against corruption, Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said yesterday.

"Instead, what we can see is different kinds of pressure on media, especially in recent times," he told a discussion marking International Anti-Corruption Day.

"We want to remind the government that this is not permissible according to the [country's] constitution," he added.

TIB arranged the discussion at its office in the capital's Dhanmondi.

Iftekharuzzaman also said the government has its pledge to create a favourable atmosphere for investigative journalism against corruption.

According to a TIB paper that was presented during the discussion, investigative journalism in Bangladesh has been facing various challenges.

Such challenges included "controlled marketplace" and influence of corporate capital, political culture, state laws and policy frameworks, self-censorship, lack of willingness

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Country straying from four founding principles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is far away from the four fundamental principles of its constitution, speakers said at a seminar yesterday.

Titled "State Thoughts at Constituent Assembly Debate", the seminar was jointly organised by Dhaka University's law department and law faculty at the Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Hall. The session marked the department's birth centenary and the golden jubilee of the independence of Bangladesh.

"Among the fundamental principles, nationalism was the base, socialism was the destination, democracy was the means and secularism was the catalyst," said Prof Asif Nazrul, chairperson of the department, while

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



On the occasion of Begum Rokeya Day, members of "Begum Rokeya Deepshikha Parishad" formed a human chain yesterday evening in front of the capital's Central Shaheed Minar, in remembrance of the life and works of the feminist writer, educator and activist.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

We are failing Says environment minister on wildlife conservation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environment, Forest and Climate Change minister Md Shahab Uddin yesterday said they were not being able to conserve wildlife, citing section-18 (Kha) of the constitution that makes it mandatory to do so.

He made the remark while addressing a programme as chief guest titled "National Result Sharing and Consultation Workshop" organised by IUCN at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka.

"The wildlife is supposed to be in the forests. But when forests go under the clutch of humans, how will the wildlife survive?" he asked.

In November alone, eight elephants were electrocuted and shot by forest grabbers across Chattogram and Sherpur.

MORE NEWS

After children and husband, woman succumbs to burn injuries

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Following the demise of her two children and husband, Shanta Begum (38) died yesterday from the burn injuries she sustained after a fire broke out at their flat in Munshiganj's West Muktarpur area seven days ago.

She breathed her last around 3:00am while undergoing treatment at the Sheikh Hasina burn institute in Dhaka. She had sustained 60-70 percent burns. On December 2, the day when the fire broke out, her children Nahar Khan (3) and Md Yasin Khan (6) passed away, while her husband Kausar Khan (42) died on Saturday.

Ctg 3-way collision: bus driver held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Rab-7 arrested bus driver Shahidul Alam (48) yesterday, who is a major catalyst behind the three-way collision at Chattogram's Khulshi Railway Crossing on Saturday.

Earlier, gateman Ashrafal Alamgir Bhuiyan was held over the incident. The collision allegedly took place due to Ashrafal's negligence, which resulted in a barrier on one side of the crossing remaining open as a train rushed in. A constable, an HSC examinee and an engineer were killed in the collision.

Local films lack substance: speakers

DU CORRESPONDENT

To appeal to a larger audience and make more money, most Bangladeshi films are being made following common templates. As a result, historical, social and political awareness is fading from society, speakers observed at a seminar yesterday.

The session was titled "Thought and Political Awareness in Bangladeshi Film", held at Dhaka University. Organised by the Centre for Advanced Research in Social Sciences, it was presided over by its director Prof Zia Rahman. Prof Naadir Junaed of DU's Department of Mass Communication and Journalism presented an essay at the seminar. Department of Television, Film and Photography's Prof AJM Shaiful Alam Bhuiyan also spoke.

Stop driving them out, say speakers on Rakhines in Patuakhali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People from the Rakhine community in Patuakhali are slowly being driven out of the country as their properties continue to be grabbed, civil society members claimed at a press conference yesterday.

The 14-member delegation recently visited several Rakhine villages at Patuakhali's Kalapara and Sadar upazila. "Patuakhali had at least 144 Rakhine villages... the number is now 26," said Prof Robaet Ferdous of mass communication and journalism at DU. Zakir Hossain of Nagorik Uddog and Shamsul Huda of ALRD spoke at the event conducted by Myentthein Promila of Adivasi Forum.

Art exhibition underway at Drik Gallery

STAR REPORT

"Narir Shopno", a group art exhibition organised by Naripokkho, began at Drik Gallery in Panthapath yesterday. The exhibition, inspired by Begum Rokya's groundbreaking short story "Sultana's Dream", features creative and colourful visualisations from female artists aged between 15 and 35.

The exhibition will conclude on December 16.

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বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিষয়ঃ লিখিত পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ ও প্রবেশপত্র সংগ্রহ

উক্ত প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্মারক নং-এনআইএলএম-আরসি/প্রশাসন/নিয়োগ/২০২০/১৭৩৪, তারিখঃ ২৮/১১/২০২০ইং মূলে ৩০/১১/২০২০ইং (১) দৈনিক আমাদের সময় এবং (২) "The New Nation" পত্রিকায় নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশিত হয়। বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুসারে অস্থায়ী রাজস্ব খাতে ০৯ (নয়)টি শূন্য পদে নিয়োগের জন্য লিখিত পরীক্ষা আগামী ৩১/১২/২০২১খ্রিঃ রোজ শুক্রবার বেলা ২.৩০ ঘটিকায় ভেনুঃ মডেল একাডেমি, পাইকপাড়া সরকারি (ডি-টাইপ) স্টাফ কোয়ার্টার, মিরপুর-১, ঢাকা-১২১৬-তে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। বিজ্ঞাপিত পদসমূহে আবেদনকারী প্রার্থীদের প্রবেশপত্র NILMRC-এর নিজস্ব ওয়েবসাইট (www.nilmrc.gov.bd) হতে ডাউনলোড করা যাবে। সকল প্রার্থীকে উক্ত সাইট হতে প্রবেশপত্র ডাউনলোড করে এর বর্ডিন প্রিন্ট সংগ্রহ করতে হবে। উক্ত প্রবেশপত্র ব্যতীত কোনো প্রার্থী লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন না।

০৩/১২/২০২১
অধ্যাপক ডঃ মোঃ এছানুল হক
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After mending worn down jute bags, they are tied up, loaded onto trucks and distributed in regions across the country. The workers who load the vehicles work from morning till the afternoon and earn around Tk 500 daily. This photo was taken yesterday from Barishal city's Goriarpur area.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Images of carnage

FROM PAGE 3

heavy gunfire. Elements of the Pakistan forces had crossed the river and launched an attack.

All along her way, freedom fighters repeatedly requested her to tell the world that they were badly in need of modern military equipment. They were also appealing for foreign military intervention.

"That's when I decided to return to Calcutta to convey the needs of the freedom fighters and the plight of thousands of refugees trying to reach the border with India to avoid a massacre," shared Anne.

After the war, Anne was very keen to visit the newly independent Bangladesh. When she learned that Bangabandhu would deliver a speech on April 7, 1972, she travelled from Kolkata to photograph the event.

"As a photographer, it was very interesting to capture his different moods when switching from addressing the crowd with vigorous gestures to sitting quietly on the floor of the stage filling his pipe, drinking

water, or taking notes. I could sense by his gestures, the tone of his voice, and the concentrated looks on the faces of the large crowd listening to him that he was giving a very invigorating speech," recounted Anne.

The photographs of Bangabandhu were also never published before.

Anne travelled to many war-torn countries such as Vietnam, Laos, Bangladesh and Middle Eastern countries. She took many historic photos of the conflicts and her works have been exhibited in numerous exhibitions in Europe and the Middle East.

Regarding this exhibition, Anne said, "The 50th anniversary of the independence of Bangladesh provides a context for me to exhibit the photographs taken in the country and share them with today's youth."

"The presentation by Samdani Art Foundation testifies to the courage of a people ready to die to achieve freedom for their country. I would like these images to be an inspiration for the younger generation," Anne added.

HOTEL SONARGAON Union gets new committee

CITY DESK

Mohammad Azam Khan has been elected president and Saiful Islam general secretary of Hotel Sonargaon Workers-Employees Union.

The election was held on Monday, said a press release.

Lorry driver

FROM PAGE 3

court yesterday, he added.

Mahdi Hasan Lemon (21), a fourth-year student of Green University's textile engineering department, was killed after a lorry hit his motorcycle from behind and ran him over as he fell on the ground on the capital's Airport Road.

Locals seized the lorry, but the driver and his helper fled. Lemon's father filed a case with the local police station.

We want safe road

FROM PAGE 3

submit a memorandum containing six-point demand.

Students said they would march towards the PMO again from Nilkhet on December 19.

Meanwhile, another group of students distributed leaflets to commuters, pedestrians and police officers in Rampura Bridge area around 3:30pm to raise awareness about their 11-point demand.

They will hold a solidarity rally near the bridge at 3:00pm tomorrow, and will be participated by students, teachers, workers and guardians.

Meanwhile, another group of students under the banner of "Nirapad Sarak Andolon" will hold a protest rally at Central Shaheed Minar today where family members of the victims in road accidents would take part.

State must facilitate

FROM PAGE 3

within the institution, lack of capacity, and insecurity.

Citing an Article 19 report, TIB said at least 265 journalists came under various types of attack in Bangladesh last year. Of those, 16.32 percent were instances of physical attack.

Besides, 71.95 percent of journalists and rights activists were victims of different legal challenges.

During the programme, the graft watchdog awarded eight journalists and one television documentary programme with the "Investigative Journalism Awards-2021". Among them, two were camerapersons and six were reporters from different print and electronic media outlets at national and local levels.

Marking International Anti-Corruption Day, TIB has been recognising journalists with the "Investigative Journalism Awards" since 1999.

This year, 71 investigative reports, in total, were submitted in six different categories.

On the occasion of international anti-corruption day, TIB also arranged a weeklong "anti-corruption cartoon exhibition" that started yesterday.

Country

FROM PAGE 3

presenting the keynote paper. Speaking of the constituent assembly debate that decided the four principles, Nazrul said every member of the then government was aware of opposition leaders' rights. "They heard all of their objections and respected them. But we all know how the situation is today," he said.

Barrister Amirul Islam, one of the members of the constituent assembly, said, "That proclamation has a citizen's oath which should be read by all students from the primary school to universities to understand its values."

Prof Intiaz Ahmed, Director of DU's Centre for Genocide Studies and Lawmaker Aroma Dutta also spoke at the session. It was chaired by Dean of Law Faculty Prof Rahmat Ullah while DU VC Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman attended as chief guest.

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Agargaon

FROM PAGE 3

he said that may help passengers but that Mirpur to Motijheel is the route in demand.

Replying to another question, he said authorities across the globe have to give 10-50 percent subsidies for operating the metro and Bangladesh will have to as well. But, partial operation would increase overhead operational and maintenance costs.

MAN Siddique said they would sign a memorandum of understanding with BRTC soon and would operate a circular bus service centring Agargaon and Uttara.

PHYSICAL WORK OF 2 MORE LINES STARTS 2022

MAN Siddique said they are hopeful about starting physical work of MRT-1, which will be the first underground metro line, in July next year. The line will have two parts -- one will run from Dhaka airport to Kamalapur, and the other from Notun Bazar to Purbachal.

Deadline for the Tk 52,561.43-crore line is 2026.

Besides, physical work of MRT-5 (northern route) would also start in December next year, he said.

The line from Savar's Hemayetpur to Bhataria via Gabtoli, Mirpur and Gulshan, would be finished by 2028 at an estimated cost of Tk 41,239 crore.

NEWS IN brief

Two cases filed against Alal

STAR REPORT

Two cases have been filed against Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal, joint secretary general of BNP, in Shariatpur and Joypurhat for making derogatory comments against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Jahangir Hossain, president of Shariatpur Sadar upazila unit of Awami League, yesterday filed a case with the district court seeking Tk 5 crore compensation.

In Joypurhat, Jahurul Islam, general secretary of district AL, filed another case under Digital Security Act with Sadar Police Station on Wednesday.

22 selected for Acumen Fellowship Program

CITY DESK

Twenty-two emerging leaders from diverse social groups have been selected for the third Acumen Fellowship in Bangladesh for the year 2022, said a press release.


The third group of Acumen fellows are social entrepreneurs from non-profit, for-profit and local institutions and activists and storytellers from leading social movements. They are Ho Chi Minh, Mong Mamma, ABM Mahmodul Hasan, Moshfec Ara, Sadikul Islam, Zyma Islam, Razin Mustafiz, Trishila Chakma, Diptha Saha, Kashfia Mahmud, Tori Chakma, Ehsan Kabir, Sadia Jafri, Shams Jaber, Fawaz Rob, Arman Hasan, Fatiha Polin, Gopal Kumar Dey, Md Nazmul Haque Nehal, Swarna Moye Sarker, Milon Patwary and Imran Ahmed Chowdhury.

BFUJ supports NOAB's demand for incentive

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists yesterday called for restoring discipline in newspaper industry along with considering the demand of Newspaper Owners' Association (NOAB) for providing incentive to newspapers.

The BFUJ leaders said NOAB, during a recent meeting with the FBCCI raised newspaper industry's crisis which is very much rational. "BFUJ is observing with concern that most newspapers did not implement the government-declared 9th wage board award till now, many do not give appointment letters to journalists-employees and pay their regular salaries, they are retrenching journalists without clearing their dues as per the law."



বহরব্যাপী প্রশিক্ষণ কোর্সে ভর্তি চলছে


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বাংলাদেশ শিল্পকলা একাডেমি

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১৪/৩ সেপ্টেম্বর, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Gomostapur, Chapai Nawabganj
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.7037.000.07.001.21-634 Date: 09/12/2021

Invitation for Tender (Goods) e-Tender Notice No. 02/2021-21

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

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of scheme	Tender last selling (date & time)	Tender closing & opening (date & time)	Tender ID No.
2	INF-2019-20-507037-002	Supplying High & Low Bench of Difference High School of Gomostapur Upazila Dist. Chapai Nawabganj.	11/01/2022 17.00pm	12/01/2022 12.00pm	635753

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System 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 11/01/2022 at 17.00pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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GD-2283

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Gurudayal Government College
Kishoreganj
Website: www.gdc.gov.bd

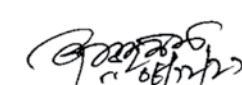
Memo No. GDGC/CEDP/Goods/G9/2021-22/79(4) Date: 08/12/2021

e-Tender Notice 02/2021-2022

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.	636671	Procurement of Scientific Apparatus for Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology and Geography Labs	27/12/2021, 12.00pm	27/12/2021, 1.00pm

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 26 December 2021, 4.00pm. 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-2280

Physically challenged indigenous girl raped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

A physically challenged indigenous girl was raped allegedly by one of her neighbouring youth in Yangcha area of Lama upazila on Wednesday.

Victim's mother filed a case with Lama Police Station accusing one Altaj Uddin, 30, the same night, OC of the police station Shahidul Islam said.

According to the case statement, Altaj raped the Marma girl, aged around 24, when she was alone at her house on Wednesday noon, the OC said, adding that the victim girl was sent to Bandarban Sadar Hospital for medical test yesterday.

LAND DISPUTE

3 to walk gallows for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Joypurhat court yesterday sentenced two brothers and their cohort to death for killing the siblings' elder brother over land dispute in Joypurhat's Akkelpur upazila in 2007.

Joypurhat District and Sessions Judge Nur Islam delivered the verdict in presence of the convicts -- Sekendar Ali, 42, and his brother Shahidul Islam, 44, of Akkelpur upazila, and Babu Mia, 48, of Khetlal upazila.

According to the case statement, there had been a feud between the convicted siblings and their elder brother Abu Taher, 46, over the ownership of ancestral property.

On March 1 in 2007, Sekendar and Shahidul along with the other convict entered Taher's room and stabbed him to death.

Police arrested the trio after Ashraf Ali, Taher's father-in-law, filed a murder case with Akkelpur Police Station the following day.



A view of the illegal structure built on the land of the Water Development Board along the flood bypass road next to the Teesta Barrage in Doani area of Lalmonirhat's Hatibandha. A local Awami League leader claimed that he was building the structure on his own land but failed to show any document in favour of his claim. PHOTO: STAR

AL man building market grabbing WDB's land

No action yet even after lodging complaint with the police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A local leader of the ruling Awami League (AL) is building a market grabbing the land of the Water Development Board (WDB) in Doani area of Hatibandha upazila in Lalmonirhat.

Abu Bakkar Siddique Shyamal, the organising secretary of Hatibandha upazila unit Awami League and chairman of Gaddimari Union Parishad, has been constructing structures on some 30 decimals of land along the flood bypass road next to the Teesta Barrage in Doani area of Hatibandha.

Meanwhile, the WDB authorities on September 1 lodged a written complaint with Hatibandha Police Station against the illegal construction on the land. WDB authorities also issued a notice to the AL leader on September 15 asking him to stop building permanent structures on its land. But the construction work has not stopped yet.

Abdur Rob, assistant revenue officer of WDB in Dalia, said that although they had lodged a written complaint with the police on September 1, the police have

yet to take any action for unknown reasons. Police assistance has been sought over again and again but to no avail.

"We have issued notice to Abu Bakkar Siddique Shyamal too," he said.

"I have informed the higher authorities of the matter," he said adding that the flood bypass of Teesta Barrage will be threatened due to the illegal construction on the land.

Several ultra-poor people have been living on the WDB's land in Doani area for a long time building makeshift structures.

"We have never dared to build any permanent structure here. But the AL leader has been building structures occupying the WDB's land," said a resident of the area seeking anonymity.

The WDB authorities have failed to take any stern action against him. If no action is taken against this illegal occupation, others will start occupying the WDB's land and start construction, locals said.

Contacted, Abu Bakkar Siddique Shyamal said that he was constructing the structures along the flood bypass road as per the rules.

He claimed that he purchased the land from the land owner but he could not give any information about who had sold this land to him.

"WDB authorities have illegally lodged a complaint against me with the police station. The notice issued to me is also invalid," he said.

"I will remove the structures from here if the court orders so; otherwise not," he also said.

However, WDB official Abdur Rob said there was no privately-owned land around the Teesta Barrage and the Flood Bypass Road. The landless people have been living temporarily on WDB's land.

Nobody can build any permanent structures on it, he said.

Hatibandha Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Ershadul Alam said that Abu Bakkar Siddique Shyamal was asked to stall the construction work on WDB's land following the written complaint lodged by the WDB authorities and he was also asked to show his documents.

"As per the rules, if WDB seeks police assistance, we are ready to cooperate," said the OC.

Early variety of potato a boon for farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

An early potato harvest has brought fortune to the farmers in Nilphamari district as traders are paying exceptionally high prices for the kitchen staple amid increased demand in the country's major cities.

The situation is unlike the previous season when the farmers incurred huge losses due to preserving their produce in cold storage.

"Farmers in Nilphamari are the pioneers in producing the early variety of potato that can be harvested only 60 days after sowing," said Kishoreganj Upazila Agriculture Officer Habibur Rahman adding that the soil of the region is highly conducive to potato cultivation.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Nilphamari, it set the target to cultivate potatoes in 22.5 thousand hectares of land and the production target was 4.5 lakh metric tonnes. However, the early variety of potatoes has been cultivated on 8.1 thousand hectares.

In the meantime, 25 per cent of early potatoes have already been harvested and sold instantly as traders from Dhaka, Chattogram and other cities came to the farmers' doorsteps to purchase the product directly from fields at a competitive rate as this new potato has a high demand in the markets.

Selected villages in the district's two upazilas out of six are blessed with the bumper yield of the variety and they are Panialpur, Porakot, Putimari, Kalikapur, Nitai, Uttar Durakuthi, Dakkhin

Durakuthi, Uttar Bahagli, Dakkhin Bahagli of Kishoreganj upazila and Chapra, Natib Chapra, Zadorhaat and Panchapukur of Sadar upazila.

Shamim Hossain Babu, 45, a potato farmer of Uttar Durakuthi village in Kishoreganj upazila, said, "I cultivated the early variety of potato in 10 bighas of land spending Tk 2.30 lakh as production cost and got 15,000 kg yield in the third week of November, which was sold at Tk 6 lakh and my net profit stands at 3.70 lakh."

These potatoes after reaching the kitchen markets of Dhaka are usually sold at Tk 80-Tk 100 per kg, he added.

"For an early harvest, we sow potato varieties like Grula, Karez, Diamond etc in September-October and harvest in November-December," said farmer Zohurul Islam of Kalikapur village in the same upazila adding that late varieties of potatoes are usually harvested in the February-March period.

Farmer Sirajdoulia of Chapra village in Sadar upazila said that after harvesting of early potato, they can sow the same crop again in the same land to harvest in the February-March period giving them the opportunity to make extra bucks.

Deputy Director of Nilphamari DAE Abu Bakkar Siddique said, "Early varieties of potato are a blessing to the district's farmers as they bring sure profit. As farmers can cultivate potatoes twice in the same land, hopefully, the production target will be reached by February-March period."



A farmer of Putimari village in Nilphamari's Kishoreganj upazila along with others is seen harvesting potatoes from his field. Most of the farmers in the district are happy as harvesting of the early varieties has given them opportunity to earn quick bucks. PHOTO: STAR

PM's comment

FROM PAGE 12

so much humanity [to Khaleida Zia], and asking what else is left to do? This cannot be expected from a leader of a civilised country."

Hasina on Wednesday said they have already shown great generosity to Khaleida though the latter had always intended to hurt the Bangabandhu family.

Fakhrul said Khaleida is not being allowed to receive advanced treatment abroad although she struggled during the Liberation War and fought to restore democracy and people's rights in the country.

Convicted by a court in a corruption case, the BNP chief landed in jail on February 8, 2018.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, she was freed temporarily on certain conditions on March 25 last year. The term of her release have so far been extended four times.

4 students

FROM PAGE 12

Later, the two called the families and demanded a ransom of Tk 5 lakh for the release of each of the students.

The two Rohingya are residents of Teknaf's Nayapara Rohingya camp number 26. They work at "Batighar cottage" on Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Marine Drive in Himchhari Panchardwip area, the families said.

Sonarpara High School Head Teacher Milon Barua said, "I've heard about the incident. We want our sons back."

Kaysar's father Abdur Rahim said the four students knew Jahangir and Ibrahim. After abducting them, the two beat them and threatened to kill them. "We have informed Ramu police about the incident," Rahim said.

Ramu Police Station OC Anwarul Hossain said, "We received a complaint from the students' families on Wednesday. Ramu police along with Teknaf police have been conducting drives to rescue the abducted students."

Last respects paid to Rawat

FROM PAGE 12

data on the chain of events, including the last-minute conversations, if any between the pilot and the ATC before the tragedy unfolded on the hills.

Group Captain Varun Singh, the lone survivor among the 14 on board the Mi-17 V5 chopper, is battling for his life in the military hospital at Wellington in Tamil Nadu.

"All efforts are being made to save his life," Singh said.

Rawat, 63, was appointed as India's first chief of defence staff by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in late 2019. The position was set up with the aim of integrating the army, navy and air force.

Singh said the Mi-17 V5 helicopter took off at 11:48 am (06:18 GMT) on

Wednesday from the Sulur Air Base. The base lost contact with the aircraft seven minutes before it was scheduled to land at a hillside military area at 12:15 pm.

"Locals spotted a fire in the forest near Coonoor and rushed to the spot where they observed the wreckage of military helicopter engulfed in flames," Singh said.

At a colonial-era barrack in Wellington, the military cantonment town where Rawat and his entourage were headed, uniformed soldiers carefully laid out the coffins, in the presence of officers from all three services of the Indian armed forces.

Military personnel, veterans, politicians and others then paid their last respects, offering floral wreaths and flowers by the coffins, reports Reuters.

Death reference

FROM PAGE 12

Two days after the incident, Al Amin narrated the horrific night to The Daily Star.

He said he along with his friends Towhidur Rahman Palash and Kamruzzaman Kanto offered prayers at Darussalam Furfura Sharif Mosque and met Shams Rahim Shamam, Ibrahim Khalil, Tipu Sultan and Sitaf Jabi Munif at the main road.

The seven decided to have tehari at Gabtoli and took two rickshaws. Reaching there, they changed their mind and decided to spend the night roaming the area. They crossed Gabtoli bridge on foot and went along the Turag river up to Keblarchar.

"We split into two groups and sat by the river. Palash, Kanto and I were together while Shamam, Tipu, Ibrahim and Munif were about 200 yards away. Suddenly, we three heard the other four screaming for help. We thought they were being attacked by muggers or robbers.

"We rushed to help them but found hundreds of villagers beating them indiscriminately while about 50 others were coming to attack us, calling us robbers," Al Amin continued.

"We tried to tell them that we were students, not robbers and had come from Darussalam. But by then, several people swooped on us and started beating us up. I heard the assaulting villagers say they had already killed four of us."

He continued: "Fearing for my life, I grabbed the legs of an elderly man and begged for my life but he kept hitting me. Then I spotted plainclothes policemen with shotguns standing nearby and watching the mob go crazy. I begged them to save my life."

A policeman then stopped the attackers, he said.

"All of your friends are dead and you will be soon unless you agree to say whatever we want you to say," said Al Amin quoting the "saviour" police official as saying.

Al Amin was then sent to a hospital under police arrangement.

The six students lost their lives. Although Al Amin survived the brutal attack, he and the six other victims were accused in a robbery case filed by local trader Abdul Malek.

Later, Al Amin was cleared of the charges after police found that the victims were not robbers.

Following the development, Anwar Hossain, sub-inspector of Savar Police Station, filed a murder case against Malek and several others in connection with the incident.

During the investigation, 14 accused, including Malek, confessed to different magistrates about their involvement in the killings.

A judicial probe body submitted its report on September 8, 2011 saying they had found negligence by police in protecting the students who had gone to Bardeshi village from the capital's Darussalam.

Eight policemen were suspended after the filing of the judicial probe report. On January 7, 2013, Investigation Officer Sharif Uddin Ahmed, an additional superintendent of police at Rab, pressed charges against 60 people in the case, excluding the eight suspended cops.

The court on July 8 framed charges against the 60 accused.

After 10 years of legal battle, Judge Ismat Jahan of the Second Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka delivered the verdict.

Officials of the Dhaka court concerned brought the documents of the case, including the judgment, to the HC on Tuesday, Supreme Court Spokesman Saifur Rahman told The Daily Star.

If a lower court sentences any person to death in a case, its judgment is examined by the HC through hearing arguments for confirmation of the death sentence.

The case documents and judgment reach the HC as death reference from the lower court after the latter delivers the verdict as per relevant provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)

Mitro Bahini closing in on Dhaka

FROM PAGE 12

initially indicated strong objections because "Russia is giving India everything she wants."

ON THE WAR FRONT Mitro Bahini was poised for a final drive on Dhaka today, according to Indian military officials.

A spokesman for the Indian Army's Eastern Command said at a briefing in Kolkata tonight that the Indian forces were consolidating near Bhairab Bazar, on the Meghna's western bank, and had not yet begun the drive. The spokesman added, however, that "from here, Dhaka is directly threatened without any major obstruction."

Mitro Bahini had bypassed or encircled major border towns, including Cumilla, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Sylhet, in the drive towards Dhaka. At least one Pakistani brigade was cut off in the Chattogram area. A brigade at Jessore reportedly retreated to the Kushtia area in the north.

On the western front, Pakistanis launched a large attack in the Chhamb area of southwestern Kashmir.

OUR GOAL FREEING BANGLADESH: GANDHI Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said today that India would keep fighting until Pakistani troops were

driven out of Bangladesh. She was addressing a student rally in New Delhi.

The Indian prime minister said that her government was considering the United Nations ceasefire resolution but that "nothing can deter us from driving the occupation forces out of the region and helping the Bangladesh people live in peace and prosperity."

Indira Gandhi, apparently aiming at the US, told the students that "certain countries giving us aid are angry with us because we could not possibly act on their advice, which we thought was not in our country's interests."

Later, in a broadcast to the armed forces, the Indian prime minister said, "Fight well, my countrymen. Victory will be ours."

"NOTHING SHORT OF INDEPENDENCE": JUSTICE CHOWDHURY

In an interview at the UN Headquarters in New York, leader of Bangladesh delegation Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury said today, "The government of Bangladesh alone can speak for our people; no other government can do so, not even India, because our people will accept nothing short of independence."

Even though most of the UN

member countries, 104 of 131 United Nations members, voted in the General Assembly for a resolution that was supported by Pakistan and opposed by India, Justice Chowdhury expressed the hope that majority of the world's governments would decide to recognise Bangladesh.

He added, "The most basic principles of the United Nations Charter is self-determination, and this is what is involved in the creation of Bangladesh."

"We are a separate people, a different ethnic group with different language and customs, and we have been ruled by people a thousand miles away. This is the classic definition of a colony."

Indian delegate to UN, Samar Sen, today said that India would not negotiate a ceasefire unless a representative of Bangladesh was present.

He pointed out that the assembly merely called for a ceasefire, withdrawal of Indian and Pakistani armed forces and restoration of order. It had not pronounced itself for or against Bangladesh, he emphasised.

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

Booster doses likely from next month

FROM PAGE 12

While Maleque did not give a timeline for the rollout of the booster dose campaign, The Daily Star has learnt from health ministry officials involved in vaccine management that two weeks is needed to complete the technical tasks.

The campaign for booster shots will start in January at the earliest, they said on condition of anonymity as they are not authorised to speak with the media.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has been preparing the protocols for giving booster doses, which is a supplemental vaccine dose given to people when the immune response to a primary vaccine series is likely to have decreased over time.

People aged 60 years and above who have received the full dose of the Covid-19 vaccine will get the same vaccine as the booster dose, according to the officials.

The background tasks to roll out booster doses are underway, Toufiq Hassan Shawon, medical officer at the DGHS engaged in Covid-19 vaccination management, told The

Daily Star yesterday.

"We will stay prepared and will start giving booster dose once the higher-ups take a call," he added.

The government's move to proceed with the booster dose campaign for the elderly goes against the National Immunisation Technical Advisory Group (NITAG).

When the majority of the target people has not received full doses of Covid-19 vaccines, it is unscientific and discriminatory to give booster doses, Benazir Ahmed, a member of the NITAG, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The government has targeted to inoculate 80 percent of the population. As of yesterday, 22.95 percent of the population has received the full dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, according to the DGHS.

"So we have advised not to start booster dose right now," Ahmed said.

The NITAG -- whose earlier counsel to not begin Covid-19 vaccination for children was unheeded by the government -- gave the advice in its latest meeting held earlier this week.

Meanwhile, the country witnessed another day of zero fatality from

Covid-19 in the 24 hours to 8 am yesterday, the second since November 20 -- an encouraging development at a time when many countries around the world are experiencing a fresh wave of cases and fatalities.

With this, the total number of deaths due to Covid-19 remained at 28,016. This is about 1.77 percent of all confirmed cases.

During the period, a total of 262 new infections from Covid-19 were recorded to take the tally to 15,78,550. The positivity rate was 1.22 percent from a total of 21,496 samples tested across the country.

Meanwhile, a total of 287 Covid-19 patients have recovered during the 24 hours.

The total number of recoveries now stands at 15,43,491 and the recovery rate at 97.78 percent, the press release added.

Restorers discover

FROM PAGE 12

The sketch reveals that the artist initially planned to paint feathers on one militiaman's helmet, and that he decided against including a sword that he had drawn between the two main figures.

MORE NEWS

Three HK activists convicted over Tiananmen vigil

Jailed Hong Kong media mogul Jimmy Lai was among three democracy campaigners convicted yesterday for taking part in a banned Tiananmen vigil as the prosecution of multiple activists came to a conclusion. Lai, the 74-year-old owner of the now-shuttered pro-democracy Apple Daily newspaper, was found guilty of unlawful assembly charges alongside former journalist Gwyneth Ho and prominent rights lawyer Chow Hang-tung. Authorities had charged more than two dozen pro-democracy politicians and activists over a vigil last year, which commemorated the victims of Beijing's deadly Tiananmen crackdown in 1989 despite a police ban.

UK's Johnson welcomes 2nd child with wife Carrie

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday became a father again, after his wife, Carrie, gave birth to a girl, Downing Street said. The "healthy baby girl" was born at a London hospital in the early hours and "both mother and daughter are doing very well", a spokeswoman for the couple said. "The couple would like to thank the brilliant NHS (National Health Service) maternity team for all their care and support," she added. The announcement comes as Johnson faces a backlash over the imposition of new coronavirus restrictions designed to curb the spread of the new Omicron variant. He is also under pressure from the public after claims that Downing Street staff held a Christmas party last year in defiance of restrictions.



India lawyer bailed after 3-yr detention on anti-terror law

An activist lawyer detained for more than three years without trial was freed on bail in Mumbai yesterday, in the latest case to highlight the Indian government's use of contentious anti-terror laws. Sudha Bharadwaj, 60, was arrested in August 2018 on accusations of inciting violence between different Indian castes and claims she had links to Maoist militants. A special court for India's National Investigation Agency has set over a dozen bail conditions for her release, including banning her from talking to the press. The court also directed her to stay in Mumbai and immediately inform it about her place of residence and contact numbers.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Students hold light candles and posters to pay their tribute to India's defense chief General Bipin Rawat, who was killed with 13 others a day earlier in a helicopter crash, at their school in Amritsar, India yesterday. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that a tri-service inquiry will be conducted into the helicopter crash.

PHOTO: AFP

FIGHT AGAINST NEW COVID VARIANT

Wealthy nations may hoard shots again

Warns WHO's vaccine director

REUTERS, Geneva

Wealthy countries may start to hoard Covid-19 vaccines again, threatening global supplies as they seek to shore up stocks to fight the new Omicron variant of the virus, a senior World Health Organization official said yesterday.

The warning by the WHO's vaccine director, Kate O'Brien, comes as supplies to the COVAX dose-sharing programme run by the WHO and vaccine charity GAVI have increased in the past few months due to donations from wealthy countries and after India eased limits on exports of vaccines.

New Delhi's move has meant the Serum Institute of India has resumed shipments of the AstraZeneca vaccine it makes, mainly for COVAX.

"We have to make sure that it (higher shipments) continues," O'Brien said in a briefing.

"As we head into whatever the Omicron situation is going to be, there is risk that the global supply is again going to revert to high-income countries hoarding vaccine" as they seek to protect their ability to vaccinate their citizens, she said later.

Earlier in the briefing, she said a major problem for COVAX has been wealthy countries donating Covid-19 vaccines with a relatively short shelf life, while noting that wastage rates were also high in some wealthy countries.

COVAX has shipped 610 million doses of vaccines to 144 countries or territories since February, the GAVI website shows.

'We stand at an inflection point'

Biden rings the alarm on state of democracy worldwide

AFP, Washington

Democracy faces "sustained and alarming challenges" worldwide, US President Joe Biden said yesterday at the opening of a virtual summit on democracy with representatives from some 100 countries.

Biden said trends are "largely pointing in the wrong direction" and that democracy needs "champions." "We stand at an inflection point," Biden said. "Will we allow the backward slide of rights and democracy to continue unchecked?"

The two-day event, held by video link because of the coronavirus pandemic, was billed by the White House as US leadership in an existential struggle between democracies and powerful autocracies or dictatorships.

"Make no mistake, we're at a moment of democratic reckoning,"

DEMOCRACY SUMMIT



said Uzra Zeya, the Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. "Countries in virtually every region of the world have experienced degrees of democratic backsliding."

The summit featured opening remarks from Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, with representatives from some 100 governments, as well as NGOs,

private businesses, philanthropic organizations and legislatures attending.

But Biden went into the summit with the United States deep in its own democratic troubles.

His Republican predecessor Donald Trump continues a shocking campaign to disrupt US political norms and overturn the 2020 election in which he was defeated by Biden.

And there was also tension simply over who should be on -- and off -- the list of invitees.

China and Russia, which Biden sees as champions of the autocracies camp, were pointedly left out, something they say is stoking an ideological rift.

"No country has the right to judge the world's vast and varied political landscape by a single yardstick," wrote ambassadors Anatoly Antonov of Russia and Qin Gang of China in a joint essay last month.

China 'committed genocide' in Xinjiang

Uyghur tribunal in London rules

CNN ONLINE

A London-based independent tribunal has ruled that China committed genocide against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in its western Xinjiang region, accusing China's senior leadership including President Xi Jinping of "primary responsibility" for acts perpetrated against Muslim minority groups.

"The tribunal is satisfied that the PRC [People's Republic of China] has affected a deliberate, systematic and concerted policy with the object of so-called 'optimizing' the population in Xinjiang by the means of a long-term reduction of Uyghur and other ethnic minority populations to be achieved through limiting and reducing Uyghur births," Geoffrey Nice, who chaired

the tribunal, said yesterday as he read out the verdict.

He added that the tribunal was "satisfied that President Xi Jinping, Chen Quanguo and other very senior officials in the PRC and CCP [Chinese Communist Party] bear primary responsibility for acts in Xinjiang."

While the "perpetration of individual criminal acts that may have occurred, rape or torture, may not have been carried out with the detailed knowledge of the President and others, but the tribunal is satisfied that they have occurred as a direct result of politics, language and speeches promoted by President Xi and others..." he said.

The judgment follows a series of tribunal hearings in London this year, during which a panel of jurors reviewed evidence and testimony.

US-led anti-IS coalition ends Iraq combat mission

Shifts to training, advisory and capacity building role

AFP, Baghdad

The US-led coalition against the Islamic State group has finished its combat mission in Iraq and will shift to a training and advisory role, Iraq's national security adviser said yesterday.

The change of the mission for around 2,500 American troops stationed in the war-battered country by the end of the year was first announced by US President Joe Biden in July when he hosted Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi.

The Iraqi government has been under pressure from powerful pro-Iranian political groups with armed wings that have vehemently demanded all US troops leave the country.

"We are officially announcing the end of the coalition forces' combat mission," national security adviser Qassem al-Aaraji wrote on Twitter.

"The relationship with the international coalition continues in the areas of training, advising and capacity building" of Iraqi forces, he added.

Aaraji was speaking after a meeting between the coalition and the Joint Operations commanders of the Iraqi

security forces.

In effect, the about 2,500 US and 1,000 other coalition troops deployed in Iraq will remain there. They have been acting as advisers and trainers since mid-2020.

IS established a so-called caliphate across swathes of Syria and Iraq from 2014.

It was defeated in Iraq in 2017 after offensives by Iraqi forces with the support



of the coalition that has included more than 80 countries, among them Britain, France and several Arab nations.

Even though Iraq declared victory against the IS jihadists in December 2017, the group's remnants still carry out attacks against security forces and civilians and in recent weeks killed several Kurdish fighters in northern Iraq.

ASSURANCES FROM GOVT

Indian farmers end year-long protests

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian farmers called off a year-long protest yesterday after the government conceded a clutch of demands, including assurances to consider guaranteed prices for all produce, instead of just rice and wheat, union leaders said.

The move comes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi said last month he would roll back three farm laws, seeking to end the longest-running farmers' protest that galvanized millions of growers who remained resolute in opposing the legislation.

Despite the government's climbdown, thousands of farmers had continued to camp out on major highways leading to New Delhi to press for other demands such as the guaranteed prices, as well as for legal action against protesters to be dropped.

"We have received a letter from the government which has conceded to our requests," said Balbir Singh Rajewal, a senior farm union leader.

Farmers' leaders would meet on January 15 to review progress on the government's assurances, Rajewal told a news conference.

"We will resume our protests if the government moves away from the assurances," said Gurnam Singh Charuni, another farmers' leader.

The government will set up a panel of growers and government officials to find ways of ensuring Minimum Support Prices (MSP), as the guaranteed rates are called, for all farm produce, according to the letter seen by Reuters.



Nobel Peace Prize winner Maria Ressa takes a selfie with the Nobel Committee and co-prize winner Dimitrij Muratov after a press conference at the Norwegian Nobel Institute in Oslo yesterday, the day before the awarding ceremony of the Nobel Peace Prize.

PHOTO: AFP

Advertisement for North South University, Center of Excellence in Higher Education. Admission - Spring 2022 MS in Biotechnology. Application Deadline: 22nd December 2021. Admission Test: 24th December 2021 10am. Eligibility: B.Sc in any discipline of Biological Sciences or Chemistry, MBBS, BDS, or Equivalent Healthcare Degree. Minimum CGPA Required: 2.75 out of 4*. Graduate Application Helpline: 01614271717. Program Features: 36-Credit Hours Program, Course Waiver, Evening & Weekend Classes, Classes conducted by PhD Holders. Career Opportunities: High acceptance in PhD, Research Organizations, Food and Pharmaceutical Industries. Apply Online: http://apply.northsouth.edu/

THIS DAY IN HISTORY DECEMBER 10. 1995 - Israeli soldiers quit the West Bank town of Tulkarm and a first contingent of PLO police moved in to Hebron as part of a handover to Palestinian rule. 1996 - President Nelson Mandela signed into law a new constitution for South Africa, legally entrenching racial equality and consigning apartheid to history's dustbin. 2000 - Former Pak PM Nawaz Sharif arrived in Saudi Arabia for an indefinite exile after being released from prison by army.

Advertisement for Bangladesh Bank (বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক) regarding the withdrawal of the 2nd issue of the 100 Taka banknote. The notice states that the 100 Taka banknote issued in 2011 is being replaced by a new issue. It provides details on the withdrawal process, including the deadline of December 22, 2021, and the locations where the old notes can be exchanged. The notice is signed by the Deputy Governor of the Bangladesh Bank.

YOUTH IN ACTION

Combatting cyber harassment through comics



Team members of NAW receive their DKC runner-up trophy from Rob Stoelman, Project Manager, UNDP Bangladesh.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF NAW

SHANIZ CHOWDHURY

Youth-led organisation N te Nari, N te Nirapotta (NAW) was the 2021 runner-up in the students/campaigns category for UNDP's Digital Khichuri Challenge (DKC), titled "The Unsafety Net: How Online Abuse is Driving Women Out of Digital Spaces".

Shahriar Pranto, Founder of NAW, formed a team of five to enter the competition and counter cyber harassment. The other members of the team are Co-Founder Nur-A-Shafee Ahnaf, who studies Economics at Dhaka University (DU), Chief Strategist Md Rakib Hossain, a marketing student at North South University, Ashim Faiaz Talukdar, the Chief Arts & Graphic Designer from Faculty of Fine Art, DU, and Sheherin Jahan, the Campaign Coordinator, who just completed her HSC from Adamjee Cantonment College.

During the competition, their research led them to find existing ways in which women can seek help if fall victim to online harassment. However, people are oblivious to such facilities due to lack of information dissemination.

There are numerous hotlines that women can use to complain about cybercrimes, including Police Cyber Support for Women, Quick Response Team of the Women Support & Investigation Division and Cyber Police Centre.

In order to tackle violence against women and children, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs provides a national helpline, 109, which provides police

assistance and counseling services, among other things.

NAW publishes comics online, based on true stories, to enlighten people about such services. This medium allows them to portray the story of a woman being harassed, asking for help and finally, the perpetrator being punished, in a way which people can relate and empathise with. As people read the comics, they become aware of the assistance available in case anyone comes into such dangers.

NAW also organised debate and art programmes online so their message of speaking up instead of staying silent is dissipated across the nation to as many people as possible.

"Women have increasingly exposed themselves to social media, especially through e-commerce, so it is important that we promote safe and healthy online communities. We are also hoping to start campaigns and have someone from the police go to schools and teach both boys and girls about helplines," shared Pranto.

In the future, NAW aspires to have printed versions of their comics. "If physical copies of our comics are distributed in debate programmes, science fairs, libraries and student clubs in schools and universities, it will be easier for us to relay the necessary information," concluded Rakib.

The author is a student of BRAC University, and a freelance journalist. Email: shanzaychowdhury@gmail.com.



NAW publishes comics online about cyber harassment and women's safety issues.



PHOTO: ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

Garos children perform at the Wangala Festival at Madhupur.

EXPERIENCE

Roaring drums, vivid 'Dokmandas' and a day too good to forget

Celebrating Wangala with the Garo community in the greenery of Madhupur

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

Jishu ni Rasong (in the name of Jesus, I greet you) read a board at the church gate as we stepped into the Saint Paul's Dharmapalli in Pirgacha, a small rural area that lies in the suburbs of Madhupur in Tangail.

The hustle and tussle of the young girls, the women screaming on top of their voices, giving instructions to each other and the men constructing the platform for the next morning- this is how Madhupur welcomed me for Wangala, a festival that celebrates the arrival of winter and the harvest season.

This was my very first time visiting Madhupur for a field trip, organised by my Sociolinguistics professor Fr Shankar Leonard Rozario from Notre Dame University Bangladesh (NDUB). He taught us to design ethnography last semester, but was unable to take us to any speech event to practically analyse speech acts due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Being one of his former students and an associate at the NDUB Language Centre, I was asked to accompany the junior Master's batch and help them write an ethnography report on the Wangala Festival.

The Wangala, being derived from the pagan beliefs, is a festival where the worshipers thanked the Misi Saljong (Sun God) for their rich harvest. For decades, the woods of Madhupur has been home to the Garo Christian community.

Draped in beautifully hand woven Dokmandas, the girls were rehearsing for the performance. Children aged between 4 and 8 were repeating their steps, as they kept forgetting the sequences.

As the night closed in, everyone gathered around the campfire, enjoying the foggy winds, local delicacies paired with Chu (locally made rice wine). We had the privilege to visit a Garo family who invited us for dinner.

As we sat around the dining table, a long train of dishes arrived: first the bhortas, then the curries and stews, and finally the spicy stir-fried non-veg items and fruits. Juicy pineapples, luscious papayas, and naturally grown guavas paired with a mug of Chu, which seemed to be on auto-refill every time the cup went empty.

I woke up the following day with the sound of the big brass bell dangling beside the Wangala podium. Hastily finishing our breakfast, we rushed to the church field.

Adapting to their current religious faith while treasuring their cultural heritage, the Garo community began the day with performances, leading to a prayer and ending the day with a cultural event.

As the sun set and the festivities began to quiet down, it was time for me to bid farewell to this amazing organic lifestyle and wonderful hosts. Holding a large coconut on my hands while sipping its sweet water with a bamboo cane straw, I waved the cheerful yet sad faces goodbye, promising to meet them again.

The author is Trainee Reporter, Arts & Entertainment, The Daily Star. Email: ashley@thedailystar.net.

NURTURING DREAMS

Making waves in the overseas industrial scene

LABIBA ANJUMI KABIR

Afshen Mozammel Misha has been making waves as an industrial engineer overseas in notable ways.

After graduating from North South University in Human Resource Management and Finance & Accounting, Afshen pursued her MS in Industrial Engineering Technology and Organizational Leadership & Supervision at Purdue University Northwest. She was also the Deputy Manager of Vendor Management and Training at Grameenphone.

She moved to Indiana to pursue her MS in Industrial Engineering Technology and Organizational Leadership & Supervision, and has worked as a Lean Six Sigma & Process Improvement Analyst, Process Engineer and Process Improvement Engineer at different points of her career. She was also the Deputy Manager of Vendor Management and Training at Grameenphone.

Afshen's longest tenure started at DENSO, where she started off as Senior Process Engineer and then moved on to the position of Advanced Process Engineer in 2019. After DENSO, she started working for Cox Communication as Manager of Engineering Enablement.

Currently, Afshen is the Manager of Engineering Enablement at Cox Communications.

As an experienced industrial engineer, she believes that there are immense opportunities in Bangladesh for process improvement efficiency in the manufacturing industry, especially in garments, pharmaceuticals, and even service sectors.

"Our country is heavily export-based, and there are no alternatives but to lower costs for

maximum benefits to compete in the world market. The only way to increase profits without increasing prices is to lower costs. Process improvement initiatives offer the opportunity to lower costs, without hiking prices, and with optimum investment," she said.

Afshen has worked on multiple projects nationally and internationally. One of her biggest projects was improving a model for Chrysler as Lead Engineer. She was also certified as Six Sigma Green Belt (CSSGB), American Society for Quality (ASQ) in 2010 and Six Sigma Black Belt (CSSBB), ASQ, in 2012.

"Even with awareness, the representation of women in engineering as well as leadership continues to be small. I have been a panellist for several leadership and engineering forums myself, to inspire other women. Life comes with challenges, but we have to be persistent to bring about positive changes," she added.

Afshen aspires to invest time in Bangladesh to develop people's leadership skills, which will add value not only to their personal lives, but also to their companies and communities. She also facilitates different workshops on job interviews and resume writing.

Afshen dreams of sharing her knowledge of industrial engineering and process improvement with the people of Bangladesh. "One way of developing people's skills here is through classes, workshops, seminars and training sessions. Another way is to work with different industries, especially garment manufacturing, to make their processes more efficient," she concluded.

The author is a freelance journalist. Email: labibakabir99@gmail.com.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Afshen Mozammel Misha.

SPOTLIGHT

Violence against young women and girls with disabilities: An everyday affair

NILIMA JAHAN

Worldwide, young women and girls with disabilities face up to 10 times more violence than women and girls without disabilities, and Bangladesh is no exception.

In Bangladesh, young women with disabilities are at a high risk of experiencing gender-based and other forms of violence due to social exclusion, limited mobility, lack of support structures, communication barriers, negative social perceptions, and overall culture of impunity.

According to data from the Women with Disabilities and Development Foundation, an organisation providing non-legal support to women with disabilities, 96 percent of women and girls with disabilities face physical, psychological, sexual and emotional violence.

Another 2020 study conducted by BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, in association with the Netherlands Embassy that interviewed 5,000 people with disabilities, revealed that one fourth (74 percent) of the women and girls with disabilities faced psychological violence, while more than 33.2 percent of them faced physical violence and 10 percent faced sexual violence.

In most cases, the caregivers, either at home or in institutional settings, and violent partners, are found to be the perpetrators, as they are socially dependent on them for survival.

On the other hand, research and real-life experience show that once young

women and girls with disabilities are victims of violence, they are more likely to be victims of violence for the second or third time, as the perpetrators take advantage of their vulnerability and helplessness.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) data also revealed a similar picture of the magnitude of repeated violence against them—about 78 percent of young women and girls with disabilities become victims of various forms of sexual and physical abuse due to their limited ability to protest and 18 percent of them are



ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

victims of repeated abuse.

However, media monitoring reports also show that incidents of violence against this vulnerable group mostly go unreported.

The process for reporting violence is often inaccessible because of family, administrative and social barriers, as almost 99 percent of women with disabilities live below the poverty line, while only 1 percent of girls with disabilities have access to education and an overwhelming majority

of them do not know sign language.

Besides, the inequalities in access to justice, including the inaccessible court buildings, lack of interpreters for young women and girls with intellectual, speech, hearing and psycho-social disabilities, inadequate policies and standards, information unavailability about services and funding make them even more vulnerable to experience multiple forms of violence. According to experts, we need to look for reasons why young women and girls with disabilities are being excluded from getting justice, and take necessary steps to remove these obstacles.

Arranging compensation for the victims of disabilities and giving exemplary punishment to the perpetrators is crucial, they noted. Meanwhile, laws related to disability rights must be disseminated to the victims in accessible formats (through braille, sign language), so that they can be aware of the crimes and their rights.

Ashrafun Nahar Misti, Executive Director, WDDF, also highlighted that the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act 2013 does not specify how a girl child or young woman will get remedies if they are raped.

"It would have been better if there was a separate chapter on how these particular cases could be tried and remedies were provided," she said.

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The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA FRIDAY DECEMBER 10, 2021, AGRAHAYAN 25, 1428 BS

Political parties must stop raising thugs

They, too, are liable for the misdeeds of their student activists

THE first judicial ruling on the brutal murder of a student has been delivered. Twenty students of Buet have been sentenced to death for their direct involvement in the murder of Abrar Fahad, a second-year student of the country's premier engineering university, who was beaten to death. Five other students have also been sentenced to life imprisonment by the court for their involvement in the grisly murder that shook the country in October 2019. We appreciate the strong message delivered by the court through this verdict. Without commenting on the merit of the case, we would, however, like to express our sadness at the fact that 20 young people are now facing death penalty.

Right now, we would like to concentrate on the message sent out by the teachers: to end criminality in the name of student politics. In the case of Abrar's death, 12 of the accused were members of the Buet wing of Bangladesh Chhatra League, while the rest were their followers. Over the years, we have seen the student wings of the ruling parties becoming increasingly more violent and involved in all forms of criminal activities. Whenever a party comes to power, we see their affiliated student wing terrorising university campuses and taking over their dormitories. Our once glorious student politics has now become a hostage for criminal elements. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our independence, it is a great shame that the student movement, which played such a pivotal role in the emancipation of our people, has been reduced to this.

At this lowest point for our student politics, we have to restore civility back into our universities. We have to take this moment to address the moral degradation of values that is taking place at our educational institutions. For years now, we have been witnessing how politicians and major political parties have been using student activists as cronies for their criminal agendas. This is turning more and more young people on the path to becoming hardened criminals.

The misuse of student activists by their political leaders and parties must stop. As we lament the ruthless and criminal behaviour of the ruling party's student activists, we cannot help but wonder the role of their political backers in all of this. At the end of the day, all political parties are responsible for using student organisations as a factory for raising goons to serve their ill interests. Therefore, we call on all our major political parties to self-reflect and bring such practices to an end, so that no more innocent lives have to be lost in the hands of their party activists.

Rising inequality a cause for concern

Planners must address the glaring wealth gap

IT is flustering news that only one percent of Bangladesh's population is in possession of 16.3 percent of the total national income. This fact was revealed in the report titled "World Inequality Report 2022," released by the World Inequality Lab in Paris. The latest update of the index, published on December 7, showed that the figures did not change much from the previous year, but clearly indicated how income inequality had been rising since the 1980s. In 1981, the share of pre-tax national income of the top one percent of people was 11.8 percent, while the bottom 50 percent held 20 percent of the wealth.

According to a UN study, "one of the consequences of inequality within societies is slower economic growth. In unequal societies, with wide disparities in areas such as health care and education, people are more likely to remain trapped in poverty, across several generations." When we look at the Bangladesh perspective, we see that the root causes of inequality have not been removed. For example, Bangladesh did not create the desired number of employment opportunities for its large number of unemployed youths; also, it did not spend enough on the health and education sectors and on social safety net programmes.

As a result, the number of poor is increasing day by day and also the number of rich is increasing proportionally. It has been noted by experts that even during the pandemic, people have gone from rich to richer. Economists and social researchers tend to agree that inequality has been increasing for years as the country's GDP is not increasing inclusively. They suggest addressing the incidence of corruption and weak taxation structure, which are contributing to the rising spectre of inequality. A great deal has been deliberated on the issue of wide-ranging corruption in the country and its impact on the economy. But, despite some small steps taken towards addressing the issue, the enormity of the burden remains hanging around the neck of the nation like the proverbial "dead albatross."

It is a common feeling that merely wishing the inequality index to go away will not happen for anyone. Pragmatic planning to address issues like global warming, migration, adoption of technology, and providing financial support to the sectors involved in income-generating activities must happen at the right time.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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No faith in e-commerce

People became used to e-commerce platforms during Covid-19. At the beginning, these companies delivered as they promised. But with time, they started a Ponzi scheme: they took advance payment from new consumers to repay the existing customers. Then, officials from these companies started to run away, and the customers were left to suffer. The government has intervened and started setting new guidelines for the sector. However, the damage has already been done; people have lost faith in these platforms.

Md Iftakhar Ahmed, student, North South University

Why the chasm between state commitments and access to rights?



C R ABRAR

DECEMBER 10 marks the Human Rights Day (HRD). It was on this day that a landmark document, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), was proclaimed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in Paris in 1948 as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. Not only have most states in their constitutions espoused the tenets of the UDHR, but the document has also been the source of at least 70 human rights treaties at global and regional levels.

The principles of equality, non-discrimination, justice, accountability, diversity, participation, and the rule of law are some of the core blocks on which the UDHR rests. States and societies that ensure protection and promotion of human rights for everyone are not only more resilient and sustainable, but are also better equipped to withstand challenges of all kinds—including wars, pandemics, and the climate crisis. The successful attainment of the much celebrated 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with concomitant commitment to "leave no one behind" makes it mandatory for the states that they respect and promote rights and dignity of everyone, irrespective of their status.

While the UDHR encompasses a whole range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, which were subsequently expanded through various international human rights treaties, this essay will essentially examine the status of enjoyment of the freedoms of assembly and expression by people in Bangladesh. The UDHR acknowledges that "(e)veryone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression... without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (Article 18). It also guarantees that "(e)veryone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association" (Article 19).

Both these principles have been further elaborated in a number of international treaties that Bangladesh is a state party to. As a member state of the UN, the country is obliged to honour each and every article of the declaration as well as the provisions of those treaties. Needless to say, the principles laid out in the UDHR have also been enshrined in the country's constitution, the supreme law of the land. Hence, it is incumbent on the state of Bangladesh to ensure that its citizens enjoy all those rights and freedoms without encumbrance. However, a cursory examination of the human rights situation pertaining to the freedoms of assembly and expression prevailing in the country leads one to surmise that there exists a wide chasm between the state commitments and the lived experiences of citizens.

Though the right to peaceful assembly has been guaranteed in Article 19 of the UDHR as well as the Article 37 of the constitution, it has increasingly become restricted in the country. Under the law, if political parties and organisations plan to hold rallies, meetings, and marches, they are required to secure prior permission from the police commissioners in the metropolitan cities and superintendents of police at the district level. In the past, granting such permission was a routine matter; over more than a decade, the applicants find it increasingly difficult to secure permission. The reasons for refusal of permission are not communicated.

Experiences show that, while the ruling party and its associate organisations do not face any problem in holding public programmes, opposition political parties have reported facing severe restrictions (Prothom Alo, November 26, 2021). There have been instances in which opposition

permission, police action and attacks by pro-government loyalists. On several instances, leaders and activists were detained, imprisoned and charged for holding unlawful meetings, creating public disorder and the like. The attack on civic protests marked a new low when a number of people protesting the visit of a foreign leader were killed or injured by police fire and arrested in different parts of the country. On March 14, 2021, during a press conference, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) banned political programmes during the state celebrations of independence, declaring that parties that would fail to comply "will be considered as traitors" (Dhaka Tribune, March 14, 2021).

Freedom of expression/speech is another fundamental prerequisite of any democratic polity and has been recognised as such (Article 18 of UDHR). Yet, over the decades, this has been subjected to serious erosion under successive regimes. Despite

also come in handy to tame the press. The Special Powers Act, in particular, accords substantive powers to state functionaries to detain individuals—including journalists and whistleblowers—for committing "prejudicial acts." The relatively recent legislations such as the Information and Communication Act (ICT), 2006 and the DSA have taken a serious toll on freedom of expression—including that of the media.

Apart from legislative measures, the state can exercise control over the media by exercising its discretion on issuance of licence, directing the flow of advertisements, and influencing the formats and contents of reports/programmes through "informal advice," a practice that has its roots during the military dictatorships.

In recent times, the DSA has turned out to be the most important instrument to control freedom of expression. Quoting the Department of Prisons, a recent Amnesty International (AI) report informs that 433 individuals have been imprisoned under the DSA as of July 11, 2021. The report further informs that more than 1,300 cases have been filed against about 2,000 people under the law, and nearly 1,000 people have been arrested since the law was enacted in October 2018. Amnesty claims more than 100 journalists have been sued under the law between January 2019 and July 2021, and at least 40 of them have been arrested. The vague wording of the law provides the state agencies the scope to clamp down on dissenting voices on social media, websites and other digital platforms. The punishment that can be meted out under the law extends to life imprisonment.

In addition to the legislative instruments, journalists and dissenting voices face threats and intimidation from various official and private quarters as well. The absence of an enabling environment that encourages free and unfettered reporting and analysis leads to the practice of self-censorship. Various national and international media watch reports have time and again expressed concerns about the constraints in which journalists, particularly those at the grassroots level, have to work in Bangladesh.

Thus, freedoms of expression and assembly have largely remained a chimera for the Bangladeshis. This failure of the state to uphold its constitutional and international legal obligations in upholding the rights to free speech and freedom of assembly amounts to undermining the very spirit of the Liberation War. The Human Rights Day exhorts people to stand up for their own rights and those of others. The onus, therefore, rests on all conscientious citizens, organisations, civic bodies, learned bodies and academics, artists, poets, and writers' guilds to contest and challenge the state and hold it accountable. Being humans, we all are innately entitled to enjoy these rights—rights are no charity.

C R Abrar is an academic, and a member of Nagarik, a platform of human rights and rule of law. The author acknowledges the support of Rezaur Rahman Lenin in writing this article.



While the freedom to express one's opinion and dissent is ensured in our constitution, the reality on the ground says otherwise.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

rallies organised after securing due permission were subjected to attacks by the police or supporters of the ruling party and its associate organisations. Those include denial of or very delayed granting of permission, calling of parallel meetings on the same venue and date by the ruling party or its associates, imposition of "virtual curfew" on the day of the event and, in some cases, severance of all road and railway links, monitoring passengers on trains, creating obstacles in securing accommodation, and public requisition of buses and motor launches to disrupt the flow of supporters (Prothom Alo, November 26, 2021).

In addition, spontaneous rallies and demonstrations by groups of students and the youth, mobilised on issues such as revoking the VAT on student fees, road safety, and government service quota reform, were also subjected to denial of

the constitutional acknowledgement of those freedoms, those were curtailed through continuation of colonial vestiges, such as the provisions of the Penal Code, 1860 pertaining to defamation and sedition, and the Official Secrets Act, 1923. The defamation provision in the Digital Security Act (DSA), 2018 and the Penal Code are legal instruments to intimidate journalists and free-thinking individuals. In most countries, defamation is a civil offence; in contrast, it is a criminal offence in Bangladesh. Section 198 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1898 explicitly stipulates that the plaintiff has to be an aggrieved party; in practice, defamation cases admitted by magistrates were filed by individuals who had no *locus standi* to file them.

Other legislative instruments such as the Printing Presses and Publication Act, 1973 and the Special Powers Act, 1974

PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

The global coal hypocrisy



SHASHI THAROOR

INDIA has somehow emerged as the villain of last month's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), blamed for resisting cuts to coal consumption even as toxic air envelops its capital, New Delhi. The country's supposed crime in Glasgow was to join China in insisting on a last-minute change to the conference's final declaration, in which countries pledged to "phase down" rather than "phase out" coal. For that, India, whose per capita carbon dioxide emissions are a fraction of those of the world's leading emitters, was widely criticised for obstructing the global fight against climate change.

The irony is that India has done far less to intensify the planet's greenhouse effect than either China or the developed West. True, the country is a major coal consumer, and derives about 70 percent of its energy from it. But, as recently as 2015, at least a quarter of India's population couldn't take for granted what almost everyone in the developed world can: to flick a switch on a wall and be bathed with light.

Worse, Indians are among the biggest victims of climate change, periodically enduring devastating floods and unseasonal droughts, in addition to choking on polluted air. Delhi is a poster child for poor air quality, which hovers between "severe" and "hazardous" for much of the year. The causes include PM2.5 particles emitted from coal-fired power plants, fumes from dense traffic, industrial pollution, and the burning of crop stubble by farmers in the neighbouring states—all combined with winter fog.

But given India's traditional role as a leading voice of the developing world, it became the face of the last-minute change of language at COP26. The "phase down"

wording regarding coal consumption had already appeared in a US-China bilateral climate agreement, signed earlier in the conference. Nevertheless, India became the focus of global opprobrium.

India does not deserve to be the fall guy. For starters, the country has 17 percent of the world's population but generates only seven percent of global CO2 emissions. (China, with 18.5 percent of the world's people, generates 27 percent of emissions, and the US, with less than five percent of

Copenhagen in 2009), and refused to transfer advanced green technologies. And COP26 singled out the coal used by developing countries, not the oil and gas used extensively in the West.

India's energy requirements are expected to increase faster than those of any other country in the next two decades. Since COP21 in Paris in 2015, India has announced ambitious plans to scale up its production and use of renewable energy, which currently accounts for only 18 percent of its electricity generation. And at COP26, India complemented its explicit commitment to phase down coal with a pledge to achieve net zero emissions by 2070.

India has also updated its nationally determined contributions (NDCs), which it must fulfil by 2030. The country is now pledging to increase its installed renewable energy capacity to 500 gigawatts (GW), and meet 50 percent of its energy requirements from non-fossil-fuel sources. Furthermore, India aims to reduce its CO2 emissions by one billion tonnes and lower its emission intensity (which measures emissions per unit of economic growth) by 45 percent from the 2005 levels.

For now, there is no viable alternative to coal. Blessed with abundant sunshine, India has become a solar power enthusiast and plans to generate 40GW of green energy from rooftop solar installations by 2022. But it has achieved barely 20 percent of that target so far. Vast amounts of solar energy cannot be generated overnight, and battery storage remains expensive, while green hydrogen technology and facilities are still unavailable in India. Wind energy is minuscule, and the country lacks significant oil and gas reserves. Nuclear power accounts for less than two percent of India's electricity, and nuclear power plants constantly face opposition from the residents of surrounding areas.

As a result, India's performance on greenhouse gas emissions will get worse before it gets better. According to a study by BP, India's share of global emissions

will increase to 14 percent by 2040. Coal will by then account for 48 percent of the country's primary energy consumption, and renewable energy only 16 percent. And because of India's high dependence on agriculture, which engages nearly two-thirds of its population, and its vast number of cattle, the country did not sign the global deal announced at COP26 to reduce methane emissions.

Of course, reducing emissions is not the only way to combat climate change. India plans to bring one-third of its land area under forest cover, and to plant enough trees by 2030 to absorb an additional 2.5-3 billion tonnes of atmospheric CO2. It has made a start, with forest cover increasing by 5.2 percent between 2001 and 2019, though progress has been uneven, with the northeast losing forest cover while the south visibly improves.

Still, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says that achieving global net zero emissions by 2050 is the minimum needed to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Climate Action Tracker calculates that—based on the countries' current 2030 climate targets—the world faces a temperature rise of 2.4 degrees Celsius by 2100. Some scientists warn that global warming could eventually exceed four degrees Celsius.

If this happens, the resulting heat waves, droughts, floods, and rising sea levels would cause devastating loss of human life, mass extinction of animal and plant species, and irreversible damage to our ecosystem. India would be a major victim of such a calamity. The country will therefore make a good faith effort to help avert climate disaster—but only within the limits of what it can feasibly do.

Shashi Tharoor, a former UN under-secretary-general, and former Indian minister of state for external affairs and minister of state for human resource development, is an MP for the Indian National Congress.

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16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

How much have we done to end violence against women?



SHAHEEN ANAM

THE 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, which began on November 25, is ending today. As many of us know, it is a global campaign to bring attention to the scourge of violence against women and girls, and to call for its elimination. The global

theme for this year's 16 days of activism is: "Orange the world: End violence against women now!" The colour orange symbolises a bright and optimistic future free from violence against women and girls.

The campaign received widespread coverage from the media this year, which in itself is an achievement. This increased awareness means that more and more people are realising the urgency of the issue of violence against women and girls (VAWG), and the necessity of addressing it. However, this has not stopped such incidents from occurring. As per newspaper reports, during this period, at least 74 women and six children have been raped and at least 75 girl children have been married off.

So, what can we do about it? Of course, the activism, protests, and raising awareness have to continue. However, we need stronger political commitment and actions. We must question institutions responsible for preventing VAWG regarding how much of the National Action Plans to end VAWG and child marriage has been implemented. Or what changes have been made within institutions, or what mechanisms have been put in place to hold accountable those responsible, such as law enforcers, healthcare officials, elected representatives and local authorities, etc, to address and prevent VAWG.

VAWG is a multi-dimensional issue and

requires multi-dimensional strategies to be combatted. It is as much an issue of the law working to prevent it, as it is about the attitude towards women and girls and their position within families and society. We have to analyse the upbringing of girls vis-a-vis that of boys. Are they brought up with a sense of self-worth and confidence, or taught to be docile, submissive and subservient? The differences in the ways boys and girls are raised determine their personality in adulthood. Society still perpetuates gender-defined roles for boys and girls, creating an imbalance and discrimination from childhood. Patriarchy negatively impacts men too, who face pressure to be the main bread-earners and take on all familial responsibilities. Thus, they showcase traits such as dominance, arrogance and aggression. Women, on the other hand, are not taught to rebel, take charge or protest, leaving them with lower levels of self-worth and confidence. That is why feminist discourse is around redefining masculinity/femininity and unpacking patriarchy.

There is also a need to review existing laws that often prevent women from getting justice. Women rights activists have been campaigning for changes in archaic laws related to rape. One of them is a certain clause in the Evidence Act, which allows for character evidence to be presented in court. While this law needs to be reviewed in its entirety, this specific clause in particular has been used to denigrate and humiliate women when they are being cross-examined by defence lawyers. Women are often intimidated to the extent that they do not want to continue with the cases.

As we look to reduce gender-based violence in the near future, we must also ask the government to take a more proactive stance in preventing child marriage. The progress in this regard was much eroded during the pandemic. There is evidence of



PHOTO: SUDESHNA BISWAS

Besides activism, we need stronger political commitment to eliminate violence against women and girls.

high rates of child marriage using the excuse of income loss and closure of schools. However, child marriage is a symptom of a negative attitude towards girl children, who are thought of as burdens to be sent away at the first opportunity.

Violence is a symptom of a wider issue that revolves around respect and dignity and the status of women and girls in their families. Highlighting their contributions can be an effective strategy to make families aware of the critical role they play in maintaining harmony and well-being of their families. In this regard, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has launched a national campaign to highlight women and girls' contributions to their families and society, especially in terms of their unrecognised and unpaid care work, with the assumption that this will raise their

status in families and prevent VAWG.

The other important issue to address is the culture of impunity that perpetrators enjoy. It is nearly impossible for the victims of sexual violence, such as rape, to get justice as the conviction rate for such cases is between two to three percent—meaning 97 percent of perpetrators believe that they will get away with it. VAWG thrives in a system where people are not held to account for negligence of duty and where bribes, extortion and misuse of power determine the outcome of cases filed for rape and sexual assault. The MJF conducted an analysis of 20 rape cases in the last five years, and found that, out of 34 accused in these cases, 28 were out on bail (although rape by law is a nonbailable offence) using money, power or loopholes in the law.

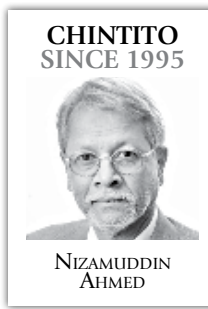
At the end of the 16 Days of Activism, we must also turn our attention to review the much-talked-about progress of women (which is without a doubt impressive) and find out who has actually benefited from the development that Bangladesh now enjoys after 50 years of independence. We have to admit that this progress has been partial, as a huge number of women have been left behind. Although VAWG cuts across classes, it is evident that women from low-income groups are more vulnerable to violence both at home and outside. Therefore, the economic independence of women, along with elevating their position within families, is central to the elimination of VAWG. Keeping girls in schools to complete their education, conducting skills training and creating jobs or enterprise opportunities are necessary to this end.

The last day of the 16 Days of Activism falls on Human Rights Day. Why was this day chosen particularly? The reason is to demonstrate that "Women's rights are human rights!"—a slogan used by rights activists globally. Quoting a UN source, "Attaining equality between women and men and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women are fundamental human rights and United Nations values. Women around the world, nevertheless, regularly suffer violations of their human rights throughout their lives, and realising women's human rights has not always been a priority."

Finally, achieving equality between women and men is fundamental to ending discrimination and violence against women and girls. On Human Rights Day, we must reiterate that every woman has the right to a life free from violence, injustice and discrimination. Fifty years after independence, is that too much to ask for?

Shaheen Anam is the executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation.

The crisis of wastage



CHINTITO SINCE 1995

FROM my flat on the 5th floor, I could hear a beggar beseech anyone who would care to listen for alms. I had enough cash in the house, and even food, to give him. But going all the way down to the street to meet him was not a plausible option for me for several

reasons. Feeling guilty was the best I could do. His need and my intention were both betrayed by a faulty supply chain.

We have food on our table because, down the line, farmers fared well in fair weather and were able-bodied for labour. Then followed effective collection, storage and transportation, due to which the produce reached the market, and we were able to purchase them. At every step, there was a forward button that ensured that the food reached us within its shelf life. But food cannot always make the right journeys.

Due to ineffective distribution chains, while some of us are feasting—and perhaps shamefully wasting—there are millions who are half-starving, if not fully. Pictures of children searching for food in waste bins have shocked us, but not many of us have been awakened.

Erroneous misconnections between the beginning and literally "the end" has led to about one-third of the world's produced food go to waste. According to The World Counts, approximately 1.3 billion tonnes of food manufactured for human consumption worldwide gets wasted every year. Edible items are lost at every step of the food "life cycle": farming fields, agricultural production, post-harvest handling, storage, processing, distribution, consumption, and end of life. But a lot of it is wasted by us fortunate ones. Keep an eye on the food—or how much it is wasted—at the next wedding you attend. If the surplus of food could be channelled to

the hungry, we would have millions of happy people—mostly mothers and children. And we, too, could be happier.

Every now and then, we come across real-life tragedies that we think we could have avoided. More simply said than done. Every Eid, it is not unusual to read news about how a rickshaw-puller father could not afford a Tk 100 red frock for his daughter. She could not bear the pain and humiliation in the midst of her friends, all agog with new clothes. She then unfortunately took her own life. Our hearts were not ripped by this tragic loss, because we

thought her father had failed her, but she would never know that we did.

Lehengas, wherever that came from, are expensive, going by hundreds of thousands of taka. Sarees are similarly pricey. Modest ones cost several thousands. The red frock that the 10-year-old girl had her eyes on had a price tag of Tk 500. We cannot say "just 500," because that much was now the whole world's worth for her father.

The 12-year-old boy came home to a bed of tattered papers on the pavement beside a busy avenue in the capital. He had a long day,



The crisis of wastage is largely our fault, so it is upon us to resolve it.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

are that much strong.

We have thousands—nay, hundreds of thousands—of red frocks lying around in our wardrobes, but the supply chain has failed again. Now, each of us wanted to give her an Eid gift, and even more, but she did not want to hang about to be gifted with our pity. She

trying to find some money for himself and his mother. She was finishing up making the bed by dusting off pebbles and dried mud. The boy placed his head into the comfort of an imaginary pillow that many of us do not find in a spring mattress.

On the other side of disparity, some people

have five-bedroom residences, or even larger houses, if you can call them home. What the boy on the street would find really obnoxious are 150-room buildings for a dozen or so occupants. That, too, if perchance the family was not holidaying in the Bahamas. Mercifully, the lad does not watch television, because he would be disoriented by the amazing tales from around the world.

Electricity is not wasted that much, because we have to pay for it. But, you will see a light switched on in the stairwell at 11 am. Switch it off. Water is regularly misused because it is cheap. But, even in this day and age, there are long queues to collect drinking water in our cities and towns. Stop the running tap when you don't need it. Metering has somewhat reduced abuse of cooking gas. The most effective meter is our own conscience.

Okay, unlike almost every other pundit on our LNBT shows, I would not want to complain only. Nor would I want to impose myself with ideas that I did not care to implement when I had the authority to do so. That is a direct reference to some of the retired

government officers, who now say that this *kora uchi*, and that is a *bhoyongkor* mistake. On the contrary, I would really urge you to stop and take a hard look at our current living style. The solutions lie in us—what we will do or not do next. We don't have to get down from our fifth floor residence to give alms, but we can try to find more permanent measures to mitigate need and hunger.

Collective efforts are also ever so effective. That is why clubs, societies and associations are necessary in society. Places of worship, too, can play their part in spreading charity and compassion. There are great examples in the community. We only have to follow, or be more imaginative.

Every taka makes a difference, every drop of water matters, and each small step is a giant leap.

Please, please, someone ask me what I meant by LNBT above. I have to tell you, even if you don't: Late night, big talk...

Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed is an architect and a professor, a Commonwealth scholar and a fellow, Woodbadge scout leader, Baden-Powell fellow, and a Major Donor Rotarian.

QUOTABLE Quote

HENRI FREDERIC AMIEL
(1821 - 1881)
Swiss philosopher

There is no respect for others without humility in one's self.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS	30 "Nuts!"	14 Outcry
1 American marsupial	31 Toy store buy	16 Sturdy
7 Play group	32 Bay	17 Florida city
11 City on the Rio Grande	34 "Easy!"	19 Silver or gold
12 Lotion additive	40 Spur on	20 Period of time
13 Serenity	41 Scan, as data	21 Scarlet
15 Accumulate	42 Sacks	22 Peanut butter buy
16 Dance bit	43 Gopher's task	23 Bowler, for one
18 Jamaican products		25 Tubular pasta
21 Map line	DOWN	28 Catalog info
22 Nativity figure	1 Vitality	29 Chop shop buy
24 Shade tree	2 Bullring cry	31 Putt off
25 Golf goal	3 Sauna site	33 Folk tales
26 Pot brew	4 Holy	34 Soho saloon
27 Water ladle	5 Exhaust	35 Lyricist Gershwin
29 Sentry's command	6 Apollo goal	36 Nest sight
	7 School grounds	37 Oklahoma city
	8 Boxing great	38 Relatives
	9 Abel, to Adam	39 Conclusion
	10 TV's Danson	

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.

SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

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

মাওলানা ভাসানী বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
সন্ধ্যা, টাঙ্গাইল-১৯০২।
ওয়েবসাইট: www.mbstu.ac.bd

তারিখ: ২৩ অগ্রহায়ণ ১৪২৮
০৮ ডিসেম্বর ২০২১

২০২০-২০২১ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ১ম বর্ষ স্নাতক (ইঞ্জি/সম্মান), বি.বি.এ. ও বি.ফার্ম. প্রবেশনাল প্রোগ্রামে

ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

মাওলানা ভাসানী বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ২০২০-২০২১ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ৪ (চার) বছর মেয়াদি স্নাতক (ইঞ্জি/সম্মান), বি.বি.এ. ও ৫ (পাঁচ) বছর মেয়াদি বি.ফার্ম. প্রবেশনাল প্রোগ্রামে GST গুচ্ছভুক্ত ভর্তি পরীক্ষার ফলাফলপ্রাপ্ত শিক্ষার্থীদের নিকট হতে ১ম বর্ষ ১ম সেমিস্টারে ভর্তির জন্য অনলাইনে আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। অনলাইনে ভর্তির আবেদনের লিংক ও অন্যান্য নির্দেশনা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইটে (www.mbstu.ac.bd) পাওয়া যাবে এবং সরাসরি mbstu-admission.net ওয়েবসাইটেও আবেদন করা যাবে।

- আবেদনের সময়সীমা: ১১/১২/২০২১ সকাল ১০:০০ হতে ৩১/১২/২০২১ রাত ১১:৫৯ পর্যন্ত (যেকোনো দিন যেকোনো সময়)।
- GST গুচ্ছভুক্ত ভর্তি পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণকারী প্রত্যেক শিক্ষার্থী শুধুমাত্র একটি আবেদনের মাধ্যমেই এ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে নিজস্ব ইউনিট ছাড়াও অন্য ইউনিটে ভর্তির জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবে।
- আবেদন ফি ৬০০/- (ছয়শত) টাকা বিকাশ (bKash)/রকেট (রকেট)/নগদ (Nagad)/DBBL পেমেট গেটওয়ের মাধ্যমে গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- আবেদনকারীর GST গুচ্ছভুক্ত ভর্তি পরীক্ষায় প্রাপ্ত নম্বর, এসএসসি/সম্মান পরীক্ষায় প্রাপ্ত জিপিএ হতে ৪০% (চতুর্থ বিষয়সহ) ও এইচএসসি/সম্মান পরীক্ষায় প্রাপ্ত জিপিএ হতে ৬০% (চতুর্থ বিষয়সহ) গণনা করে বিভাগসমূহের নির্ধারিত শর্তসমূহের ভিত্তিতে মেধা তালিকা প্রকাশ করা হবে।
- মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/উপজাতি/পোষা কোটা বিভাগভিত্তিক এবং বিকেএসপি কোটা অনুষদভিত্তিক বিধিমোতাবেক সংরক্ষণ করা হবে।

বিশেষ দৃষ্টব্য : ভর্তি সংক্রান্ত নীতিমালার যেকোনো পরিবর্তন, সংশোধন, সংযোজন, বিয়োজন ও পুনঃসংযোজনের অধিকার বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

মোঃ মাকসুদুর রহমান
ডেপুটি রেজিস্ট্রার (একাডেমিক) ও সদস্য-সচিব
কেন্দ্রীয় ভর্তি পরীক্ষা কমিটি ২০২০-২০২১
মাতাভিপ্রবি, ফোন : ০৯২১-৬২১২৮ (অফিস)

GD-2281



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON 4TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND BEYOND (IC4IR) 2021

To mark the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of the Independence of Bangladesh

WWW.IC4IRB.ORG



University Grants Commission of Bangladesh
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

10-11 DEC 2021
HYBRID MODE
DHAKA, BANGLADESH



Message

President
People's Republic of Bangladesh
25 Agrahayan 1428
10 December 2021

I am delighted to know that the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh is going to organize an International Conference on 4th Industrial Revolution (IC4IR) on 10-11 December 2021 in Dhaka.

To build a poverty and unemployment-free Bangladesh, the presence of necessary skilled manpower is crucial. Bangladesh now has more people of working age than that of dependant one. By 2030, the population aged between 15 and 64 years would rise to 70 percent and then it would start declining. Therefore, an appropriate planning should be formulated to take advantage of this opportunity of demographic dividend. The present government has taken a number of breakthrough initiatives to produce skilled manpower, especially by reforming the country's education system. Moreover, to develop skilled manpower with specialized knowledge to cope with the 4th Industrial Revolution, the government has established Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Digital University along with a number of new science and technology universities. The government has continued its effort to build necessary ICT infrastructure at the Union, Upazila, District, Divisional and Central levels, allowing IT services to reach at the doorsteps of the people.

The higher education institutes of the country should follow an Innovative Education Ecosystem (IEE) so that the benefit of the 4IR can be realized. Higher education institutes need to be more focused on innovation and research to accelerate the country's growing economic development. The conference, organized by the University Grants Commission, will be attended by three Nobel laureates and seven eminent scientists and experts from home and abroad. In addition, the conference has two important events titled 'Mujib 100 Idea Contest' and 'Mujib 100 Industry Exhibition' which will help in spreading innovative and creative thinking among the youth. I believe that the discussion and exchange of experiences of eminent scientists from home and abroad at the conference will play an important role in introducing them to innovative sciences.

I wish the International Conference on 4th Industrial Revolution a grand success.

Jai Bangla.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid



Message

Dr. Dipu Moni, M.P
Honourable Minister
Ministry of Education
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

It is a matter of immense pleasure that the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh is going to host a two-day long International Conference on 4th Industrial Revolution and Beyond (IC4IR) 2021 on 10-11 December 2021 as part of the celebration of the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of Independence of Bangladesh. On this auspicious occasion, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the UGC and other relevant stakeholders of it.

We are living in an era where knowledge and skills are inevitable as well as undeniable to keep pace with today's globalized world. Our people will be enriched if they are equipped with the skills of 4IR such as Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Blockchain, Machine Learning, Quantum Computing, Big Data and other emerging technologies. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implement Vision 2041, there is no alternative to materializing the huge potentials of 4IR in every sector of the country without any delay. These skills can be achieved by developing an innovative entrepreneurial educational ecosystem, which will contribute to building linkages between industry and academia. Implementation of the dream of Digital Bangladesh in almost every sector as well as in the daily lives of the masses of our country over the last thirteen years has created an appropriate platform to kick-off such an international event.

I strongly believe that the IC4IR will encourage university students, teachers, researchers and relevant stakeholders in formulating a realistic plan to achieve the Vision 2041. We do believe that such an international conference will create tremendous momentum in the arena of research and innovation at tertiary level since it will work as an appropriate platform to link academia and researchers both from home and abroad.

Participation of Nobel Laureates and renowned academics from top ranked universities and organizations across the world will add significant values to the conference. It will pave the way for solving local as well as global problems in industrial domain through realistic application of frontier technologies.

I wish the conference a grand success.

Jai Bangla, Jai Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh live forever.

08 December 2021

Dr. Dipu Moni, M.P



Message

Prof. Dr. Kazi Shahidullah
Chairman
University Grants Commission of Bangladesh

It is a matter of great pride for me and the UGC family to host the two day long International Conference on 4th Industrial Revolution and Beyond (IC4IR 2021) to be held on 10-11 December 2021. As the Chairman of the apex statutory body of the country's higher education institutes, I would like to take the privilege to extend my sincere thanks to all, who worked hard to arrange this mega international event.

The UGC is organizing this gala conference as part of the celebrations of the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of Independence of Bangladesh. The IC4IR 2021 is to be conducted in the hybrid mode of both physical presence and virtual platform. The conference aims to unite researchers, academic, entrepreneurs, businesspeople, industrialists and practitioners in diverse domains from home and abroad.

The present government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been working tirelessly for the last several years with a view to building Bangladesh as a developed, prosperous and resourceful country by the year 2041. Vision 2041 strives to eradicate extreme poverty and gain the status of the Upper Middle-Income Country (UMIC) by 2030 and the status of the High-Income Country (HIC) by 2041. On the way to translating these dreams into reality, there will be a lot of changes during the forthcoming two decades in the style and working pattern in agriculture, industry, trade and commerce, education, health, transportation and communication sectors. Different technologies of 4IR like artificial intelligence, robotics and automation, Internet of Things (IoT), data analytics and cloud computing, communication and network signals and natural language processing will transform the way we live, work, and relate to one another.

The country will require huge workforce with appropriate skills to deal with these emerging technologies. The higher education institutions will have to play a pivotal role in this regard to produce skilled graduates. The existing collaborative relations among the higher education institutes and the industries have to be strengthened in coming days. This will help the tertiary level education institutes know the needs of industries and redesign their academic curricula in line with their demands.

I strongly believe that the conference will turn into an ideal platform to discuss all the pressing issues relating to impending challenges of 4IR. Hopefully it will also bring out a set of recommendations for the policy makers and higher educationists to confront the challenges. This will ultimately help the country's current pace of economic growth grow faster.

I wish the conference a grand success.

08 December 2021

Prof. Dr. Kazi Shahidullah

Innovative Education Ecosystem (IEE) is the key to Realize the Dream of 4IR

Now-a-days, a genome sequence can be acquired by using computing power in a few hours at the cost of less than one thousand dollars, while the first human genome project took 10 years at a cost of 2.5 billion dollars to map the human genome sequence. Therefore, to obtain the faster solution of a problem like this, an interaction between computing and genetic engineering is inevitable, enabling the exploration of new avenues of knowledge. Certainly, an integration between these two disciplines, obtained by this interaction, takes them to the new level of knowledge, and can be termed as evolution. Because of the presence of continuous interaction, integration and the evolution between the entities such a method should become dynamic in nature. The combined result of such an approach, resulting in blurring the difference between biology and computation, which is called convergent. Sensors are now widely used to collect data from the physical world (for instance, agriculture, atmosphere, route network, traffic management and many others), facilitating the development of data analytics/prediction models by using machine learning tools. Therefore, prediction of a phenomenon is becoming cheap and accurate, playing an important role in the decision making process. The integration of the physical world with the computer world is rightly delineated with this example. Such an integration opens a new avenue of knowledge, which was out of the scope of this domain before. The above outlines the appearance of a novel civilization, coined by the interaction and integration among physical, computing and biological worlds through a process of continuous evolution or dynamism over time. Such evolution takes place in the cyber-physical space, which is extensively known as Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) or Industry 4.0.

Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Internet of Things (IoT), Cognitive Computing, Cloud Computing, 5G, Quantum Computing, Biotechnology, and Nanotechnology are at the heart of this 4IR. In the other parts of the world, especially in the Scandinavian countries, they are preparing their manpower to take advantage of 4IR. This is the reason, these countries have integrated Artificial Intelligence and Robotics in their education, starting from primary level to higher education with an objective to prepare the cognitive mind of their human resources to lead the 4IR. The charm of this 4IR is that it is expanding faster than from the other three industrial revolutions and empowering human beings equally.

It took 120 years for the first industrial revolution to get out of Europe, which was powered by steam engines, where the production system was mechanized. 1.2 billion People are still out of electricity until now because of the benefit of the second industrial revolution, which was powered by electricity and led to mass production. Half of the world population is still out of internet access because of the third industrial revolution, which is underpinned by the electronics and information and communication technology, known as digital revolution. However, this is not the case with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) because in this novel civilization, systems are embedded in society as well as in the human body. We are moving towards a time where we can recognize the presence of ambient intelligence, known as pervasive computing because of the presence of Internet of Things, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, 5G, Blockchain, cognitive computing and nanotechnology. In this era of civilization, skill is important and without this it is difficult for a human being to survive. People will become rich within a short period if they are equipped with 4IR skills. Hence, the exponential economic growth of a country would be observed as long as the presence of people with 4IR skills are available. For example, 5G technologies will completely change the present business model and hence, the business education should be equipped to cope with this new scenario.

The present computer science education requires a serious shaking because it lives in the third industrial revolution. The same is true for the Electronics and Electrical Engineering education, where the concept of smart grid is emerging, which requires the integration of AI thoughts and nanotechnology. The education of medical science should be equipped with the core subjects of 4IR. This is true in other disciplines such as biological sciences, business sciences, social sciences and arts. In addition, all over the world the optimal utilisation of the university resources remains unutilised, because of the absence of an Innovative Educational Ecosystem (IEE), allowing the linking between industry and academia. As mentioned the core of 4IR is the convergence, which in this case consists of taking advantage of industry and academia linkage. Such convergent is really absent, especially in the higher education system of Bangladesh since our universities are yet to set their mind to change the course curriculum to realise the potential of such an innovative educational ecosystem. Hence, it can be argued that our current education system is not equipped with appropriate research, teaching and learning methods and tools, enabling the realization of the huge potential of 4IR. Certainly, university graduates do not possess the skills to live in the era of 4IR with dignity and dynamism.

The hierarchical organization management structure, which is very much centralized, is replaced by decentralized architecture in the era of 4IR. For example, the water supply system of a town is very much centralised and is unable to solve the water crisis for its inhabitants in a sustainable way. This is true for the traffic management system and this is the reason, no cities in the world are able to solve traffic jams.

The implementation of 'Digital Bangladesh' in the last thirteen years by developing huge information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure all over the country, almost in every sector as well as in everyday life of the people has created an appropriate platform to kick-off 4IR in our country. Indeed, such realization of 'Digital Bangladesh' is considered as the implementation of the dream of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The eminent computer scientist of our time Sajeed Wazed, Honourable ICT Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister is considered the architect of 'Digital Bangladesh'. To implement the vision 2041 of our Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of the Father of the Nation, where Bangladesh has been envisioned to become a rich country with a per capita income of 15,000 USD as well as empowering the people equally, there is no alternative but to realise the potential of 4IR without delay. The annual financial budget of the government will become 600 billion dollars in 2041 from today's 50 billion dollars. The GDP size of the country will become 2.6 trillion dollars in 2041 from today's 225 billion dollars.

Taking the above view point into account, University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh is organizing a 2-Day International conference between 10th December and 11th December 2021 in the area of Fourth Industrial Revolution to commemorate the 100th Birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as well as the Golden Jubilee of the country. Such a conference will create a tremendous momentum in the area of research, teaching and learning, especially at higher education level because this will work as an appropriate platform to develop IEE, enabling the realization of 4IR. The presence of Nobel Laureates as well as distinguished scholars from all over the world in various sessions of the conference would play an important role to develop appropriate ways out to realise the potential of 4IR in our country. The outcome of this conference will also help in achieving Vision-2041 by formulating specific recommendations for the implementation of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in every sector of the country.

Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain

Member
University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC)
Chair, Organizing Committee, IC4IR



EVENT MANAGER: CEMS



Message

Prime Minister
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
25 Agrahayan 1428
10 December 2021

I am pleased to know that the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh is going to organize International Conference on the 4th Industrial Revolution and Beyond (IC4IR 2021) on 10-11 December 2021. I extend my sincere thanks to the UGC authority and other stakeholders for taking such an initiative to mark the celebrations of the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of the Independence of Bangladesh.

The participation of three Nobel Laureates and seven world-renowned scientists enriches this event. 'Mujib-100 Idea Contest' and 'Mujib-100 Industry Exhibition' are being organized as part of this event which has already created a lot of enthusiasm among the students, teachers, and scientists of our country.

The country's economy has been consistently achieving high growth for the last thirteen years due to various measures taken by our government in the reality of the 21st century. Development of the agricultural sector, expansion of the service sector, export earnings from the readymade garments sector, and remittances from expatriates have been the major driving forces in achieving the country's socio-economic progress. However, we need to accelerate the current trend of increasing economic growth to transform Bangladesh into a prosperous and wealthy country by 2041. Achieving this goal requires prioritizing investment growth, human resource development, and increased productivity within the framework of an Innovative Technological Ecosystem (ITE).

We are currently going through the fourth industrial revolution, which has brought many challenges to developing and developed countries. Yet, at the same time, it is creating opportunities for the implementation of innovative technological ecosystems. For example, the rapid spread of digitization, robotization, and intelligent automation has a significant impact on the current and future labor market. As a result, on the one hand, labor-dependent employments are shrinking; on the other hand, new employment fields and opportunities are being opened up.

Our government is working to transform our young generation into skilled human resources to meet the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Higher education institutions of the country have to play a leading role in producing competent graduates as per the demand of various industrial and commercial institutions. Universities need to take the initiative to create an Innovative Education Ecosystem (IEE) through joint collaborative activities to solve multiple problems of industry and commerce organizations in our own capacity.

Our government has established several new science and technology universities, including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University, and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Digital University, to create specialized knowledge and skilled human resources. We want to build our institutions of higher learning as a breeding ground for innovation, research, and development, and the Awami League government is committed to providing the necessary support for this.

I am very much interested in the recommendations and directions that will come out of this conference. I believe that the guidelines and recommendations received will play an essential role in enhancing the skills of our graduates and in formulating forward-looking realistic policies to meet the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In addition, by achieving economic growth, the greatest Bengali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's dream of 'Golden Bangladesh,' will be built by 2041.

I wish this conference a complete success.

Jai Bangla, Jai Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Sheikh Hasina



Message

Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury, M.P
Honourable Deputy Minister
Ministry of Education
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

I am glad to know that the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) is going to arrange an International Conference on 4th Industrial Revolution and Beyond (IC4IR) on 10-11 December 2021 in Dhaka. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all those who are involved in arranging the conference to mark the celebrations of birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of Independence of Bangladesh.

Skilled manpower plays a vital role to keep the wheels of economy moving forward. To this end, the present government has established numerous technical education and training institutes, including specialized universities, science and technology universities to build skilled human resources in line with the needs of the global labor market. After assuming power in 2009, the government has taken and implemented different initiatives for the quality enhancement of technical education. These initiatives have changed perception of students and parents about technical education. Another outcome of these initiatives is increasing enrolment for technical education from the previous 1 percent to 15 percent today. Our government has set a target to raise it to 30 percent by 2030. I think it has now become a demand of time to take an integrated plan for the development of technical education system.

It has been mentioned in a report of the World Economic Forum that 65 percent of children entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new job types that don't yet exist. It is high time to assess the numbers and types of manpower our job market will require. Our educational institutes would be able to take necessary preparations once the demands of our industries are available. If we fail to cater the needs of our industries, they would seek skilled manpower from abroad. This will remit our currency abroad.

Our higher education institutions need to be more proactive in undertaking joint collaborative activities with the country's industrial and commercial institutions. They have to play a role in solving the industrial problems through research and innovation.

I expect necessary suggestions and recommendations would come out of the discussions of the experts to help our higher education institutes take necessary steps for producing skilled graduates to meet the challenges of 4IR.

I wish the conference a grand success.

Jai Bangla, Jai Bangabandhu

December 2021

Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury, M.P



Message

Md. Mahub Hossain
Secretary, Secondary and Higher Secondary Division
Ministry of Education

It gives me immense pleasure to note that the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) is going to organize an International Conference on 4th Industrial Revolution and Beyond (IC4IR) during 10-11 December 2021 in Dhaka as part of the celebration of the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of Independence of Bangladesh.

I strongly believe that the experts from both home and abroad, who are attending the conference, will discuss the necessary steps to be undertaken by the universities of Bangladesh to develop skills of our youths. At the same time, the foreign experts will also be able to know about the different initiatives and future plans of our government in this regard. I would like to congratulate all involved in arranging this event.

The future economic progress of our country largely depends on the producing of skilled manpower through proper education and training. After assuming power in 2009, the present government under the leadership of Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has taken a number of breakthrough initiatives to produce skilled manpower through development of the country's education system. Different initiatives like modernization of classrooms with necessary equipment, development of modern research laboratories, supply of modern equipment to the existing laboratories of education institutes, establishment of computer laboratories, library automation, overseas training for teachers and students as well as revision of curricula are going on for the development of teaching-learning environment of our education institutes.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is currently the most discussed topic in the world. Use of different technologies of 4IR like Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Blockchain etc will cause unimaginable changes in the production system. In near future, machine will outperform human labour force in almost all the manufacturing industries.

At this backdrop we need to take extensive preparations to face the complex challenges that the 4IR is entailed with. In order to take advantage of the opportunities. Our main goal must be to create skilled human resources suitable for handling the potentials and perils of the 4IR. This will require a considerable changes in the education system.

Our youths have tremendous merits and potentials. It would be easier for the government to achieve Vision 2021 and Vision 2041 if we could turn our young population into a skilled human resource through proper interventions.

I wish the Conference a grand success.
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Md. Mahub Hossain

BCL in focus after international debacle

SPORTS REPORTER

For a long time, there have been media reports, talks and criticism regarding improving the competitiveness in the domestic circuit. The main agenda, more or less, remains the standard of pitch, or the lack thereof, that ultimately acts as a major factor behind the sub-standard cricket played in domestic arena.

Following a string of losses in the international arena, the latest being whitewashes in T20I series and a Test series at the hands of Pakistan, coupled with the apparent vacuum in the immediate pipeline of players, it has now become more important than ever to shift the focus back to the development of the cricketing culture and process at the domestic level.

And the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is seemingly taking steps which are set to be implemented in the upcoming Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL).

"Our aim will be to make four-day cricket attractive again in the country and to also grow players' interests for



playing longer version cricket," BCB chief selector Minhajul Abedin told The Daily Star yesterday. The ninth edition of the franchise-based competition is being planned to start from December 12.

After the usual four-day encounters, all the four teams will also play one-dayers.

This, in fact, is only the second time that one-day matches will be played in the BCL after the edition in 2015.

According to Minhajul, there are plans afoot to make this tournament more competitive and exciting. "Obviously, longer version cricket is now our priority. It

has been for a while. And to make it [BCL] more competitive, we decided to have at least six millimetres of grass and to have bouncy tracks at all the venues," informed Minhajul.

The primary focus of the BCB will be to have bouncy and grassy tracks to encourage the pacers and to enable the batters get used to a more challenging condition.

"We also provided separate instructions to all the coaches and team management. There are also two sides with leg-spinners, so we will be focusing on them as well.

BCL will be played across the country at four different venues - Rajshahi, Chattogram, Dhaka and Sylhet. The first round of the tournament is supposed to begin in Rajshahi and Chattogram while the one-dayers are all set to be played in Sylhet.

Plenty of promises were made regarding the development of pitch and standard of cricket in the domestic arena in the past as well, however, those never materialised. Promises better be materialised this time or else there might be no arresting the slide in international cricket.

Head pinching himself after Ashes ton

AFP, Brisbane



Travis Head blasted the third-fastest century in Ashes history to crush England hopes on the second day of the opening Test at the Gabba on Thursday.

At the close of play a dominant Australia were 343-7, a lead of 196 on England's dismal first-innings total of 147.

Head was on 112, alongside Mitchell Starc, who was not out 10, on another desponding day for England in Brisbane.

England had threatened a comeback after tea when Ollie Robinson took two wickets in consecutive balls, but Head's aggressive innings put paid to any hopes of a miracle recovery.

The 27-year-old Head, controversially recalled to the Australia side ahead of veteran Usman Khawaja, justified his selection by passing 100 off only 85 balls.

He smashed two sixes and 12 fours in his century -- the third-fastest in the Ashes behind only Adam Gilchrist's 56-ball ton in Perth in 2006 and Gilbert Jessop's 76-ball effort at The Oval in 1902.

"I'm still pinching myself -- I can't quite work out what transpired over the past couple of hours," Head said. "I took some chances -- technically and mentally I was really composed, really relaxed," he added. "I found the first 20 runs really tough, but the game opened up and I was able to take the chances, which is pleasing."

Head attacked from the outset and was particularly harsh on spinners Jack Leach and Joe Root, the English skipper. Head came to the crease with Australia 189-3 after Steve Smith edged Mark Wood to keeper Jos Buttler just before tea.

He then watched David Warner (94) and Cameron Green depart to Robinson's accurate seamers after the break, with Australia still only 89 runs ahead.

Earlier, Warner rode his luck in the first two sessions. The gritty Australian batsman was bowled by a no-ball by Ben Stokes before lunch, then dropped by Rory Burns in the first over after the break, before Haseeb Hameed bungled a simple run-out.

Warner's good fortune began when Stokes bowled him when he was on 17, but the all-rounder had overstepped to give the Australian opener a mighty reprieve.

Television replays showed that Stokes had also overstepped on the first three balls of his over, but nothing was called. It later transpired that technology issues were at the centre of the no-ball drama.



Members of champions Rangpur Division celebrate after beating Mymensingh Division 1-0 in the final of Bangamata Sheikh Fajilatunnesa Mujib (U-17) National Gold Cup at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday. Sylhet Division, meanwhile, beat Rajshahi Division 3-1 in tiebreaker to become champions in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (U-17) National Gold Cup tournament, with both tournaments organised by the youth and sports ministry. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina watched the girls' final and joined the closing ceremony through digital platform and encouraged the players with a speech.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

SAFF U-19 WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

'We want to defend the title'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh have their eyes locked on the inaugural SAFF Under-19 Women's Championship trophy as the regional football extravaganza kicks off at Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur on Saturday.

Meanwhile, all visiting four teams - India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan - have already begun training in the city for the tournament, which will be played in a round-robin format before the top two teams feature in the final on December 22. On the opening day, hosts Bangladesh will kick-start their campaign against Nepal after Bhutan take on Sri Lanka.

As winners of the now-defunct SAFF U-18 Women's Championship, which has been replaced with this upcoming U-19 tournament, the Women in Red and Green are geared up to defend their title by taking advantage of familiar playing environment and home crowd.

"Being champions of the tournament's last edition, we want to defend the title by presenting a good performance at home," captain Maria Manda told reporters at a press conference at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) House yesterday.

Maria is one of the experienced players of the U-19 squad alongside 14 campaigners of the senior women's team in the 23-member squad,

declared yesterday.

Head coach Golam Rabbani Choton is optimistic about his side's chances while acknowledging that they will be in for a tough competition.

"After a week's rest following two tough matches in the AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers till September 22, the girls resumed training from September 30 and have worked really hard to display a trophy-winning performance," informed Choton.

BFF Women's Committee chairman Mahfuza Akter Kiran hoped that this group of girls, who had won different tournaments before, would also be in tune this time to taste glory.

Barcelona to 'start from scratch'

AFP, Munich

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez vowed to return the Spanish giants to the pinnacle of European football after they crashed out of the Champions League on Wednesday with a 3-0 defeat at Bayern Munich.

Five-time European champions Barca were eliminated in the group stages for the first time in 21 years. They had reached the last 16 in each season since 2003-04, when they did not qualify for the competition at all.

Goals by Thomas Mueller and Leroy Sane gave Bayern a 2-0 half-time cushion in falling snow at the Allianz Arena, which was devoid of spectators due to high numbers of Covid-19 cases in Bavaria.

Teenager Jamal Musiala grabbed Bayern's third after the break to seal Barcelona's fate. "I'm angry. I don't like that this is our reality now. We start a new era from here - to work hard and get back in the Champions League," said Xavi.

Bayern, who also beat Barca 3-0 at the Camp Nou when the sides met in September, had already qualified for the knock-out stages as Group



E winners. They now join Liverpool and Ajax with a perfect six victories from six games in the group stage.

Benfica's 2-0 win at home to Dynamo Kiev means Barcelona finish third and drop into the Europa League. It was almost eight years to the day since Bayern lost a home Champions League game in the group phase and the Bundesliga leaders were in no mood to be generous. Xavi, 41, who took charge of struggling Barcelona four weeks ago, has now suffered back-

to-back defeats after his first loss as head coach against Real Betis last weekend.

"We start from scratch. Unfortunately, we are in the Europa League, which is not the place for us," insisted Xavi. "We will work hard to put Barcelona back in the right place. We have many things to correct.

"We need to win the Europa League and recover the points in the Spanish league. "We have had some injuries, maybe we can sign some more players, but we start from zero."

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AMINBAZAR KILLING Death reference reaches HC



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The documents of the sensational Aminbazar six-student murder case reached the High Court as death reference in order to examine the trial court verdict that sentenced 13 accused to death in the case.

A Dhaka court on December 2 sentenced 13 people to death and 19 others to life imprisonment for killing six students in Aminbazar, on the outskirts of the capital, more than 10 years ago, an incident that shook the nation.

Twenty-five others were acquitted as their involvement in the killings was not proven.

In the early hours of Shab-e-Barat on July 18, 2011, a mob of villagers killed the six youths near Aminbazar bridge and took their bodies more than half a kilometre away to Keblarchar on the instructions of police.

They then called other villagers and said they caught robbers.

Later, Al Amin -- the only survivor among the students -- was cleared of charges after police found that the victims were not robbers.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2



Clouds of smoke billowing from a warehouse of jhut (garment waste) in Chattogram city's Aturar depot area and firefighters spray water to douse the fire. Four other such warehouses were also burnt. The fire, which broke out around 5:00am yesterday, was extinguished around four hours later. The origin of the fire could not be known immediately.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

HC commutes jail sentence of BNP MP Harun

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday dismissed an appeal filed by BNP lawmaker Harunur Rashid that challenged a lower court verdict sentencing him five years' imprisonment for evading tax while importing a luxury car.

The court, however, commuted the jail sentence of Harunur, MP of Chapainawabganj-3, from five years to the period that he has already served -- 16 months -- in connection with the case.

The full text of the HC verdict is yet to be released.

"A person shall be disqualified for election as, or for being, a member of Parliament who has been, on conviction for a criminal offence involving moral turpitude, sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release," according to the article 66 (2) of the constitution.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Last respects paid to Rawat

Black box recovered

AGENCIES

The bodies of India's defence chief and 12 others who died in a helicopter crash laid draped in the Indian flag at a defence cantonment yesterday, before being flown to New Delhi, where the general will be laid to rest with full military honours.



General Bipin Rawat, his wife and 12 defence personnel were en route to a military staff college in southern India when the air force helicopter they were travelling in came down near the town of Coonoor in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday.

In a brief statement in parliament yesterday, India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the remains of all the deceased would be brought to New Delhi and Rawat would be cremated with full military honours.

He also announced that a tri-service enquiry had been ordered by the Indian Air Force (IAF).

Defence officials yesterday retrieved the 'Black Box' of the ill-fated IAF helicopter, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

The black box could provide crucial

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Mitro Bahini closing in on Dhaka

DECEMBER 10, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

KISSINGER'S MESSAGE TO FARLAND

In a backchannel message, Henry Kissinger, the US president's Assistant for national security affairs, informed US Ambassador to Pakistan Joseph Farland, "We are making strongest demarche to Soviets today which proposes that they join with us in supporting provisos : (a) India and Pakistan should agree to an immediate ceasefire with the separate armed forces "standing fast"; and that the United Nations or other international organization provide observers to see that the ceasefire is effective; (b) that India and Pakistan "at any effective level" immediately open negotiations aimed at a settlement of the war and troop withdrawal; and coincident therewith negotiations be started looking towards the political satisfaction of Bengali aspirations; i.e., a political settlement."

Kissinger asked Farland to discuss the provisos with Pakistan President Yahya Khan and added, "You should emphasize that the president [Nixon] has made the strongest demarche to the Soviets and included warning to them that we have obligations towards Pakistan which will not permit aggression against West Pakistan. The president added that should Indian offensive be launched in the West, with Soviet acquiescence, a US/Soviet confrontation would ensue."

Later, on the same day, after having a discussion with Yahya, Farland informed Kissinger that the Pakistan president "bought" the original proposal as delivered. He, however, added that Yahya

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4



Booster doses likely from next month

People aged 60 and above to be eligible initially

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Work to start administering booster doses of Covid-19 vaccines to people aged 60 years and above is in full swing, with the rollout expected by early January.

The ICT division is now updating the "Surokkha" database with the list of individuals eligible for booster doses so that they can register for the job, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday at the unveiling of the "Nationwide Blindness Survey 2020".

The development comes as calls for the coronavirus vaccine booster job have grown louder, sparked by fears that waning immunity induced by earlier rounds of vaccination will not be enough to stave off a potential wave of infections from the highly transmissible Omicron variant.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

REMBRANDT'S PAINTING Restorers discover hidden sketch



AFP, The Hague

A sketch that has lain hidden for centuries under the thick layers of paint Rembrandt applied to create "The Night Watch" offers new insight into the Dutch master's creative process, museum officials said Wednesday.

Hailing a "breakthrough" in the understanding of Rembrandt's most famous work, Rijksmuseum director Taco Dibbits told reporters: "We always suspected Rembrandt must have made a sketch on the canvas before embarking on this incredibly complex composition, but we didn't have the evidence."

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

PM's comment on Khaleda's treatment unexpected

Says BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's comment that the government has already shown great generosity to party Chairperson Khaleda Zia is "unexpected" as she is fighting for life.

"Khaleda Zia is seriously ill and she is now fighting for life. The treatment she needs is not possible in the country. She needs to be sent to an advanced medical centre abroad without any further delay," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said yesterday.

Addressing a discussion organised by Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf Smiriti Parishad at the Jatiya Press Club, Fakhrul said, "This is unfortunate to hear the person who is running the country capturing power saying that she has shown

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

4 students 'abducted by Rohingyas'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Two Rohingya men have abducted four schoolboys in Cox's Bazar after promising to take them to St Martin's Island, said the families of the victims.

The four -- Mohammad Kayser, Mizanur Rahman, Jahedul Islam and Mijanul Islam -- are students of Sonarpara High School in Ukha upazila. Jahedul is a student of class 10 while the three others are students of class 8.

According to their families, Jahangir and Ibrahim along with other criminals abducted the four on Tuesday telling them they would be taken to the island.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 10

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-15 12-30 3-45 5-19 7-00
JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-00 5-22 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A common hoopoe is in action before swallowing an insect. Hoopoes are colourful birds found across Africa, Asia, and Europe, notable for their distinctive "crown" of feathers. This photo was taken from Gazipur's Sreepur recently.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MOSABBER HOSSAIN RIBON

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Dental Care SHOULD YOU FLOSS?

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A lot have been said about flossing your teeth. Some say it is as important for your oral health as brushing, whereas others say it is even more crucial.

In a 2016 investigation by The Associated Press, it was found that the available studies which recommend flossing teeth are scientifically inadequate.

However, there was also no proof that flossing is useless or harmful.

So, as absence of proof isn't proof of absence, dentists around the world



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SEE PAGE 2 COL 3