

LONDON COURT RULING
WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange one step closer to extradition to US
SEE PAGE 5

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Your Right to Know

JAMADUL AWAL 6, 1443 HJRI

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"We're looking into BNP's demand for sending Khaleda Zia abroad."
LAW MINISTER ANISUL HUQ ON THE BNP CHIEF'S TREATMENT.



"I have to say that Russophobia is a first step towards genocide. You and I know what is happening in Dombass."
PUTIN ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE TENSIONS



"The problem with the British government is that it does not do what it says."
FRENCH PRESIDENT MACRON ON ROW OVER FISHING, MIGRATION

INT'L HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Return our loved ones

Families of victims of enforced disappearance appeal to govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of the victims of enforced disappearance yesterday staged a demonstration in the capital's Shahbagh demanding return of their loved ones.

Among the demonstrators were victims' children who were mere toddlers when their fathers went missing eight years ago. Holding photos of their fathers in their hands, they demanded justice for the victims.

"Mayer Daak", a platform of family members of the victims of enforced disappearance, organised the human chain in front of the National Museum marking Human Rights Day.

Years have gone by since some of the

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Abida Islam Ridhi, left, and Arwa Islam have no idea whether their fathers, who became victims of enforced disappearance about eight years ago, will return home or if they are gone forever. They just wake up early every single day hoping to hear good news, but their wait seems to be far from over. They form a human chain, organised by Mayer Daak, in front of the National Museum in the city's Shahbagh yesterday demanding return of the victims. The programme was staged marking Human Rights Day.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE

US sanctions Rab, seven top officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United States yesterday imposed human rights-related sanctions on Rapid Action Battalion and seven current and former top officials of the agency, including Benazir Ahmed, now inspector general of police.

Benazir, former director general of Rab, and five officials were designated by the Department of the Treasury under the Global Magnitsky sanctions programme in connection with serious rights abuse.

The five are Rab Director General Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun; Khan Mohammad Azad, additional director general (operations) of Rab; Tofayel Mustafa Sorwar, former additional director general (operations); Mohammad Jahangir Alam, former additional director general (operations), and Mohammad Anwar Latif Khan, former additional director general (operations).

Besides, the US State Department barred Benazir, and another former official of Rab Lt Col Miftah Uddin Ahmed, from traveling to the United States.

"Today, on International Human Rights Day, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is designating 15 individuals and 10 entities for their connection to human rights abuse and repression in several countries around the globe, pursuant to multiple sanctions authorities," said a Treasury release.

Rab is designated pursuant to EO 13818 for being a foreign entity that is responsible for or complicit in, or has directly or indirectly engaged in, serious human rights

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WANT JUSTICE

For my son and others killed in crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Much to the frustration of family members of victims and justice seekers, reckless drivers are rarely punished even if they cause loss of life.

"Killer drivers are on the road unchallenged. But we are yet to get justice," said Shahjahan Kabir at a rally at Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

He added, "I am a poor farmer. My only son was crushed to death by a recklessly driven bus. I went to different ministries and offices in the last three years, seeking justice and compensation. I have got nothing."

His son Saiful Islam Rana, 26, was a nurse at Dhaka Community Medical College and Hospital in Moghbazar. He was killed on August 3, 2018, after a speeding bus hit his motorcycle from behind near his workplace.

He died at a time when there were widespread student-led demonstrations across the country for safe roads. The grieving family members and friends of the victims attended the rally yesterday as students have been demonstrating again for weeks demanding safer roads.

A group of students under the banner Nirapad Sarak Andolon held the rally. Many of the speakers expressed their helplessness and burst into tears.

Shajahan said the bus which killed his son was still plying the Dhaka-Satkhira highway. "I want

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Father, daughter killed in N'ganj road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A man and his 14-year-old daughter were killed in a road accident at Chashara in Narayanganj town yesterday.

The victims are Altab Hossen and Bely Akhter, said police.

According to the victims' family, Bely used to live in the USA with her mother after her parents' divorce. She came to Bangladesh only three weeks ago to visit her ailing grandmother.

Yesterday noon, she was going to attend a marriage programme along with her father. On their way, a truck rammed over the rickshaw that they were riding, leaving them dead on the spot.

Bely's maternal aunt Mahmuda Akhter said the minor girl was supposed to return to the USA on December 22.

"I prepared Bely myself before she left for the wedding. We are devastated losing our child to road accident," a sobbing Mahmuda said.

Jahangir Alam, sub-inspector of Fatulla Police Station, said the truck hit the rear end of the rickshaw in Chashara area.

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justice for my son and anyone who had died on the road because of reckless driving."

Saiful's mother and sister were also present at the programme.

"We beg the prime minister to see that we get justice for my brother," said Saiful's sister Jannatul Juthi.

In July 2018, the widespread demonstration for road safety was triggered by the deaths of two college students, Abdul Karim Rajib and Dia Khanam Mim, in a crash in the capital.

The current demonstrations began on November 18 after bus fares were raised following a hike in diesel price. The protests began in reaction to the hiked bus fares. But the demonstrations soon gained momentum after two students got killed in the capital by recklessly driven vehicles.

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CAMPAIGN FOR EVALY

3 actors sued

Police say they'll arrest them anytime as an aggrieved customer files case



Tahsan Khan

Rafiath Rashid Mithila

Sabnam Faria

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday said actors Tahsan Khan, Rafiath Rashid Mithila and Sabnam Faria are under watch and may be arrested anytime in a case filed by an aggrieved customer of controversial e-commerce platform Evaly.

In the case filed with Dhanmondi Police Station on December 4, Saad Sam Rahman brought fraud charges against nine accused, including the three celebrities, for embezzling Tk 3.18 lakh.

"Since a case has been filed, they are under our watch and will be arrested at any time," Sazzadur Rahman, deputy commissioner (Ramna Division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told journalists at his office.

The complainant said their celebrity status attracted him to Evaly, which eventually defrauded him.

"They cannot avoid responsibility," said the DC.

Tahsan is the chief goodness officer, SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

This Nobel light is blinding

Says Maria Ressa as she receives the honour



AFP, Oslo

Champion of press freedom Maria Ressa yesterday said there was "no brighter light" than the Nobel Peace Prize and told AFP that her award was "for all journalists".

"Oh my God, no, never, never," the 58-year-old journalist, co-founder of the news website Rappler, told AFP in an interview when asked if she had expected to win the Prize, which she formally received yesterday.

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Jannatul Juthi, younger sister to late Saiful Islam Rana, breaks down at a rally at the capital's Central Shaheed Minar yesterday while an organiser of the event tries to comfort her. Saiful was killed in a road crash in the capital's Moghbazar in August 2018. Students organised the demonstration to press for their 9-point demand for safer roads.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'ABDUCTION BY ROHINGYAS'

Three out of four boys rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Three of four schoolboys were rescued from Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila yesterday, four days after they were abducted allegedly by two Rohingya men from Ramu upazila.

Tariqul Islam, commander of Armed Police Battalion (APBn-16), confirmed the development. He, however, did not disclose details of the rescue drive.

The rescued schoolboys are Jahedul Islam Mamun, a tenth-grader of Sonarpara High School in Ukhiya upazila, and Mizanur Rahman Nayan, an eighth-grader of the same school, and his classmate Mohammad Kayser.

A team of APBn-16 along with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-15) and local police was conducting the drive in Hila union to rescue the fourth victim, Mizanul Islam, an eighth-grader of the same school, until the report was filed around 10:00pm, said APBn-16 officials.

Jahedul's father Abdus Salam, who was with the law enforcers during the rescue operation, told The Daily Star, "The three schoolboys are seriously ill as the abductors beat them up and confined them in a hilly area for four days."

About the location, Salam said the kidnappers confined the four schoolboys in a hilly area near the Leda unregistered

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

15,78,819 Total cases

269 New cases in 24hrs

28,017 Deaths

15,43,740 Recoveries

5,307,320 Deaths

269,015,074 Total cases

GLOBAL UPDATE

15,43,740 Recoveries

28,017 Deaths

5,307,320 Deaths

269,015,074 Total cases

GLOBAL UPDATE

15,43,740 Recoveries

28,017 Deaths

'CULTURE OF PEACE'

UN unanimously adopts Bangladesh's resolution

Bss, Dhaka

The United Nations General Assembly has unanimously adopted Bangladesh's flagship resolution on the "Culture of Peace".

Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Ambassador Rabab Fatima introduced the resolution at the UNGA on Thursday, according to a press release received here yesterday.

"The resolution this year assumes greater relevance and urgency as we continue to grapple with the unprecedented, multifaceted challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic," she said while introducing the resolution.

The resolution was first adopted on September 13 in 1999, during the first tenure of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Since then, Bangladesh has been facilitating this resolution at the Assembly every year and also convening a High-level Forum on the "Culture of Peace" in the General Assembly.

This year's High-Level forum,

which was held on September 7, focused on transformative role of the "Culture of Peace" in promoting inclusion and resilience in the post Covid recovery.

Bangladesh's permanent representative said the resolution of the "Culture of Peace" has over time, grown in relevance, and evolved into a dominant theme finding larger footprints and recognition in all major UN discourses.

"In the rapidly changing global situation, it has proved to be a useful means to complement UN Charter obligations of maintaining peace in the world," Fatima added.

This year, 109 countries from a cross-regional representation of the UN member states co-sponsored this resolution, showing the broad-based support for the notion of the "Culture of Peace".

The continued support to this resolution, facilitated by Bangladesh every year, is a testimony to the huge confidence of international community on Bangladesh as a proponent of global peace.



Banners hanging from electricity poles and tangled webs of cables mar the beauty of the entrance to Lalbagh Fort, an architectural jewel of the Mughal Empire, in Old Dhaka. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

This Nobel light is blinding

FROM PAGE 1

"Up until today, from the time I was told... You know that painting 'The Scream'," she said, describing her feelings as she brought her hands to her face, mimicking the figure in the painting by Norway's Edvard Munch.

Ressa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in early October, together with Russia's Dmitry Muratov, editor-in-chief of the independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta, for "their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression."

The two investigative journalists, facing pressure from authorities in their respective countries, received the prestigious award yesterday at a small ceremony at Oslo's City Hall.

"This Nobel light is blinding," Ressa said.

"There's no brighter light than this," she added.

"It's for all journalists around the world. We've seen the decline in terms of the quality of journalism, the safety

of journalist and then the quality of democracies over the last decade," she said.

Ressa, whose website is highly critical of Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, is the subject of seven lawsuits in her country, that she says risk putting her in jail for 100 years.

Currently on parole, pending an appeal after being convicted of defamation last year, she needed to ask four courts for permission to be able to travel and collect her Nobel in person.

"It was never an option," she replied when asked if she considered life in exile.

"If I were to leave at a time when (our work) is most necessary, then I wouldn't be who I am or I would be far weaker than I thought I was," she said.

An election to find a successor to Duterte is scheduled in the Philippines on May 9.

Want justice

FROM PAGE 1

State University student Inzamul Haque Ramim, a road safety campaigner, said his father, who was a policeman, died in 2017 being runover by a bus. "We have yet to get justice."

Ramim said, "We, the students, have been on the roads since 2018, with a nine-point demand. Our demands have not been met."

Jagannath University student Shahidul Islam Apon said, "We live in a country where parents fear that their children would return home dead because of road crashes. Many dreams have been shattered on the roads. We know that the transport company owners instruct drivers to drive hastily to be able to make more money. Many novice drivers are getting licence before they are fully trained. That's why the number of deaths on roads is increasing."

Mohidul Islam Daud, another road safety campaigner, said, "Even in the 50 years of independence, there is no discipline on the roads. A student of Noakhali Science and Technology University was killed three days ago. The young ones who would run the country in the future are being killed on roads."

The protestors demanded realisation of the nine-point demand that include compensation for those killed and injured in road crashes and half-fare for students on all modes of public transport across the country ensured through a government order.

If their demands are not met by December 14, they would begin a hunger strike from December 15, in front of the Secretariat in the capital and in front of the deputy commissioners' offices in the districts.



Three out of four boys rescued

FROM PAGE 1

Rohingya camp of Hila union. Two abductors were arrested, Rab said. But they did not disclose their names.

On Tuesday, two Rohingya men -- Ibrahim and Jahangir Alam -- abducted the four schoolboys, alluring them to take to St Martin's Island, said the victims' guardians.

The four schoolboys are from Himchhari Panchardwip area in Ramu upazila. Jahangir and Ibrahim used to work in a cottage there.

While going to school in front of the cottage, the schoolboys were talking to Ibrahim and Jahangir and a friendly-relation developed among them, said the victims' families.

The kidnapers first took the four to Rohingya Camp-26, confined them in an unknown place and then demanded

a ransom of Tk 20 lakh from their families, the guardians said.

Before rescuing the three schoolboys, APBn-16 yesterday arrested three Rohingyas for their alleged involvement in the abduction.

Arrestees Nur Salam, 50, his 13-year-old daughter and Saddam Mia, 35, are residents of the camp. They were later handed over to Teknaf Police Station.

Commander Tariqul told this correspondent that the arrestees are relatives of Ibrahim involved in the abduction.

Sources claimed that Rohingyas are found getting involved in different types of crimes in Cox's Bazar. In November, two APBn units arrested around 334 Rohingyas for their alleged involvement in different criminal activities.

3 actors sued

FROM PAGE 1

Sabnam the chief public relations officer and Mithila a brand ambassador of Evaly.

Other accused in the case are Evaly Chairperson Shamima Nasrin, founder and CEO Mohammad Rassel, Vice-President Akash, Chief Marketing Officer Arif R Hossain, Category Head Mohammad Abu Taher Saddam and Evaly Executive of Operations Abu Evely.

Nasrin and Rassel are behind bars since Rab arrested them from their Mohammadpur residence on September 16.

The couple and many other Evaly officials and staffers are facing several cases in Dhaka and other districts for fraudulence, embezzlement, cheque fraud, etc. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has been carrying out money laundering inquiry against the e-commerce platform.

Complainant Saad said he trusted Evaly after seeing that the three celebrities were involved with the platform.

He then ordered a motorcycle worth Tk 3.18 lakh, but did not get the bike despite serious efforts, said the case statement.

Contacted yesterday, Saad told The Daily Star that soon after the arrest of Evaly CEO and chairperson, he went to Gulshan and Dhanmondi police stations to file a case, but police did

not register any.

He then lodged an appeal with a Dhaka court, which ordered Dhanmondi Police Station to accept his case.

Investigation Officer of the case, Sub-Inspector Rajib Hasan of Dhanmondi Police Station said Rassel and Shamima have been formally shown arrested in the case.

"We have opened an investigation. Legal action will be taken against other accused if their involvement is found," he told The Daily Star.

The Daily Star talked to Tahsan and Faria for their comments. Mithila could not be reached after several attempts.

Tahsan, who is now staying in the US, said, "Evaly had been requesting me repeatedly for a year. When I did not agree, they said, 'We are with the Bangladesh Cricket Board. We are with Rab's movie Operation Sundarbans. We got the ICT award, so why don't you agree?'"

"After many requests, I made a deal. But I did not act according to that agreement. Before that, I terminated the contract in May. I was supposed to advertise [for Evaly] according to the contract. But I did not. I was getting a lot of complaints after doing two Facebook Live videos, so I cancelled the agreement with them."

He added, "There are brand ambassadors from many organisations

around the world. They are not responsible for the activities of the organisations, because they are just promoters. They will move away when the company has problems. It is by no means a crime to promote a company. And what does it mean by 'arrest at any moment' or 'under surveillance'? Law enforcers keep an eye on those who are accused. Such a headline is not expected. I will file a defamation suit in this regard."

Sabnam Faria said, "These things are being done mainly to harass me. I hope the police will not find any involvement in the investigation. I am not connected to the crimes that have been mentioned in the case. And I haven't yet received a single penny from Evaly. I have nothing to do with the allegations. I never did a promotion."

Evaly, in response to a commerce ministry's directive to explain the whereabouts of around Tk 338 crore it owed customers and suppliers, reported that its total liabilities were Tk 543 crore, including Tk 311 crore to more than 2 lakh shoppers and Tk 206 crore to suppliers as of July 15.

It did not disclose the number of vendors. Nor did it clearly mention when the dues might be cleared.

On October 18, the High Court formed the five-member committee to run the e-commerce platform.

US sanctions Rab, seven top officials

FROM PAGE 1

abuse, it said on its website.

"NGOs have alleged that Rab and other Bangladeshi law enforcement are responsible for more than 600 disappearances since 2009, nearly 600 extrajudicial killings since 2018, and torture. Some reports suggest these incidents target opposition party members, journalists, and human rights activists."

Widespread allegations of serious human rights abuse in Bangladesh by Rab -- as part of the Bangladesh government's war on drugs -- threaten US national security interests by undermining the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the economic prosperity of the people of Bangladesh, it added.

Additionally, the six individuals are designated pursuant to EO 13818 for being foreign persons who are or have been a leader or official of Rab, an entity that has engaged in, or whose members have engaged in, serious human rights abuse relating to their tenure.

Executive Order (EO) 13818 was issued in 2017. It is titled "Blocking the Property of Persons Involved in Serious Human Rights Abuse or Corruption".

As a result of Treasury Department's action, all property and interests in property of the persons above that

are in the United States or in the possession or control of US persons are blocked and must be reported to Office of Foreign Assets Control.

The State Department in a separate release said Benazir and Miftah, an ex-CEO of Rab-7, were designated under Section 7031(c) of Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2021.

It was for their involvement in a gross violation of human rights, namely the May 2018 extrajudicial killing of Teknaf City Municipal councillor, according to the release.

This action makes the two "ineligible for entry into the United States".

Contacted last night, Rab Director General Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun said he was busy at a programme and would talk later. But he didn't respond to calls later.

Rab's ADG Khan Mohammad Azad also didn't pick up the phone.

Talking to The Daily Star, Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of the Legal and Media Wing of Rab, said they were not informed officially about the sanctions and had not yet received any letter regarding this.

"We came to know about it from the media. If we are informed formally or get any letter, we would address the issue through Ministry of Foreign Affairs," said the official.

Talking to a private TV channel, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said he did not think the US imposed the sanctions in line with facts. "Maybe they [the US] have got some exaggerated information and taken the action based on that."

The US imposed sanctions yesterday also on people and entities tied to China, Myanmar and North Korea and added Chinese artificial intelligence startup SenseTime Group to an economic blacklist.

The Treasury said it was imposing sanctions on two Myanmar military entities and an organisation that provides reserves for the military, reports Reuters.

The Directorate of Defense Industries, one of the entities targeted, makes weapons for the military and police that have been used in a brutal crackdown on opponents of the military's February 1 coup.

"On International Human Rights Day, Treasury is using its tools to expose and hold accountable perpetrators of serious human rights abuse," said Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo.

"Our actions today, particularly those in partnership with the United Kingdom and Canada, send a message that democracies around the world will act against those who abuse the power of the state to inflict suffering and repression."

US court rejects Trump bid to keep Capitol riot documents secret

AFP, Washington

A US federal appeals court on Thursday rejected former president Donald Trump's bid to prevent the release of White House records relating to the January 6 attack on the Capitol.

The appeals court agreed with a lower court ruling that President Joe Biden could waive executive privilege on the records, so that they could be handed over to a Congressional panel investigating the violence by Trump supporters.

Trump, who has been accused of fomenting the attack on the US

Congress, sought to exercise his privilege as a former president to keep the documents and phone records that might relate to the attack a secret.

But the court said Biden's judgment carried more weight in the case.

"The right of a former president certainly enjoys no greater weight than that of the incumbent," the appeals court said in its ruling.

"In this case, President Biden, as the head of the Executive Branch, has specifically found that Congress has demonstrated a compelling need for these very documents and that

disclosure is in the best interests of the nation," the court said.

The ruling did not trigger the immediate release of the records. The appeals court said that Trump's lawyers would have two weeks to appeal the case to the Supreme Court.

There, Trump's attorneys are expected to request a new freeze on the release while the high court reviews the unprecedented case.

"Regardless of today's decision by the appeals court, this case was always destined for the Supreme Court," said Trump spokeswoman Liz Harrington.

BBC calls on Iran to end campaign against its staff

AFP, London

The BBC yesterday urged Iran to end what it said was a mounting campaign of threats and intimidation against its journalists and their families at home and abroad.

The corporation said staff from its Persian-language service have endured a decade of harassment and attacks, including asset freezes and arbitrary arrest of relatives.

"In the past year, threats against BBC News Persian staff and Persian-speaking journalists outside Iran have escalated," the broadcaster said in a statement.

"Death threats and threats of extra-territorial harm have been made towards BBC News Persian staff in London, leading to police involvement and protection."

The campaign has extended to journalists from other organisations perceived to be critical of the regime, forced returns from overseas and imprisonment, it added.

The UN has voiced concern about treatment of BBC Persian staff, saying the authorities in Tehran were prepared to go to illegal lengths to silence reporters.

The broadcaster's World Service operation is part-funded by Britain's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office but is editorially independent of government.

Return our loved

FROM PAGE 1

victims, including people involved in politics and businessmen, went missing, but the law enforcers are yet to trace their whereabouts.

Eminent citizens also joined the human chain to express their solidarity with the victims' family members and relatives.

Shafiqur Rahman, father of former Gulshan unit Chhatra Dal leader Saifur Rahman, alleged that his son was picked up on February 18, 2015 from the capital's Bhatara area.

He said he filed a general diary with the local police station regarding the incident, but his son remains missing. Shafiqur said he pleaded to the government to locate the whereabouts of his son or at least ascertain whether he was killed and buried somewhere so that they could pray for the departed soul.

"My son was involved in politics. Was it his fault?" he asked.

Saleha Begum, mother of another victim Moazzem Hossain Topu, said her son was picked up on January 26, 2016.

She said she sought the prime minister's intervention in the incident and also requested some government high-ups to help her in this regard.

However, Moazzem, a former president of Rampura unit Chhatra League, remains untraced.

Mayer Daak Coordinator Afroza Islam said they want a change in the culture of impunity and violation of rights in the country.

"We want our dear ones back," she said.

Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Prof Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University and Ganosamhati Andolon Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki, among others, addressed the human chain.

Father, daughter

FROM PAGE 1

Locals detained the trucker, he said, adding that the bodies were sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsies.

Witnesses told The Daily Star that the truck was over speeding. It hit the rickshaw as soon as it entered the Dhaka-Narayanganj road.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Eastern Marsh Harrier with Prey, Muhuri, Bangladesh.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Predators of Muhuri

Screaming loudly and wildly flapping their wings, the ducks abruptly took off from the water about two hundred feet from our boat. This alerted us to the proximity of a bird of prey. Sure enough, a solitary black and white bird approached from the distant horizon, coming closer as it circled the shallow water covered with *Jol Kolmi*, *Chand-mala*, *Kochuripana* and other aqueous plants. Its head tilted downward, the bird intently scanned what lay below while it circled. It made its move suddenly, orienting its body downwards, tucking in its wings and kicking its feet before diving. Coming up empty-handed it resumed circling. After several attempts, it emerged from the dive clutching the lifeless body of a White-breasted Waterhen, its head resting limply against the mighty talons.

This drama unfolded before our eyes at a lake formed by a dam on the Muhuri river in Feni. During winter many types of birds congregate here including ducks, egrets and herons, jacobins, rails and cranes and migratory songbirds. But for me, the attraction of Muhuri lies in predators of the sky – her raptors.

A year ago I saw the magnificent Greater Spotted Eagle here, a large reddish bird with white spots on its body. It was sitting atop a small, submerged *Mandar* tree. This is a rare winter visitor to Bangladesh. I have also seen two resident eagles: Grey-headed Fish Eagle and Indian Spotted Eagle. The former nests high among the trees that surround the fishponds adjacent to the lake. The latter also breeds here, as I have seen both juveniles and adults.

Then there are the harriers. They

own the skies above Muhuri.

Harriers are medium-sized hawks that fly low over the ground or water. Their flight profile is unmistakable: long wings, narrow tails, flying with the head tilted downward, eyes often hidden by the span of their wings. They take their prey from the ground, including birds, small mammals and reptiles, using their hooked talons to catch, kill and carry.

There are sixteen species of harriers in the world. Six are seen in Bangladesh, most commonly the Eastern Marsh Harrier, Western Marsh Harrier and Pied Harrier. They fly over open spaces: marshlands, *chars*, *haors* and lakes. While harriers are winter visitors to Bangladesh, I have heard unconfirmed reports that some nest in more remote trees around the lake at Muhuri. I have seen harriers over the *haors* in Sylhet and the *chars* of Padma, but Muhuri is the best place for observing them.

Muhuri is a long but comfortable day trip from Dhaka. We left at 5 am by car. Driving the Chittagong Highway we arrived in Feni at 8:30 am and were at the lake at 9 am. The lake is best explored by boats available at the Tourist Spot. Rowboats rather than motor boats are preferable for birding as motor noise frightens the birds. Birding season lasts until early March, when migrant birds start disappearing but blooming *Mandar* flowers switch our attention to the myriad songbirds they attract.

Predator birds are usually shy and hard to find, but if you go to Muhuri in winter, you stand a good chance of seeing them.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow ihtishamkabir on Instagram.

Over 9,000 job seekers in limbo

Results for recruitment in BNFE project yet to be published

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Over 9,000 jobseekers have been waiting for final results of their viva for recruitment at a project run by Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE), due to delay on the bureau's part in finalising a key component of the project.

The candidates passed the written test held in late 2019 and faced the viva-voce in different phases in January last year for the post of upazila/urban programme coordinator (UPC) under Out of School Children Education Program (OSCE).

OSCE, a sub-component of Fourth Primary Education Development Program, has been designed to ensure education for children aged 8-14 years who could not be enrolled in school or dropped out. Around Tk 3,200 crore was allocated for the programme, which was supposed to run from 2018 to 2023.

Initially, the programme was planned to provide education to around 9,31,000 such students through 31,000 learning centres in 61 districts. A total of 53 NGOs have been appointed as Implementation Support Agencies by BNFE to run these learning centres.

- Project planned to educate around 9,31,000 children, but list of students not finalised yet
- Candidates passed written test in 2019, faced viva-voce in Jan, 2020 for post of upazila/urban programme coordinator
- Final results of viva-voce not out even after 23 months
- It's not possible to recruit before finalising list, says BNFE; points to pandemic for delay

However, BNFE could not finalise the list of students yet.

BNFE was supposed to recruit 300 UPCs to ensure effective management of the learning centres. The UPCs are also responsible for maintaining coordination between NGOs and BNFE's district-level offices, according to the project description.

The bureau published a vacancy announcement on June 30, 2019 to recruit the UPCs. Institute of Education and Research (IER) of DU was appointed as the consultant to administer the exam.

Over 24,000 candidates applied for the posts. The written and viva examinations were completed by January 25 last year, but the final results of the viva-voce did not come out even after 23 months.

"When we requested BNFE to publish our results, they told us to go to IER. When we went to IER, authorities said they were appointed just to administer the exams; only BNFE can publish the final results," said a candidate, preferring anonymity fearing reprisal.

Another candidate said one BNFE official informed them to contact the NGOs, as they shall get salaries from them. "This is ridiculous because as UPCs, one of our responsibilities will be to monitor effectiveness of the learning centres run by the NGOs. How can we ensure quality monitoring and supervision if we have to work under the NGO authority?"

Contacted, Prof Abdul Halim, director of IER, said their responsibility was only to administer

the exam to ensure quality and transparency. "We don't know anything about result publication and the project's future plan."

According to the project requirement, BNFE formed five-member committees in every ward of 61 districts. In 2019, these committees were tasked with making the list of eligible students.

By January 2020, a list of 931,000 students was submitted to BNFE.

The bureau has asked committees to further verify the list and submit a verified final list, which has not been completed in the last two years.

Ataur Rahman, BNFE director general, said, "It's not possible for us to recruit UPCs without finalising the list. Because, there might be some places where we may not open learning centres due to unavailability of eligible students."

He gave the pandemic as the reason for delays.

"Once the list is finalised, we shall start the learning centres and recruit the UPCs," he said.

One thing should be clear: once recruited, the UPCs will work with the NGOs. They will not be the employees of BNFE, as the bureau just facilitated the recruitment process to ensure quality and transparency, he added.



Thousands of butterfly enthusiasts flocked to Jahangirnagar University's Zahir Raihan Auditorium to enjoy the eleventh butterfly fair held yesterday. Throughout the day-long fair, visitors, especially children, were seen surrounding the butterfly enclosures made of net and taking pictures of the vibrant insects.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

The silent warrior

Book launched in memory of Masud Sadique Chullu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In remembrance of Masud Sadique Chullu, a brave member of the Crack Platoon who executed valiant guerrilla operations during the Liberation War, the cover of the book "The Silent Warrior: In Memory of Masud Sadique Chullu" was unveiled yesterday.

The book launching ceremony was held at a community centre at Banani Old DOHS in the capital.

The book has been published by Daily Star Books and edited by Yasmeen Sadique, wife of Masud Sadique Chullu, who passed away in 2017 at the age of 72.

Crack Platoon member Golam Dastagir Gazi, while addressing the ceremony as chief guest, said, "That today I'm a "Bir Pratik" is because of Chullu Bhai."

Mahfuz Anam, editor of The



"The Silent Warrior: In Memory of Masud Sadique Chullu" was launched yesterday. The book, edited by Masud Sadique Chullu's wife Yasmeen Sadique, has been published by Daily Star Books.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Daily Star, also took part in the discussion on the book, while Shaheen Anam, Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, moderated the programme.

Taking part in the discussion as special guest, AB Tajul Islam, former state minister for Liberation War

Affairs, said the operation in Hotel Inter-Continental introduced the Liberation War in the international arena.

"This book is written by fellow fighters reminiscing Chullu Bhai. Many unknown avenues of the war will be unveiled if our

fellow fighters start writing such reminiscing books", he said.

During her speech, Chullu's wife Yasmeen Sadique said, "I have assembled the book inch by inch, for which my family members and my husband's comrades helped me. I thank them all. I also thank Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, who wrote the book's preface."

Sanjana Sadique, the couple's daughter, said that her father used to talk a lot but never shared anything about the war with them.

"He did not even talk to journalists on occasions of Independence Day or Victory Day. Liberation was simultaneously an issue of valour and agony for him," she added.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said there are many memoirs written on

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

1,408 buses fined Tk 57.31 lakh for taking extra fares

Despite BRTA drives, practice still rampant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA)'s drive against charging extra bus fares in Dhaka and Chattogram city, many bus operators are still taking higher than the government fixed rate.

Shafiqul Islam, a private-job holder, told The Daily Star yesterday that bus conductors ask for Tk 20 for going to the capital's Farmgate from Mirpur 10, even though the actual fare would be around Tk 15.

"When some passengers protested and asked for BRTA's fare chart, some conductors agreed to take Tk 15. We have to deal with this hassle almost every day," said Shafiqul.

Quoting a conductor, he said owners charge operators high amounts, for which they themselves charge extra, otherwise they would only earn Tk 200 to 300 from the whole day's trips.

According to a press release of BRTA,

the authority fined 1,408 buses a total of Tk 57.31 lakh for charging extra fares in Dhaka and Chattogram city in 30 days till December 8.

Nine mobile courts launched drives in the capital, while two were conducted in Chattogram city.

Among the 1,408 buses, 80 were CNG-run and 1,328 diesel-powered, said Sarwar Alam, director (enforcement) of BRTA.

During the month-long operation, 56 buses were sent to dumping stations for non-payment of fines and not having route permits, he said.

Five bus drivers faced imprisonment due to reckless driving and trying to intercept duties of government officials.

A list of 25 buses that were fined by magistrates thrice or more, due to taking extra fares, was sent to Dhaka Metro Regional Transport Committee for cancelling their route permit and taking legal action.

Female tea workers more vulnerable to violence

Says Selina Hossain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The existing patriarchal social system in the tea gardens keep women away from decision-making activities and make them more vulnerable to violence and discrimination, said litterateur Selina Hossain yesterday.

Men, in particular, must come forward to abolish this culture, she added.

She made the remarks while addressing as chief guest in a dialogue and book launching programme organised by Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) marking "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence" at Brac Learning Centre in Sreemangal upazila of Moulvibazar.

When it comes to violence against the female workers in tea gardens, the level of impunity is higher, mentioned Selina Hossain.

"We need to educate the women in tea gardens and simultaneously be aware of the deprivation and discrimination that we face ourselves," said Jasmine Akhter,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

HISTORIC SITES AT DHAKA UNIVERSITY

Years of neglect erasing embodiments of history



Prayers are still offered at the Musa Khan Jame Mosque, but its ailing state, due to lack of preservation, disappoints history enthusiasts. Fifteen other historic sites on the Dhaka University premises suffer similar conditions. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

ASIFUR RAHMAN and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Amidst the excitement of centenary celebrations diffusing across Dhaka University (DU) campus, a number of university buildings have been adorned with vibrant lights and decorations.

However, despite the colours and festivities, different historic and architectural monuments of the university area are slowly biting the dust.

The recent centenary master-plan of DU recognised 16 important establishments of the university area. But only Curzon Hall and the area surrounding the vice-chancellor's bungalow are among the 16 that were decorated.

Does this lack of decoration for the century-old structures symbolise the negligence that these sites have been facing for years?

The locations and monuments mentioned in the master-plan include Brajendra temple in Shivbari area, Curzon Hall, Dr Muhammad Shahidullah Hall, Faculty of Fine Arts, Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall, Govinda

Chandra Dev Bhavan of Jagannath Hall, Greek Memorial and Twin Hindu Math at Teacher-Student Centre, Gurudwara Nanak Shahi, Central Library Building, Madhur Canteen, Mir Jumla Gate or Dhaka Gate, Musa Khan Jame Mosque, Sir Nawab Salimullah Muslim Hall, VC Bungalow and Central Shaheed Minar.

Although they were mentioned, no provision exists to preserve them.

"We have recognised the structures to preserve them. The decision can be taken later, after consulting state agencies concerned," Prof ASM Maksud Kamal, convener of the master-plan preparation committee, told The Daily Star.

The Brajendra temple, built on three acres of land, stands in the middle of two buildings built for third and fourth-class staffers of the university. Almost nothing is left of the original establishment. The absence of a signboard makes it even harder to find.

The negligence of Dhaka Gate is another widely discussed topic. Taking the boundaries of Mughal Dhaka into account, the gate was rebuilt by Mir Jumla in 1825.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Landless' Aspia to receive land, house

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Barred from joining as a police constable, despite passing the written, viva, and health tests, due to being "landless", Barishal's Aspia Islam is now set to get her own land and house.

"We have instructed Hijla upazila UNO to hand these over to Aspia's family as soon as possible," Barishal district commissioner Md Jasim Uddin Haider told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

"I received the instructions from Prime Minister Office secretary Md Tofazzal Hossain over phone," the DC said. This was done according to the prime minister's wish, said Barishal Range DIG SM Aktaruzzaman.

Earlier on November 17, Aspia passed and placed fifth at the police constable recruitment exam held in Barishal. However, despite passing all necessary tests, and obtaining the final reference, she could not secure the job as police investigations found that she has no "permanent address".

On Wednesday, Aspia visited DIG Aktaruzzaman's office. Although the DIG was sympathetic to her plight, he could not assure her that she would get the job.

On Thursday, the issue went viral on social media, after which it came into the notice of the prime minister.

Talking to this newspaper, Aspia said, "The complications arose after the police mentioned in their investigative report found that I don't have a permanent address, rendering me 'landless'. This has created a legal obstacle to my employment."

"It's my dream to join the police. I hope the higher authorities will consider my applications and help me achieve my dream," she said.



Amidst metro rail construction and the usual gridlock of the city, a private car was seen driving the wrong way near Jatiya Press Club yesterday, and that too right in front of a traffic police officer. This practice, which shows a clear disregard for traffic rules, creates obstruction in the usual flow of traffic, and potentially puts pedestrians in danger.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Ruhul Amin's martyrdom anniversary observed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

The 50th martyrdom anniversary of Bir Shreshtha Mohammad Ruhul Amin was observed yesterday.

On December 10, 1971, only six days before victory, he was killed in a bombing by Pakistan army in Rupsha River, Khulna while fighting in a naval ship.

To honour his contributions, Bir Shreshtha Ruhul Amin Memorial Library and Museum and the local administration jointly arranged a discussion at the museum auditorium in Noakhali's Sonaimuri upazila yesterday.

Ruhul Amin was born on February 1, 1934, at Baghpachra village in Sonaimuri. After March 25, he actively participated in the Liberation War.



50 kilometres for 50 years of independence

Freedom fighter Bimol Pal walks from Haluaghat upazila to Mymensingh city to mark the event



Bimol's (middle) journey started from Haluaghat Shaheed Minar and ended at Mymensingh Circuit House.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

Marking the 50th Victory Day, veteran freedom fighter Bimol Pal walked for 50 kilometres, from Haluaghat upazila to Mymensingh city, yesterday.

Mymensingh was fully liberated from the Pakistan occupation on December 10. Bimol, who is 70 years old, started his journey from Haluaghat Shaheed Minar around 5:00am and reached Mymensingh Circuit House ground around 4:00pm, said Ali Yusuf, a prominent social activist.

Known as "Muktijuddher Golper Feriwal" in Mymensingh, Bimol said he is fortunate, as he was totally fit for the walk, that too at this age.

Members of different voluntary organisations in the city also joined the programme with Bimol. A reception programme was organised at Mymensingh Circuit House to honour the veteran.

Praising Bimol's initiative, Abdur Rob, ex-commander of Mymensingh Zila Muktijuddha Sangsad, said this will inspire the younger generation.

Born to Arabindu Paul and Shuvashini

Paul in Mymensingh city, Bimol was only a first-year college student when he fought in the Liberation War.

Inspired by the mass upsurge in 1969, Bimol joined the war, went to India in May 1970, and returned in July 1971.

After surrendering arms to Syed Nazrul Islam, one of the four national leaders, in March 1972, Bimol returned to tend to his late father's grocery shop in the city's Natun Bazar.

Facing business losses, Bimol, a father of three, later shifted his business to the city's Thanar Ghat and started a tea stall in 1990, which he ran for 20 years. He now assists his two sons in their business in the same area.

Bimol has so far written five books on the war -- "Telikhali Juddho", "Ekattorer Genocide O Pakistan Style", "Rajapahar Juddho in Sherpur", "Chhotoder Muktijuddho O Bangabandhu Golpo", and "Bangabandhu O Mymensingh".

He visits schools in and around Mymensingh to narrate stories of the Liberation War and distributes his books to primary-school students for free.

23 new dengue cases in 24hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 23 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday. Of them, eight are from outside the capital, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the new cases, the total number of dengue rose to 27,893, of which 671 were diagnosed during the current month.

According to the DGHS 101 people have died of dengue in the country this year.

SCCI election today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Election of Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) will be held today.

According to the election board, a total of 22 directors -- 12 from ordinary category, six from associate, three from trade group and one from town association category -- are to be elected by direct votes of the general members for 2022-2023.

A total of 40 candidates are participating in the polls. The elected directors will elect the president, senior vice president and vice president on December 13.

The contesting candidates of ordinary and associate categories declared two panels -- Sylhet Byabsayi Parishad and Sylhet Sammilito Byabsayi Parishad. They declared their election manifesto a few days ago.

The silent

FROM PAGE 3

the Liberation War, but this book stands out from the others for three reasons. "One is the unheard story of those oppressed during the war. There is one interview of Chullu Bhai and a write-up by Shah Mohammad Farid, both of which describe the agony of those tortured during the war.

"Another unique feature is the story behind the bravery described in the book. We know about the heroism of those fighting in the frontline, but not enough about those who were in the background, supporting the freedom fighters through every step of the way," he added.

Describing the third reason as the one that makes the book unique, he said most of those who took part in the war for freedom had a political background.

"But the speciality of Chullu Bhai was that he was non-political since the very beginning. It was the oppression of the Pakistan army that inspired him to join the fight for freedom," said Anam.

Moin Ghani, son-in-law of Masud Sadique Chullu, freedom fighter Ali Ahmed Ziauddin (Bir Protik), Habibul Alam (Bir Protik), Shahidullah Khan Badal, Minu Haque and Rizwan Bin Farouq, cousin of Masud Sadique Chullu also spoke at the ceremony.

Female tea workers

FROM PAGE 3

vice president of Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union (BCSU). Philip Gain, director of SEHD made the welcome speech while Raya Yampolsky, representative (political), High Commission of Canada to Bangladesh, Mitali Datta, vice chairman of Sreemangal upazila, Rambhajan Kairi, executive advisor, (BCSU) attended as special guests at the programme.

20th Death Anniversary



Bakhtiar Ali (Jugnu), Son of Al-Haj Monowar Ali (Ex Director), The City Bank Ltd. Died in a Car crash on 11th December, 2001. All relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to pray for departed soul.

READY FLATS FOR SALE

Ready flats of 2000-3500 sft. in various attractive locations of Gulshan and 2250 sft. in Baridhara Diplomatic Zone are for sale with gas connection and various modern facilities. Contact: **01952300100**

FOR SALE

NPB Rifle Cal. 7x57 MM UK & .32 Astra Spain Pistol with Ammos. Capt. Huda Cont: **01713047789**

In Remembrance

Mohammad Shahidul Alam passed away due to COVID on this day of last year (Innalillahi.....Rajeun). He was from the batch of CSP officers of 1970. Mohammad Shahidul Alam served in different positions of the Government notably as SDO Satkhira (1974-5), DC Bogura (1978-79), DG NGO Affairs Bureau (1991-92), DG of erstwhile Anti-Corruption Bureau (1993), IMED Secretary (2000-1), Education Secretary (2001-3) and PD & DG of BIAM Foundation (1989-2007). His family and friends request all to pray to the Almighty for his salvation and peace in afterlife.

'Cybersecurity risk key challenge of future'

ICMAD confce on 4th industrial revolution held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Experts at a conference yesterday emphasised the importance of cybersecurity to allow us to truly reap the benefits of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

There is a need for concerted and strategic efforts from the government in Bangladesh to face the challenges posed by the fourth industrial revolution through appropriate economic and labour market policies and strategies, they opined.

The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh (ICMAD), Chattogram, organised the daylong conference "The Fourth Industrial Revolution: Challenges and Opportunities for Bangladesh" at a hotel in the port city.

As chief guest, Chattogram Divisional Commissioner Md Kamrul Hasan said, "Bangladesh has already entered into the era of Fourth Industrial Revolution but majority of its success depends on the effective participation of accountants as well as professionals from other sectors."

Former ICMAB president Mohammad Arif said, "The 4IR is paving the way for transformative changes in the way we live and radically disrupting almost every business sector."

"The main benefits of 4IR are higher productivity, improved quality of life, creation of new markets and lowering of barrier to entrepreneurship through a fusion of advances in artificial intelligence,

robotics, the Internet of things, 3-D printing, genetic engineering, quantum computing and other technologies."

"The main challenges of 4IR are cybersecurity risks, inequality, disruption of core industries and ethical issues. We will get the benefit of 4IR if we're able to find ways to mitigate these risks," he added.

Executive Director of South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) Prof Dr Selim Raihan said, "Social sectors, like health and education, have already started seeing new approaches and potentials of benefits of 4IR."

"While there are fears of job losses due to automation, there is also scope for the creation of new jobs driven by the emergence of new production and supply processes of goods and services," he added while presenting a paper on "The Fourth Industrial Revolution: Turning Challenges into Opportunities".

Senior Investment Officer of Asian Development Bank Bidyut Kumar Saha presented his paper on "The Fourth Industrial Revolution: Readiness for Financial Sector".

More than 100 participants from several bank and financial institutes attended the daylong conference while Ahmed Jamal, deputy governor of Bangladesh bank, AKM Delwer Hussain, President of South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA) and Abu Bakar Siddique, president of ICMAB, joined the conference as special guests.

Years of neglect erasing

FROM PAGE 3

Upon visiting, it was seen that trash is scattered on both sides of the monument, and cracks have developed in some parts. One of the main Mughal monuments in the capital has lost its charm due to the wide expanse on both sides of the road, lack of renovation and absence of any familiar plaques.

At the Greek Memorial, 10 tombstones have been found in this corner of TSC, including those of Greek merchants, their wives and religious leaders. Historians deem the structure's preservation essential, since there is only one Greek establishment in the country.

The twin temples lying unprotected next to the swimming pool inside TSC is also a cause of major concern.

Prayers are still offered at Musa Khan Jame Mosque, but its ailing state will disappoint history and architecture enthusiasts. One needs to go through an

unrepaired, and hence, risky staircase to locate the main mosque, which covers an area of almost 2,000 square feet.

Such are the conditions of some of the historical sites on the lands of the 100-year-old university.

Critics claim the entire university area has many more important historic structures other than the ones mentioned in the plan. Among them are several mass graves, 30-35 sculptures, centennial trees, and tombs of eminent persons that are worth preserving.

"It is important for everyone to know about the heritage of these monuments. Many such structures remain unknown due to lack of proper preservation," said Ayesha Begum, honorary professor of Islamic history and culture at DU.

"History is never made without important monuments. Only if these are well preserved, visitors will get to know the history behind them," she added.



ISMAT IMAM

21st Death Anniversary

Dearest **Abba** and **Amma**,

Know that you are missed more than words could ever say. We have felt your absence every day of our lives since you were stolen from us. We fell into a never-ending well of agony after you died.

Abba, your children, and grandchildren miss your twelve am phone call on their birthdays. We miss you saying, 'just called to hear your voice'.

Amma, as much as we miss your absence, we are happy that you and abba are reunited after twenty years.

Asif, Humaira and their 'terrible two' **Adam** are happy together and doing well at their profession. Adam is a spitting image of Asif and reminds us of Asif's mischief when he was his age. Nabila couldn't find a better partner than **Ruben**, amazing husband, dad, and a stellar physician. **Maya** and **Anya**, the two princesses and the beauty queens entertain us regularly. **Maya's** inquisitiveness leaves us feeling hopeless. **Nabila** managing her challenging job and the toddlers successfully.

Through hard work and determination **Saqib** succeeded in landing an amazing new job. **Preanka**, as always, a diligent, driven, and an ambitious young woman.

Alicia is charged up and feeling good about her recent promotion.

Manize is tackling her new job with Water Aid successfully and with determination. She still weeps for you both silently.

Nehal is focusing on his premed degree at VA Tech and continuing his internship on cancer research at Georgetown University.

Your youngest grandson **Numair** is getting ready to head out towards college soon and is a stellar athlete.

Konrad, Shanta and **Sadiq** are in good health and spirit.

We children, **Muktee, Mitu, Munmun** and **Jamil**, are still grieving our loss of you.

A part of us is still lost and wondering if we will ever get it back. We pray that peace is in heaven with you and someday we will join you and be whole again.

We love you more than air.

May Allah SWT give you eternal peace and grant you both permanent place in Jannatul Ferdous. Ameen

Son, Daughters, Daughter-in-law, Son-in-laws, Grand Daughters, Grand Sons and admirers.

NW(E) 13, Road # 55/57, Gulshan-2, Dhaka.

Murarichand College, Sylhet

www.mccollege.edu.bd

Memo No. ৩০-এমসি/বি/২০২১/৬২৮ Date: 09/12/2021

e-Tender Notice 04/2021-2022

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 supply	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1	634819	Supply of AC for Classroom at Murarichand College, Sylhet	27-Dec-2021 02:00pm	27-Dec-2021 03:00pm

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

Professor Md. Saleh Ahmed
Principal
Murarichand College, Sylhet
Phone: 02 996641634
e-mail: mccollegesylhet@gmail.com

GD-2288

Pak Taliban call off ceasefire

Accuse govt of breaching terms

REUTERS, Islamabad

Taliban militants in Pakistan declared an end to a month-long ceasefire arranged with the aid of the Afghan Taliban, accusing the government of breaching terms including a prisoner release agreement and the formation of negotiating committees.

The Pakistani Taliban, or Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), are a separate movement from the Afghan Taliban and have fought for years to overthrow the government in Islamabad and rule with their own brand of Islamic Sharia law.

Last month's ceasefire, which was always set to run until Thursday with the possibility of extending if both parties agreed, was the latest in a series of attempts to broker a settlement to end a conflict that has killed thousands.

The Afghan Taliban's shock overthrow of the Western-backed government in August gave the talks fresh impetus but the TTP accused Islamabad of failing to respect the ceasefire agreement.

It said the government had not released more than 100 prisoners as promised and had not appointed negotiating teams to conduct talks. It also said security forces had carried out raids while the ceasefire was in force.

"Now let the Pakistani people decide whether it is the TTP or the Pakistani army and establishment that is not abiding by the agreements?" the group said in a statement.

"In these circumstances, it is not possible to advance the ceasefire," it said.

Best known in the West for attacking Malala Yousafzai, the schoolgirl who went on to win the Nobel Prize for her work promoting girls' education, the TTP has killed thousands of military personnel and civilians over the years in bombings and suicide attacks.



Protesters carry placards and an effigy of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte during a protest in observance of International Human Rights Day at a university grounds in Manila yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

LONDON COURT RULING

Assange one step closer to extradition to US

REUTERS, London

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange yesterday moved a step closer to facing criminal charges in the United States for one of the biggest ever leaks of classified information after Washington won an appeal over his extradition in an English court.

US authorities accuse Australian-born Assange, 50, of 18 counts relating to WikiLeaks' release of vast troves of confidential US military records and diplomatic cables which they said had put lives in danger.

Assange's supporters cast him as an anti-establishment hero who has been persecuted by the United States for exposing US wrongdoing and double-dealing across the



world from Afghanistan and Iraq to Washington.

At the Royal Courts of Justice in London, the United States won an appeal against a ruling by a London District Judge that Assange should not be extradited because he was likely to commit suicide in a US prison.

Judge Timothy Holroyde said he was satisfied with a package of assurances given by the United States about the conditions of Assange's detention, including a pledge not to hold him in a so-called "ADX" maximum security prison in Colorado and that he could be transferred to Australia to serve his sentence if convicted.

MORE NEWS

Indian defence chief cremated in military funeral

The flag-wrapped coffin of India's defence chief was towed through the streets of New Delhi on a gun carriage draped with flower garlands before he was cremated yesterday.

General Bipin Rawat, 63, was killed along with his wife and 11 military personnel when their helicopter crashed on Wednesday. He and his wife were cremated together on the same pyre, with a 17-gun salute fired as their daughters set it alight. India accorded him full military honours for his funeral, with the gun carriage bearing his remains towed by an armoured vehicle and escorted by lines of security personnel.

Myanmar activists protest against junta with 'silent strike'

Protesters in Myanmar closed businesses and stayed off the streets yesterday in a "silent strike" against rule by the military and its ousting of the Southeast Asian country's democratically elected government in a February coup. Photos published by Myanmar media showed deserted streets and markets in towns across the country, while protesters in the northern city of Shwebo wore black clothes and marched in silence. "We need to send a message to the world about Myanmar's terrible human rights violations," protest leader Khin Sandar told media. "Silence is the loudest shout. We want our rights back. We want revolution. We express sadness for our fallen heroes," she said.



Australia fights bushfires in west, floods in east

Australia battled twin natural disasters yesterday, with bushfires cutting through a picturesque west coast region, while serious flooding and heavy rains lashed the country's east. After weeks of high temperatures, fires flanked the western tourist hotspot of Margaret River -- famed for its fine wine and big surf. No homes have been damaged or injuries reported, but flames have been seen over a wide area, sending smoke billowing high into the sky. Emergency warnings are in effect, and some residents have been told to flee to safety or shelter in place. "Act immediately to survive," the state's Department of Fire and Emergency Services said.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Poor soil, water putting food security at risk: FAO

AGENCIES

Pressure on land and water resources has increased and poses a risk to not only feeding the next generation but the environment and security as well, the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization warned Thursday.

Its latest report on the state of the world's limited land and water resources for food production found that many are already stressed, yet face even more intense use to feed a world population that is expected to grow by over a quarter in the coming three decades.

The agency estimates that on current trends the agrifood sector would need 35 percent more water to produce the additional food needed over the coming decades.

"That could create environmental disasters, increase competition for resources, and fuel

- Agrifood sector would need 35pc more water to produce additional food
- Rapid scaling-up of technology will be needed to boost the efficiency of agrifood sector

new social challenges and conflicts," said the FAO.

The agency's director-general, Qu Dongyu, said current agrifood production is not proving to be sustainable and was putting pressure on land and water use, reports AFP.

"Yet, agrifood systems can play a major role in alleviating these pressures and contributing positively to climate and development goals," he said at the launch of the report, according to a FAO statement.

The agency said a rapid scaling-up of technology will be needed to boost the efficiency of the agrifood sector and put its use of resources on a sustainable footing.

A report of FAO on Tuesday said the land we use to grow our food is contaminated with larger quantities of plastic pollutants.

RUSSIAN TROOP BUILDUP NEAR BORDER

Biden gives Ukraine 'strong' support

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden gave "strong" backing Thursday to Ukraine in its struggle with Russia and urged a diplomatic solution to the conflict in eastern Europe, while promising US help if Moscow attacks.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky issued a statement thanking Biden for his "strong support" in a phone call lasting about an hour and a half.

And the White House said Biden "reaffirmed the United States' unwavering commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity." Biden also placed a separate call to the leaders of Nato members Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, which are all in eastern Europe and deeply concerned by Russian military threats to Ukraine.

They "discussed Russia's destabilizing military buildup along Ukraine's border and the need for a united, ready, and resolute Nato stance for the collective defense of allies," the White House said.

Biden had already spent two hours talking to President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday, warning him that if Russian troops now massed next to Ukraine launch a major attack, Moscow would then face US economic sanctions "like none he's ever seen."

But the White House stressed that Biden, in his calls on Thursday, was also pushing for reinvigorated diplomacy, including the stalled peace talks between Ukraine and Russia.

"Within the next couple days, we're obviously going to continue talking with our European partners, we're going to continue talking with our Russian partners and finding a way forward," a senior administration official told reporters.



DECEMBER 11

1946 - The United Nations General Assembly created the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef) to provide relief to children in war-torn countries.

1994 - Russia sent tanks and troops into Chechnya to end the rebel territory's three-year drive for independence.

1997 - The world's first treaty to reduce greenhouse gases was agreed after marathon talks in Kyoto, Japan.

SOURCE: REUTERS

'Uyghur tribunal' is a lie: China

UN says genocide report 'disturbing'

AGENCIES

The Chinese embassy in London said an unofficial tribunal of lawyers which accused Beijing of genocide against the Uyghurs was nothing more than a political tool of China's enemies which were spreading lies.

The unofficial tribunal of lawyers and campaigners said on Thursday that Chinese President Xi Jinping bore primary responsibility for what it said was genocide, crimes against humanity and torture of Uyghurs and Kazakhs in Xinjiang. An embassy spokesman said it was "nothing but a political tool used by a few anti-China and separatist elements to deceive and mislead the public."

"Anyone with conscience and reason will not be deceived or fooled," the spokesman said.

The tribunal, headed by British lawyer Geoffrey Nice, has no powers of sanction or enforcement, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, the UN yesterday labelled as "deeply disturbing" the report by the London panel of lawyers and rights experts. UN rights office spokesman Rupert Colville said the agency had not verified the findings and did not comment on the conclusion that China had committed genocide through population control measures.

India's Omicron cases mild

REUTERS, New Delhi

India has detected 25 cases of the emergent Omicron variant of the coronavirus and all have shown mild symptoms, the health ministry said yesterday, adding that there was no immediate plan to authorise vaccine boosters.

Vaccine supplies have surged in India in recent months thanks to the Serum Institute of India (SII), which now plans to halve the monthly output of its version of the AstraZeneca vaccine as demand has crashed.

The SII and other Indian drugmakers such as Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, which distributes Russia's Sputnik vaccine, have lobbied the government to approve booster shots in a bid to lift sales.

Senior health official Vinod Kumar Paul told a news briefing that government experts were studying data on boosters but "our emphatic view...is to (first) cover every adult with (just) the primary two doses."

The government has said this target can be achieved by January.

India has not considered authorising booster doses yet as many in the country have been naturally infected and the government believes two vaccine doses offer sufficient protection for now, three informed sources told Reuters late last month.

Around 87% of India's adults, estimated at 939 million people, have received at least one dose of a vaccine and 54% of them have received the full two. Inoculations for those under the age of 18 years have not started.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Hadia Ahmadi, 43, was a teacher in various schools under the previous Afghan government, but she lost her job due to education restrictions for children and job restrictions for women, now she waxes shoes for people along the street in Kabul, Afghanistan. The photo was taken on November 22, 2021 and released yesterday.

MIGRANT TRUCK CRASH

53 killed in Mexico

AFP, Tuxtla Gutierrez

At least 53 migrants crammed into a truck traveling at high speed were killed Thursday in Mexico after the vehicle overturned in the southern state of Chiapas, a major transit point for those trying to reach the United States.

Thousands of people attempt the long and hugely dangerous journey, often seeking a life free of violence and poverty in their home nations in South America.

It is unclear how many people were traveling in the truck but at least 58 were injured, three seriously, according to a preliminary report from the prosecutor's office in Chiapas, bordering Guatemala.

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Re-tender Notice No: 08/2021

E-tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works details in table.

Memo No.	Name of work	Tender ID	Tender document last selling date and time
36.02.014.00.00.056.2021	Construction of pump driver quarter & pump house	626133	20-12-2021, 4.30pm
36.02.014.00.00.059.2021	Installation of Deep Tube-Well	626134	20-12-2021, 4.30pm
36.02.014.00.00.058.2021	Installation of water supply line	626136	20-12-2021, 4.30pm

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no off line/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP system portal (<https://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 as per above table. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Ahmed Jamal Naser Chowdhury
 Project Director
 BSCIC Industrial Estate, Rawjan (1st Revised)

GD-2289

Govts worldwide must stop imprisoning journalists

Attacking the free press is the hallmark of authoritarianism

IT is disconcerting to note that for the sixth year running, the number of journalists imprisoned worldwide has hit a record high, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). It illustrates an alarming trend of governments around the world cracking down on the free flow of information and on professionals whose duty is to keep the public informed. Without an informed public, there can be no democracy—this has been widely acknowledged by all reformers who helped shape modern democracies. That the governments around the world are upholding this idea less and less illustrates a dangerous turn towards authoritarianism.

According to a report published in this daily on December 10, many Asian countries are leading the way when it comes to imprisoning journalists. Among them are countries like China, Myanmar and Vietnam. Press freedom in Bangladesh has also taken a turn for the worse over the years. Bangladesh, which has always performed poorly in the World Press Freedom Index, slipped another notch to be ranked 152 out of 180 countries in this year's ranking.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular, we have seen governments around the world crack down on journalism in the name of protecting people from misinformation. However, as we have repeatedly seen around the globe, the production and distribution of verified information by independent journalists have always been the best antidote to disinformation.

That is why, as recently as October this year, editors of various newspapers in Bangladesh raised concern that free press in Bangladesh was under assault from multiple directions. The lack of institutional protection for journalists, along with the government's refusal to respect the constitutional rights of journalists—and, indeed, all individuals when it comes to free expression—as well as the various international agreements that it is a signatory to, is gravely concerning.

Imprisoning journalists for reporting the news is the hallmark of an authoritarian regime. Yet, we have seen the Digital Security Act (DSA) being used to repeatedly harass journalists in particular. This hostility towards free expression not only threatens independent journalism, but our democracy itself. Hence, we call on our government to reassess many of the laws and mechanisms it has put in place that are stifling freedom of speech and freedom of the press. And on the global front, countries have to start valuing the rights of journalists—and overall of free expression—that their respective constitutions and various international human rights agreements recognise as being eternal, and key to the survival and progress of our civilisation.

Economic recovery cannot afford inefficiency at ports

Customs procedures must be made hassle-free

WE are concerned to learn that the recovery of import-export businesses post Covid-19 lockdowns is being hampered by the slow and expensive pace of work at the Chattogram port. According to Mohammad Ali Khokon, president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), many shipping lines are reluctant to send their vessels to this port due to delays in unloading goods. With businesses finally starting to get back on their feet, demand has risen all around for container ships, but this has unfortunately caused an abnormal rise in the price per container—from the pre-pandemic fee of USD 600 to a staggering USD 6,000. Because of the delays due to port congestion, businesses are also incurring losses in terms of paying demurrage for overstaying and goods not being attended to at the port.

While there have been encouraging trends regarding trade—such as the 6.36 percent rise of garment exports to non-traditional markets in 2020-21 fiscal year, despite the two waves of the pandemic—the economy is still a long way away from fully recovering (at least to the pre-pandemic levels). So, now more than ever, it is important for the customs authorities to buck up and clear out shipments as speedily and efficiently as possible. In the last fiscal year, the Customs House, Chattogram (CHC) itself recorded a 23.23 percent higher year-on-year revenue growth of Tk 51,577 crore—the highest ever in CHC's history. Though the CHC officials say this increase is owing to them improving surveillance to eliminate false declarations, it is undeniable that the increased demand in the energy, power and construction sectors have contributed to the customs house's success as well. It is crucial for the organisation to now carry this momentum forward and perform even better once the current fiscal year is concluded.

As such, we urge the Chattogram port authorities to conduct the unloading, loading, and shipping of goods with as little delay as possible, so that businesses, big or small, need not pay for hefty overstaying fees on top of the already expensive process of importing and exporting goods using shipping containers. The customs department must also make sure not to hold businesses hostage by not completing procedural tasks on time. Losses due to such delays will eventually affect the whole economy, slow down or even negate our recovery, if issues with customs are not resolved soon.

From Disgrace to Grace



BLOWN' IN THE WIND
SHAMSAD MORTUZA

THE recent announcement and endorsement of the resignation of two high-profile figures have rocked the political boat. A mayor and a state minister have given up their offices—or should I say, they have fallen out of grace to fall on their own swords. Historically, "falling on one's sword" implies a tradition of accepting responsibility for a calamity. It dates back to 42BC when Brutus, one of the assassins of Julius Caesar, decided not to run away after his defeat at the Battle of Philippi, but to end his own life. Shakespeare made Brutus say, "Hold then my sword and turn away thy face/While I do run upon it" (*Julius Caesar* V.v). By the same token, one can even argue that the recent resignations involve swords of a sharper sort—such is the reputation of the tongue. In both cases, private loose talk exposed in public domain became the source of disgrace. Since one cannot answer the "why" and "how" of the public availability of such private discourse, it is safe to reflect on their observable implications and ramifications.

The office-bearers were asked to step down once their recorded conversations with objectionable remarks were leaked. They did not resign out of any moral impulsion. One tried to play the "conspiracy" and "put out of context" cards, while the other got ready to phase out to succumb to the political compulsion. They did not assert any high moral ground that the Roman practice of self-immolation would have implied, as they did not own up to their actions. The endorsement of their resignation letters simply shows that these two individuals have burnt their boats, and there is no turning back as they have failed to control their tongues. It was a bit too late by the time they learnt that a little modesty averts disgrace. They were sacrificed to save the parties from public opprobrium, and their inglorious exits were timed and presented in such a way that their political adversaries did not get any opportunity to crow triumph or showcase the government as weak.

Instead, their demitting of office is being used as a tool to inculcate a sense of fear among the potential transgressors. There was a time when voluntary resignations were used to laundry-wash away tainted reputations. But we live in a different time, where everyone is vying for attention, and there are too many "cool" people to fill in the empty space vacated by the mighty hot air. It is unlikely for these zeroes to become heroes all over again. By showing the door to two public officials in the face of charges

transgressors—the ones who violated a legal, moral and ethical code. They are all guilty in the eyes of the law.

They took the life of one man because he articulated his frustration. As a conscientious citizen, Abrar Fahad urged for the upholding of national interest above everything else. The expressed sentiment was interpreted as something that went against the party line. He was rounded up, periodically beaten. Under the influence of alcohol, perhaps. Abrar

respect for women even while working under female leadership. He was not thinking of the discretion required by the position sponsored by the taxpayers. The violent act of the engineering students showed that they were simply acting as automatons to pursue hazing instructed by a party senior, without listening to their inner voices of reason. They were actually not thinking of their parents who sent them to become educated and better human beings. They were not thinking of the taxpayers who were facilitating their studies. The fallen public officials and the cursed students remind us of knowing our place in the grand scheme of things.

Frankly, I could not process the judgment against the 25 meritorious students-turned-criminals; just like I could not process the death of Abrar two years ago. As an educator, father, and a responsible citizen, I feel we have collectively failed our students. Our indifference has allowed the hidden monsters to thrive and prowl. Sometimes, they are posing as intriguing land grabbers, perverted predators, or violent Frankensteins.

I don't want to dampen the spirit of our golden jubilee Victory Day with such pessimism. I was reading the story of a young girl from Brahmanbaria named Shova, whose mother works as a domestic aide. Shova lost her father when she was in her mother's womb. Her mother was at the mercy of her brother for some time. The mother and the daughter were thrown out of the house in the middle of rain one night once the mother sold some eggs from the chicken coop to buy a dress for her daughter. She was thrown out of a household as the employer refused to feed two mouths for the work of one. That little girl got scholarships, tutored others for a monthly salary of Tk 100 to eventually pass her school and intermediate exams. She has finally found a place at Buet.

My eyes are welling up as I write her story. I am sure those 25 students have all been special with their own stories. Right now, they are nothing but news items. They join the list of viral stories. But to pay respect to our freedom fighters, we must find *shova* (grace) in whatever we do. We need to leave all our disgraces behind to move forward to embrace the radiance of the golden Bengal that was pursued by Bangabandhu, the father of the nation.

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



When one is operating under the illusion of invincibility, it becomes all too easy to forget how precarious one's position of power can become.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

of impropriety and conflict of interest, the government has actually gained political capital.

These timely departures came at a time when a mood of impunity was growing. These punishments can be used as a stern signal for those who constantly fail to control their tongues. A similar exemplary punishment is evident in the landmark judgment in which 25 students of the country's premier technical university were sentenced for the murder of one of their fellow students. Twenty students were given the death penalty, and the remaining five life imprisonment. In essence, both are capital punishments as life without parole is nothing but an extended death sentence.

Social media is rife with mixed responses as the punishment of so many bright, young students is unprecedented. On the other hand, they were all party to a crime that resulted in the death of an equally bright young man. The punishment has been given to

was killed on October 7, 2019. Who do we blame? The 25 men who had been identified as the shadowy figures captured in the night vision of Buet's CCTV footage? The system that allowed people to act more Catholic than the Pope? What does one get out of such excess?

I was reading an article by the youngest daughter of Bangabandhu. After the death of his mother, it was one of the would-be murderers and perpetrators of the August 15 carnage who cried the most. The public show of ideals does not mean anything unless you internalise the spirit of freedom and humanity. The candid remarks of the former Gazipur mayor showed that, deep down, he never respected the ideology of Bangabandhu which he was publicly parading. He was not thinking of the reputation of the party and the love of his constituents that gave him his public stature and personal fame.

The obscene remarks of the disgraced state minister showed that he had no

To save our planet, we need to stop living unsustainably



THE climate crisis facing us today is the combination of endless needs, wants, indecisions, arguments, and the lack of acceptance rising out of selfishness. We are addicted to processes that will eventually kill most of mankind and irrevocably damage our planet. And we have very little time to either phase this self-destructive behaviour out, or else trigger a self-perpetuating cycle of climate change resulting in death, destitution, starvation, forced migration and unimaginable disasters for most of life on Earth.

to go by, COP26 was never likely to "rewrite our story."

Walking down the streets of Glasgow to reach the conference centre, there seemed to be two COPs going on simultaneously—one inside and one outside. Outside, there were demonstrations and pleas for understanding, solidarity, equity, climate justice and action to keep the planet liveable. There were cries for those with power to exercise a sense of responsibility preceding self-interest and self-protection. Inside were two weeks of "intense negotiations." But negotiations on what? On whether today's development is more important than the future of this planet? On whether we need to phase out, or if phasing down will do for now? Because if we phase out, then what will happen to the 3.6 million Indians who are directly

in alternate sectors, and develop alternate technologies. Divestment from fossil fuels needs to be accompanied by investment in green technologies.

At the same time, climate-impacted economies need funds to adapt to climatic changes that are already at play, and which will continue even if we stop emitting greenhouse gases (GHGs) right away. Developing countries estimated that their need for climate financing would total about USD 1.3 trillion per year until 2030. This was left out of the Glasgow Climate Pact. Developed countries committed only to coughing up USD 100 billion more quickly, noting "with deep regret" that they had failed to give it by 2020, as previously promised.

Developed countries have refused to take responsibility for loss and damage that they have caused through their

agreed to the need for finance, technology transfer and capacity-building to support adaptation. They agreed to protect nature and biodiversity, and they managed to get non-CO2 emissions such as methane into the conversation.

However, the bottom line is that countries have not planned for significant emission cuts in the next 10 years, despite net zero pledges and acceptance of the science. The Climate Action Tracker shows that if all the COP26 commitments are met, we're still headed for a global temperature rise of 2.4 degrees Celsius, which will be catastrophic (instead of 2.8 degrees Celsius without the pact, which would have been apocalyptic).

Of course, having this conference itself is a success. In fact, given COP's history of ineffective decisions and broken promises, every concession we win is a plus point. But when the stakes are high as saving humankind, anything short of that is a failure.

We asked Dr Atiq Rahman, who was instrumental in forming Bangladesh's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), whether developed countries are taking responsibility for their share of the damage caused by global warming. "No, absolutely not," he said. "Are rich people in Bangladesh taking responsibility for poor people here?"

Developed countries and corporations will not easily change their ways and pour all their money into solving future problems—especially when the status quo benefits them greatly. Lobbyists will make vast amounts of money trying to ensure that lucrative corporations don't lose business. In the same vein, political leaders will try not to lose popular support in their constituencies.

And so, the negotiations turn to the nitty-gritty details about who wins, who loses, who gets to keep their profits, and who gets to develop and how much. Today's development programmes, political agenda, the weighing of power and money against the cost of survival of life on this planet—this was not the intended agenda; but it feels like these considerations have shaped the outcome.

Real change requires real sacrifices. The same goes for you and I. Are we prepared to stop using plastics tomorrow, limit internet use, stop overconsumption? Are we prepared to forego our comforts today for a brighter tomorrow? We are addicted to unsustainable behaviour. To stop will hurt.

But if we change, we can still have our beautiful world. A world which will provide generously for our needs, see more equity not only among human beings, but also in sharing our planet with all those beings who inhabit it.

Runa Khan is the founder and executive director of Friendship, a social purpose organisation.



While leaders wrangled over the wording on their commitments at COP26, protesters outside decried what they saw as a lack of sincere action.

PHOTO: COURTESY

The year 2020 ended with the postponement of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) due to Covid-19. One more year passed in which nations were not held accountable and gave no results to help abate the climate crisis.

When COP26 eventually happened this year, David Attenborough called it an opportunity to "turn this tragedy into a triumph."

"We are the greatest problem solvers to have ever existed on Earth," he pointed out. "We know how to stop the number rising and put it in reverse."

Opportunity is there. But if the track record of the past 25 COPs was anything

or indirectly employed in coal mining or power sectors? India currently gets at least 70 percent of its energy from non-renewables. Where will this energy come from? India's energy requirement is projected to grow more than any other nation in the world.

Then there are manufacturing processes like steel and cement still dependent on the use of coal—alternate technologies are yet to be developed. India's steel and cement production is set to triple by 2050.

This kind of growth is seen by economists as necessary for progress. If large, developing countries stop using coal, they will need enormous funds to ensure that their economies can adapt, create jobs

emissions thus far, which impact mostly small island nations and developing countries like Bangladesh. Rich countries don't want to take liability for this—capitulation now could be a basis to hold them liable for years to come.

There are a few small victories in the pact. Despite US opposition, references to the rapidly depleting carbon budget stayed in. There is acknowledgement of how woefully inadequate the contribution of developed countries to climate funding is, and calls for urgent scale-up. Developed countries agreed to double their pay-outs. The conversation on loss and damage was given space, but there are no commitments on this subject. They

Only radical kindness can drive true reform



RUBAIYA AHMAD

THIS was nearly a decade ago, when we set up Obhoyaronno, the country's first animal welfare organisation with a mission to end dog culling in Bangladesh. We were young and innocent, with unrealistic hope in our hearts and a very clear line of demarcation between good and evil. It was us vs them. "Us" were the animal lovers, who bore kindness in our hearts and would set the world straight. And

little boy's bald head. Some wounds were old and scabbed over, while others were more recent, oozing pus. When I asked who did this to him, he said that it was his stepfather, who had been using the little boy's head as an ashtray for years. The boy couldn't stand up to his stepfather, so he took it out on the puppy. I will never forget the eyes of that little boy. They were dead, reflecting no emotion whatsoever.

The first ever criminal case we ever filed from Obhoyaronno was in 2011, against a group of young men in Rampura who had beaten a dog to death. This was way before the new Animal Welfare Act was passed in 2019; the punishment for the said crime, according to the now-defunct Cruelty to Animals Act, 1920, was a Tk 100 fine and up to three months' imprisonment (under the new law, it's six-month imprisonment and a Tk 50,000 fine).

However, it was unprecedented to arrest anyone for animal cruelty—especially if it's an animal of no economic value, such as a dog—let alone convict him. I had pulled all my strings to have those boys arrested. The news was published in local as well as international media. I felt a huge sense of achievement on the day of our first hearing. This is also when I met those boys for the first time. Three young men, not looking any more lethal than the boys who work at Obhoyaronno. They couldn't understand why they were in handcuffs for something they had been doing all their lives and were applauded for. If sent to jail, these boys would have surely been beaten and brutalised, and come out as hardened criminals. I explored ways for them to mandatorily volunteer at Obhoyaronno, but there was no such system in place. We ended up dropping the case.

We stopped filing criminal charges after that and decided to focus more on policy and legislative reform for the following reasons. First, punishment doesn't work—it never has, it never will. We seek revenge when we seek punishment, and revenge never leads to reform. There is something sinister about rejoicing at someone else's pain and suffering, even if it's your enemy, and a state that doesn't look

radical a concept.

Secondly, our legal system is broken, corrupt, and can be manipulated by anyone with the right connections. I used my connections to have those boys arrested. I could have bribed the system to keep them in jail without any proper legal proceedings, and no one would question me. I would have also justified it thinking they deserved it.

On top of that, the arrest was

cats, but not so much for the millions of cows, goats, chickens, and fish we unnecessarily kill every day. Selective compassion ends up teaching us no compassion.

We haven't done our part in creating a more compassionate society. These kids fail us because we failed them. We discontinued our humane education programme at Obhoyaronno because it took too much time and money. I knew better. I saw what education could do, but resources were always limited, and no one wanted to invest in something as intangible as compassion. After all, you cannot quantify the impact of compassion on a spreadsheet, and those who need it the most don't matter.

Finally, punishing powerless people is a cop-out. We convince ourselves that we have done our part, because the real job is much harder and requires sacrifices that you and I aren't willing to make. The real culprits will continue to kill or dislocate or maim animals systemically to avoid responsibilities, or gain popularity, and we will continue to applaud them.

How about dismantling our own faulty moral compass and starting afresh with nothing but compassion in our hearts? How about remembering that most of us, despite our education and upbringing, are capable of causing serious harm to others when we feel scared or threatened? How about empathising not only with the victim, but also with the offender, who is so broken that they can no longer feel empathy? This society is begging for some radical changes. How about we start being radically kind?

Rubaiya Ahmad is the founder and chairman of Obhoyaronno - Bangladesh Animal Welfare Foundation.



A radical change has to happen within us to realise and internalise that all life forms have equal value.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

to rehabilitate people validates as well as encourages this barbaric and regressive behaviour. The understanding of human rights in this country is so poor that it is accepted that prisoners will be treated poorly under police custody. Anything less than brutality is not acceptable, and rehabilitation is too

possible because those boys were from lower-middle-class families. I knew rich boys who kept animals locked up in the garages of their palatial homes. I never went after them. I could no longer ignore my own glaring hypocrisy. I also became aware of how I was more eager to speak against cruelty to dogs and

Punishing powerless people is a cop-out. We convince ourselves that we have done our part, because the real job is much harder and requires sacrifices that you and I aren't willing to make.

"them" were the animal abusers, who needed to be weeded out.

One day, I came to know about a severely wounded puppy in a local slum and went running to rescue him. A young "man" had allegedly put out cigarettes on the puppy and left him with multiple burn wounds, which got infected. The puppy was barely alive. I was boiling inside and wanted to do the same to the perpetrator.

When I saw the perpetrator, my heart sank. It was a young boy, no older than my five-year-old nephew. I saw that someone was way ahead of me and had already left similar burn wounds on the

Thinking big beyond the LDC graduation



MOHAMMAD ZAMAN

BANGLADESH is a surprising success story. Emerging out of war and destruction in 1971, few in the world had any optimism about the country's future. Today, Bangladesh is a rising economic power, as evident from its

graduation from the least developed country (LDC) category to the developing country group. For Bangladesh, it's like a rebirth, as we see the consistent growth and success stories on many fronts. This graduation is another testament and a major milestone in the development journey of the country.

Back in 2018, Bangladesh met all three United Nations (UN) eligibility criteria—per capita gross national income (GNI), human asset index (HAI), and economic vulnerability index (EVI)—for graduation. Indeed, the country achieved higher than the required scores in GNI—USD 1,272 (minimum requirement is USD 1,230)—HAI—72.8 (minimum requirement is 68) and EVI—25 (requirement is 32 or below). Thus, Bangladesh's performance was well and above the thresholds in all three areas. But due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the normal three-year period for transition was extended to five years. The graduation will now formally take place in 2026. Bangladesh hopes to be in the upper middle income countries (UMIC) group in 2031, and, finally, achieve the developed country status in 2041.

Against this backdrop, there is a new hope in the country for a much better and brighter future. However, there are some absurd concerns among many due to the loss of access to cheaper lending money for development assistance, loss of duty-free and quota-free export, and a more competitive export market in the post-graduation period. This has reportedly made many "worried" in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector—particularly because of the loss of the generalised system of preferences (GSP) for Bangladeshi products. It is expected that the five-year transition period to graduation will provide the government

and other stakeholders enough time to deal with the upcoming challenges—including capacity-building and general preparedness.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over much of the economic development and progress achieved in the country over the last 13 years. As a result, her government is largely credited for taking the country to this new height. The prime minister, at a reception in her honour, gave a clapback to the

is moving forward, with an estimated per capita income of more than USD 2,000 in 2021—more than the per capita income in India and Pakistan. In a recent statement at parliament, the prime minister reiterated her promise to make Bangladesh a developing country. "We will have to take many steps to move Bangladesh forward; we are also taking preparations (to that end)," she added.

Since Bangladesh continues to grow, there

should be a robust and effective Covid-19 recovery plan and strategies for healthcare services to ensure protection against the pandemic in order keep the wheels of the economy running. The pandemic is not over yet, and can potentially turn into a major health crisis, with new deadly variants surfacing every other month. The public healthcare system needs special attention to ensure better assessment, tracing, and medical

poverty reduction have already been lost due to the pandemic and the consequent loss of income opportunities by the poor. Moving forward, the economic recovery plan must be based on human development measures, such as re-training, education, health, poverty reduction, food security, and gender equity and empowerment. The huge global shifts require the right skills, new perspectives, and understanding to navigate the uncertain future.

Third, climate change, internal displacement, and migration will turn out to be major obstacles to development for Bangladesh. According to the updated Groundswell report of the World Bank, published in September 2021, the South Asia region may see 40 million internal climate migrants by 2050; of them, more than one-third are likely to be in Bangladesh. Despite the progress made so far with climate adaptation in the country, the issue of internal climate migrants or displaced people has not been adequately addressed. In this context, the protracted Rohingya crisis has placed a strain on the economy as well as created various socioeconomic, environmental and security issues for Bangladesh that demand urgent solutions from the international community.

Finally, steps should be taken to make the cherished transition more sustainable in the post-LDC period by strengthening democratic institutions, human rights, justice and equity, striking out corruptions at all levels, including public services, and establishing the rule of law in the country against any nepotism and practices of political protection. There is also a need for exposing misinformation and, at the same time, better communication with people for engaged citizenship.

Bangladesh has truly come of age in its 50 years as a development model. The LDC graduation presents many opportunities to aggressively brand the country globally. If this can be done, Bangladesh can easily become a member of the developed country group by 2041. We are all for it.

Dr Mohammad Zaman is an international development specialist and an advisory professor at the National Research Centre for Resettlement of Hohai University in Nanjing, China.



FILE PHOTO: AFP

Now is the time to prepare Bangladesh for the post-LDC graduation period.

"bottomless basket" storytellers. She credited, with her usual humility, the hard working people of Bangladesh for the country's graduation to the developing country group. Under her leadership, Bangladesh's GDP tripled from USD 103.5 billion in FY2008-09 to USD330.2 billion in FY2019-20. Even during the pandemic, the expected growth rate did not fall as much as feared. The economy

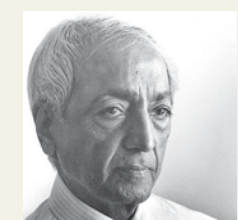
are good reasons for thinking big and beyond the graduation as an overriding message for all—the elected leaders, politicians, bureaucrats, policymakers, business owners, investors, educators, and other partners in development—to recognise and pursue some specific development objectives in order to navigate the uncertain future ahead.

For Bangladesh, the first and foremost goal

treatment to rebuild resilience against the pandemic.

Second, the pandemic has once again widened the gaps between the poor and the rich in terms of wealth and income inequality. The growing disparity and inequality will further marginalise the poor and the most vulnerable groups in the country. Some of the gains achieved over the years with regard to

QUOTABLE Quote

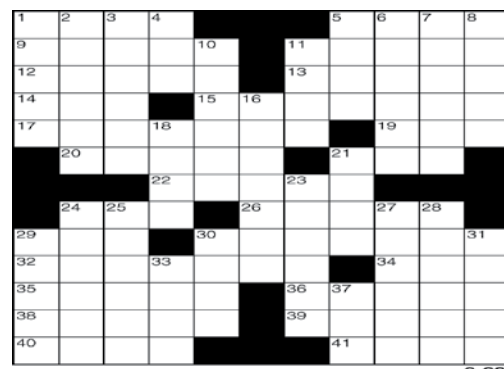


JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI (1895 - 1986) Indian philosopher

There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ACROSS | 32 Come down with something | bill |
| 1 Urban pollution | 34 Opponent | 8 Computer key |
| 5 Running pros | 35 Blockhead | 10 Clears, as a windshield |
| 9 Like lions | 36 Steer clear of | 11 Sea dog |
| 11 Singer McClachlan | 38 Tears apart | 16 Of the southern hemisphere |
| 12 Cousin's dad | 39 Car sticker | 18 Bank offering |
| 13 Suspect's story | 40 Border | 21 Cereal holder |
| 14 Narrow inlet | 41 Turner and Danson | 23 Wheelled |
| 15 Diminish | | 24 Bartered |
| 17 Undesirable consequences | DOWN | 25 Under the weather |
| 19 Rented out | 1 Blue character | 27 Wipe out |
| 20 Tramps | 2 Crazes | 28 Gizmo |
| 21 Garden visitor | 3 Available for emergencies | 29 Burning |
| 22 Texas player | 4 Hair goo | 30 Belongs |
| 24 Sandy color | 5 Become tiresome | 31 Staggers |
| 26 Used oars | 6 Maryland player | 33 Ore source |
| 29 "Exodus" hero | 7 Item on a hospital | 37 Old hand |
| 30 Get taken in by | | |



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

POSSUM CAST
EL PASO ALOE
PEACE OF MIND
STEP RUMS
ROAD JOSEPH
ELM PARTEA
DIPPER HALL
DARN DOLL
PIECE OF CAKE
URGE READING
BAGS ERRAND

BETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES

by Kirkman & Scott



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

Black Zang's "Bangla Hype" lives up to the hype

Black Zang's new track "Bangla Hype" premiered online on their official YouTube channel and Facebook page, recently. Composed, mixed and mastered by Shahan A H M, the song highlights the becoming of a rapper, and how rappers have become mainstream in recent years.



From the music video of 'Bangla Hype'.

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

The track was released under the banner of Bangla Hype Entertainment. "The recent years have been amazing, as both the local and international audience has shown us rappers a lot of love. This inspired us to create this

number, celebrating our journey and success,' shares Black Zang.

The video, echoing the essence of the Bangladesh city culture, is directed by Nasimul Mursalin Shakkar. Black Zang is the executive creative director of the production, while the animation and VFX is done by Muhammad Faayaz Nur.

Upon release, the track managed to mark a spot for four weeks on BBC Asian network's playlist has been the track of the week on Nadia Ali's show this week.

"Being able to echo with the international audience while they are urged to taste the culture of Dhaka has been the most rewarding part of my journey," shares Black Zang. "The support from my team and the underground rappers from Bangladesh has only made this piece special."

The track garnered praises upon release and has been very well-accepted by Black Zang fans. "For years we have struggled to establish this genre but with the recent changes in trend, it finally feels like this is the prime time for Bangla Hype," he concludes.

FAME IS A BLESSING IN LIFE

-Faria Shahrin

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Prominent actress and model Faria Shahrin started out in showbiz with Lux Channel i Superstar, before making her way in the field of television. She also starred in the film, "Aakash Koto Dure Naame". We caught up with the multi-faceted artiste to learn more about her work.

What can you tell us about your upcoming projects?

I have been out of the limelight for a while, but as of now, I am busy with several projects, including a one-hour tele-fiction with Chanchal Chowdhury. I have also recently worked with director Rakesh Basu on a tele-fiction titled "Hit Man".

How would you describe Chanchal Chowdhury as a co-star?

Working with an actor of his stature has been an honour. As a co-star, he is immensely helpful and co-operative; he makes everyone feel very comfortable on the sets. There is not an ounce of arrogance in him.

What kind of tele-fictions are you usually drawn to?

Although I am offered love stories the most, I do not wish to work on them right now. I want to play roles that people will remember me by. I would love to work on stories that are a little out-of-the-box, especially in the thriller genre. I want to play characters, for which there will be scope to showcase my acting range. Bangladeshi artistes are doing quite well on web platforms now. I would love to work on projects for OTT platforms.

As an experienced actress and model, how do you perceive fame?

I perceive fame as a blessing in my life, as not everyone has the good luck of earning fame. I enjoy every aspect of being famous.

Translated by Shababa Iqbal



PHOTO: COLLECTED

NURUL ALAM ATIQUE opens up about 'Lal Moroger Jhuti'

PRİYANKA CHOWDHURY

After six years of gestation since it received a government grant, "Lal Moroger Jhuti" (Call of the Red-Rooster), produced by Pandulipi Karkhana, was released yesterday.

Throughout the past two decades, director Nurul Alam Atique has created a unique style of storytelling, involving intimate human concepts. "Lal Moroger Jhuti" presents a narrative that explores the collective memory of the masses during 1971. Atique shares his thoughts on his second feature film with The Daily Star.

The director was born in 1971. His memory of that time is thus shaped by stories shared by his mother and aunts. He vaguely recalls them talking about hiding at the sound of the siren. Saidpur Airfield was a witness to forced labour, genocide, and later, the surrender of the Pakistani Army on December 18, 1971, and thus, remains crucial to history.

Atique's childhood memory of the runway, intertwined with the experiences of Col. (Retd.) Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir Bir Protik and Freedom fighter Nasiruddin Yousuff Bachchu, formed the narrative of the film. "Memories are like fading bromides of photographs. Restoring the collective memories and re-imagining the historical events is important to me. 1971 is a unique and significant event in our lives. I would not claim the film to be a historical document, but it is a reference," he says.

He emphasises on the numerous untold accounts of history, especially from people of the lower class. The film is set in a majorly hostile Bihari space, with allies, opponents, and some characters of the then East and West Pakistan.

The radio played an important source of information and aspiration during the Liberation War. Atique carefully used this space and the energy transmitting gadget in the film. "For the imprisoned community who were losing hope, radio was the only lifeline. From an intention point, this film is also a tribute to the unsung heroes of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra," he adds.

The black and white render and sound design of the film create a tunnel for time travel for the audience. Award-winning sound designer, Sukanta Majumder, created the soundscape of the film. "I intended to explore the psyche of the characters.



PHOTO: STAR

Apart from creating the time difference, black and white also helps to highlight the expressions of the characters. Sukanta's compassion for this project is unparalleled," Atique shares.

"It was while working with Tareque bhai (Tareque Masud) during the distribution of "Muktir Gaan" and later in "Muktir Kotha" that I could explore people of the grassroots level, who fought back without having any expectations. I wished to connect those expressions in my work."

With visuals, sonar conundrums, and dialogues, "Lal Moroger Jhuti" has shaped up to be not just a reimagining of history, but also an avenue for the audience to rethink.

Sara Ali Khan promises to make Sharmila Tagore proud

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Bollywood star Sara Ali Khan promised to make her grandmother Sharmila Tagore always proud.

On Tagore's 77th birthday on December 8, Sara shared on social media, "Happiest Birthday Badi Amma. I love you so much. Thank you for always being here for us and being a constant pillar of support." "Inshallah I hope that I can always make you proud," she added.

The endearing post garnered thousands of heart reacts within no time. On the work front, Sara will next be seen in "Atrangi Re", also starring Akshay Kumar and Dhanush. The film will be released on December 24.



Sara Ali Khan

What makes 'Money Heist' a riveting show?

SHANIZ CHOWDHURY

At the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, one Netflix show that ballooned to popularity was "Money Heist". Also known as "La Casa De Papel" in Spanish, it is about a bunch of misfits who are recruited by The Professor, who intends to shape them into shrewd criminals. Despite everything being planned meticulously, multiple things go haywire, and test their ability to ideate their escape under pressure. The series finale was released on Netflix recently, to much anticipation.



From the series finale of 'Money Heist'

In case you are wondering why you should continue or start watching "Money Heist", here are five reasons to convince you.

CHARISMATIC CHARACTERS

Every single character, starting from the well-trained criminals to the dedicated police officers, has their own flaws. They let their emotions rule over logic, which leads to subliminal plot twists. They are prone to making mercurial decisions, which set up the foundation for nail-biting scenes. One minute, they are on a serious quest for power, and will not fidget to point the gun at each other and the next, they confess their undying love and become ready to sacrifice themselves for their fellow criminals.

BRILLIANT WRITING

The show is written in such a remarkable way that during any episode, you will never know for sure whose side you want to be on. Perhaps, the universally hated character is Arturito, the director of The Royal Mint of Spain. Other than him, every other character falls into the trap of doing despicable things, which constantly shifts their position in the moral alignment system. It always makes you question whether or not they are going to be successful in carrying out the heist.

CONTINUITY OF STORYLINE

Like any other addictive telenovelas, "Money Heist" takes

the plunge by killing off several characters. In Season 5, Volume 1, the death of one character raised important questions about the narrative, as it was their spirit and perspective, through which the audience were able to embark on this epic journey. However, it is exciting to watch how the story continues.

LONG-AWAITED RESOLUTIONS

With the series coming to an end, there were inevitable scenes where characters got their closure, whether it be for love stories or rivalries. The relationship between The Professor and Raquel ends on a sweet note. There is more information on Berlin's heart-rending love story, and a revelation of who takes over The Professor's missions in his absence.

FITTING FINALE

Although the show's popularity has also been its downfall, it still remains faithful to its raison d'être, which is a crime drama about exceptionally clever criminals. If you have made it all the way through till Season 4, you might as well bite the bullet and finish the series. Season 5 answers several questions that may have crossed your mind, the main one being why The Professor does what he does.

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



I was testing digital security, says state minister after his obscene tirade leaked

LEAKY BLINDER

Following an uproar about how a person in government could say the vilest things known to man in a phone recording, Murad Ghapla, the former state minister for monitoring free speech, has said that he only said those things as part of a monitoring exercise.

Speaking in a phone interview with Star Satireday following his arrival in Canada, Ghapla -- who resigned following the prime minister's directive -- said as a junior minister in the Chapasthan government it was his job to go there.

When asked if by "go there" he meant going to Canada after setting off a scandal in his home country, Ghapla laughed.

"Of course not, don't be stupid. If I wanted to say Canada I would have said 'come here', not 'go there'. By the way, where are you? You've gotta come here. I will send the mounties if you don't come here. Who's with you? Is she with you?"

Confused, this reporter asked what he meant by asking him to go there.

"Yes, you see, 'go there'. I went there that day. Went to the place where people say disgusting things. Anyway as I was saying, it is (sic) my job to see if disgusting things make it through to the public. So what I said to Kemon on the phone was just an exercise."

For the record, Ghapla called a male actor from a five-star hotel in Chapasthan and verbally sexually abused a female actor who was with him, threatening to rape her and calling her colourful names.

"You see, the digital security of our country is very important. It is imperative that we have a sense of decency among the youth. I heard that many youths in our country were talking in this manner, which only leads to acting these words out."

"I acted in the best interest. I wanted to see how long it takes for such vile things to leak. You never know, it could leak from the

front, or from the back. You never know. Apparently our digital security is pretty good because it took around two years to leak.

"Now, the other thing I have learnt is that videos on social media are harder to keep quiet, but I thought that would not have much of an impact because I was abusing the opposition. In fact, I only said all those things about the opposition leaders because, as a state minister, I knew the two-year-old conversation was about to leak and I needed the brownie points," Ghapla slurred over the phone.

He said the real villain of this whole saga was the person who leaked the audio in the first place. "That person has actually hurt our digital security."

Asked whether he was in the right state of mind when talking to the actors two years ago, he said, "Of course, and that is why I am in Canada now. I need to exercise that state of mind to keep serving my country longer."

IT'S JUST A "TRIAL & ERROR" PROCESS. YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DEALING WITH.



Murad Takla no more?

SHOCKED CORRESPONDENT

Following the prime minister's order to Murad Hassan to step down from his post as state minister for information and broadcasting, many people of the country mistakenly abandoned a rich cultural heritage.

For two days following Murad's ouster, netizens were shocked to see commenters on Facebook posts saying, "Nice lagche apu, chokh e pani chole ashche (looking nice sister, brings tears to my eyes)".

"Where is nyc lagca api? Where is it??" asked a Murad Takla enthusiast in despair after seeing the state of affairs.

Star Satireday did some digging and found that people had mistaken Murad Hassan's cancelling for the cancellation of the Murad Takla subculture, by which Bangla can be written in English the way it was meant to be.

When the despairing commenter was

People had mistaken Murad Hassan's cancelling for the cancellation of the Murad Takla subculture, by which Bangla can be written in English the way it was meant to be.

told that all was okay, he said, "Tanc ioo bae, akon ape dar daka aagar moto comment corta parbo (Thank you bhai, now I can comment when I see sisters, like I did before)."

Lying is the new position of strength: CRICKET CAPTAIN

The captain of the national team has set off a new trend in the country after photos of him turning turtle in a Test match is being replicated on social media with the hashtag "Lying is the new position of strength".

UNSPORTING REPORTER

The Bobcats lost the Test match, even though it rained more than two days out of five in Merepoor.

"How can you score runs if you defend? It is shocking that you have to ask this," the captain, whose name really does not matter, said. "It is very difficult to play defensively on this wicket. Actually, it's very difficult to play."

Even though they had to keep 20 wickets intact for less than two days, most of the Bobcats got out trying to play aggressive shots. On the second of the two days, they almost saved the match when they played some defensive cricket mixed in with judicious aggression, but the captain insisted that they lost because the team played too defensively.

On the fourth day, the captain was out while trying to take a single defensively, and fell over trying to complete the run, which resulted in a priceless photograph.

That was the photo that set off the trend and the hashtag. When this reporter caught up with a man lying down on the street and taking a selfie, he asked the man what the hashtag meant: whether the "lying" meant being untruthful or just lying down.

"Does it matter? The captain is doing it, it must be worth something," the man said and took the picture.



#lyingisthenewpositionofstrength.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

POETRY

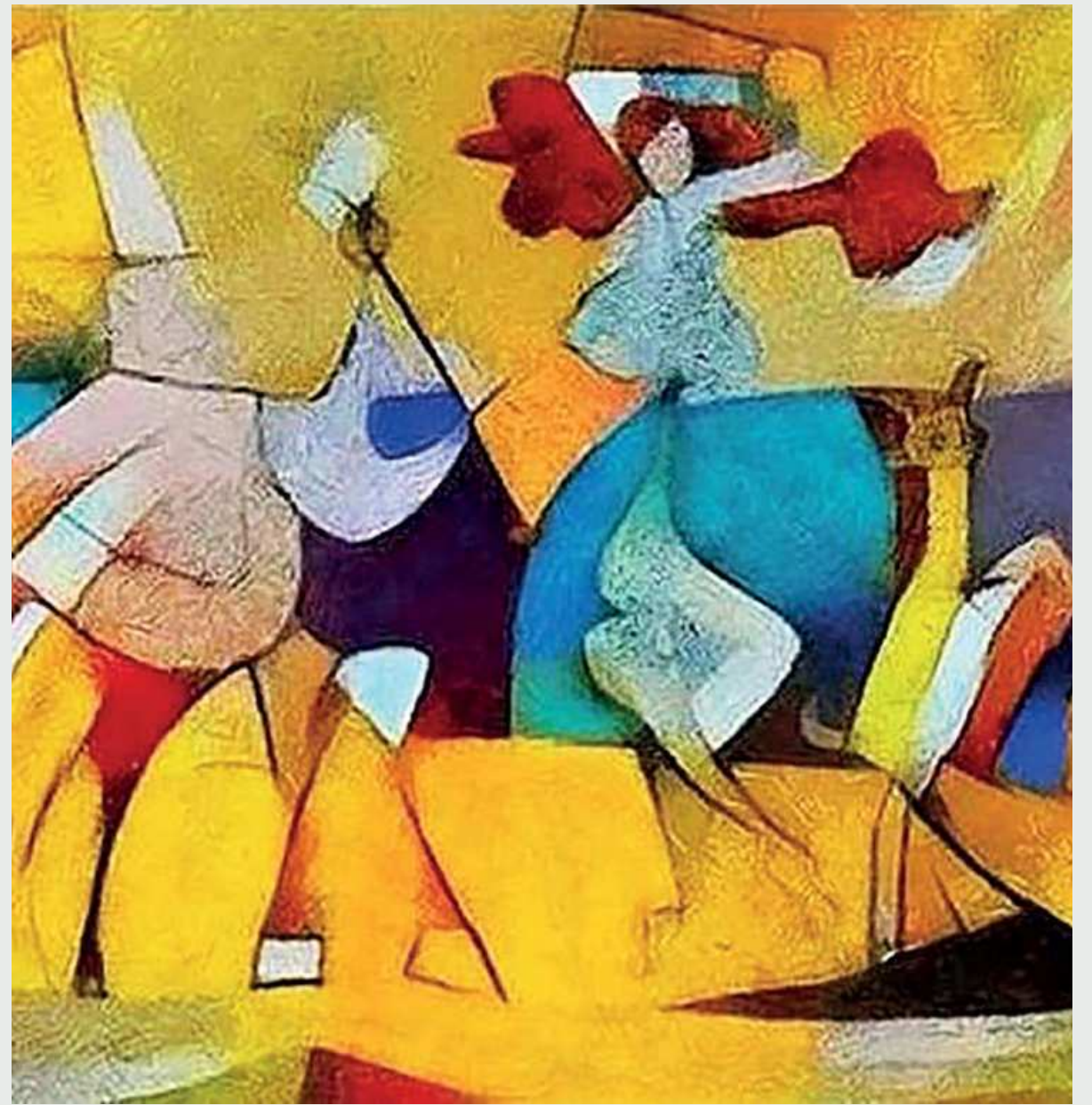
Disembodied

SUDEEP SEN

1.
My body carved from abandoned bricks of a ruined temple,
shards of an old mosque,
from slate-remnants of a medieval church apse,
from soil tilled by my ancestors.
My bones don't fit together correctly
should —
the searing ultra-violet light from Aurora Borealis
orientation —
magnetic pulses prove potent.
My flesh sculpted from fruits of the tropics,
from coconut water,
skin coloured by brown bark of Indian teak.
My lungs fuelled by Delhi's insidious toxic air
new vinyl dub-remix.



Our universe — where radiation germinates from human follies,
where contamination persists from
mistrust,
where pleasures of sex are merely a sport —
where everything is ambition,
everything is desire,
everything is nothing.
Nothing and everything.
2.
White light everywhere,
but no one can recognize its hue,
no one knows that there is colour in it — all possible colours.
Body worshipped, not for its blessing,
but its contour —
artificial shape
shaped by Nautilus.
Skin moistened by L'Oreal
and not by season's first rains —
skeleton's strength not shaped by earthquakes
or slow-moulded
by fearless forest-fires.
Ice-caps are rapidly melting — too fast to arrest glacial slide.
In the near future — there will be no water left
or too much water that is undrinkable,
excess water that
will drown us all.
Disembodied floats,
Noah's Ark —
afloat like
no GPS, no pole-star navigation,
no fossil fuel to
burn away —
just maps with empty grids and names of places that
might exist.
Already, there is too much traffic on the road —
unpeopled hollow metal-shells
without brakes,
swerve about directionless —
looking
for an elusive compass.



Sudeep Sen has published more than a dozen collections of poetry, including *Postmarked India: New and Selected Poems* (1997), *Lines of Desire* (2000), *Rain* (2005), and *Aria* (2011). These poems are from Sen's *Anthropocene: Climate Change, Contagion, Consolation* published in June 2021.

Jogabal NA Psychic Force?
The Fortunes of Mesmerism in Colonial Bengal

ABHISHEK SARKAR

The antepenultimate chapter of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's novel *Chandrashekhara* (1875) is titled "Jogabal Na Psychic Force?" (Yogic Power or Psychic Force?). In this chapter, Chandrashekhara, an elderly scholar, renders his young, beautiful wife Shaibalini into a trance by making her drink drops of water and then moving his hands along various curvilinear trajectories close to her forehead and eyes. The method has been taught by his guru Ramananda Swami. Chandrashekhara elicits from the entranced Shaibalini her confession as to whether she committed adultery with her English admirer Lawrence Foster and her childhood sweetheart Pratap during her flight from her husband. Interestingly, the trance makes Shaibalini a clairvoyant. She can tell why horsemen are approaching them on the eve of the Battle of Buxar.

A story by Prabhatkumar Mukhopadhyay (1873-1932), published in the monthly *Manasi* O Marmavani of 1333 BS, alludes to this chapter by borrowing its title, *Jogabal Na Psychic Force?* This story features a young Italian named Sabatini, who is a hypnotist-healer by profession. He has a Punjabi and a Bengali friend with whom he conspires to get the Punjabi friend married to his Bengali beloved by neutralizing the opposition of the girl's family. This comic story reverses the dour ending of *Chandrashekhara*, using as the key to its denouement a fake hypnotic trance and healing. The terms used to describe Sabatini are "Hypnotist" and "sammohan-vidyaparadarshi." The story thus takes "psychic force" to be related to "sammohan" or hypnotism. It shows the English-educated colonial Bengali literati's fascination with trance and its mechanism, especially when imported from the West through various packages and also linked to mysterious Indic traditions.

Bankim does not clarify whether Shaibalini's lie-detector trance is traceable to jogabal or "psychic force." Besides, he does not annotate the phrase "psychic force." Bankim probably expected his audience to work out what was being discussed, if they were not already familiar with the term. Chandrashekhara was serialized in the monthly *Bangadarshan* from Shrawan 1280 BS (July-August 1873) to Bhadra 1281 BS (August-September 1874), while the name "psychic force" was coined in 1871. That year William Crookes (1832-1919), eminent English chemist and physicist with a passion for the occult, published in London a tract called *Experimental Investigations on Psychic Force*. To this Crookes appended a letter from Edward William Cox (1809-79), author and



spiritualist, which recommended the name "Psychic Force" for a yet-unexplored power inhabiting the human constitution. Another of Cox's coinages, the term "Psychic" for someone who shows a copious amount of this power, seems to have a greater longevity. The concept of "psychic force" is directly indebted to that of "animal magnetism" as proposed by Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), a certified physician from the University of Vienna who took the fashionable Parisian society by storm with his unorthodox therapeutics. Mesmer used the name "animal magnetism" for an invisible force supposedly possessed by all organisms. He believed that it could be channelized for inducing trances or healing. The term "mesmerism" in the 19th century was synonymous with "animal magnetism," but now it has come to stand generally

for hypnosis. The verb "to mesmerize" now means "to hold someone's attention completely" rather than "to hypnotize." Mesmerism had a sensational but brief career in Bengal for therapeutic use. Dr. James Esdaile (1809-59), a Scottish surgeon under the East India Company, practised mesmerism extensively at the Hooghly Imambara charitable hospital and Hooghly jail hospital between 1845 and 1848. Esdaile received his medical training at the University of Edinburgh but had never seen any mesmeric procedure earlier. Nevertheless, he successfully put his patients in a mesmeric trance for making surgical operations painless. He taught his mesmeric art to Indian assistants, who took the role of his anaesthetists. Thanks to him, his workplace got the reputation of a "jadoo" hospital where patients flocked from all over Bengal.

The Hooghly Imambara Hospital was about 5 kilometres across the Hooghly River from Bankim's residence at Naihati Kanthalpara. Besides, from 1839 to 1841 Esdaile was the Principal of the Hooghly College (now Hooghly Mohsin College), of which Bankim was later a student. Bankim was very young when Esdaile conducted his mesmeric experiments at Hooghly, but it is quite possible that he heard of Esdaile afterwards. By 1848 Esdaile reported 95 mesmeric operations to his colleagues in England. His exploits were proudly reported by Dr. John Elliotson, who was the foremost crusader for the medical use of mesmerism at the heart of the Empire and a close friend of the novelists Thackeray, Dickens and Wilkie Collins. Esdaile gained such renown that several leading citizens, including Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, signed a petition to the Governor-General Lord Dalhousie for setting up a mesmeric hospital in Kolkata. The request was granted in 1848, but the hospital was to be funded entirely by private patrons such as the Tagores. However, Esdaile's therapy came increasingly under attack from the medical profession and the hospital was closed down 18 months later. In an 1852 publication, Esdaile talks of clairvoyance brought about by mesmerism. Theosophists would be excited about such connections. Rabindranath's elder sister Swarnakumari Devi (1855-1932), who headed the women's chapter of the Theosophical Society, published her two-part essay on mesmerism in the *Agrahayan* and *Chaitra* 1292 issues of the monthly *Bharati*, which was also edited by her. There she considers the latest developments in psychical research in the West from the believer's perspective, and evaluates the rival claims of "hypnotism" (swapnikata or "dreaminess" in her translation) as proposed by Dr. James Braid (1795-1860). She rejects Braid's psychological or neurological explanations for hypnotism and defends the existence of an extra-somatic force akin to Mesmer's animal magnetism. She mentions her direct acquaintance with a teenage Bengali boy who could put a younger boy in trance and control his cognition or behaviour. Notably, Swarnakumari does not cite Esdaile in her essay. Swarnakumari's daughter Sarala Devi Chaudhurani (1872-1945) mentions her experience with mesmerism in her memoir *Jibaner Jharapata* (*The Fallen Leaves of Life*). Once, she sprained her neck in bed and was unable to raise her head. Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907), the co-founder of the Theosophical Society, cured her by the

exercise of mesmerism. After making a few passes with his hands, Olcott commanded her to get up. She managed that after initial protests. Olcott returned the following evening to assert, "You have recovered. You have no pain at all." She agreed with him. Sarala recounts that the son of one Nabin Banerjee of Bhawanipore visited them once in a while to display his mesmeric skills. He was such an expert that he could put a boy in a trance and make him start at non-existent snakes or toads, sit or stand, laugh or weep. Sarala further recalls that one of the ladies of the Jorashanko Tagore family, Sushila, the first wife of Rabindranath's nephew Dwipendranath, used to practice the art. She used her maidservant Nirmala, whom she had brought up. The girl in a clairvoyant trance could call correctly the taste of the food taken by Sushila hidden from her sight. When Sushila commanded her to take a trip to the Himalayas and back, the girl would in a while give the impression of freezing. However, the entire family began to dissuade Sushila Devi from this reckless use of her powers as it might ruin her health. The performance of Sushila Devi's servant seems to have a precedent in the dozens of mesmeric clairvoyants all over the British Empire who claimed to be able to track the lost expedition of Sir John Franklin in the Arctic in the late 1840s and early 1850s. One such clairvoyant in Ireland reportedly had to be treated for chilblains after being with Franklin for two hours. It may be observed that Sarala Devi does not suspect the veracity of the mesmeric trances produced by Sushila. She seems to accept mesmerism as a fact of Nature. Mesmer, Elliotson, Esdaile, Crookes or the Theosophists failed to secure scientific recognition for mesmerism, animal magnetism, or psychic force. Discussions on these generally shifted from the mainstream Bengali periodicals to those specializing in the occult, such as *The Hindu Spiritual Magazine* and *Aloukik Rahasya*, early in the 20th century. Ajitkrishna Basu in his *Jadu-kahini* (*The Story of Magic*) mentions mesmerism while referring to the alleged occult powers of a fraudulent wizard, but it is understood to be different from the phenomenon of hypnotism professionally harnessed by magicians on the stage. As foreshadowed by the elegant amateurs of the Tagore family, the (honest, legitimate) pursuit of psychic force or mesmerism now belongs to the realm of pastimes and hobby-horses.

Abhishek Sarkar is Assistant Professor, Department of English, Jadavpur University.

LAW OPINION

Bangladesh should withdraw its reservation on the UN Genocide Convention

QUAZI OMAR FOYSAL

Bangladesh's independence is among the few examples of successful remedial secessions in the narratives of state succession. In essence, the doctrine of remedial secession implies the right of a group of people to secede from a mother state by exercising external self-determination outside colonial dominion following the commission of gross violations of human rights against them by the said state. Bangladesh's Proclamation of Independence 1971 highlights the

Bangladesh's silence regarding the use of the Genocide Convention 1948 to strengthen its accountability efforts is contrary to its historical experiences.

Pakistan ratified the Convention on 12 October 1957 without any reservation. It signifies that the people of Bangladesh were under the protection of the Convention throughout the course of the liberation war. Even the obligation to prevent and prosecute the crime of genocide was considered as obligation *erga omnes* at that time (see *Barcelona Traction* case, 1970). In 1973, Pakistan commenced a proceeding against

confronted significant opposition from the USSR and its allies during the negotiation of the Convention and even attracted significant reservations upon its adoption. It eventually led to the question of the legality of such reservations. The international community was divided into two camps, one favouring the integrity of the treaty regime (the prevalent practice of the League of Nations) and the other supporting the universality of the treaty regime. Finally, the ICJ's Advisory Opinion on the *Reservation to the Genocide Convention* (1951) resolved the issue stating that such reservations are valid as long as they are not incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. Afterwards, Article 19(c) of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties 1969 incorporated such dictum in the positive international law.

Bangladesh's reservation to Article IX qualified the jurisdiction of the ICJ. It states that "[f]or the submission of any dispute in terms of this [A]rticle to the jurisdiction of the [ICJ], the consent of all parties to the dispute will be required in each case." The language of the reservation is *in verbatim* adoption of that of India made on 27 August 1959. Apart from barring any disputant state from making any claims against Bangladesh at the ICJ, this reservation equally, due to the principle of reciprocity, incapacitates Bangladesh to sue any state, even though the latter has no reservation on Article IX. Myanmar highlighted this issue during the provisional measures hearing of the *Rohingya Genocide* case in December 2019.

The reservation in question runs contrary to Bangladesh's moral and legal commitments. As mentioned earlier, Bangladeshi people suffered serious human rights violations including the crime of genocide during its emancipation. While Bangladesh could not prosecute any Pakistanis for their roles in the commission of genocide till date, the International Crimes Tribunal prosecuted several indictments of genocide. At this juncture, Bangladesh's reservation on the Convention is contrary to its struggle

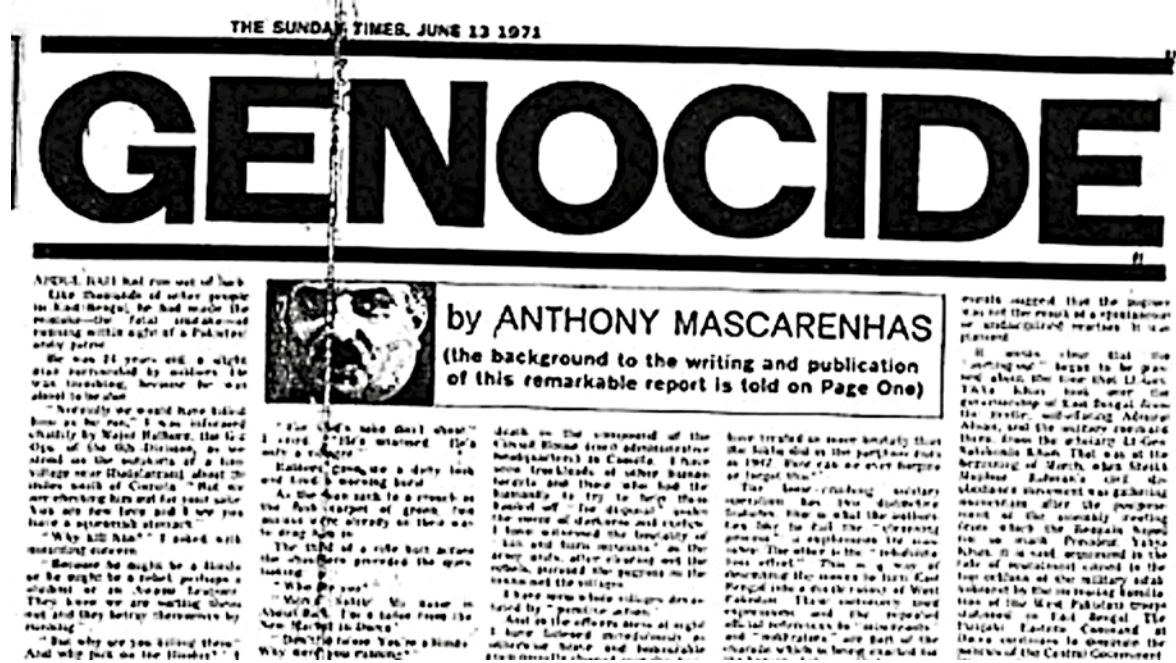
As we draw closer to Bangladesh's 50th victory anniversary, it is important to reflect on Bangladesh's commitments to peace and security throughout the world by ratifying notable human rights treaties, supporting peacekeeping missions, and harbouring one of the largest refugee populations of the world. It is high time Bangladesh reconsidered the withdrawal of the reservation on the Genocide Convention.

the 1973 Act does not have any limitation on its temporal jurisdiction. Thus, Article IX of the Convention does not make any extra obligation to Bangladesh. Rather, it reiterates its existing obligation to punish and prosecute the crime of genocide under its existing domestic law.

On the other hand, Article 25 of the Constitution reiterates Bangladesh's fundamental policy to "support oppressed peoples throughout the world waging a just struggle against imperialism, colonialism or racialism." Article IX of the Convention could serve as a potential vehicle to support the oppressed people throughout the world by applying the principle of obligation *erga omnes partes*. The doctrine of *erga omnes partes* obligates any state party to a multilateral treaty to invoke the responsibility of any treaty violations by any other states parties despite being uninjured by such violations. A recent example of the application of this doctrine is exemplified in the case filed by The Gambia against Myanmar before the ICJ, in relation to alleged crimes of genocide against the Rohingyas. Though Bangladesh is supposedly supporting The Gambia by providing funds to maintain the proceedings, the non-reservation on the Convention could enable Bangladesh to make a direct claim before the ICJ for Rohingyas that it is harbouring.

As we draw closer to Bangladesh's 50th victory anniversary, it is important to reflect on Bangladesh's commitments to peace and security throughout the world by ratifying notable human rights treaties, supporting peacekeeping missions, and harbouring one of the largest refugee populations of the world. It is high time Bangladesh reconsidered the withdrawal of the reservation on the Convention. Such withdrawal of reservation from the Convention will strengthen Bangladesh' commitment to human rights both for its citizens and for the oppressed people throughout the world.

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Pakistani authorities' continuous commission of "numerous acts of genocide and unprecedented tortures, amongst others on the civilian and unarmed people of Bangladesh" as one of the grounds for asserting the independence.

In the aftermath of its independence, Bangladesh also made exceptional struggles to uphold justice for the victims of atrocities perpetrated against its population during the liberation war. The promulgation of International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 exemplifies one part of such endeavours. However,

India at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) under the Convention in regarding the Indian proposal to hand over Pakistani prisoners of war to Bangladesh. In this period, Bangladesh's resort to the Convention could advance its accountability mission. Finally, it acceded to the Convention on 5 November 1998, but with a reservation on Article IX thereof.

Article IX of the Convention confers jurisdiction on the ICJ to deal with disputes relating to its interpretation, application, or fulfilment of the said Convention. This provision

RIGHTS ADVOCACY

The issue of competition law compliance for the e-commerce sector

AZHAR U. BHUIYAN

Businesses are constantly complaining against the anti-competitive behaviours of the e-commerce platforms. The accusations against them are quite templatic: deep-discounting, self-preferencing, manipulation in search ranking, misuse of consumer data. While the allegations may not be true all the time, the e-commerce platforms are always prone to violation of competition law risking massive amount of fine by the Competition Commission of Bangladesh (CCB).

The CCB met the leading e-commerce platforms in Bangladesh: BoomBoom, BabynneedsBD, Aladiner Prodidp, Daraz Bangladesh Ltd., Priyoshop.com Ltd., Chaldal Ltd., Redex and many others on 21 September 2021. The aim of the meet was to brief these platforms about different practices ongoing in digital marketplace risking the breach of competition law.

In such situation, it is important for e-commerce platforms to be cautious about anti-competitive behaviours and engage lawyers to vet their offers on the platforms before launching it. This article delineates some of the widely common anti-competitive disruptive behaviours and/or actions of e-commerce platforms under the Bangladeshi competition law regime.

The businesses and e-commerce platforms use cheaper pricing offers to enter and capture a market. Initially cheaper rate of products or services sounds pro-consumer. However, as soon as the businesses drive out all the competitors in the market, they exploit their monopoly in the market by increased price of the products and/or services. This is where the competition law intervenes.

The Competition Act 2012, according to section 16(2)(a), prohibits the sale of goods or provision of services at a price which is below the cost of production of the goods or provision of services that aims at reducing or eliminating competition in the relevant market. Section 20(a)(ii) of the Act also provides that the Commission may penalise an e-commerce platform for predatory pricing with a fine which may extend up to 10% of the average of turnover for the last 03 (three) preceding financial years. Thus, the caveat for e-commerce

platforms and business entities therein is to make sure the selling price of products or services is not lower than the production cost.

Notably, the availability of products or services at a cheaper rate cannot always be considered as predatory pricing. Because the cheaper price of products may also result from the exemption of the sellers from the cost of marketing, and a wider market access in the digital platform. However, the giants in e-commerce platforms enjoy such massive amount of sale that they can at times for a limited time offer deep discounts amounting to product price lesser than apparent manufacturing cost. Such deep discounts may amount to predatory pricing when it is aimed at driving competitors away from the market. The Competition Commission of India in their latest study on e-commerce sector titled 'Market Study on E-Commerce in India' found that deep discounting is gravely problematic and needs to be cautiously monitored. The CCB has been sloth in monitoring the e-commerce sector. The recent catastrophe in the e-commerce sector with the 'Evaly scam' is a departure moment



for the CCB. It is expected that with the recent recruitment of staff, the CCB will gear up their energy and extensively monitor the e-commerce platforms to ensure a competitive online marketplace.

The e-commerce platforms may perform the role of both marketplace and a competitor in that marketplace. Such dual characteristics of these platforms provide both benefits and drawbacks. These e-commerce platforms possess control over three important features of a possible sale and procurement of product or service: search result, seller's/service provider's data, and user review. As a result, the products of the platforms might enjoy increased visibility, and the consumers' choice might fail to mirror consumer preference. But a transparent business ecosystem should have facilitated a pro-

competitive market for the sellers.

E-commerce platforms generate huge revenue with their listing services by placing some products of specific companies higher in the search results. The big companies do not mind paying for such subscription fees to list their product above everyone else. In practice, it is found that the big corporations purchase all the top positions for all products and the small and medium enterprises are left dry. Therefore, these small and medium enterprises fail to competitively perform in the marketplace. This is where the CCB is authorised to intervene and regulate the business ecosystem by ensuring transparency in the system by occasional directives and guidelines. The Competition Act empowered the CCB to prevent e-commerce platforms from distorting market by abuse of dominant position in the market under section 16(2).

The e-commerce platforms in their contracts with the suppliers often include a price parity clause. A price parity clause demands from the supplier not to offer products or services at a cheaper rate or better terms in other e-commerce platforms or at times even on their own websites. Instances of such clauses are usually found in the online travel agency markets, online food ordering apps and delivery markets. These parity clauses may come under the scrutiny of the CCB if they have adverse effect on competition.

From a business perspective, the sellers might have different incentives to receive from different platforms for supplying products in different rates. An established e-commerce platform might not be willing to charge lower than a newly established e-commerce platform and thus the supplier might like to enjoy the fruits of scale economies and network effects. In consequence of a wide parity clause, the end-users might need to pay higher prices. Again, section 15(1) of the Competition Act prohibits such exclusive supply and distribution agreements when they have adverse effect on competition. If the e-commerce platform is dominant in the market, then such clause may be prosecuted under section 16 of the Competition Act as well.

THE WRITER IS LECTURER, DEPARTMENT OF LAW, BANGLADESH UNIVERSITY OF PROFESSIONALS, AND CONSULTANT, A.S & ASSOCIATES.

LAW LETTER

Musings on the condition of women and children

The pandemic has opened our eyes to the actual condition of human rights in Bangladesh. Occasionally the images of human rights protection seemed positive in the pre-Covid-19 context; however, the pandemic-induced lockdown exacerbated the human rights condition of the country, particularly with regard to rights of women and children.

Very often we see that a man provides maintenance and financial support to his wife, but he also physically tortures her. It cannot be said that the man is ensuring his wife's rights. On the other hand, if the man maintains all the comforts for living toward his wife but her right to freedom of movement is curtailed, it will also be considered as a violation of human rights. The maintenance of human rights means preservation of all the fundamental rights. Therefore, absence of any particular right may constitute an infringement.

It is observable that the right to live with liberty and dignity of women has declined in multifarious ways during the lockdown period in Bangladesh. Many women were increasingly exposed to physical and mental abuse by intimate family members, sometimes to unprecedented degrees. Health experts suggested that all the citizens stay at home in order to maintain social distance that can help to save the country from the deadly effect of Covid-19. Unfortunately, the home appeared as the most unsafe place for many women and girls. Rising incidents of rape and harassment are worth highlighting. It is true that women are contributing a lot in various sectors including garments, health care, politics, social service but they are also becoming victims of harassment. All the workplaces cannot be considered safe for female employees and

women are increasingly discouraged from pursuing work outside homes. Moreover, public roads and transports are also unsafe for travel. Only the opportunity of employment cannot be viewed as improvement of rights unless safe working condition and secure commute to and from work is also ensured.

The matter of violation of children's rights cannot be ignored either. Girl children have been facing excessive pressure of household duties while continuing home quarantine. It can



be stated that domestic violence and rights of children are sometimes connected to each other. Furthermore, home quarantine may include staying with distant relatives which may expose children to increased risks of sexual and other kinds of abuse. The prolonged restriction upon in-person education has also had notable impact on mental health of students which adds to the growing tension of the home environment.

The current human rights scenario of Bangladesh reflects that the mindset of the society towards protection of human rights has not improved at the expected rate. Human rights organisations in the country should come forward to discuss how to bring substantive and meaningful shift in people's attitude.

NAZIA AMIN, ADVOCATE OF THE JUDGE COURT, DHAKA.

How to clean your ears

FROM PAGE 16

trapping them so they can't go deep inside.

When we move our jaws while chewing, old earwax comes out of the ear canal to the ear opening. Eventually it dries up and falls out.

So the cleaning mechanism of the ear is self-sufficient. Problem occurs when one tries to insert anything like a cotton bud and actually pushes the wax in deeper.

Swabbing or sticking pointy objects inside the ear can cause serious problems like infection, rupture of the eardrum and significant loss of hearing.

However, if too much earwax builds up and starts to cause feelings of fullness inside the ear or hearing loss, you might have something called

cerumen impaction.

The risk of developing impacted earwax is generally low, but increases with age as the inner ear becomes drier. People who use hearing aids are also more likely to develop impaction.

If you have symptoms of wax impaction, you need to check with your doctor instead of trying to do something about it yourself.

If your problem isn't serious, the best way to clean your ears is to gently clean the outside of your ears with a wet washcloth using your index finger.

You can also try putting a few drops of baby oil, mineral oil, or glycerin in your ear to soften the wax so it can come out naturally.

But inserting anything, even cotton buds, inside your ears is a big no.

Pakistan general sends SOS

FROM PAGE 16

Pakistani tanks and infantry launched a massive attack last night across the shallow, sandy Munnawar Tawi river, leaving behind 600 of their own dead and about 300 Indian dead, claimed Indian field commanders.

KISSINGER'S MESSAGE TO FARLAND

In a backchannel message, US President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger provides US Ambassador to Pakistan Farland an update today on his meeting with Pakistani delegates, including Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Agha Shahi in New York in the morning. It was concluded from the meeting that the proposal for ceasefire had been overtaken by events and was too complicated to succeed here, informed Kissinger.

Therefore, they agreed to following scenario: 1) Government of Pakistan will obtain third-country support to introduce resolution in Security Council which will include provision for both ceasefire and withdrawal. 2) It is likely that such a resolution would be vetoed. They would then move to accept simple ceasefire without any linkage to the Soviet formulation which would seek political negotiation. 3) While remaining adamant in step (2) that ceasefire alone is an essential first step, they would express willingness to include political negotiation following establishment of ceasefire.

Explaining the course of action Kissinger said, "Were we to follow any other course, it would look like complete collapse. Furthermore, should we start Security Council action with step (2) above, there is strong possibility that step (2), itself, might be vetoed if it were presented as initial position. Its chances of

succeeding on second round are greatly enhanced by moving with step (1) first, recognizing that step (1) will probably not succeed."

Kissinger asked Farland to meet with Pakistan President Yahya Khan urgently and urge upon him the essentiality of sticking with the procedure and of avoiding initially any indication that proposals short of step (2) might be acceptable.

The Pakistan delegation at the UN was prepared to do same, concluded Kissinger.

TELEGRAM FROM US CONSUL GENERAL, DHAKA

The US Consul General in Dhaka in a telegram dated December 11, 1971, informed the state department, "We note with interest that British are moving smartly ahead to establish some basis for early dealing with Bangla Desh, which now appears to be as certain as anything normally is in international affairs."

It further said, "While we appreciate difficult and complicated questions involved in working out conditions in which we would recognize new sovereignty, such as Bangla Desh it seems to us that at this stage of the game, some little preparation such as the British have obviously been doing could make things, much easier... I therefore again strongly urge that we make preliminary soundings with reliable Bangla Desh reps in Washington or elsewhere which would, at very least, prevent them from assuming that we are inalterably opposed to idea of independent Bangla Desh or that we would take inordinately long to recognize a BDG [Bangladesh Government] substantially established in East Bengal."

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



Women gesture during a rally in the Jabalia camp for Palestinian refugees in the north of the Gaza Strip, marking the 34th anniversary of the founding of the Islamist Hamas movement which rules the Palestinian strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

The regrets after 50 years

FROM PAGE 16

In addition, Prof Rounaq Jahan, distinguished fellow of CPD, said, "Democracy cannot be restored unless we can stop money-making being the objectives of politics."

She also said that vested quarters earned huge wealth by abusing power in the last 50 years.

Ensuring accountability, good governance and public trust are must for a flourishing democracy but that has not been possible over the years, she said.

There is a global movement of young people, including in Bangladesh, who are calling for justice, and universal demand that captures the vision of Bangabandhu. This generates some promise, Prof Jahan said.

Prof Naila Kabeer of the London School of Economics said education is something that creates the citizens,

but the quality of education that is in high demand is under serious question in Bangladesh.

"Education should be more enlightening and promising so that it helps achieve the goals of becoming a developed as well as democratic country," she said.

Education should make people humane, develop the capacity to argue and accommodate others' opinions, Prof Kabeer said.

"Bangladesh has become a middle-income country, but I don't know how meaningful it is if the inequality is rising and the environment is degrading," Naila Kabeer said.

A lot of the people, especially the indigenous and other marginal people, still are excluded in terms of receiving health and education.

Dr Saleemul Huq, professor of environmental science at

the Independent University of Bangladesh, said, "We are proud of Bangladesh's achievements but not the way we have destroyed our forest, wetlands, coastal zones and rivers."

"Vested groups use their powers to make wealth out of destroying these. We need to work together to combat them at a very local level."

Prof S Nazrul Islam, chief of Development Research Branch at the UN Development of Economic and Social Affairs, said the fourth industrialisation is posing various challenges, and Bangladesh needs to prepare the youths with modern technological know-how and communication skills.

Prof Ifikhar Dadi, director of the South Asia Program at Cornell University and CPD Executive Director Dr Fahmida Khatun also spoke at the event.

NBR awards

FROM PAGE 16

collector is working to widen the tax net.

Jashim Uddin, president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said income tax and VAT offices should be set up at upazila level to increase revenue.

"We need to work together to combat them at a very local level."

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Multiple cases have been filed against Abdullah Al Mahmud and Touhidul Islam with various police stations.

Legal action is being taken against those arrested, added the release.

Engineers develop

FROM PAGE 16

'metasurface' technology which is produced like a computer chip. The metasurface of this particular camera has 1.6 million cylindrical posts – each approximately the size of a virus – to make up a system just half a millimetre wide.

Each of those posts has its own unique geometry, working like an optical antenna, and machine-learning algorithms can use the posts' combined interactions with light to create high-quality images. Compared to older versions of these cameras, this camera works better in natural light conditions, has fewer distortions, and larger fields of view too.

"It's been a challenge to design and configure these little nano-structures to do what you want," said Ethan Tseng, a computer science PhD student at Princeton who co-led the study.

"For this specific task of capturing large field of view RGB images, it was previously unclear how to co-design the millions of nano-structures together with post-processing algorithms."

The next step for the researchers will be to add greater computational abilities to the camera – such as object detection and other modalities that would make it more useful in medicine or robotics.

Felix Heide, the study's senior author and an assistant professor of computer science at Princeton, predicts that ultracompact imagers will be used to create "surfaces as sensors."

Individual surfaces could be turned into cameras with ultra-high resolution, "so you wouldn't need three cameras on the back of your phone anymore, but the whole back of your phone would become one giant camera. We can think of completely different ways to build devices in the future," he said.

Hungary court strikes down Orban over EU asylum ruling

AFP, Budapest

Hungary's constitutional court yesterday struck down a bid by Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government to challenge a ruling by the EU's top court against Budapest's harsh asylum policy.

Budapest had asked the court earlier this year to review a ruling from the European Court of Justice ordering it to suspend a law that allows police to deport or physically "push back" asylum-seekers across the Serbian border.

Aide to Rubel, Barkat held

FROM PAGE 16

note, a team of Faridpur Kotwali Police Station arrested Siddiqur Rahman from Dhanmondi area with the help of Dhaka Metropolitan Police around 1:15am. He was then taken to Faridpur.

Siddiqur is also reportedly the aide to former general secretary of Faridpur town Awami League unit Sajjad Hossain and former president of Faridpur Press Club Imtiaz Hossain. Sajjad and Imtiaz were arrested on June 7 last year in a case filed over attacking the house of the president of Faridpur district AL unit.

Charge sheets have been submitted against him in three cases related to extortion and criminal activities. The murder case is under investigation.

At the press conference, Sumon Ranjan Sarkar, additional superintendent of police (Sadar circle), said Siddiqur has been leading armed gangs in Faridpur town for a long time. He has amassed huge money illegally through the gangs.

MA Jalil, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, said, "We produced Siddiqur Rahman before a court seeking a seven-day remand and the court granted three days' remand."

Md Jalil, elder brother of Siddiqur, said the High Court had directed that Siddiqur could not be arrested or harassed in any case without a court warrant.

Police arrested Siddiqur in a new case ignoring the HC directives and without any court warrant, he alleged.

Macron hails Scholz as Europe's new power couple meets

AFP, Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron hailed a "convergence of views" with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz yesterday as the two men met for their first talks as leaders.

Macron and Scholz, both pro-EU centrists, are the new tandem in charge of Europe's biggest economies that have the greatest influence inside the 27-member European Union.

Scholz, a Social Democrat, heads a new coalition whose commitment to strengthening Europe's "strategic sovereignty" has raised hopes of progress in the fervently pro-EU French government.

Addressing Scholz as "dear Olaf" and using the informal "tu" pronoun in French, Macron said he had seen "a convergence of views, a desire to have our countries work together, and a firm and determined belief in Europe, which I knew already, which we will need in the months and years ahead."

The visit was "a very important moment to build solid foundations for cooperation between our countries," he added at a news conference.

Scholz made Paris his first overseas stop after taking over on Wednesday from Angela Merkel at the end of her 16 years in power.

He said the talks focused on

"making Europe strong and European sovereignty."

"What is important there is that we work together," he said.

Scholz was set to continue on to Brussels for talks with Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and EU chief Ursula von der Leyen yesterday, as well as European Council president Charles Michel ahead of a bloc summit next week.

Macron laid out an ambitious agenda Thursday for a "Europe that is powerful in the world" during France's time as the rotating president of the 27-member Council of the European Union in the first half of next year.

The 43-year-old wants to make further progress towards building up European defence capabilities and border forces, as well as devising ways of financing huge public investments in strategic industries considered vital for EU sovereignty.

Analysts say Macron's desire for more flexible budget rules in the EU, enabling governments to run larger deficits, could run into opposition from a Germany that has historically insisted on financial rigour.

Scholz said there was "not a contradiction" between wanting to finance ambitious investments to ensure growth, and solid public finances.

Onion prices shoot up

FROM PAGE 16

"But if the prices of essentials increase further, we will not be able to survive," said Shafulik, who draws a monthly salary of Tk 30,000.

Speaking to The Daily Star, several traders and farmers said the harvest of new onion, locally known as "Murikata Peyaj", has been delayed due to recent rains.

Taking this as an opportunity, a syndicate of large traders has increased the prices of the cooking ingredient by creating an artificial crisis in the market, they alleged.

According to them, there is no

shortage in supply of onion at this moment and prices are expected to fall soon.

Md Kamruzzaman, a farmer from Pabna, said new onion will hit the market within a week.

The two-day incessant rain from Sunday lashed different parts of the country, causing extensive damages to crops, especially winter vegetables and seedbeds.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension, a total of 33.62 lakh tonnes of onion was produced in the country in 2020-21 fiscal year.

However, the yearly demand for onion in the country is about 25 lakh tonnes. About 29.55 lakh tonnes of onion was produced locally while another six to seven lakh tonnes was imported, according to data presented at a workshop of the commerce ministry in October.

Since onion is perishable, some 25 percent of the produce gets damaged, as per the data.

Ghulam Rahman, president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh, said some opportunists among the traders raised the prices of onion mainly to make hefty profits.

Facebook opens virtual world app to public

AFP, Washington

Facebook's parent firm opened its Horizon Worlds virtual reality platform on Thursday to the public in North America, in a step toward building its metaverse vision for the future.

Horizon Worlds is far from a fully realized metaverse, a future internet where online experiences like chatting to a friend would eventually feel face-to-face thanks to virtual reality (VR) headsets.

But headset-wearing users in the United States and Canada can now

gather with friends or others, play games and build their own virtual worlds on Horizon as long as they are 18 years old and have the proper equipment.

Since last year a testing version of the platform has been available to a limited number of users.

Facebook renamed its parent company to Meta in October to emphasize its aim to shift from scandal-prone social media platform to its virtual reality vision for its future.

"We want Horizon Worlds to be a safe and respectful environment, so

everyone must follow our Conduct in VR Policy," Meta said in announcing the opening.

"You have several safety options... which lets you take a break and then block, mute or report people," it added.

Meta-owned platforms Facebook and Instagram have been fighting to put behind them a crisis unleashed in September by reams of internal studies leaked to journalists and US authorities by whistleblower Frances Haugen.



Rescuers dig a damaged building during an operation at an area yesterday which was affected by the Mount Semeru volcano eruption that killed at least 43 people last Saturday in Sumberwuluh, Candipuro district, Lumajang, East Java province, Indonesia.

PHOTO: REUTERS

What to WATCH

T SPORTS

SAFF U-19 Women's Championship
Bhutan vs Sri Lanka
Live from 03:00 pm
Bangladesh vs Nepal

Live from 07:00 pm
La Liga
Valencia vs Elche
Live from 11:30 pm
Athletic Bilbao vs Sevilla
Live from 02:00 am

(Sunday)
Star Sports HD 1
English Premier League
Manchester City vs Wolves
Live from 06:30 pm
Liverpool vs Aston Villa

Live from 09:00 pm
Norwich City vs Manchester United
Live from 11:30 pm
Star Sports HD 2
English Premier League

Arsenal vs Southampton
Live from 09:00 pm
TEN 2
Bundesliga
Bayern München vs Mainz 05
Live from 08:30 pm

SONY SIX
The Ashes
Australia vs England
1st Test, Day 5
Live from 06:00 am
(Sunday)



We gave everything, says Zapata after CL exit

AGENCIES



Duvan Zapata insists that he and his Atalanta teammates "gave everything" in their 3-2 Champions League defeat against Villarreal on

Thursday.

Atalanta required a win in order to leapfrog their opponents into second place in their final group-stage game, which had been rescheduled after heavy snowfall on Wednesday.

However, Arnaut Danjuma scored either side of Etienne Capoue to give Villarreal a 3-0 lead by the 51st minute, and Atalanta were unable to come back despite goals from Ruslan Malinovskyi and Zapata.

The Atalanta striker revealed that, despite the team's regret at failing to qualify for the knockout stages of the Champions League, they remain "calm".

"We are disappointed," Zapata said to Prime Video. "However, we are calm in the sense that we gave everything on the pitch."

"We are very sorry because we wanted to go through and be among the strongest 16. That's how the game went, we need to think about the [league] because it is thanks to the [league] that we are here."

"We were in trouble in the first half also because they took the lead quickly. Then we tried to attack and draw quickly. I think we played against anxiety, they are a good team who played a great match."

"There is regret for every situation that could have been done better. We gave everything. We are very sorry, but I feel the group [is] calm because we have tried in every way possible to equalise."

Atalanta defender Rafael Toloï echoed his teammate's sentiments, apologising to the club's fans for not winning the game but looking ahead to the rest of the season with optimism.

"Sorry we didn't win, but I think we gave a good response in the second half," Toloï told Prime Video. "We created beautiful situations. Sorry we didn't win, now we have to continue in the league and watch the Europa League draws."

"We tried to play the game. We conceded a goal at the beginning [due to] a mistake and then they have quality players. We played a great game. Sorry for the result, [but our heads are] held high and we still have a whole season to go."

Atalanta now drop into the knockout play-off round of the Europa League, where they will be drawn against a side that finished second in their group.



Abahani demolish Army in quarters

SPORTS REPORTER



A brace from Daniel Colindres steered title contenders Abahani into the semifinals of Riviera Independence Cup with an emphatic 4-0 win over Bangladesh Army in the first quarterfinal of the tournament at Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Colindres, who was in the 2018 World Cup squad for Costa Rica and was the chief architect behind Bashundhara Kings' Bangladesh Premier League triumph in their debut 2017-18 season, not only struck his first goal for Abahani but also assisted one.

Previously, the 36-year-old forward could not find the target in the two group matches despite his

wholehearted efforts on the artificial turf as he struggled to measure his shot on target with most of them having floated over the crossbar but yesterday Colindres found his rhythm to drive the Sky Blues into the last four.

"We are very happy because it was all teamwork. We are moving up and progressing forward step by step and hope to stay united for upcoming matches," said Colindres after the match.

However, it was Brazilian midfielder Raphael Augusto who had pulled the strings for the Abahani midfield by building up attack with frequently opening up channels in both flanks but Bangladesh Army managed to negate most attempts and their backline remained vigilant to frustrate Abahani forward line-

up featuring Colindres, Brazilian Dorielton Gomes and Rakib Hossain.

Goalkeeper Alamgir Hossain blocked two efforts from Brazilian duo Gomes and Augusto in the third minute to boost Army's morale from the onset as they went on to held their superior opponents for 44 minutes before Colindres brought down a well-measured pass from Augusto and broke the deadlock with a scintillating curler that kissed the top-left corner in the 45th minute.

After resumption, Abahani sent in local striker Nabib Newaj Jibon in place of injured Gomes and injected a bit more pace upfront combining good understanding between Colindres and Jibon, who came close to doubling the margin in the 56th minute after availing

a cross from the Costa Rican but keeper Alamgir had denied the opportunity.

However, Jibon made amends to double the margin 2-0 after diving head-on off a Colindres cross from the left in the 67th minute before Colindres made it 3-0 with a low free kick on the top of the box in the 70th minute.

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A Bangladesh player tries to manoeuvre the ball past a few Japan players during their practice match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday, with the hosts losing 4-1. Both teams will be part of the six-nation Asian Champions Trophy which begins on December 14.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



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PHOTO: BFF

Hulk fever at ATLETICO MINEIRO

AFP, Belo Horizonte

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Hulk has been the talisman of the franchise film-worthy season at the Belo Horizonte club, who defied long odds to clinch their first league title in 50 years last week, with two matches of the season to spare.

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Atletico Mineiro were betting the veteran forward still had some superpowers in store after 15 years playing in Europe and Asia.

The move paid off -- going into the final round of games, Hulk was the league's leading goal-scorer this season with 19, nearly a third of Atletico's total.

"He's already one of our biggest idols, even though he hasn't been here that long. He's the main reason we won the championship," says Mauricio Maoli, the DJ behind the club's public announcement system.

Maoli, 45, played a big part in Hulk fever catching on in Belo Horizonte. Hired to give matches a realistic soundtrack after fans were banned from stadiums because of Covid-19, Maoli decided he needed a chant for the newly-signed Hulk.

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But he has made his adopted hometown his own.

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When stadiums reopened for fans, he started going to matches with Samuel, who soon rose to local fame for his fervid Hulk fandom.

Clutching a Hulk figurine, sporting a mask of the superhero and painted in green, Samuel went to four matches -- and Atletico Mineiro won them all.

"He turned into a kind of lucky charm for the team," jokes Daniel.

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One noted fan is 17-month-old Samuel Reis, whose vocabulary consists of three words: Mommy, Daddy and Hulk.

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Hulk paid tribute to the 64-year-old legend at a match in November, raising a clenched fist to the sky after scoring a goal -- just as Reinaldo used to do in protest at Brazil's 1964-1985 military dictatorship.

"I'm not the only one embracing you, it's every single fan of this club," Reinaldo, who was watching from the stands, told him later.

"You'll be in our hearts forever. We love you!"

What to WATCH

T SPORTS

SAFF U-19 Women's Championship
Bhutan vs Sri Lanka
Live from 03:00 pm
Bangladesh vs Nepal

Live from 07:00 pm
La Liga
Valencia vs Elche
Live from 11:30 pm
Athletic Bilbao vs Sevilla
Live from 02:00 am

(Sunday)
Star Sports HD 1
English Premier League
Manchester City vs Wolves
Live from 06:30 pm
Liverpool vs Aston Villa

Live from 09:00 pm
Norwich City vs Manchester United
Live from 11:30 pm
Star Sports HD 2
English Premier League

Arsenal vs Southampton
Live from 09:00 pm
TEN 2
Bundesliga
Bayern München vs Mainz 05
Live from 08:30 pm

SONY SIX
The Ashes
Australia vs England
1st Test, Day 5
Live from 06:00 am
(Sunday)



We gave everything, says Zapata after CL exit

AGENCIES



Duvan Zapata insists that he and his Atalanta teammates "gave everything" in their 3-2 Champions League defeat against Villarreal on

Thursday.

Atalanta required a win in order to leapfrog their opponents into second place in their final group-stage game, which had been rescheduled after heavy snowfall on Wednesday.

However, Arnaut Danjuma scored either side of Etienne Capoue to give Villarreal a 3-0 lead by the 51st minute, and Atalanta were unable to come back despite goals from Ruslan Malinovskyi and Zapata.

The Atalanta striker revealed that, despite the team's regret at failing to qualify for the knockout stages of the Champions League, they remain "calm".

"We are disappointed," Zapata said to Prime Video. "However, we are calm in the sense that we gave everything on the pitch."

"We are very sorry because we wanted to go through and be among the strongest 16. That's how the game went, we need to think about the [league] because it is thanks to the [league] that we are here."

"We were in trouble in the first half also because they took the lead quickly. Then we tried to attack and draw quickly. I think we played against anxiety, they are a good team who played a great match."

"There is regret for every situation that could have been done better. We gave everything. We are very sorry, but I feel the group [is] calm because we have tried in every way possible to equalise."

Atalanta defender Rafael Toloï echoed his teammate's sentiments, apologising to the club's fans for not winning the game but looking ahead to the rest of the season with optimism.

"Sorry we didn't win, but I think we gave a good response in the second half," Toloï told Prime Video. "We created beautiful situations. Sorry we didn't win, now we have to continue in the league and watch the Europa League draws."

"We tried to play the game. We conceded a goal at the beginning [due to] a mistake and then they have quality players. We played a great game. Sorry for the result, [but our heads are] held high and we still have a whole season to go."

Atalanta now drop into the knockout play-off round of the Europa League, where they will be drawn against a side that finished second in their group.



Abahani demolish Army in quarters

SPORTS REPORTER



A brace from Daniel Colindres steered title contenders Abahani into the semifinals of Riviera Independence Cup with an emphatic 4-0 win over Bangladesh Army in the first quarterfinal of the tournament at Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Colindres, who was in the 2018 World Cup squad for Costa Rica and was the chief architect behind Bashundhara Kings' Bangladesh Premier League triumph in their debut 2017-18 season, not only struck his first goal for Abahani but also assisted one.

Previously, the 36-year-old forward could not find the target in the two group matches despite his

wholehearted efforts on the artificial turf as he struggled to measure his shot on target with most of them having floated over the crossbar but yesterday Colindres found his rhythm to drive the Sky Blues into the last four.

"We are very happy because it was all teamwork. We are moving up and progressing forward step by step and hope to stay united for upcoming matches," said Colindres after the match.

However, it was Brazilian midfielder Raphael Augusto who had pulled the strings for the Abahani midfield by building up attack with frequently opening up channels in both flanks but Bangladesh Army managed to negate most attempts and their backline remained vigilant to frustrate Abahani forward line-

up featuring Colindres, Brazilian Dorielton Gomes and Rakib Hossain.

Goalkeeper Alamgir Hossain blocked two efforts from Brazilian duo Gomes and Augusto in the third minute to boost Army's morale from the onset as they went on to held their superior opponents for 44 minutes before Colindres brought down a well-measured pass from Augusto and broke the deadlock with a scintillating curler that kissed the top-left corner in the 45th minute.

After resumption, Abahani sent in local striker Nabib Newaj Jibon in place of injured Gomes and injected a bit more pace upfront combining good understanding between Colindres and Jibon, who came close to doubling the margin in the 56th minute after availing

a cross from the Costa Rican but keeper Alamgir had denied the opportunity.

However, Jibon made amends to double the margin 2-0 after diving head-on off a Colindres cross from the left in the 67th minute before Colindres made it 3-0 with a low free kick on the top of the box in the 70th minute.

Seven minutes later, Abahani widened the margin 4-0 when Augusto played Rakib on the right flank and the national winger darted into the box to put a nice lob for unmarked Emon Mahmud, who did not fail to head it home to complete the rout against Army.

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EVERYONE CAN MAKE ROADS, BUT
THERE'S ONLY 1 EXPERT
SO CHOOSE BSRM TO BUILD SAFER HOMES

COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT

BSRM
building a safer nation

Aktaruzzaman Flyover
Chittagong

Principal Cement Brand

SHAH CEMENT

The regrets after 50 years

Prof Rehman Sobhan says despite many achievements, the country sees widening disparities, weakening of our institutions

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in economy and social development in the last 50 years but failed to institutionalise democracy, improve governance and protect the environment, said eminent scholars.



They also observed that widening inequality and a lack of quality education still remain matters of concern that need to be addressed urgently for the country to flourish in the coming decades.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan said, "Bangladesh became a success case from the basket case in 50 years."

"Regrettably, we also see widening social and economic disparities and weakening of our institutions."

He made the remarks while attending the last session of a four-day webinar that ended Friday night.

CPD and the South Asia Program of Cornell University jointly organised the webinar marking the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence.

There now exists a politically patronised bureaucracy and exclusionary political space, he said.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 3



Two boatmen navigate their vessel through clumps of garbage on the Chaktai Khal in Chattogram. Waste carelessly dumped in the city's canals find their way to the Karnaphuli river, causing environmental damage. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

NBR awards nine highest VAT payers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue yesterday awarded nine firms for paying the highest amounts in value-added tax in the 2019-20 fiscal year.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal handed over the crests to the representatives of the firms at an event at IDEB Bhaban in the capital.

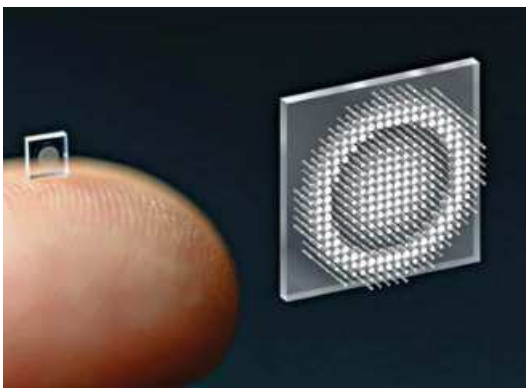
Manufacturers Aristopharma Ltd, Square Toiletries Ltd, and Maya Biri Factory; traders SM Motors, AMCO Bajaj International and MABS Union Motors Ltd; and service providers Edotco Bangladesh Company Ltd, Grey Advertising Bangladesh Ltd, and Robert Bosch Bangladesh Ltd were recognised as the highest VAT paying firms in the country.

Finance Minister Kamal said taxes allow the government to spend for the welfare of people.

NBR Chairman Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem said the revenue

SEE PAGE 12 COL 6

Engineers develop tiny camera the size of a grain of salt



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Researchers have created an ultracompact camera the size of a grain of salt capable of producing pictures on par with lenses hundreds of thousands of times larger than it.

Engineers from Princeton University and the University of Washington say that the camera can produce full-colour images that could be used in collaboration with medical robots to diagnose and treat diseases.

Traditional cameras use curved glass or plastic to bend light rays, this new camera uses

SEE PAGE 12 COL 6

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Pakistan general sends SOS to UN

DECEMBER 11, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGLADESH BANS COMMUNAL PARTIES

The Bangladesh government today banned four communal parties -- the Muslim League, the Jamaet-i-Islami, the Nizami Islam and the People's Democratic Party. The announcement was made by acting president Syed Nazrul Islam in Jashore.

"Religion will not be allowed to be used in politics in Independent Bangladesh," he said. He also said that a tribunal would shortly be formed to try the war criminals. He appealed to all not to take the law into their own hands and "kill traitors and collaborators", but the people should hand over the traitors to the representatives of the Bangladesh government.

ON THE WAR FRONT

Pakistan said today that India had landed a brigade of paratroops north of Dhaka. A Pakistani military spokesman described the situation in East Pakistan as "grim". It was, however, asserted that major East Pakistani towns, including Jessore and Comilla, were



still in Pakistani hands but that landing of Indian troops by helicopter and parachute deep within East Pakistan had bypassed main points of Pakistani resistance.

The Pakistan army in the eastern section was cut off from resupply from the West and for the last four days had been without the protection of an air force. Dhaka was under continuous air attack by Mitro Bahini.

The New York Times reported that Rao Farman Ali, military adviser to the puppet civil government in East Pakistan, proposed a ceasefire to the United Nations under which non-Bangalees would be evacuated and political autonomy would be conceded by Pakistan.

Meanwhile, on the western front,

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

5 held for spreading anti-state propaganda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rab arrested five people in the capital's Swamibagh area on charges of spreading anti-state propaganda.

The arrestees are: Abdullah Al Mahmud, 29, Wayez Kuruni, 27, Touhidul Islam 26, Gazi Sakhawat, 29, and Habibur Rahman, 30, said a Rab media release yesterday.

Several laptops, portable hard disks, and leaflets containing provocative and anti-state statements were seized during the arrests, it said.

During primary interrogation, all five confessed to their involvement in spreading anti-state conspiracies and sabotage.

The arrestees said they formed secret groups on social media platforms where they negatively portrayed the activities of

SEE PAGE 12 COL 6

Onion prices shoot up

AKANDA MUHAMMAD JAHID

The retail price of onion has gone up to Tk 80 per kg in city kitchen markets, putting the low and middle income people, already reeling from Covid-19 fallout, under more financial pressure.

Retailers were seen selling the local variety of onion for Tk 75-80 a kg, up by Tk 30 from three days ago while the imported Indian onion was being sold for Tk 50-60 a kg, an increase by about Tk 15.

Md Amin Mia, a retailer at Shukrabad kitchen market, said he bought 120kg of local onion from Mohammadpur Krishi Market at Tk 75 a kg and was selling it for Tk 80 a kg.

Wholesalers in Karwan Bazar and several other markets were selling the local variety of the essential cooking ingredient for Tk 70-75 a kg and the imported Indian onion for Tk 45-55 a kg.

Visiting Town Hall kitchen market in Mohammadpur yesterday, this correspondent found customers expressing worries about soaring onion prices.

Manirul Islam, a private company employee, was telling an onion trader, "How can we survive if the prices of essentials are so high?"

The 35-year-old told this correspondent he could not afford the high prices of essentials.

"For the last few months, my salary amount was exhausted by the 20th of each month. I need to borrow money to run my family for the rest 10 days. I can't even buy medicine for my ailing parents."

Another private employee, Md Shafiqul Islam, said his family has already reduced their food intake to cope with the additional expenses.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 3

Faridpur Gangs Aide to Rubel, Barkat held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Faridpur police arrested the president of Faridpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry from the capital early yesterday.

The arrestee is Md Siddiqur Rahman, 40, son of late Alauddin Sheikh of Guhaluxmipur area in Faridpur Sadar upazila.

There are four cases against Siddiqur with Kotwali Police Station -- three are related to extortion and criminal activities while another is a murder case.

Faridpur Additional Superintendent of Police Jamal Pasha confirmed the matter at a press conference at noon.

According to the press

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 11

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Workers cleaning the steps and walkway of the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in the capital's Rayerbazar yesterday, ahead of the Martyred Intellectuals Day to be observed on December 14. On the day, people from all walks of life visit the monument to mourn and pay respect to the intellectuals killed by the Pakistan occupation army at the fag end of the 1971 Liberation War.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Star HEALTHLINE

How to clean your ears
WITHOUT DAMAGING THEM

STAR HEALTH DESK

Do your ears really need cleaning? If they do, how to do it without causing damage?

ENT specialists around the world agree that ears generally don't need cleaning. Presence of cerumen or earwax is normal, according to experts. It actually helps protect and lubricate the ears. In its absence ears would be itchy and dry.

Along with having antibacterial properties, earwax is like a filter for harmful things like dirt and dust,

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1



Hyginex
Instant hand sanitizer

BEACON
Pharmaceuticals Limited