



A massive surge round the corner

Health minister sounds the alarm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid a surge in Covid cases, Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday warned that the situation was set to turn grim, putting a strain on the country's healthcare system.

There will be a massive spike in daily cases and deaths in the coming days, he said, citing analyses of the current transmission trend.

"If the situation worsens and we have 40,000 or one lakh patients, where will we treat them?" he asked.

Hospitals across the country have around 20,000 beds in total for Covid patients, he said, urging all to strictly follow the health rules in order to avert a disaster.

DATE	CONFIRMED CASES	POSITIVITY RATE
Jan 6	1,140	5%
Jan 7	1,146	6%
Jan 8	1,116	6%
Jan 9	1,491	7%
Jan 10	2,231	9%
Jan 11	2,458	9%
Jan 12	2,916	11.68%

Around 1,300 Covid patients were admitted to hospitals as of yesterday, shows DGHS data.

"Patients have already started coming to hospitals. We will see a massive spike in the number of patients over the next five to seven days. It will put pressure on doctors and nurses. People will struggle to get beds and the death rate will also go up."

The minister was speaking at an event in the capital's Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS).

The DGHS reported 2,916 new cases and four deaths in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday. The positivity rate jumped to 11.68 percent from 2.43 percent on January 1.

Health officials said the transmission rate would be much higher than reported and urged everybody to wear masks outdoors, maintain physical distance, and more importantly, get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Otherwise, the situation might slip out of hand, they warned.

At an online briefing yesterday, DGHS spokesperson Prof Robed Amin said, "Many [infected patients] are not getting tested. If they did, the number of daily cases would be much higher."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Students of Shaheed Ramiz Uddin Cantonment College walk through the underpass next to the school on the capital's Airport Road after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually inaugurated the walkway yesterday. In July 2018, two students of the school, Dia Khanam Mim and Abdul Karim, were killed on the spot when a bus ploughed into a crowd.

RHD ROAD SAFETY DIVISION

Dropped when needed most?

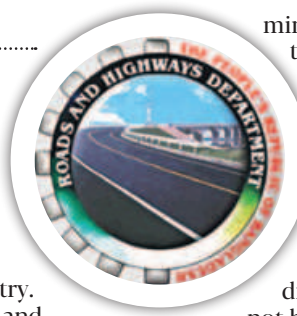
TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

At a time when there's a heightened public concern over traffic deaths and safety, the Road Safety Division of the RHD may soon cease to exist.

And it may happen despite a proposal from the RHD to rather expand and strengthen it, considering how reckless driving and violations of traffic rules are claiming lives every day throughout the country.

The division was formed under the Roads and Highways Department to deal with issues related to road safety. Currently, an executive engineer is at its helm.

In a proposal sent to the public administration



ministry in early 2020, the RHD suggested that the division be expanded into a circle under a new wing. It also proposed several changes in the existing organogram with additional manpower.

In October last year, the ministry partially approved some of the changes but did not give its nod to the new wing.

This means that once the new organogram comes into force, the road safety division will cease to exist and the RHD would not have any dedicated manpower to take road safety measures like conducting audits, investigating accidents or taking corrective steps.

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SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Mask wearing is the exception rather than the norm while social distancing is ignored altogether at a roadside winter wear market in the capital's Gulistan. As the Covid-19 infection rate surges, such disregard for health guidelines could weaken the country's fight against the pandemic. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

JAN 16 NCC POLLS

Voters fear chaos, CEC pledges fairness

Ivy, Taimur believe polling will be peaceful

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA AND SANAD SAHA

With the Narayanganj city polls only two days away, voters fear there may be chaos on election day over taking control of polling centres by supporters of some ward councillor candidates.

However, two heavyweight mayor candidates -- Selina Hayat Ivy and Taimur Alam Khandakar -- hope the voting will be held peacefully on Sunday.

A total of 148 councillor hopefuls are contesting polls in 27 wards of Narayanganj City Corporation while 34 women are running for nine reserved seats of women councillors.

Meanwhile, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda yesterday said Sunday's election would be held in a free and fair manner as polls officials and the local administration were working sincerely.

He urged the presiding officers not to allow any voter in polling centres without wearing mask and to



ensure social distancing as the Covid-19 situation was getting worse in the country.

CONCERN REMAINS

Wising anonymity, a voter in the city's Bandar area said all six councillor candidates in ward-22 are campaigning desperately to win the polls.

"Possibilities are there that there would be chaos centring the councillor elections. Supporters of a candidate are already intimidating voters into casting ballots for their councillor hopeful," he added.

Raihan Hossain, a voter in ward-1, said supporters of Omar Farooq and Mahmudur Rahman, two major councillor hopefuls in the ward, have clashed several times since the allocation of electoral symbols among the candidates on December 28.

"There are fears such a rivalry would lead to chaos on polling day," he added.

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Qawwali event at DU foiled BCL activists behind it, allege organisers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, DU

A Qawwali performance at TSC on Dhaka University campus yesterday was foiled allegedly by Bangladesh Chhatra League activists.

A group of BCL men vandalised the stage, chairs and beat up the programme organisers and some students, said witnesses.

They also barred journalists from taking footage of the incident with their mobile phones.

Seeking anonymity, a DU student said, "The programme was scheduled to start at 6:00pm today. But a group of Chhatra League activists earlier asked the organisers to stop it."

The organisers alleged that the attack was carried

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

ORGAN TRADE

Nine held in Joypurhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, DINAJPUR

Nine members of an organ trafficking gang were sent to jail by a court in Joypurhat yesterday following their arrest by Rab from the district's Kalai upazila on Tuesday night, said law enforcement officials.

Rab officials in Joypurhat confirmed the arrests at a press conference yesterday and sources at the Kalai Police Station said the nine were sent to jail in the afternoon yesterday after they were produced before a Joypurhat court.

Kalai upazila is the largest source of kidney for acute patients who need the organ for transplant, Lt Col Ziaur Rahman of Joypurhat Rab camp said at the press conference.

The arrestees are Khaza Momen Uddin, 44, Azadul Islam, 37, Forkan Ali, 45, Afzar Uddin, 56, Nurul Islam, 50, Babul Fakir, 52, Sobhan Mondal, 52,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



A view of a damaged stage at Dhaka University's TSC where a Qawwali programme was taking place yesterday. Witnesses and organisers of the event said Bangladesh Chhatra League activists assaulted students, organisers and also vandalised the stage and chairs.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Omicron pushing Covid out of pandemic phase

Say experts; Germany, Austria set new daily case records

AGENCIES

The spread of the Omicron variant is pushing Covid towards being an endemic disease that humanity can live with, although it remains a pandemic for now, the EU's drug watchdog said.

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) also expressed doubts about giving a fourth vaccine shot to the general population, saying repeated boosters were not a "sustainable" strategy.

"Nobody knows exactly when we will be at the end of the tunnel but we will be there," Marco Cavaleri, head of vaccine strategy at the Amsterdam-based regulator, told journalists on Tuesday evening.

"With the increase of immunity in population -- and with Omicron, there will be a lot of natural immunity taking place on top of vaccination -- we will be fast moving towards a scenario that will be closer to endemicity," he added.

But he stressed that "we should not forget we are still in a pandemic", noting the huge burden on healthcare from the surge in Omicron.

"If we have a strategy in which we give

boosters every four months, we will end up potentially having problems with immune response," Cavaleri said. "And secondly of course there is the risk of fatigue in the population with continuous administration of boosters."

"Omicron, with its extraordinary, unprecedented degree of transmissibility, will ultimately find just about everybody. There's no way we're going to eradicate this."

Anthony Fauci top US infectious disease official

Countries should instead start thinking about spacing out boosters at longer intervals, Cavaleri said.

Top US scientist Anthony Fauci said on Tuesday the United States is approaching the "threshold" of transitioning to living

with the coronavirus as a manageable disease, despite soaring cases and record-high hospitalisations, reports AFP.

Meanwhile, Germany has reported more than 80,000 new daily Covid-19 infections, marking a new daily record.

Austria's daily new infections have risen to a new record of 18,427, newspaper Kronen Zeitung reported yesterday as cases have been surging because of the spread of the Omicron variant.

India reported 194,720 new cases yesterday, the most since late May, health ministry data showed.

Saudi Arabia has registered its highest daily number of new infections so far, health ministry data showed, breaking through 5,000 cases yesterday.

President Vladimir Putin said yesterday Russia had two weeks to prepare for a fresh wave of coronavirus infections driven by the Omicron variant after the WHO warned of a surge in Europe.

Indonesia opened its coronavirus booster campaign to the public as the country records rising infections driven by the Omicron variant.

The free shots will be given to the elderly and at-risk residents as a priority, but will be available to everyone who received their second dose six months prior, President Joko Widodo said on Tuesday after announcing the decision.



16 burnt to death in South Africa mini-bus crash

AFP, JOHANNESBURG

Sixteen people were burnt to death on Tuesday when a minibus taxi and an SUV collided on a highway in South Africa's northeastern Limpopo province, a local official said. The SUV driver lost control after a tyre burst and collided head-on with a 22-seater Mercedes-Benz bus, provincial transport ministry spokesman Mike Maringa told AFP yesterday.

Assign staff

FROM PAGE 1

Bridge over the Chengri river in Rangamati's Naniarchar.

The PM asked the education ministry to take initiatives for directing every educational institution up to higher secondary level to keep its staff on adjacent road points to help students and prevent the loss of lives to accidents.

Because, she said, students are reluctant about paying heed to the instructions of others in many cases. "If there's anyone from the school authorities, they'll follow his or her instructions," she said, adding that every school will take the initiative on their own.

Hasina asked the students to follow traffic rules during their movement on roads. "In every school and college, students should be taught about traffic rules from their very childhood. Every school, college and university will have to take this step."

She asked people not to attack car drivers soon after any accident. It might lead to further accidents when the driver would try to escape the attack.

"There's a tendency to do that in our country. If

any accident takes place, all start beating the driver and, in some cases, drivers are killed in such mob attacks," she said, adding that it needs to be considered and found out the reasons behind an accident.

Pointing at the pedestrians, the PM said everyone needs to have knowledge about traffic rules and follow those.

On August 12, 2018, Hasina laid the foundation of the underpass after Diya Khanam Mim and Abdul Karim Rajib, first-year students of Shaheed Ramiz Uddin Cantonment College, were killed as a bus ploughed into some students in front of Kurmitola General Hospital in the capital on July 29.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader was present at the virtual event conducted by PM's Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikaus.

Chief of Army Staff SM Shafiuddin Ahmed, Secretary of Road Transport and Highways Division Nazrul Islam and Engineer in Chief of Bangladesh Army Major General Ibne Fazal Shayekhuzzaman spoke on the occasion.

The projects were implemented by the army.

A massive surge round the corner

FROM PAGE 1

He said the transmission has been rising "progressively" since the beginning of this month because of the Omicron variant. "This is alarming for us."

With three new cases reported yesterday, 33 Omicron cases have so far been confirmed in the country. The first two cases were reported on December 9.

First reported in South Africa, the variant can transmit 70 times faster than the original novel coronavirus that emerged in China's Wuhan in December 2019, studies show.

DGHS data shows the

Covid transmission has gone up eight times since January 1.

A total of 4,558 cases were detected last month, whereas 15,766 cases have already been confirmed so far this month.

Most of the fresh cases reported yesterday were detected in Dhaka.

Referring to the latest DGHS weekly analysis as of Sunday, Robed said Dhaka and Rangamati were being considered "red zones" with positivity rates higher than 10 percent each.

Rajshahi, Natore, Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Jashore and Dinajpur have been labelled "yellow zones",

with transmission rates between 5 and 10 percent, he said.

Speaking at the event yesterday, the health minister said the government would step in to curb the Covid infection.

"Anyone outside home without a mask will be fined from tomorrow [today]."

He also said no public event would be allowed from today.

Asked how they would enforce the Covid curbs, he said, "These are government directives. The health ministry can only make suggestions. It is the job of the other ministries to make sure that the suggestions are

followed."

The minister also said around 65 lakh students have so far been jabbed against the targetted 1.28 crore.

"People don't go [to the vaccination centres] unless they are forced. Earlier, students showed reluctance to get the shots, but they are now swarming the centres after we told them that they must be vaccinated to attend classes."

He added the government has a stock of some 6-7 crore vaccines. "We have enough vaccines. Along with our hospitals, we too are prepared. But hospitals have a limit."

Voters fear chaos

FROM PAGE 1

Ashir Baran Biswas, councillor hopeful in ward-15, alleged that some candidates were trying to purchase votes. "A group of people are trying to create chaos so that voters cannot go to polling centres. I will write to the Election Commission and the local administration informing them about my concerns."

Ishrat Jahan Khan Smrity, who is running for councillor in ward-22, said there is a chance of chaos as some Awami League and BNP leaders are taking part in the polls.

"Some candidates are intimidating voters into casting their ballots in favour of them and also obstructing their opponents from campaigning," she alleged.

Yesterday, Awami League mayoral nominee Selina Hayat Ivy said the overall election atmosphere in the city was good till date.

She said she wants that this atmosphere remains unchanged on the voting day so that voters can exercise their franchise without fear.

Stating that the last two NCC polls were held peacefully, Ivy said, "I urge the administration to create an atmosphere in which people don't feel afraid of going to polling centres."

On the other hand, independent candidate Taimur Alam Khandakar alleged that police raided the houses of his supporters and created a panic situation, which

remains as a barrier to holding of polls peacefully.

"Police did not arrest anyone from the ruling party, but they are harassing my supporters. I want nothing but a level playing field so that people can cast their ballots. I want the prime minister's intervention so that the election in Narayanganj is not manipulated," he told journalists yesterday during electioneering.

Also yesterday, the CEC held a meeting with the presiding officers in Narayanganj polls. He talked to journalists after the meeting at a school in the city.

Asked about the violation of the electoral code of conduct by local AL lawmaker Shamim Osman, Huda said, "He [lawmaker] violated the electoral code of conduct, but he did not flout it to such an extent which would warrant issuing a notice, handing out punishment or bringing to book."

Talking about presiding officers, he said, "As an individual, one may be prejudiced against a person or a particular party, but when you are on election duty, you will have to carry out your duties bestowed on you."

Jayedul Alam, Narayanganj superintendent of police, said tensions are there in some wards and special measures have been taken for those.

He said an adequate number of law enforcers will be deployed at the polling centres so that no one can create chaos.

Form polls-time govt under Hasina: NPP

At a dialogue with President Abdul Hamid, National People's Party yesterday suggested an "election-time" government, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, comprising all registered pro-liberation political parties.

It also urged the president to take measures to enact a permanent law in line with the constitution on EC formation.

Led by Chairman Sheikh Salauddin Salu, an NPP delegation, at the meeting in the Bangabhaban, placed a five-point proposal, including forming an independent and neutral EC.

Sinha murder verdict on January 31

The verdict in the Major (ret'd) Sinha Rashed Khan murder case is scheduled to be delivered on January 31, Public Prosecutor Faridul Alam told our Cox's Bazar correspondent yesterday.



He added that Judge Mohammad Ismail of Cox's Bazar

District and Sessions Judge's Court set the date.

Sinha was shot dead at a police check-post in Teknaf on July 31.

Indian student found dead in Jashore

An Indian student of Jashore Ad-din Sakina Medical College and Hospital was found dead in a dormitory bathroom of the college yesterday.

Sheema Johra, 21, from Jammu and Kashmir, was found hanging from the bathroom ceiling after authorities, being informed by a cleaner, broke open the door, said Prof Dr Kamal Uddin, principal of the college.

Doctors of Jashore General Hospital, where the body was taken, said the reason behind her death could not yet be known.

TDS reports picked for GIJN top 10 list

Two reports of The Daily Star made it to The Global Investigative Journalism Network's top 10 "Best Investigative Stories in 2021" from Bangladesh.

The report titled "Built to crumble" by Partha Pratim Bhattacharjee and Zyma Islam -- on the Ashrayan-2 project -- was published on July 25.

The other -- "Rogue IPTVs on the prowl" -- by Zyma Islam, which, according to GIJN, "exposed internet television outlets not paying reporters' salaries, with journalists instead taking a cut from sponsored content", was published on September 22.



Cleaning glasses of the capital's high-rises has always been a hazardous job, which includes climbing up and hanging on to a ladder made of bamboo and rope. While the skilled workers have become quite adept at it, the process, devoid of safety measures of any kind, remains extremely risky. The photo was taken from the capital's Dhanmondi yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

REDUCING MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE

Incorporate private caregivers to reach SDG: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To reach the SDG target by 2030, private caregivers should be incorporated in the healthcare system, said speakers at a programme yesterday.

They said despite having no payment and infrastructural facilities, private caregivers are providing antenatal and postnatal care, carrying out vitamin A campaigns, and facilitating family planning and vaccination among other services.

Care Bangladesh and Community Health Worker Initiative jointly organised the roundtable “Changing perspective of CSBA in Bangladesh through role shifting to community-skilled pregnancy attendant: opportunities and challenges”, at Medical Research Council.

“Of the 26 lakh annual births in the country, 53 percent deliveries were conducted at homes, only three percent by skilled people,” said Dr Halida Hanum, reproductive health epidemiologist of Johns Hopkins University in Maryland, USA, who conducted the roundtable.

“Besides, most community clinics in the country remain unused. Those could be utilised as infrastructural support for CSBAs,” she said.

Community Skilled Birth Attendants (CSBA) are private caregivers working under Care Bangladesh. Dr Halida said if over 14,000 community clinics are used for maternity support, 120 deliveries can be carried

out every year. “But we need a national strategy to raise funds, by engaging local representatives.”

Care Bangladesh initiated a “skilled-health entrepreneurship” model in Sunamganj and Netrakona in 2003, and trained 300 health-service providers, who conducted over 47,000 deliveries in the last six years.

Mentioning the data, icddr,b assistant scientist Bidhan Sarker, in a presentation, said

Despite having no payment and infrastructural facilities, private caregivers are providing antenatal and postnatal care, carrying out vitamin A campaigns, and facilitating family planning and vaccination among other services.

there should be a private-public partnership process to ensure robust services in community clinics 24/7.

Prof Syed Modasser Ali, president of Community Clinic Health Support Trust, said they have some limitations, but they will try to incorporate the trained workforce.

Despite significant and steady progress in the last two decades, Bangladesh's maternal mortality ratio stands at 196 for every lakh. The SDG target is 70 by 2030.

Climate-smart projects THE SMART WAY FORWARD

Say experts on infrastructural development

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

All infrastructural projects in Bangladesh should be climate-smart as the country aims to achieve the goals committed to the UN in reducing carbon emission, said officials and development experts yesterday.

Bangladesh committed to reducing 21.85 percent carbon emission by 2030 and support global initiatives to limit global warming to 1.5-2 degree-Celsius at the pre-industrial level.

Major areas of the infrastructure projects should focus on renewable energy, transport and waste management. Authorities need to see how eco-friendly transports, including rail and waterways, can be better utilised, they said.

The speakers observed that all the ministries, private sector, civil society organisations need to have plans and design projects that have climate components aimed at improving efficiency.

The observations came at a seminar titled “Scope of climate-smart Public-Private Partnership in Bangladesh and COP-26 Discussion”, organised by the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) in partnership with the UNDP at a city hotel.

State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain said Bangladesh is becoming an industrial hub and the industries can play a major role by installing effluent treatment plants and adopting energy-efficient technologies.

Solar power, wind power, hydropower, electric cars – all options of renewable energy need to be explored, he said.

Mostafa Kamal, secretary of the environment ministry, said introducing electric cars, satellite towns and reducing traffic congestions are some of the most important areas where more investments would be required to reduce greenhouse gas

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Focusing on renewable energy, waste management
- Utilising eco-friendly transports
- Installing effluent treatment plants
- Adopting energy-efficient technologies
- Designing small, medium-scale climate-resilient projects

emissions.

The PPPA as a coordinating body needs to have specific models of partnership, which are sustainable and beneficial for all stakeholders, he said.

UNDP Resident Representative Sudipto Mukherjee said it is not always right to think of mega-projects but also climate-resilient projects of small and medium-scale involving large sections of the population.

Bangladesh faces frequent cyclones and floods and it is important to see how the damages to these disasters, especially to the infrastructure, can be further reduced, he said.

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert C Dickson said the foreign direct investment is crucial for Bangladesh as it graduates by 2026. The PPPA can attract lots of investors provided that the investment climate is improved.

Prof Saleemul Huq, director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development; Danish Ambassador to Bangladesh Winnie Estrup Petersen; and Turkish Ambassador Mustafa Osman Turan, among others, spoke at the seminar chaired by PPPA CEO Sultana Afroz.

‘Their plight must be addressed’

Shahriar Alam on migrant workers in Lebanon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam yesterday said Bangladeshi migrant workers are facing inflation in Lebanon which needs to be addressed.

“Look at Lebanon... where the currency was devaluated like 50 times,” he said, addressing a workshop at a Dhaka hotel as chief guest.

This newspaper published separate reports on December 22 and March 20 last year on the economic hardship of thousands of Bangladeshi workers in Lebanon.

In his speech, Shahriar Alam said when the migrant workers in Lebanon convert their local earnings into dollar it's actually less compared to what they used to send back home. “I think we need to address the issue... We need to find a way to keep them [migrants] encouraged and interested to work,” he added.

Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit organised the workshop on “Impact of Migration on Transformation to Sustainability: Poverty and Local Development in Bangladesh”.

The state minister said the country needs to upskill and re-skill its migrant labour force, adding, Bangladeshi migrants are still one of the lowest paid in the world.

Chairing the session, economist Hossain Zillur Rahman said Bangladesh has benefited very much from migration and over time both incrementally and strategically made many policy innovations. Besides, Bangladesh has now globally a very respectable identity in terms of its engagement on migration issues, he said.

RMMRU Founding Chair Prof Tasneem Siddiqui and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's Director of Cooperation Suzanne Muller also spoke.

Law alone cannot stop trafficking Says minister, calling for integrated approaches

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said human trafficking cannot be prevented by only enforcing laws.

“Integrated approaches are needed to combat this offence,” he said while speaking as chief guest at an event in Dhaka.

The USAID and Judicial Administration Training Institute jointly organised the meeting at a city hotel on the occasion of inaugurating a training programme on human trafficking, relevant national and international laws and ensuring justice for victims.

Twenty-three judges from Anti-Human Trafficking Offence Tribunals and Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals attended the event.

The minister said the government is taking different steps to fight trafficking.

As part of the policy and steps, special importance is being given to quickly dispose of such cases, he added.

Special laws have been formulated and tribunals have been set up for this purpose and judges and prosecutors have been appointed.

Besides, a committee under the ministry of home affairs is working to this effect and a monitoring cell has been established at the Police Headquarters to collect and analyse the information on trafficking.



PRAYER
TIMING
JAN 13



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5:30	12:45	4:00	5:36	7:00
Jamaat	6:05	1:15	4:15	5:40	7:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					

KASHIMPUR CENTRAL JAIL

Inmates using cellphones with guards' help: ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inmates are using cellphones, assisted by guards at Kashimpur Central Jail in Gazipur, finds Anti-Corruption Commission.

During a visit to the jail yesterday, an ACC team recovered a mobile phone from an inmate, confirmed ACC Public Relations Office.

ACC Deputy Director Salam Ali Molla led the team, which also found that “the jail authorities don't have their own doctors and nurses. Only one doctor is carrying out duties on deputation.”

“Health guidelines are not being followed properly although the hospital has high risk of Covid infection,” said an ACC official.

Food is cooked in a very unhygienic kitchen and distributed through a card system. Extra money is collected during the card issuance process, he said.

The jail authorities told the ACC team that they will take necessary steps regarding the matter.

On January 5, the jail authorities seized a cellphone from Nur Hossain, a death-row convict in the Narayanganj 7-murder case. Following this, they formed a three-member probe committee.



Around one lakh people live in Mirpur's Diabari area, who need to go to Savar's Kaundia by crossing the Turag river every day in search of a living. Most often, these people are seen getting on a boat to get to the other side. This is a particularly risky and inconvenient endeavour, which is why the residents have been demanding a bridge over the river for quite some time now. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

“

We are trying to turn Dhaka into a planned city, but PPP projects and project-based work of different service-providing organisations are barrier to developing a planned city.

DSCC Mayor
Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh



Every winter, Karnaphuli riverbank buzzes with workers, as it's the season to construct large fishing trawlers in the region. A vessel like this one, which is being built by a team near Rajarkhali canal, generally costs around Tk 1 crore and takes three months to build, according to workers. This photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

UP ELECTION
Moslem
Uddin denies
'nomination
trade'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Awami League lawmaker Moslem Uddin Ahmed yesterday said he was not involved in "nomination trade" centring union parishad election. Moslem, president of AL Chattogram south district unit and MP of Chattogram-8 constituency, was addressing a press conference at Chattogram Press Club.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Covid positivity rate jumps to 12.4pc in Ctg

Highest in 4 months; experts call for strict measures

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The Covid-19 infection rate in Chattogram hit almost 13 percent yesterday, the first time after four months. A total of 222 cases were detected after testing 1,790 samples in 24 hours till 12:00am, putting the positivity rate at 12.40 percent. The infection rate was nine percent on Tuesday and 5.85 percent on Monday. Yesterday's rate was the highest in four months. The district witnessed a similar rate on August 31. A total of 174 positive samples were from the city and 48 from different upazilas,

said Dr Elias Chowdhury, civil surgeon of Chattogram. No patient died yesterday, but according to experts, after the capital, the port city is becoming a Covid-19 hotspot in the country. The situation has been getting worse since last week. Just 35 cases were detected in the district on January 4, with a positivity rate of 2.07 percent, said sources in Chattogram Civil Surgeon office. With cases increasing daily, the rush of patients is also increasing at hospitals. For example, the number of daily patients admitted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital's Covid ward was hovering from

10 to 12 last week, whereas it increased to 60 yesterday, said CMCH Director Brig Gen Shamim Ahsan. However, the death rate is low; three deaths were reported against 953 positive cases from January 4 till yesterday. Experts warned that if the infection rate keeps increasing, the death rate would also increase. They emphasised ensuring strict health guidelines. Public health expert Prof Shakeel Ahmed, head of Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases laboratory thinks the Omicron variant is responsible for the recent rise of infection rate.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Schoolboy among 4 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed and 11 injured in road accidents in two districts during the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents. In Lalmonirhat, a schoolboy and his uncle were killed, and the child's father was injured as a truck hit their motorcycle yesterday. The accident took place around 9:00am on Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway in RDRS office area of Hatibandha upazila, said police. Seven-year-old Abdullah Bin Nayeem was a nursery student of a local kindergarten. He along with his father and uncle was going to his school, said Hatibandha Police Station OC Ershadul Alam. Nayeem died on the spot and his uncle Imran Ali at Rangpur Medical College Hospital. Nayeem's father Faruk Hossain sustained minor injuries. The truck driver was arrested, and his vehicle was seized from the spot, the OC said. In Narayanganj, at least two people were killed and 10 injured as a truck collided with a human haulier in Araihaazar upazila on Tuesday night. The accident occurred around 10:00pm on Dhaka-Araihaazar road in Binaichar area. The deceased are Hajera (30) and Nasima (20) from the upazila, said Araihaazar Police Station OC Anisur Rahman. Of the injured, four were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. He said around 10-12 workers were returning home from their workplace on the human haulier. Locals rescued the victims and took them to a hospital, where the doctors declared Hajera and Nasima dead.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

6 brick kilns demolished, fined Tk 62 lakh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A mobile court of Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday demolished six illegal brick kilns in Savar for polluting the environment. The brick kiln owners were also fined a total of Tk 62 lakh. The court led by DoE executive magistrate Kazi Tamjid Ahmed conducted the drive at Namagenda and Birulia. M/S Eklas Brick Kiln was fined Tk 20 lakh, Firoz Brick Kiln Tk 6 lakh, M/S Madhumati and Karnaphully brick kilns Tk 5 lakh each, Mahim Brick Kiln Tk 20 lakh and Ripan Brick Kiln Tk 6 lakh, he said. "We will continue our drives," he added.

Meghna Petroleum Limited
(A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
58-59, Agrabad Commercial Area, Chattogram

Re-e-Tender Notice

Re-e-Tender is invited in the e-GP Portal for the procurement of the following goods, details are given below:

S/N	Re-e-Tender ID	Procurement title	Tender last selling (date & time)	Tender closing & opening (date & time)	Procurement method
1.	647704 (PUR: 012)	Procurement of 2" Dia Petroleum Product Flow Meter	26 January, 2022; 17:00 Hrs.	27 January, 2022; 15:00 Hrs.	One Stage Two Envelopes
2.	647717 (PUR: 013)	Procurement of 3" Dia Petroleum Product Flow Meter	26 January, 2022; 17:00 Hrs.	27 January, 2022; 15:30 Hrs.	Tendering Method (OSTETM)

This is an online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal.

GD-82

There is no alternative to following health guidelines strictly, until the situation improves. Vaccines are a must to tackle the pandemic.

Dr Abdur Rob, head of Covid ward at Ctg General Hospital

10 BNP men hurt as rally stage breaks down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Ten BNP activists sustained minor injuries as a portion of a rally stage in CDA Residential Area Field in Chattogram broke down all of a sudden while they were delivering speeches yesterday. The injured have been given primary treatment. According to the information provided by sources in BNP, a portion of the stage broke down as people getting on the stage exceeded its capacity. BNP Chattogram south district unit organised the rally as part of the centrally declared programme, demanding better treatment of Khaleda Zia abroad.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

BNP's central standing committee member Ameer Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury was present as the chief guest at the event where Jainal Abedin Faruk, adviser to the BNP chairperson, and Mahbubur Rahman Shamim, BNP's central organising secretary, spoke among others. Khasru, in his speech, said BNP programmes could not be foiled by imposing section 144. "Gone are the days when we would ask the police for permission to hold our programmes," he added. People in the country are united now in their demand that the government step down, said Khasru.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয় (সওজ)
সড়ক বিভাগ, গাইবান্ধা
ফোন নং-০৫৪১-৫১৬৭৪, ফ্যাক্স নং-০৫৪১-৫১৪৩৫
E-mail: egpai@rhd.gov.bd

তারিখঃ ১১-০১-২০২২

স্মারক নং-০৫.০১.৩২০০.৪২৬.১০.০০০.২২-৫০

সেতুর ইজারা কোটেশন আহবান বিজ্ঞপ্তি (৬ষ্ঠ আহবান)

সেতুর নাম ও অবস্থানঃ গাইবান্ধা সড়ক বিভাগীয় গাইবান্ধা-গোবিন্দপাড়া ভায়া নাকাইহাট সড়কের ২১তম কিলোমিটারে বড়দহ সেতুর যাহার নিকটে ইজারা দরপত্র বিক্রয় করা হয়েছে তার নাম ও ঠিকানাঃ.....

মোসাদ/জমাঃ.....

টাকার পরিমাণ (অনেক)ঃ..... (স্থানীয়).....

শিশি নংঃ..... তারিখঃ.....

উক্তমান সহকারী/ক্যাশিয়ার স্বাক্ষর

ক্রঃ নং	বিবরণ	সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়
০১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	সড়ক ও জনপথ
০২।	অধিদপ্তর	সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তর
০৩।	ক্রমকর্তার নাম	নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, গাইবান্ধা
০৪।	দরপত্র বিষয়	ইজারা কোটেশন
০৫।	দরপত্র স্মারক নং	০৫.০১.৩২০০.৪২৬.১০.০০০.২২-৫০
০৬।	তারিখ	১১-০১-২০২২খ্রিঃ
০৭।	ক্রয়ের পদ্ধতি	ওপেন লিজ কোটেশন মেথড
০৮।	ইজারার বিবরণ	২০২১-২০২২(খ), ২০২২-২০২৩, ২০২৩-২০২৪ ও ২০২৪-২০২৫(খ) ইং অর্থ বছরের জন্য গাইবান্ধা সড়ক বিভাগীয় গাইবান্ধা-গোবিন্দপাড়া ভায়া নাকাইহাট সড়কের ২১তম কিলোমিটারে বড়দহ সেতুর যাহার নামে ইজারা দেয়া হবে।
০৯।	ইজারার সময়সীমা	৩ (তিন) বছর বা ১০৯৫ দিন।
১০।	ইজারা কোটেশনের সিডিউল স্থান	০১/৫/০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার টাকা) মাত্র।
১১।	ইজারা কোটেশন নং	০১/ইই/জিআরডি/২০২১-২০২২ (৬ষ্ঠ আহবান)।
১২।	বায়নার টাকার পরিমাণ	উক্ত মূল্যের ১০% (শতকরা দশ ভাগ) বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের অফিসিয়াল যে কোন সিডিউল ব্যাংক হইতে পে-অর্ডার/বিটি ইত্যাদি আকারে নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, গাইবান্ধা এর অফিসে কোটেশনের সঠিক জমা দিতে হবে।
১৩।	ইজারা ভাঙে অংশগ্রহণের যোগ্যতা	সরকারি/বেসরকারি/গায়ত্রীসনিক সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রকৌশলী, অফিস ইঞ্জিনিয়ার ও বাংলাদেশের অধিকাংশে স্থল ন্যায়িক যারা ভাট ও অয়কর প্রদান করেন।
১৪।	যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন পাওয়া যাবে	নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (সওজ), সড়ক বিভাগ, গাইবান্ধা/বগুড়া/জয়পুরহাট/বগুড়া/প্রাণি বিভাগ-১, সড়ক ভবন, তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা।
১৫।	যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন মুখবন্ধ অবস্থায় গ্রহণ করা হইবে	ক) অতিরিক্ত প্রধান প্রকৌশলী (সওজ), রংপুর জোন, রংপুর। খ) তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক সার্কেল, বগুড়া। গ) নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, গাইবান্ধা।
১৬।	ইজারা কোটেশন বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৭-০১-২০২২ তারিখ বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৭।	মুখবন্ধ অবস্থায় ইজারা কোটেশন গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময়	১৮-০১-২০২২ তারিখ ১১.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৮।	ইজারা কোটেশন খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	স্থানঃ নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ, গাইবান্ধা সড়ক বিভাগ, গাইবান্ধা। তারিখঃ ১৮-০১-২০২২খ্রিঃ সময়ঃ বিকাল ৪.০০ ঘটিকা।
১৯।	বিজ্ঞপ্তি আহবানকারী ব্যক্তির নাম	মোঃ ফিরোজ আহতার
২০।	বিজ্ঞপ্তি আহবানকারী ব্যক্তির পদবী	নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (সওজ)
২১।	বিজ্ঞপ্তি আহবানকারী ব্যক্তির ঠিকানা ফোন নং	সড়ক বিভাগ, গাইবান্ধা। ০৫৪১-৫১৬৭৪
২২।	ইজারা কোটেশন ডকুমেন্ট/নিসিদের সকল শর্তাবলী প্রযোজ্য হবে।	
২৩।	কোটেশন নাভাওয়া ভাড়া/ভাড়াহাওয়ার উক্ত দর কোটেশন তফসিলের নির্ধারিত স্থানে শুদ্ধ এবং স্পষ্টভাবে অঙ্কিত ও কথায় লিপিবদ্ধ করিতে হবে।	
২৪।	কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রয়োজন মনে করিলে এক বা একাধিকবার ইজারা কোটেশন আহবান করিতে পারবেন।	
২৫।	কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন বা সকল ইজারা কোটেশন আর্থিক বা সম্পূর্ণ ব্যতিরেকে ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করবেন। এছাড়া কোন আপত্তি বা অভিযোগ গ্রহণ করা হবে না।	
২৬।	ইজারার উদ্ধৃত দর সংশোধনের প্রয়োজন হইলে একটানে কেটে সংশোধন করিতে হইবে এবং অনুশাস্তর করিতে হইবে। কোনরূপ কাটাকাটি বা মুহূর্ত বাবদ্য করা যাবে না।	
২৭।	সময়ে সময়ে সরকারের পরিবর্তিত আয়কর ও ভ্যাট এর হার ইজারাদার মেনে নিতে বাধ্য থাকবে।	

কোটেশন দাখল স্বাক্ষর

মোঃ ফিরোজ আহতার
পরিচিতি নং-৬০২২৯৪
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (সওজ), সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, গাইবান্ধা

জিডি-১৩

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
College Education Development Project (CEDP)
Govt. Debendra College, Manikganj

Memo No. CEDP/GDC/2021-22/G-09/156 Date: 12/01/2022

e-Tender Notice 03/2021-2022

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

SI No.	Tender ID No.	Name of supply	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1.	647962	Procurement of Generator at Govt. Debendra College, Manikganj (G-09)	31-Jan-2022 13:00	31-Jan-2022 14:00

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 bank's branches up to 30-Jan-2022 16:00. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Professor Dr. Md. Rezaul Karim
Principal
Govt. Debendra College, Manikganj
Phone: 996610404
E-mail: debendracollege@gmail.com

GD-80



‘I follow no strategy, as the industry is quite unpredictable’

I follow no strategy, as the industry is quite unpredictable. You can be working one day, and suddenly, be left with nothing the next day. It is best to have other options, before coming into the industry.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Nazia Haque Orsha has been mesmerising audiences with her versatile performances since her participation in Lux-Channel i Superstar 2009. She carved a space for herself in the world of television, before making her way into OTT platforms and films.

In a candid conversation with The Daily Star, the “Networker Baire” actress opens up about her new films, upcoming ventures, and more.

Among film, television, and OTT platforms, which medium do you enjoy the most?

I am working on web-based projects more than anything else right now. I believe the audience for streaming platforms will be steady in the long run.

Currently, I am shooting for Golam

Sohrab Dodul’s web film, “Kalo Projapoti”, and I have also finished the shoot for Zee5’s “Kuhulika”.

Usually, for projects on OTT platforms, we get over a month to prepare for our roles and work on our craft. OTT platforms produce projects of higher quality and budgets too.

You have slowly moved away from television. Why so?

I have stopped working on television, as it became too hectic for me. I was working like a robot, and as a result, I was not delivering quality performances. As this was unacceptable to me, I distanced myself from the field.

Tell us about your upcoming films.

I am currently awaiting the release of two of my movies, Nur Imran Mithu’s “Patal Ghor” and Sajjad Khan’s “Shahosh”.

Both films might be released this year, and they are quite different from each other.

Moving forward, I will only choose films with strong characters.

Do you follow any strategy in your career?

You truly cannot plan anything in this industry. For example, if you look at Badhon’s career, she garnered international acclaim just last year, in her mid-30s.

Frankly speaking, I follow no strategy, as the industry is quite unpredictable. You can be working one day, and suddenly, be left with nothing the next day. It is best to have other options, before coming into the industry.

Are you still upset about Aranyo Anawer’s decision to cast Pori Moni in ‘Maa’, instead of you?

It is all in the past. I don’t feel upset or sad about the decision anymore. I only feel bad for the director, who might not be able to cast anyone in his films ever. There was no professionalism from his side. I pity him.



Bhabna excited for ‘Dampara’ with Ferdous

Ashna Habib Bhabna, fresh off the critical success of “Laal Moroger Jhuti”, shared a beautiful snapshot with renowned actor Ferdous from the sets of their upcoming project, “Dampara”. The film, which wrapped up shooting recently, is directed by Shuddhaman Chaiton. “He is such an amazing person and a great co-actor, I am already missing him,” wrote Bhabna on Facebook.

Akshay Kumar announces ‘Selfie’ with Imran Hashmi

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

It was reported that Akshay Kumar will feature in a film together, soon. It turns out that the stars will share the screen in ‘Selfie’, the upcoming remake of the Malayalam film “Driving Licence”.

“Kick-starting my day with a #Selfie! Because why not,” shared Akshay on Twitter. The film is being produced under Karan Johar’s Dharma Productions banner. According to reports on the Indian media, the story revolves around a cop and a superstar.



NEWS

Bangladesh seeks thaw

FROM PAGE 12

government will try to find out the reasons and address those, and improve democratic practices.

“If there are any mistakes, the government will rectify those,” Momen said.

“We have a number of channels for engagement with the US. We could not hold the dialogues due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As it goes away, we will be increasing our engagement. We believe we can remove the gaps and weaknesses we have,” said Momen.

In February, two dialogues – Security Dialogue in Washington and Investment Dialogue

– are likely in Dhaka. Generally, director general of the America wing leads security dialogue, but this time Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen may lead it, given the sensitivity of the issue this year, a foreign ministry official said.

Meanwhile, USAID Administrator Samantha Power is also likely to visit Dhaka soon, while Foreign Minister Momen is likely to visit Washington in February to join a discussion on climate change at the invitation of John Kerry, Biden’s Special Envoy for Climate.

“We want visits like these for more engagement with them,” Momen said recently.

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute President and former ambassador M Humayun Kabir said the foreign minister’s remarks that if there are mistakes, those will be rectified are in the right direction.

“The US is a very important country for us. It is so far the highest donor in the Rohingya crisis and an important factor to create pressure on Myanmar. We need to maintain a good relationship with it,” he said.

Bangladesh exports around \$6 billion worth of products, mostly RMG ones, to the US annually. The US provided over \$6 billion development assistance through USAID

since 1972, making it one of the most principal development partners.

According to the US Embassy in Dhaka, the US is also the largest donor of Covid-19 vaccines, more than 17 million so far, to Bangladesh. US companies are the largest foreign investors in Bangladesh, with \$3.4 billion in investments as of 2018. Chevron is the single largest foreign investor, producing some 55 percent of Bangladesh’s domestic natural gas.

A foreign ministry official said there is a large Bangladeshi diaspora, about 800,000, in the US. Also, in 2020-21, at least 8,598 Bangladeshi

students were enrolled in different US universities.

“We have a multi-faceted relationship with the US. So, we need to keep it strong,” a foreign ministry official told this correspondent.

Rab said it wanted a solution to the problem with the US by establishing a cordial relationship. The force has been receiving important training from the US since 2011. For now, Rab can avail of no US assistance or training because of the sanction.

Dhaka has not clarified if it is taking any actions against those sanctioned by the US.

According to the Global Magnitsky Accountability

Act, for sanctions to be lifted, the individual facing the sanction has to be prosecuted appropriately.

“Or, the person has to credibly demonstrate a significant change in behaviour, pay an appropriate consequence for the activities, and credibly commit to not engage in the types of activities,” it says.

M Humayun Kabir said there is no alternative for Dhaka to improve democratic values and rights situation for a strong relationship with Washington.

TIES TO REACH NEW HEIGHTS: MILLER

Outgoing US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R

Miller expressed hope that the “excellent relations” between the two countries would reach “new heights” in the future, noting that a high-level delegation from Washington would visit Dhaka within the next few months.

He said the delegation has started preparations to discuss various issues of mutual interest with a view to taking the relations between the two countries to a higher level, reported UNB.

Ambassador Miller made the remarks during his farewell meeting with Prime Minister’s International Affairs Adviser Dr Gowher Rizvi at the Prime Minister’s Office.

The meeting between them lasted for an hour from 4:30pm to 5:30pm, according to the Prime Minister’s Office.

Ambassador Miller was accompanied by Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Dhaka Helen LaFave and Political Section Chief Arturo Hines.

Youth playing

FROM PAGE 12

8:30pm, Rashedul’s friends quickly left the railway tracks. Rashedul, however, was run over by the train. He died on the spot, the OC added.

Police later recovered the body and handed it over to the victim’s family members.

Forgotten by society, unforgiven by hunger

A family of four physically challenged persons belonging to indigenous Mahato community suffers from starvation

MINTU DESHWARA

An indigenous family belonging to the Mahato community has been suffering from hunger pangs as all four members are physically challenged.

Poverty has forced them to share their living space with their lone cow at Baramchal Tea Garden in the remote area of Kulaura upazila in Moulvibazar district.

When this correspondent approached them at Baramchal Tea Garden, some 45 km away from Moulvibazar town, they initially refused to talk.

“Many people like you come to visit us with a promise to help us but they never keep their words,” they resented.

“We have been fasting for days.

Tonight, we could manage some arum leaves,” they said.

“Nobody cares for us; we go to bed unfed most of the nights,” said Mohanlal Kurmi.

It could be learnt that Mohanlal Kurmi and Jasanti Kurmi belonging to the Mahato community are physically challenged. Mohan Lal is speech impaired and physically challenged. Each of the two children—Arjun Kurmi, 15, and Malati Kurmi, 13,—is also visually impaired.

Jasanti is the breadwinner of the family. She somehow supports the family by working as a day labourer and tending betel plantation.

Mohanlal also tried to add to the family income but he could

not continue because of his physical challenges.

According to them, their one child is entitled to a government allowance of Tk 750.

Mohanlal Kurmi’s younger brother Chunulal Kurmi said, “I am also a very helpless person yet I try to help them. But sadly, that is not enough.”

Shakhawat Hossain, Kulaura upazila social welfare officer, said that according to the policy, more than one person in the same family will not get the allowance.

Saidul Hasan Shipon, general secretary of Kulaura Sangbadik Samity, said he also visited the family earlier.

If the family is not given quick support, all the people in the family will starve to death, he added.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

স্থানীয় সরকার প্রকৌশল অধিদপ্তর

উপজেলা প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়

চুনারুঘাট, হবিগঞ্জ

www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.3626.000.14.034.21.24

e-Tender Notice No. UGDP/03/2021-22

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of the works	Date & time of closing
01	647437	INF-2020-21-603626-01	(A) Construction of Fish Shed at Mirashi Hazi Bazar, (B) Construction of Wash Block at Mirashi Notun Bazar & (C) Construction of Wash Block at Chandi Tea Garden in Chunarughat Upazila, Habiganj District.	31 January, 2022 BST 11:00:00
02	647614	INF-2020-21-603626-02	(A) Installation of Solar Light at different important Roads in Chunarughat Upazila, Habiganj District.	31 January, 2022 BST 11:00:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies are allowed. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Any others conditions for this tender is stated in TDS. Interested tenderers may communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

Abdullah Al Baker Mazumdar
Upazila Engineer
Chunarughat, Habiganj
Phone: 08325-56189
ue.chunarughat@lged.gov.bd

GD-83



'No ultimatums'

Russia sets out security demands at Nato meeting

REUTERS, Brussels

Russia laid out its demands for security guarantees in Europe to Nato's 30 allies yesterday but insisted they were not ultimatums following intense talks with the United States in Geneva that failed to break the deadlock.

Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg received Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko at allied headquarters to try to defuse the worst East-West tensions since the Cold War over Russia massing troops near its border with Ukraine.

Moscow has dismissed concerns expressed by the United States that it may be planning to invade its neighbour and Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said live-fire exercises on the Ukraine border on Tuesday were not linked to the Nato talks.

"We are not negotiating from a position of strength; there is not, and nor can there be, any place for ultimatums here," he said in Moscow as the talks were getting underway in Brussels.

But he said pan-European security was at a critical point and the West needed to respond to Russia's concerns about Nato activities in former communist countries it sees as its backyard.

Nato allies say the talks, the highest-profile

attempt at the alliance to turn a potential conflict over Ukraine into a political process, are taking place because of Russian aggression, not the other way around.

"Let's be clear: Russian actions have precipitated this crisis. We are committed to using diplomacy to de-escalate the situation," US envoy to Nato Julianne Smith told reporters on Tuesday evening.

"We want to see ... Russia pulling back its forces," she said of the 100,000 troops stationed near Ukraine.

Nato diplomats say the Western alliance would consider it a success if Russia agreed to hold further talks. Allies are ready to negotiate with Moscow on increasing openness around military drills and to avoid accidental clashes that could spark conflict, as well as arms control regarding missiles in Europe.

But the Nato allies say that many of Russia's demands, laid out in two draft treaties in December, are unacceptable, including calls to scale back the alliance's activities to 1990s era levels and promising not to take in new members.

Bridling at Nato's expansion eastward into its old Soviet sphere of influence, the Kremlin sees the US-led alliance's deterrents and military modernisation as a threat.

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for boosting the country's strategic military forces as he observed the test of a hypersonic missile, state media said yesterday, officially attending a missile launch for the first time in nearly two years.

On Tuesday authorities in South Korea and Japan detected the suspected launch, which drew condemnation by authorities around the world.

The second test of a "hypersonic missile" in less than a week underscored Kim's New Year's vow to bolster the military with cutting edge technology at a time when talks with South Korea and the United States have stalled.

After watching the test, Kim urged scientists to "further accelerate the efforts to steadily build up the country's strategic military muscle both in quality and quantity and further modernise the army," KCNA news agency reported.

AFP, Rome

Pope Francis, a lover of classical music, made a surprise visit to a Rome record store to bless the premises – and picked up some vinyl while he was there.

The 85-year-old pontiff slipped into Stereosound, located near the Pantheon, on Tuesday evening to bless the shop after its recent renovation, a Vatican source told AFP.

The owners of the store are longtime friends of the Argentine pontiff, who has previously spoken of the power of music. He left with a 33 RPM record of classical music, a gift presented by the owner's daughter, according to Vatican News.

A small crowd gathered outside the shop while he was inside, for around 10 minutes, but he made no public comments as he got into a white Fiat 500L and was driven away.

REUTERS, New Delhi

China has accelerated settlement-building along its disputed border with Bhutan, with more than 200 structures, including two-storey buildings, under construction in six locations, according to satellite image analysis conducted for Reuters.

The images and analysis supplied to Reuters by US data analytics firm HawkEye 360 provide a detailed look into China's recent construction along its frontier with Bhutan.

Construction-related activity in some of the locations along Bhutan's western border has been under way since early 2020, with China initially building tracks and clearing out areas, based on material provided by satellite imagery firms Capella Space and Planet Labs.



Strengthening of Hilsa Research in Riverine Station Chandpur Project

Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute

Riverine Station, Chandpur-3602



Memo No. 33.04.0000.122.19.421.17-2528
Date: 12.01.2022

Request for Expressions of Interest

Ministry/Division	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock	
Agency	Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute	
Procuring entity	Director General, Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute	
Expression of interest for selection of	Local Hilsa Specialist (01 No)	
Duration	03 Months	
Eoi memo no	33.04.0000.122.19.421.17-2529	
Date	12-01-22	
Procurement sub-method	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)	
Budget & source of fund	Development Budget, GoB	
Project/Program code	5-4405-3002 (224069100)	
Project/Program name	Strengthening of Hilsa Research in Riverine Station Chandpur Project	
Eoi closing date & time	26-01-2022 at 5:00 PM	
Information for Applicant		
Outline of the assignment and required qualifications & experience [Details provided in the Standard Request for Application (SRFA)]		
Position	Qualification & Experience	Duties & Responsibilities
Local Hilsa Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hilsa specialist must have PhD or equivalent degree in Fisheries/Marine science with minimum 10 years working experience in hilsa research & management activities. Must have practical experience in hilsa fishery research planning and management and implementation of similar research project. Must have international publication on hilsa research. 	<p>a. Analyze existing status of Hilsa fisheries, including intimidation they are facing in their habitats of Bangladesh.</p> <p>b. Review and recommend practical application of knowledge learned from conventions, consensus, rule and regulations relating to fisheries and biodiversity conservation and their enforcement.</p> <p>c. Assist Project Director and Director General, BFRI for smooth implementation of the project.</p> <p>d. Development of research plan/project on hilsa fishery as per requirement for implementation by BFRI.</p> <p>e. Consider other sectoral activities which are making or are likely to make adverse impacts on hilsa resources in the coastal and marine ecosystem of Bangladesh.</p> <p>f. Preparation of detailed plan for development and management of hilsa resources in Bangladesh.</p>
Other Details		
Applicants are requested to provide information as per the format provided in Standard Request for Application (SRFA) indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (complete CV in prescribed form with other details as applicable). SRFA may be obtained from the address below either through email or in person from the office of the undersigned. The applicants shall submit supporting documents in favor of their experience and qualifications along with the SRFA.		
Procuring Entity Details		
Name of the official inviting Eoi	Md. Abul Bashar	
Designation of the official inviting Eoi	Project Director	
Address of the official inviting Eoi	Office of the Project Director, Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, Riverine Station, Chandpur-3602	
Contract details of the official inviting Eoi	Md. Abul Bashar, Project Director, Strengthening of Hilsa Research in Riverine Station Chandpur Project, Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, Riverine Station, Chandpur-3602. Phone: +880841-66111 (Office), Mobile: +8801719818187 E-mail: mabashar.bfri@gmail.com	
The Procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Eoi(s) without assigning any reason thereof.		


 12.01.22
 Md. Abul Bashar
 Project Director

GD- 76

Rivers are not dumping grounds

Buriganga, Dhaleshwari’s conditions a cautionary tale of mismanagement

IT seems like there is no end to the plight of Buriganga and Dhaleshwari rivers, their fates unimaginably entwined. Buriganga had long been the site used exclusively for dumping of toxic substances from tanneries processing rawhide. That is until 2017, when 170 of the 210 rawhide processing units in Hazaribagh, Dhaka were moved to Hemayetpur, Savar. It was expected that the relocation of tanneries from the bank of Buriganga to that of Dhaleshwari would rid the former of its largest source of pollution and, with proper planning and execution, soften the blow on the latter. But a study by a team of researchers now shows that, far from aligning these goals, the move has rather backfired.

The study, conducted by researchers from Jahangirnagar University, Stamford University and Waterkeepers, Bangladesh, finds that even though the tanneries are no longer near the Buriganga, pollution from rawhide processing continues to deteriorate its water quality. The tannery estate in Hemayetpur is upstream of the Dhaleshwari, and the resultant pollution in the river also streams into the Buriganga, meaning the latter is still affected. This wasn’t meant to be. Before 2017, the relocation was promoted as the answer to our river pollution problem, what with the central Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) that was supposed to treat all waste from the tanneries, leaving the Dhaleshwari unscathed. But even after all these years, the central ETP remains incomplete, and toxic waste continues to be dumped into the river.

Make no mistake, waste flown from the Dhaleshwari is not the only reason for the plight of the Buriganga. There are still dozens of micro-level rawhide processing units operating in Hazaribagh. More importantly, the plying of thousands of vessels, the presence of dyeing factories at Shyampur, and raw sewage from other factories and households continue to afflict its water. But in trying to save one river we’ve condemned another to a slow but certain death. The study team gave a statistical face to the gravity of the situation, with Dhaleshwari scoring 27.06 and Buriganga 39.39 on the six indicators based on which the river data was analysed. The Dhaleshwari is now in the same category of river health as the Buriganga.

This is a totally unacceptable situation, a cautionary tale of what happens when we let poor planning, mismanagement and lack of accountability get in the way of much-needed reforms. Not only have the authorities totally failed to uproot major sources of pollution from the Buriganga’s bank, they have also made the situation worse for Dhaleshwari by failing to complete the central ETP in Savar and not holding the polluters responsible for their actions. The recommendation, as made by the parliamentary standing committee on the environment ministry, to shut down the Hemayetpur estate for its lack of facilities, and the mandatory environmental clearance, will not help the situation. The government must bring all heads together to devise a workable plan and eradicate all sources of pollution to save our rivers.

A hospital amid garbage!

How can it ensure good health?

IF an open dumpster is allowed to exist near the very entrance of a hospital, and if it emanates foul stench all the time, how can you trust that hospital to ensure the good health of its patients? This is precisely what a visitor to the Khulna General Hospital will notice these days. Beside the dumpster, the entire vicinity of the hospital is littered with waste material, including organic waste that rot fast. It needs no emphasising that the stench makes breathing an ordeal for the patients, hospital visitors, passers-by, and even residents in the surrounding areas.

A report by this daily on January 12 depicts this sordid picture of a Khulna City Corporation dumpster placed right on the opposite of the main gate of the hospital, where all sorts of garbage and organic waste are dumped on a regular basis. These not only emit foul odour, but also provide a perfect feeding and breeding ground for disease-carrying insects like cockroaches, flies and mosquitoes, as well as rats. Hospital staff and local people invariably dump waste in the container. Often, they throw garbage from a distance, and as a result, half of it falls outside the dumpster.

More alarmingly, besides kitchen waste from nearby residences, untreated medical waste is also thrown into the bin, to be scattered away by scavengers like crows, cats, and dogs. Hundreds of people, including little children, who go there to get tested, vaccinated or treated for serious ailments, are forced to breathe in the toxic air as long as they are in the hospital.

This is particularly disturbing. At a time when health experts and even government authorities are urging people to observe certain hygiene practices to stay safe from Covid-19, a hospital—a public one, no less—is encouraging or rather forcing people to do the opposite. In fact, the garbage bin is situated near the waiting area of the hospital’s Covid-19 unit, where hundreds of people come every day to get tested, treated or vaccinated. Even the local administration, which has a duty to ensure that no such things happen, has been equally silent about this macabre spectacle.

Unfortunately, the problem of unregulated waste dumping is one shared by many other hospitals and health centres in our country. We have no way of scientifically assessing their impact, but experts have repeatedly warned against such irresponsible conduct. There are many modern technologies for collection and destruction of household or hospital waste in a safe and hygienic way. The Khulna General Hospital authorities should invest more time and money in finding the best way to keep their premises clean. A general hospital should ideally be located in a hygienic and well-maintained area, and proper waste disposal should be a priority at the very outset.

When will our health system put patients before profits?



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

NAZNIN TITHI

THE recently reported cruel act of a hospital—that removed oxygen tubes from six-month-old twins because their mother couldn’t pay the hospital bills—speaks volumes about the state of our healthcare sector. According to a report by the daily *Prothom Alo* on January 8, 2022, Ayesha Akter admitted her twin sons with breathing difficulty and fever to a private hospital in Dhaka. Diagnosed with pneumonia, both the babies were given oxygen support. After five days of their stay at the hospital, the authorities handed her a bill of Tk 1.26 lakh. As the poverty-stricken woman could not pay the amount, the hospital owner directed the staff to remove the oxygen tubes from the twins’ mouths, and the staff complied. An hour later, one of the twins succumbed to his illness.

While this may be an extreme example of cruelty and medical malpractice by a particular private healthcare provider, news of patients being driven out of hospitals for not being able to pay medical bills is not uncommon in Bangladesh. Patients are often handed exorbitant medical bills by these hospitals and clinics, as well as given unnecessary diagnostic tests and medicines. While many patients sell their land and other properties to pay for better treatment, those with no money or properties are left with no options but to seek over-the-counter (OTC) treatment, or worse, stop seeking treatment at all.

A number of studies carried out by government and private agencies last year revealed how malpractices by our private healthcare providers led to this high medical expenditure, pushing poor patients and their families into further poverty. One such study, conducted by the Health Economics Unit (HEU) under the health ministry last year, found that Bangladesh’s out-of-pocket (OOP) health expenditure was the highest in South Asia. OOP expenditure refers to the expenses that a patient or their family has to pay directly to the healthcare provider, where the state or an insurer does not give any financial support.

According to the HEU study, Bangladesh’s OOP treatment cost was 68.5 percent in 2020 when the global average was only 32 percent. One of the main reasons for such high health expenditure has been identified as the



▲ Access to healthcare is a basic human right, but for a significant segment of our population, it remains a luxury.

FILE PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Patients are often handed exorbitant medical bills by these hospitals and clinics, as well as given unnecessary diagnostic tests and medicines.

management in our public hospitals. Reportedly, in many of our upazila hospitals, it is often difficult to find doctors and staff for help, as well as the necessary medical equipment to run tests. In other facilities, high-quality equipment such as X-Ray machines are lying idle because there are no trained staff to operate them.

Our budgetary allocation for the health sector is also not sufficient—while an ideal health allocation should be 15 percent of the total budget, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), our budgetary allocation for health is only 5.42 percent in the 2021-22 fiscal year. And whatever little money the government does allocate to the health sector is not properly utilised either. Furthermore, this sector is riddled with lack of good governance and rampant corruption, which has been widely reported in the media recently.

As more people seek treatment at private facilities, they are faced with a number of problems. The high diagnosis and medicine costs are two of them. Reportedly, the expenses in private hospitals are hardly monitored by the authorities concerned. In 2020, the High Court directed private hospitals, clinics

and diagnostic centres to submit their price charts for medical tests and also directed the authorities concerned to formulate guidelines to monitor these facilities under the Medical Practice and Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982. Sadly, we don’t know if any progress has been made in this regard.

Regulating our private healthcare providers and improving the overall management of the public ones are all the more necessary now, as the country is at the outset of another Covid-19 onslaught. In the last two years of the pandemic, patients suffered a lot due to the extremely high treatment costs at private hospitals and the inefficiency of public healthcare facilities. A study conducted during that time revealed that Covid-19 treatment cost was unusually higher in private hospitals compared to the public ones; while the government hospitals spent, on an average, Tk 1.28 lakh for a Covid patient in general bed, in private hospitals, the cost was around Tk 2.42 lakh—almost double. This was mainly due to the differences in diagnosis and medicine costs. However, only a few public hospitals were properly equipped to handle Covid patients.

Therefore, unless the ridiculously high health bills in private hospitals and clinics can be brought down by formulating a set of guidelines and implementing them, and public hospitals and health complexes are operated efficiently, ensuring everyone’s access to healthcare will remain a far-fetched dream.

Saudi, Emirati religious moderation yet to inspire others



Dr James M Dorsey is an award-winning journalist and a scholar, and a senior fellow at the National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute.

JAMES M DORSEY

SAUDI Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have drawn praise for social reforms that have domestically reduced the role of religion in public life. Yet, their efforts to position their countries as the Muslim world’s beacons of an autocratic notion of moderate Islam have done little to encourage moderation beyond their borders.

The geographic limits of Saudi and Emirati moderation are evident in the housing projects of France, the Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh’s Cox Bazar, and in Pakistan. While the rise of Islamophobia in recent years due to indiscriminate and senseless acts of violence, prejudice against migration, and right-wing xenophobic agitation is beyond doubt, equally true is that neither Saudi Arabia nor the UAE can claim total innocence.

“At the risk of simplifying a bit, one could argue that from the mid-1990s onward, the rise of Islamist violence in France that culminated with the terror wave of 2015-2016 was essentially a Salafi undertaking,” said Marc Weitzmann. Weitzmann, who blames the Muslim Brotherhood and its Middle Eastern backers alongside the Saudis for France’s problem, appeared to implicitly acknowledge that his assessment did not also hold French discriminatory policies and societal attitudes responsible.

The combination of Saudi funding, Islamist agitation, and French policy created a brew in an environment of

While the rise of Islamophobia in recent years due to indiscriminate and senseless acts of violence, prejudice against migration, and right-wing xenophobic agitation is beyond doubt, equally true is that neither Saudi Arabia nor the UAE can claim total innocence.

increasing anti-Muslim and anti-migrant sentiment that allowed the UAE to align its obsessive campaign against political Islam with the domestic and geopolitical aspirations of French President Emmanuel Macron. With an election scheduled for April, Macron has accused the Brotherhood and Salafists of Islamist “separatism” and “supremacy” by allegedly seeking to introduce an Islamic legal code that would supersede French law. The government has in the past year passed legislation that is widely seen as targeting Muslims and has cracked down on various Muslim civil society organisations.

Similarly, militants of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) alongside criminal gangs are gaining ground in Bangladesh’s Cox’s Bazar, home to about a million refugees from Myanmar who have nothing to look forward to. Like their French brethren, little short of practical life-improving solutions will stop Rohingya refugees from finding solace in religious militancy and ultra-conservatism.

To be sure, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have donated millions of dollars for humanitarian aid to the Rohingya. But humanitarian aid alone is unlikely to stop the wound in Cox’s Bazar from festering. Yet, Myanmar does not rank among the top recipients of aid in a just published report on Saudi humanitarian and development aid.

Saudi Arabia ranks among the world’s top five donors with 60 percent of the funds or USD 40 billion allocated to development in the last 46 years. In contrast to Myanmar, Pakistan ranks among the top five recipients of Saudi largesse in terms of both humanitarian and development aid.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan emphasises the role of Islam in education and the clamping down on alleged blasphemy, while Saudi Arabia and the UAE have sought to reduce the role religion plays in national identity and

public life.

After introducing a singular national education curriculum that substantially increases religious content and creating a body to monitor the curriculum and watch for blasphemous content on social media, Khan last week identified corruption and explicit sexual content on the internet as the main threats facing Pakistani and Muslim youth.

In doing so, he ignored the real issues confronting youth in multiple Muslim-majority countries: a lack of quality education that prepares students for a 21st century labour market, the absence of an intellectual and social environment that truly encourages creative and independent thinking, and a dearth of professional prospects for many young Pakistanis. Khan has long made corruption a signature issue, but recently leaked documents suggest that members of his cabinet and their families as well as some of his financial backers and military officers have parked millions of dollars in secretly owned offshore companies.

In an online meeting last week with Islamic scholars, Khan, focusing on Islam’s earliest years, appeared to argue that securing societal ethics and morals were a prerequisite for the fight against corruption.

Neither Saudi Arabia nor the UAE embrace fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression. On the contrary, their human rights records are badly tarnished. Nonetheless, demonstrably nudging Pakistan to embrace educational reform and counter law-of-the-jungle social militancy, even if only in line with an autocratic definition of religious moderation and helping provide troubled communities with prospects beyond mere survival, would constitute a step forward. Potentially, it would enhance the two Gulf states’ competing efforts to be icons of a restrictive form of moderation and leadership of the Muslim world.

Not just law, we need social change to end corporal punishment



Laila Khondkar is an international development worker.

LAILA KHONDKAR

CORPORAL punishment is defined as any punishment in which physical force is used with the intent to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Degrading and humiliating punishment also falls under this definition. Corporal punishment violates not just children’s right to freedom from all violence, but also their rights to health, development and education.

In November 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) published “Corporal Punishment and Health,” where it called for the end of this practice around the world. The WHO fact sheet highlighted that a large body of research had established links between corporal punishment and a wide range of negative outcomes—both immediate and long-term. Some of those are “direct physical harm, sometimes resulting in severe damage, long-term disability or death; mental ill health, including behavioural and anxiety disorders, depression, hopelessness, low self-esteem, self-harm and suicide attempts, alcohol and drug dependency, hostility and emotional instability, which continue into adulthood.” Impaired cognitive and socio-emotional development; damage to education, including school dropout and lower academic and occupational success; increased antisocial behaviour;

settings, including schools and madrasas, in Bangladesh. The Ministry of Education also issued a circular and guidelines that prohibit corporal punishment in educational institutions. Yet, corporal punishment is still pervasive in schools and madrasas due to weak monitoring and our general acceptance of this

children with care and love, which will help the children in their learning and development. Teachers should apply positive discipline techniques to have their students listen to them.

Corporal punishment is preventable through multisectoral approaches,

New Zealand, Poland, and Romania.

Ending corporal punishment is a human rights imperative, and essential if the world is to meet the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #16.2 to end all violence against children by 2030. Prohibition and elimination of corporal punishment is also a low-cost effective public health measure, as this contributes to prevention of domestic violence and mental illness, and supports education and developmental outcomes for children.

The ban on corporal punishment in educational settings should be implemented in the following ways: 1) All teachers, parents, community members and students should be made aware that corporal punishment is banned in educational settings; 2) Teachers’ code of conduct should clearly mention that they cannot use corporal punishment against students. Disciplinary actions should be taken against teachers who do so; 3) School inspection checklist should include compliance with corporal punishment ban; and 4) School management committees should discuss and deal with issues related to corporal punishment in their meetings. This issue should also be in the regular agenda of coordination meetings of education officers and head teachers at district and upazila levels to assess the situations and take actions accordingly.

To end corporal punishment in all settings in Bangladesh, these are what should be done: 1) A new law should be enacted prohibiting corporal punishment of children in all settings; 2) Law reform must be linked to comprehensive awareness-raising as well as developing capacity on positive, non-violent forms of parenting and teaching methods. Media can play an important role in changing social norms so that parents, teachers, and all adults treat children with respect and dignity; 3) Messages on positive discipline should be embedded into the training of all those who work with or for children and families, as well as in health, education, and social services.

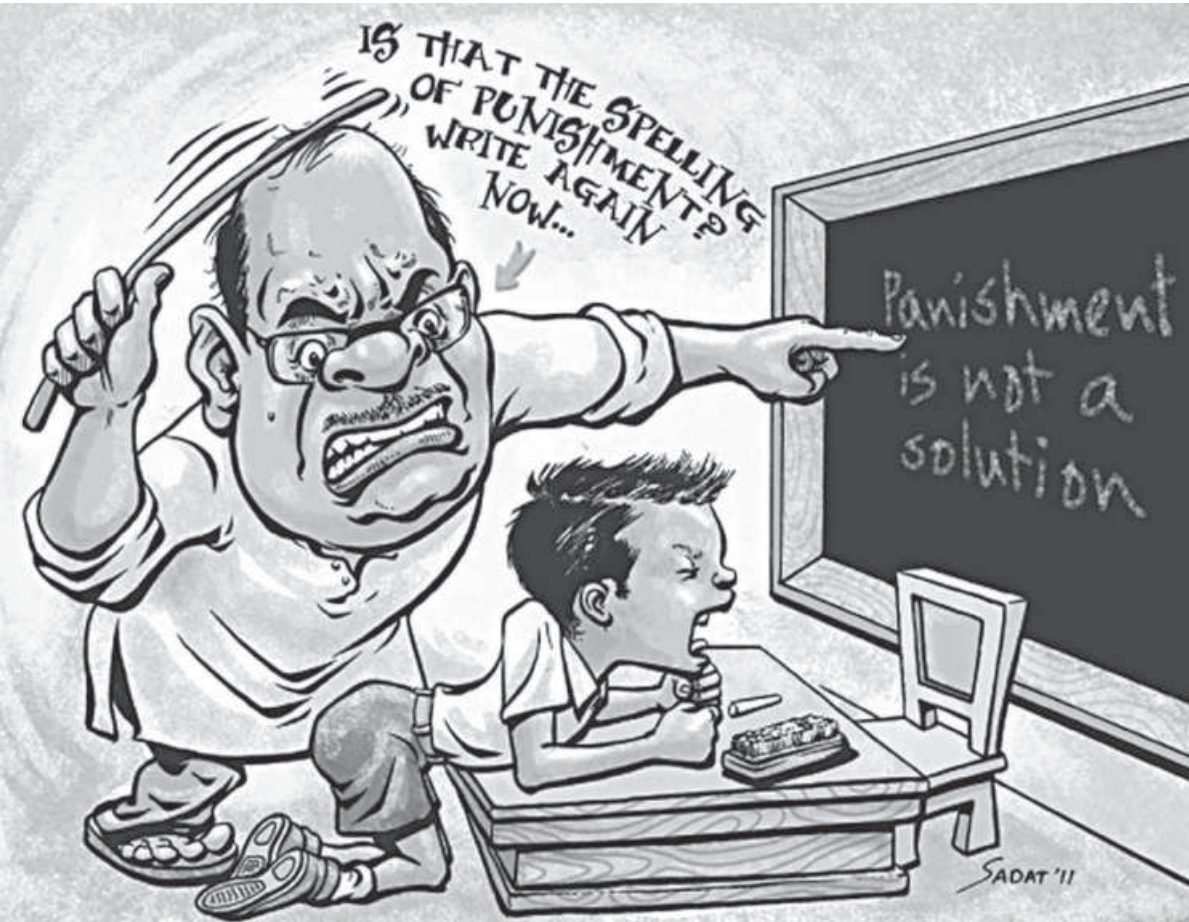


ILLUSTRATION: SADAT

which include law reform, changing harmful norms around child-rearing and disciplining, parent and caregiver support, etc. Research shows that law reform has led to reduced acceptance of corporal punishment among parents and other members of society. This has been the case in Sweden, Finland, Germany,

We never justify hitting an adult even when we are frustrated. Why should that be acceptable in the case of children? In many homes and institutions, adults may be facing difficulties, but taking their frustration out on children by hitting and humiliating them can never be acceptable.

practice. Not just in educational settings, but children are subjected to corporal punishment at home, in institutions and workplaces as well. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2019, carried out by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and Unicef, 89 percent of children (1-14 years) in Bangladesh experienced violent discipline in the past month of the survey. Meanwhile, 35 percent of parents or caregivers expressed that corporal punishment was necessary to discipline children.

Corporal punishment makes children feel sad, afraid, ashamed, and guilty. When children are punished by parents, caregivers and teachers—people whom they love and trust the most—they learn to accept violence in personal relationships, too, and may become perpetrators or victims of violence later in adulthood.

increased aggression in children; adult perpetration of violent, antisocial and criminal behaviour; indirect physical harm, including developing cancer, alcohol-related problems, migraine, cardiovascular disease, arthritis and obesity that continue into adulthood; and damaged family relationships are also some of the outcomes, according to WHO.

Even though we know that corporal punishment is so harmful for children, it still remains in practice around the world. Only 63 countries have enacted laws banning corporal punishment of children in all settings: homes, schools, workplaces, institutions, alternative care arrangements, etc. A whopping 87 percent of the world’s children are not protected from corporal punishment by law; this includes Bangladeshi children, too.

Today, January 13, marks the 11th anniversary of the High Court banning corporal punishment in educational

In Bangladesh, people have ample excuses for corporal punishment. For example, some say many parents are raising their children in challenging conditions, and teachers are often under stress from overcrowding and lack of resources, so, they often use corporal punishment. We never justify hitting an adult even when we are frustrated. Why should that be acceptable in the case of children? In many homes and institutions, adults may be facing difficulties, but taking their frustration out on children by hitting and humiliating them can never be acceptable.

Despite popular belief, corporal punishment is ineffective as a technique to teach and discipline children. When faced with punishment, children may comply with the instructions given by their parents or teachers in the short term, without understanding why something should be done or avoided. Instead of punishment, parents should give age-appropriate guidance to their

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National Institute of Neuro-sciences and Hospital
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Phones 48120079, E-mail: nins@hospi.dghs.gov.bd

Ref:-56(6)/NINS&H/Tender Document/2021-22/1389

Invitation for Tender (OTM)

01	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and family Welfare		
02	Agency	Director General of Health Service		
03	Procuring Entity Name	Director, National Institute of Neuro-Sciences & Hospital		
04	Procuring Entity Code	1270208111110		
05	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka-1207		
06	Invitation for	Supply of MSR Instrument		
07	Invitation Reference No	56 (6)/NINS&H/Tender Document/2021-22/1389		
08	Date	09/01/2022		
KEY INFORMATION				
09	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10	Budget & Source of Fund	Revenue Budget (GoB)		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
11	Office Code	1270208111110		
12	Office Name	National Institute of Neuro-Sciences & Hospital		
13	Tender Package No	NINS&H/MSR GR-09		
14	Tender Package Name	MSR Instrument		
15	Tender Publication Date	13/01/2022		
16	Tender Last Selling Date	12/02/2022 (Office hour)		
17	Tender Closing Date & Time	13/02/2022, Time:12:00 pm		
18	Tender Opening Date & Time	13/02/2022, Time:12:15 pm		
19	Name & Address of the office	Selling Tender Document		
	Receiving Tender document	1) Room No-311, National Institute of Neuro-Sciences & Hospital. ShereBangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207		
	Opening tender document	Room No-311, National Institute of Neuro-Sciences & Hospital. ShereBangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207		
20	Place/Date /Time of Pre-Tender meeting	Room No-311, National Institute of Neuro-Sciences & Hospital. Shere Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207; Date 23-01-2022 at 11.00 am		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
21	Eligibility of Tenderer	Tenderer shall have the following legal documents /capacity to enter into the contract- a) Valid up-to date Trade License b) TIN Certificate c) VAT Registration Certificate d) Bank Solvency Certificate, e) other details conditions including in the schedule.		
22	Brief Description of Goods	Supply of MSR Instrument 1. General, 2. Cath Lab		
23	Price of Tender Document	Lot. 1- TK. 5,000.00, Lot. 2- TK. 5,000.00		
24	Lot No	Identification of lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (TK)
	01	MSR Instrument (General)	NINS & H	2.5 % of offered price
	02	MSR Instrument (Cath Lab)		45 days after Work Order.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
25	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Prof. Dr. Quazi Deen Mohammad.		
26	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director		
27	Address of Official Inviting Tender	National Institute of Neuro-Sciences & Hospital ShereBangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207		
28	Contact Details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel : +88-02-48120079; Fax: +88-02-48120568, E-mail: nins@hospi.dghs.gov.bd		
29	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tender(s) without assigning any reason whatever.			

Note: (1) If the date of selling ,receiving & opening of tender is disturbed under any unavoidable circumstances, the next working day will be applicable for the same respectively.
(2) The bill will be paid on receipt of allotment.

(Prof. Dr. Quazi Deen Mohammad)
Director
National Institute of Neuro-Sciences and Hospital
Shere Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.

GD- 78

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Cube's six
6 More than sufficient
11 Superior to
12 Rid of rind
13 Jeans material
14 Expansive
15 Impertinent
17 Questionable
18 Pro votes
20 Skin woe
22 Tour carrier
23 Reaches by air
26 Kind of metabolism
28 Fiery crime
29 Lively, in music
31 Suffering
32 Savvy about
33 Sacred

34 Heredity unit
36 Wilson of "Rushmore"
38 Stockpile
40 Modify
43 Colorful flower
44 Dome home
45 School paper
46 Peevish

DOWN

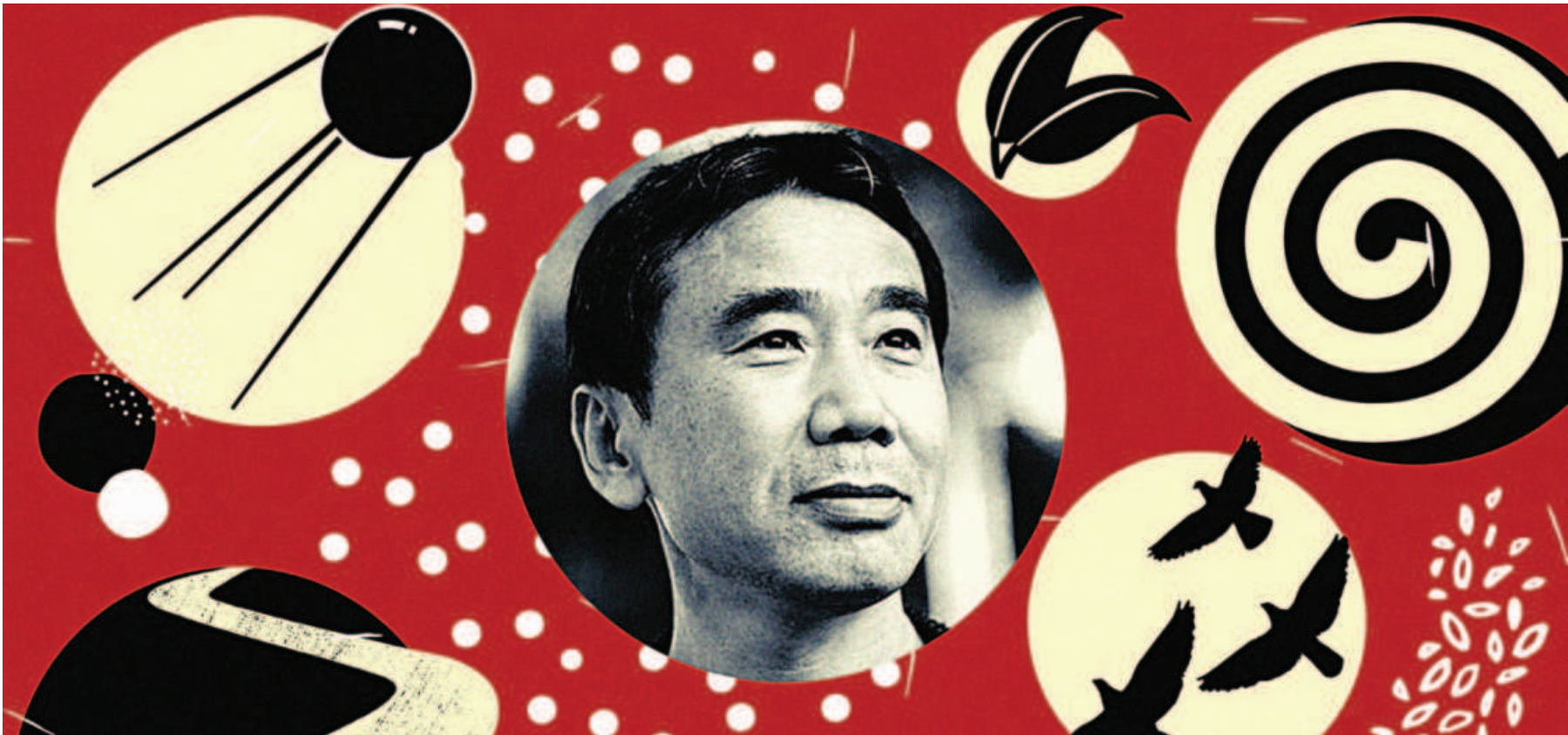
1 Rage
2 Presidential nickname
3 Church fixtures
4 Contents of Pandora's box
5 Big rig
6 LAPD issuance
7 Sailor
8 Paid players

9 Book part
10 Vortex
16 Bud
18 "Fernando" group
19 China's currency
21 "See ya!"
23 Level
24 Turnpike cost
25 Just
27 Memory loss
30 Overly
33 Bushy boundary
34 Airport area
35 Outback birds
37 "Hold on!"
39 Bond, for one
41 Lobster trap
42 Gift from Santa

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

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

B	A	S	H		H	O	T	P	A	D
E	C	H	O		I	N	H	A	L	E
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OPINION

Why Murakami resonates with young readers

In celebration of Haruki Murakami’s birthday on January 12, 2022.

Murakami, being part of the youngest generation to take part in the Zenkyōtō movement, grappled, first-hand, with the struggles of identity crises, and questions regarding alienation and identity loss grew to be prominent themes in many of his most popular books.

SHANJIDA NOWSHIN CHOWDHURY

Haruki Murakami is perhaps one of the most celebrated and well known writers of not only Japan but all of contemporary literature. His writing is humorous, hypnotic, and known to resonate deeply with the youth of every generation. But what is it about Murakami that gets young readers so enthralled? Is it the deadpan style of narration? The miniscule elements of fantasy rising out of the ordinary? Or maybe it's the absurdist sense of humour that has come to be a staple of Gen Z culture? If you asked me, I would tell you I didn't know. Not just because I didn't have the answer, but because Murakami didn't either.

Haruki Murakami, born in 1949, was part of the first generation of Japanese children born after the country's defeat in World War II. Japan, at that time, perplexed by their defeat, was about to embark on the largest socio-economic transformation in all of world history. By the time he reached his youth, Murakami found that the Japan he lived in was completely different from the one he was born into.

The 1960s brought about a time of great economic prosperity in Japan. The value of their currency increased exponentially, and the youth grew up paralysed by the silver spoons shoved into their mouths. With every material need met by a snap of the finger, their minds wandered to more philosophical questions: Who am I? What is my purpose in life?

Frustrated by their inability to find answers, and jealous of how the generation before them were able to draw meaning

by participating in the war, the youth of Murakami's generation decided to bear all of their frustration into one of the largest student protests in Japanese history: the Zenkyōtō movement, which rebelled against the US-Japan Security Treaty. However, the youth behind the rallies weren't just a band of rebellious youngsters. They were confused and alienated individuals, crying out to their motherland, all in the hopes of figuring out what their country meant to them, what they meant to their country, and more importantly, what they meant to themselves.

Murakami, being part of the youngest generation to take part in the Zenkyōtō movement, grappled, first-hand, with the struggles of identity crises, and questions regarding alienation and identity loss grew to be prominent themes in many of his most popular books. For the first few years of his writing career, Murakami avoided giving his characters proper names at all. Though the main characters' names would be mentioned in passing, for the majority of the story, Murakami—in his detached tone—would have characters use first-person narration, referring to themselves as "Boku" (The Japanese equivalent of "I").

In Murakami's later novels, though his characters grew to have proper names, the psychological impacts of alienation and identity loss became increasingly bleak in his writing.

The use of magic realism, a trademark of Murakami storytelling, only furthers the themes of identity loss by presenting a world that, despite being brutally rooted in reality, does not deny the absurdity of

everyday existence. The incorporation of magic into mundane settings allows Murakami to capture the uncertainty and confusion with which young people navigate their way through the world.

As a young Bangladeshi reader, I had a limited understanding of what the Japanese youth of Murakami's generation felt about losing their sense of national identity at the hands of Western capitalism. However, something I did relate to was the longing to feel connected to my country, be it through pleasure or pain. With 50 years under its belt, the Bangladesh Liberation War is something people my age have no personal memories of. With an independent country and endless possibilities, a new generation of youth are forced to tackle those same questions Murakami once did; what do I mean to my country and what does my country mean to me?

So, to come back to the original question, what is it about Murakami that hits so close to home for young readers? I'd argue that it is the unknowability of it all. It is about his stories having ambiguous endings, how the characters venture in search for answers only to end up having more questions, or the lingering confusion lying at the corner of every page. Murakami's writing effortlessly achieves what not many writers can: a shared connection with his readers about how life is a whirlwind in which there are far too many questions and never enough answers.

Shanjida Nowshin Chowdhury is an English major at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).

Design: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

Paulo Coelho, where are you?

OYESSORZO RAHMAN CHOWDHURY

I love it when Paulo Coelho's books start with a challenge or a quest, and *The Archer* (Penguin Random House, 2020), accordingly, does not fail to open with an intriguing pursuit. Upon reading the prologue, I thought I was in for a good read; it was rich and humorous, and in line with the writer's usual mystical tone.

The book follows the stories of Tetsuya, a once master archer who has since become a recluse, a stranger who travels a long way to prove that his archery skills are superior to that of Tetsuya's, and a little village boy who witnesses it all. The plot reminded me of *The Alchemist* (first published in 1988) and the pursuit of realising one's own legend, and I was thrilled at the prospect of discovering the quest through which the stranger overpowers his doubts and insecurities. Much to my disappointment, I found the following pages did not have a strong plotline, but were instead filled with advice for the little boy. Reading about the definitions, characteristics and the mechanism of bows and arrows, veiled by metaphors, was much too theoretical and dreary for me.

The story itself felt like reading motivational quotes on Pinterest instead of a novel. I am personally not against motivational quotes, but lines like, "Join with all those who experiment, take risks, fall, get hurt, and then take more risks" sounded

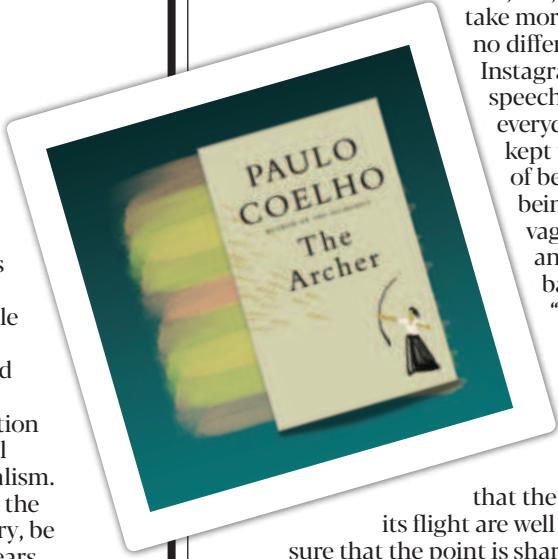
no different from fluffy Instagram motivational speech we come across everyday. Besides, they kept to their ill-repute of being badly written—being sometimes too vague, too technical, and often, outright banal. For instance, "To hold the arrow is to be in touch with your own intention. You must look along the whole length of the arrow, check that the feathers guiding its flight are well placed, and make sure that the point is sharp". They stuck out even more because Paulo Coelho has always been a sophisticated writer. And even though the book adheres with the enlightening tone Coelho usually commands, it does not hold the reader's attention because it is not in touch with a compelling story.

I applaud Coelho for choosing a unique approach for this book and appreciate the pep talk and timely effort for advocating mental well being, but cannot get over how cliched and generic the approach was in this book. I patiently expected this rambling to end and hoped for the story introduced in the prologue to take a turn; it never did. A 130-page book, with more than a quarter filled with illustrations by Christoph Neiman and half empty pages, *The Archer* did not come close to any of the other books Coelho has written previously.

We can't possibly know about a writer's motivation behind writing their books, but I do feel readers try to find the author's mark in their works. And I, despite being a fan, could not find Paulo Coelho in *The Archer*.

Oyessorzo is a humanitarian worker.

Collage: MAISHA SYEDA

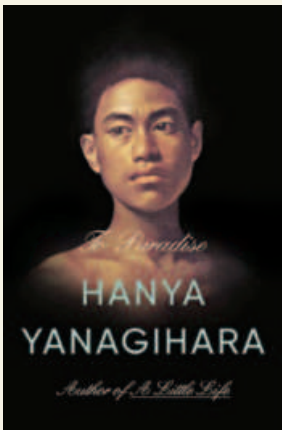


THE SHELF

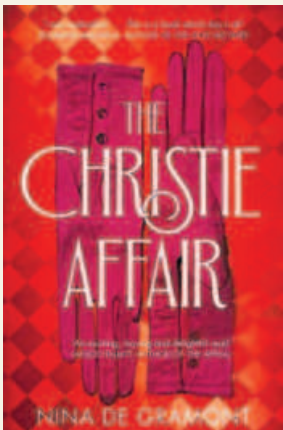
New books by favourite authors in the first quarter of 2022

MD TANJIM HOSSAIN |

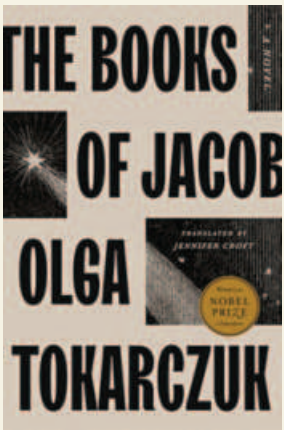
Read an extended version of this list on The Daily Star website and on Daily Star Books' Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.



To Paradise
Hanya Yanagihara (Doubleday)
An alternate history of America circa 1893, the contemporary Manhattan bustle of 1993, and a futuristic totalitarian nation in 2093: Hanya Yanagihara, author of the bestselling book, *A Little Life* (2015), threads together three different timelines of the American experiment in his latest novel, *To Paradise*.
Release Date: January 11



The Christie Affair
Nina de Gramont (Mantle)
Possibly the greatest mystery writer of all time, Agatha Christie, went missing for 11 days in August 1926. While her whereabouts during this period still remain a mystery, Nina de Gramont provides some insights into her story of a real world crisis.
Release Date: February 1



The Books of Jacob
Olga Tokarczuk (Riverhead Books)
Spoken through multiple perspectives, Noble prize winner Tokarczuk's new book portrays historical figure Jacob Frank's charismatic spell which leads him to explore numerous empires, like the Hapsburg and the Ottoman, and religions and sects, like Islam and Catholicism.
Release date: February 1



All My Rage
Sabaa Tahir (Razorbill)
The Cloud's Rest Inn at Juniper, California, is the product of many dreams by Misbah and Toufiq in Lahore. But in the midst of their dreams, arrive unforeseen events tearing them both in different directions. Having grown up in her family motel, it comes as no surprise to find a book with these elements by Sabaa Tahir.
Release date: March 1



Young Mungo
Douglas Stuart (Grove Press)
Having won the 2020 Booker prize with *Shuggie Bain*, Stuart encompasses a broad social canvas in his new book. Set in Glasgow 1992 during a turbulent time for the Catholics and the Protestants, this provocative new book explores the divisions of sectarianism as two young men fall in love with each other.
Release Date: April 5



Time is a Mother
Ocean Vuong (Jonathan Cape)
In this deeply intimate poetry collection, Vuong, author of *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*, grieves at the aftermath of his mother's death and faces the paradox of despair while also wanting to move forward.
Release date: April 7



Either/Or
Elif Batuman (Jonathan Cape)
In this sequel to the entertaining and intellectually stimulating *The Idiot, Either/Or* follows Harvard student Selin on her exploration through literature and her efforts to fuse into her life, as she faces an exciting Summer in 1996.
Release date: May 26

Md Tanjim Hossain is a contributor.



India pacer Jasprit Bumrah celebrates with Virat Kohli after taking the wicket of South Africa's Keegan Petersen, who led the resistance with a 72-run knock as the hosts were bundled out for 210 runs in reply to India's first innings total of 223 on the second day of the decisive third and final Test at Newlands yesterday.

PGOTO; REUTERS

Liton attains career-best Test ranking

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh batter Liton Das has been rewarded for his impressive batting performance in the just concluded two-match Test series against New Zealand as the stylish right-hander attained career-best rankings in Tests.

Liton, who hit his second Test ton in the final match with a brilliant display of strokeplay, moved up 17 places to 15 in the rankings with 683 rating points.

The elegant right-hander also scored 86 in the only innings that he batted in the first Test against the Kiwis. He scored a total of 196 runs in the series.



BPL fixtures announced

SPORTS REPORTER

Chattogram Challengers are set to take on Fortune Barishal in the opening match of the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on January 21 after the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) issued the itinerary for the eighth edition of the BPL yesterday.

Later on the same day, Khulna Tigers will face Minister Group Dhaka at the same venue.

As per the fixtures, the day game on Fridays will begin at 1:30pm while the night game will get underway from 6:30pm.

On weekdays, both the day match and night match will begin an hour early. Qualifiers, final and the majority of the league matches will be played in Dhaka with Chattogram and Sylhet hosting matches during the second and fourth phases of the league matches respectively.

'Sky is the limit'

Under skipper Mominul Haque, Bangladesh drew a Test series in New Zealand for the first time following a historic eight-wicket win in the first Test at Mount Maunganui. It was the perfect remedy after a disastrous 2021 and showed promise of Bangladesh cricket moving in the right direction. From that perspective, Bangladesh's Test captain spoke to The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin, opening up and sharing various aspects during an exclusive interview. The excerpts are below:

The Daily Star (DS): What was the expectation when you traveled to New Zealand?

Mominul Haque (MH): To be honest, we got more than we expected. Our backs were against the wall following defeats one after another and the failure in the T20 World Cup. We were hoping to play better cricket, but speaking frankly we never thought of something like this.

DS: It looked like a different Bangladesh team in the first Test. What was the recipe behind the change in mentality?

MH: I am not a good motivational speaker. The credit must go to Khaled Mahmud Sujon and Mushfiqur Rahim. They encouraged the boys and worked really hard to motivate players. We never thought of the result. We instead focused on the process. Credit to the boys that they were able to execute. The win gave us belief.

DS: How can the Bangladesh team take this belief forward?

MH: I think it will give us confidence in the coming days because the players have started to believe that they can beat any team abroad. In international cricket, the difference in skills is mostly negligible but it's the mentality that is important. At



times players and even supporters do not believe that we can win and I want that to change. If you have the belief that you can win, it actually keeps you 50 percent ahead even before you enter the field.

DS: As a captain, you were under tremendous pressure prior to the New Zealand series. Did that result come as a big relief to you?

MH: I won't say it's a relief but we needed that win as a team. As captain, I still don't feel we have done a tremendous job. However, the reaction to the win makes it seem it was a big achievement. As captain,

I want more. I want to win matches abroad against bigger opponents consistently. The sky is the limit.

DS: What are the things you want to retain from this tour in the coming days?

MH: We want to keep the process right and not focus on the outcome. The youngsters are now interacting a lot in the dressing room and we are focusing on developing a good culture.

DS: Do you think things will stay the same or may get better when seniors like Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal return?

MH: It will obviously boost the team because they have performed well over the years and contributed. Their experience will definitely help us in the coming days.

DS: How fascinating was it to see Ebadot Hossain stepping up and taking center stage? And what's your take on Liton's batting?

MH: Ebadot didn't perform exceptionally ever since starting his career and he finally delivered after two years. If you notice, it's the belief towards him which paid off eventually. It shows that it is important to give time to players instead of wanting instant results. On the other hand, Liton is always a special case. It's good to see that he has taken the next step and become more consistent.



PGOTO; REUTERS

World Number 1 Novak Djokovic rests at Melbourne Park during a training session but he could still have his visa cancelled again if Immigration minister exercises discretionary power. Meanwhile, Djokovic blamed "human error" on Wednesday for a mistake in his Australian immigration paperwork and apologised for breaking isolation for a photoshoot when he had Covid-19 last month.

U-19s confident despite challenges

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19s are gearing up to defend their title in West Indies, starting with their fixture against England at Basseterre, St Kitts on January 16 in the upcoming ICC Under-19 World Cup.

Captain Rakibul Hasan, who was instrumental in Bangladesh's triumph in the previous edition of the tournament, was hopeful that the newly-built side can do something special.

"The goal would be to at least make the semifinals," the skipper urged.

Pakistan are the only country to successfully defend their title when they followed up their triumph in 2004 by winning the trophy again in 2006. Rakibul was confident they can repeat the feat while also reiterating that the loss to India in the recently-concluded Under-19 Asia Cup will not dent the young Tigers' confidence.

"I don't think there will be any problems. We have been working on our batting and hope things will go smoothly in the tournament. Of course we want to win it again. Every team came here to win," he added.

However, things were a bit challenging in terms of preparation this time around.

"This year we could not prepare adequately due to the Covid situation. We're hoping the upcoming matches will see us play our best cricket if we can execute our plans," he said. Rakibul has the experience of playing this tournament and he was hoping to use that to his advantage in leading a young side.

"Last time we had a good squad and this time around the challenges will be quite similar but we have the kind of players to once again prove our mettle," he said.



Salahuddin ponders appointing foreign refs for BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

Following the controversy over the referees' decisions in the recently concluded Federation Cup, Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin is thinking of appointing foreign referees to conduct a few important fixtures of the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) starting from February 3.

BFF professional league management committee chairman and senior vice president Abdus Salam Murshedy, however, ruled out the possibility of foreign referees' appointment on Monday after Saif SC had urged on the matter citing referee bias during their Federation Cup semifinal against Abahani.

The statement from Salahuddin came yesterday following a meeting with a group of Mohammedan officials, who also raised questions over referees' decisions in their Federation Cup semifinal against Rahmatganj MFS.

"There are so many questions coming up [regarding the referees' decisions] and it is a very good idea to have foreign coaches officiate in about 10 to 12 important league matches. If the cancellation of the penalty in the match between Saif SC and Abahani was made by the foreign referees, there would not have been any confusion," Salahuddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

"If I can afford the financial aspect, a bunch of foreign referees will be hired. The local referees can also learn from them. But I don't want to have foreign coaches officiate in all the league matches as that would prove detrimental for the local coaches," Salahuddin added.

Uncertainty looms over Indonesia friendlies

SPORTS REPORTER

A bit of uncertainty looms over Bangladesh's two FIFA friendlies against Indonesia this month after the hosts insisted on players and coaching staff being fully vaccinated in order to enter the country.

Under the guidance of the new Spanish coach Javier Cabrera, who is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on Saturday, Bangladesh national football team are scheduled to play two friendly matches against Indonesia on January 24 and 27.

"On Tuesday, the Football Association of Indonesia informed that Bangladesh contingent needs to have received two dosages of coronavirus vaccine in order to enter their country," Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag told The Daily Star yesterday.

"They [Indonesia] will let us know about their decision tomorrow [Thursday] whether we can enter Indonesia having received a single dose of Covid-19 vaccine," Shohag added.

Replying to a query, Shohag said, "We can arrange vaccines for the players by tomorrow [Thursday] but the problem is that some seven to eight players took the first dosage of vaccine a few days ago and they are not eligible to take the second dosage of vaccine anytime soon."



People enjoy boat rides on the Laal Shapla Beel in Sylhet's Jaintiapur upazila. The Dibir Haor there has four such beels, of which the Laal Shapla Beel is most popular among locals and tourists for the beautiful display of floating red lotuses across the water body. However, the beel has been a victim to land grabbers for the past few years, threatening not only its tourism value but also its biodiversity.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

DHAKA-WASHINGTON TIES

Bangladesh seeks thaw Relations to reach new heights, says Miller

PORIMOL PALMA

Dhaka plans to strengthen its engagement with Washington to smoothen the strained relationship following the US measures taken to keep Bangladesh under scrutiny as far as democracy and human rights are concerned.

The Biden administration slapped sanctions on Rab and seven of its current and former officials on human rights violations on December 10. It also did not invite Bangladesh to the Democracy Summit on December 9-10.

The recent amendment to the US Leahy Law makes it mandatory for Bangladesh, like other countries getting funding from the US on security issues, to inform how and where the fund is being used.

Dhaka is discussing the law before sending the written consent in response to a letter from Washington on December 1.

According to international relations experts, the Biden administration's focus is on democracy and human rights globally, and its recent actions indicate that it wants Bangladesh to do more to improve democratic values and human rights.

Though initially Dhaka protested the sanctions, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen late December wrote to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, requesting him to reconsider the sanctions.

On January 3, he told reporters that some countries are dissatisfied with Bangladesh and that the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

TRANSPORT AT HALF-CAPACITY

Owners lobbying to get order withdrawn

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Transport leaders are at it once again: throwing their weight to get the government to take a decision that serves their interests.

With the view to preventing a third wave of Covid-19 cases and a subsequent lockdown, the government has ordered half capacity in public transport to maintain social distancing.

The move has left the transport leaders with their arms up in the air.

They are now engineering to get the Cabinet Division to walk back on the decision in a fashion not too dissimilar from the one seen back in November to get the government to hike the bus and launch fares following a 23 percent hike in diesel and kerosene prices.

The Daily Star has learnt after speaking with a host of launch and bus operators that they would be hiking the fare if they have to operate at half capacity.

To avert such a scenario, which would be of great inconvenience for the ordinary citizen, the launch and road transport leaders were busy lobbying yesterday.

In a letter to the shipping secretary, the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) said the big launches are spacious enough to maintain social distancing even at full capacity. Besides, launches have separate cabins.

Subsequently, it requested the shipping ministry to take steps to amend the cabinet division's order.

"We are waiting for a response," BIWTA

Chairman Golam Sadeq told The Daily Star last night.

Contacted, Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, president of the Bangladesh Inland Waterways (passengers' carriers) Association, said they did not demand to operate launch with full capacity but it would be better if the government allowed them to.

"Like the planes, we want to operate buses with full capacity while maintaining the health guidelines," said Mashiur Rahman Ranga, president of the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, after a meeting with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

There would be a scarcity of public transport on the roads if the buses and minibuses run at half capacity while all offices and other establishments stay open, BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder told reporters after the meeting quoting the transport leaders.

The transport owners also demanded that the government arrange a crash programme to vaccinate all transport workers as many of them are still unvaccinated, he said, adding that all their proposals would be forwarded to the road transport and bridges ministry.

Like the BIWTA, the BRTA will write to the ministry to amend the cabinet division's decision regarding half capacity, said an official requesting anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue.

As things stand, the road transport owners will operate at half capacity at the existing fare from Saturday, according to Mazumder -- just like the Bangladesh Railway.



People crowd a TCB truck in the capital's Motijheel area yesterday, as prices of daily essentials keep escalating. Many customers buy the products and sell them later at higher prices after striking deals with outside shopkeepers, depriving others of an adequate amount of essentials.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

ANTI-STATE COMMENTS

Govt mulls scrapping passports It's for those abroad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken initiatives to scrap the passports of those engaged in anti-state activities and making anti-Bangladesh comments while living abroad.

AKM Mozammel Haque, chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order, came up with the comment while talking to journalists yesterday.

"Those who are involved in anti-state activities and making anti-state statements abroad will be listed and their passports will be impounded."

He, however, did not mention anyone's name. "The list will be made upon verification," he said.

The issue came into the discussion at the Cabinet committee meeting on law and order held at the home ministry.

"We have advised those who are doing these anti-state activities abroad to have their passports revoked," said the minister.

"Let a list of them be prepared, by collecting data of who is doing what and what they are doing. The decision has been taken and instruction is given to cancel their passport," he added.

In recent times, some Awami League leaders have been found complaining that some Bangladeshis from abroad are involved in anti-state propaganda.

St Martin's Island declared marine protected area

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has declared 1,743sqkm of the Bay of Bengal, including St Martin's Island in Cox's Bazar, a marine protected area.

Earlier, 590 hectares of the island had been announced an ecologically critical area.

Issuing a press release yesterday, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change said the decision was taken to help prevent uncontrolled ships and motor boats, overfishing, dumping of waste and harmful chemicals in the sea, destruction of coral colonies and depletion of the area's biodiversity.

St Martin's Island is now the second, and by far the largest, marine protected area in the country.

According to The Wildlife Conservation Protection Act-2012, under which the declaration was made, no person shall harvest, destroy or collect any natural resources or disturb or threaten any wildlife, destroy their habitat and pollute watercourse. It will even restrict people from entering the area without permission from the authorities.

However, people will be able to enter the area with permission, perhaps by paying an entry fee, for study or investigation purposes on relevant and helpful subjects on wildlife, photography, research, and ecotourism.

The declaration will help the authorities concerned enforce laws to limit extraction of marine resources from this protected area, which will ultimately increase marine fish resources and aquatic animal breeding there, said the release.

Fire at Sajek, again

Cottage owners suspect sabotage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CHATTOGRAM

A fire left a cottage in ashes in Rangamati's Sajek early yesterday, around 40 days after four other cottages and a restaurant were gutted in another fire in the tourist destination.

The owners believe these are nothing but acts of arson.

KM Aslam Hossain, a sub-inspector of Ruilui Police Camp at Sajek valley in Bagaichhari upazila, said yesterday's fire at "Rock Paradise" could be an act of sabotage.

"The electricity in the area went off just 15 minutes before the incident," he said.

Bagaichhari does not have any unit of the fire services. So, teams from nearby Dighinala in Khagrachhari had to step in to douse the flames.

Al Amin, station officer of the fire services in Dighinala, said they were informed around 2:35am and reached the spot in the remote area around 5:15am.

"We are investigating to know how the fire originated," he said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Hossain

Mohammad Omar, owner of Rock Paradise, said, "It is definitely an act of sabotage. Why are fires breaking out in Sajek? All these seem pre-planned."

Maruati Lushai, owner of three of the four cottages ravaged by the December 2 fire, said no one from the administration provided her with any help so far. "Everyone here knows these are pre-planned arson attacks, but no one dares to protest..."

There are 84 cottages in the tourist spot, according to Rahul Chakma John, organising secretary of cottage owners' association at Sajek valley. "Owners and employees of all cottages are passing their days in fear of more arson in future," he said.

He demanded proper security in the area.

Asked about the allegation by the cottage owners, Bagaichhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shariful Islam said, "We need more time to know the details."

"We couldn't provide them with support because they did not ask for it," he said, replying to another question.