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P11 Ebadot saddened by Gibson's departure



While begging on a pavement in the capital's Mouchak area, Jharna Begum has her toddler tied to herself with a rope to ensure the child's safety. Jharna, who is blind, has no one else to look after her little daughter. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE

Coerced by cops

Victims' families allege they're being forced to sign statements deflecting blame from police

ZYMA ISLAM

With the heat turned up on human rights violations in the country, police have re-established contact with families of enforced-disappearance victims.

Some of the families alleged that they were being harassed and coerced into signing pre-written statements saying they deliberately misled the police by concealing information.

They claim that the move was aimed at deflecting blame from the law enforcers.

According to human rights activists, families of most enforced-disappearance victims were not allowed to sue law enforcers even though there was enough circumstantial evidence suggesting their involvement.

Instead, the families were made to file general diaries (GDs) or mention in case statements that the victims went "missing" or "never returned" or "picked up by unidentified people".

On Monday, several officials from the Sabujbagh Police Station went to the house of Mahhub Hasan Sujon in the capital's Basabo area, his brother Jahid Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

Sujon, a Sabujbagh Thana-level Chhatra Dal leader, was picked up by armed plainclothes men from Narayanganj's Sonargaon on December 8, 2013.

"The officials came around 11:00pm on January 10. They brought a written statement and started forcing my father to sign it. He didn't sign the statement after BNP leader Mirza Abbas intervened," Jahid said.

Critics, journos muzzled: HRW

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The security forces in Bangladesh continued to commit crimes such as enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings with impunity, said Human Rights Watch in its World Report 2022.

The report also mentioned that all these incidents happened while the ruling Awami League government made it clear in 2021 that it had no intention of addressing a pattern of grave abuses like these ones.

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COVID VACCINE

People suffer as chaos grips Mugda centre

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Hundreds of vaccine seekers, not enough space for social distancing, inadequate number of attendants to organise jab recipients and confusion about whether certain doses will be administered.

This was the state of Covid-19 vaccine administration at the vaccine centre in Nagar Matrisadan in the capital's Mugda yesterday.

On the first day of fresh government restrictions to curb the spread of coronavirus and its highly transmissible Omicron variant, hundreds gathered at the centre to be vaccinated, enduring hardship as well as the risk of contracting Covid.

This correspondent spent about three hours in front of the centre from 9:00am and talked to at least 20 vaccine recipients about the management. After entering

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RUNNING AT HALF CAPACITY

Bus owners won't go by govt decision

Curbs mostly ignored on first day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A top transport association yesterday asked its members to operate their vehicles at full capacity, violating the government directive to carry only 50 percent passengers on public transports.

Dhaka Road Transport Owners' Association gave the instruction yesterday, saying the ministry concerned has "verbally" informed them that the government would allow public transport to operate at full capacity.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Khandaker Enayet Ullah, the association's general secretary who signed the letter said, "We came to know from BRTA about the decision [to allow full-capacity operation] verbally. So, we have asked our members to work accordingly."

On Monday, the Cabinet Division issued an 11-point directive, including one that says all public transport must operate at half capacity, to curb the recent rise in Covid-19 transmission.

On Wednesday, transport leaders at a meeting with Bangladesh Road Transport Authority demanded that the government change its decision and allow them to operate at full capacity.

However, on Wednesday, BRTA reiterated that from Saturday all public transport will have to run at half capacity.

Contacted yesterday, BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder said they have forwarded the transport association's demand to the road transport and bridges ministry and the Cabinet Division will take a final decision in this regard.

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Get jabbed immediately

PM urges the unvaccinated

BSS, DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday renewed her call to the unvaccinated people to get the Covid-19 jab immediately to protect their lives from the new Omicron variant.

"I urge those who are yet to get vaccinated to receive vaccines soon. We have started inoculating school students as well. At least life might be saved if one

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N'GANJ CITY POLLS

Focus on women, new voters

Ivy, Taimur make last-minute push as campaign ends at midnight

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA AND SANAD SAHA

With the Narayanganj city polls campaign ending at midnight tonight, major mayoral candidates Selina Hayat Ivy and Taimur Alam Khandakar are making last-minute efforts to woo women and first-time voters who may make the difference.

Many voters believe that Ivy, as the nominee of ruling party Awami League, may get an advantage over her rivals while independent candidate Taimur, also a BNP leader, may capitalise on anti-government sentiments to win more votes.

Voters said the turnout will be a key factor in the election. A total of 5,17,357 voters, including 2,57,519 women, are eligible to exercise their franchise in Sunday's polls.

The Election Commission will use electronic voting machines (EVMs) in all



polling centres in the city.

Speaking to The Daily Star, several voters yesterday said the Osman family, a very influential political family in Narayanganj city, will also play a crucial role in deciding the fate of the two heavyweight mayoral contenders.

Manika Rani Saha, a homemaker, said, "We will vote for a candidate who will work for development of women. We want the city to remain safe like it is now."

Excited about casting ballots, some first-time voters said they will vote for the "fittest candidate". They said they want to see Narayanganj city as a humanitarian city where there will be no crime. They also want a pollution-free Shitalakkhya river.

Nighad Sultana Nishat, a university student and also a first-time voter, said she was yet to decide whom she would

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35 children hurt as helium cylinder explodes

6 in critical state; cause of blast in Cumilla not known yet



A doctor visiting one of the injured children at Cumilla Medical College Hospital last night.

PHOTO: KHALID BIN NAZRUL

OUR CORRESPONDENT, CUMILLA

Thirty-five children were among some 40 injured when a helium cylinder, used to inflate balloons, exploded in Cumilla's Nangalkot upazila yesterday afternoon.

Six of the children were in critical state, said Dr Sajeda Khatun, deputy director of Cumilla Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

She said around 30 were brought to the hospital as of 12:15am today.

The other injured were admitted to Nangalkot Upazila Health Complex.

Fazilatunnesa, a witness, said her neighbour Anwar was inflating and selling balloons near his house ahead of a fair set to start at Hasanpur today.

"After Asr prayers, I heard a bang and found my daughter Habiba and 30-40 others injured."

Farukh Hossain, officer-in-charge of Nangalkot Police Station, said they were yet to ascertain the cause of the blast.

He said there was no permission for the fair amid the coronavirus pandemic and that a team may be formed to investigate the incident.

According to CMCH records, the

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Moderna to be used as booster dose: DGHS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to use the Covid-19 vaccine of Moderna as a booster dose instead of Pfizer jabs.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) yesterday issued a notice in this regard, asking everyone involved with the government's vaccination drive to comply with the directive.

Doses of Pfizer vaccine will be reserved for students, aged 12-17 years, and others who have received the Pfizer vaccine as the first dose, reads the notice.

The government introduced the booster dose for the frontline workers and senior citizens on December 28 in Dhaka, which was expanded countywide gradually.

Since the beginning, Covid-19 shots of Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca were being used as the booster dose.

Send Khaleda abroad using 'moral authority'

Kalyan Party urges president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The president should use his "moral authority" to send ailing BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia abroad for better treatment and take measures to enact a law in line with the constitution on the next Election Commission's formation, Bangladesh Kalyan Party proposed while holding dialogue yesterday.

Two other parties -- Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) and Zaker Party -- also held separate talks with the president at the Bangabhaban yesterday.

An eight-member delegation of Kalyan Party, led by Chairman Syed Muhammad Ibrahim, also proposed taking steps to form a neutral caretaker government to hold the national election.

Led by Andaleev Rahman Partha, a seven-member delegation of BJP, recommended that the president take measures to enact a law on formation of the EC.

In a written statement to the president, a six-member team of Zaker Party, led by Chairman Mostafa Amir Faisal, placed a four-point proposal.

The dialogue, which started on December 20, is likely to conclude on January 17 with the participation of ruling Awami League.

The president will later form a search committee that will propose names to the president for appointing the chief election commissioner and election commissioners.

Tenure of the present EC will expire on February 14.



A man signing a paper while others wait in line to do the same after they were fined by a mobile court in Shahbagh area for not wearing masks and violating other health rules. Dhaka Metropolitan Police launched the daylong drive as there has been a surge in Covid-19 cases.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

PROFESSIONAL DRIVING LICENCE

Dope test now a must

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Negative dope test reports from government-affiliated hospitals or laboratories would be mandatory to get or renew professional driving licences from January 30 this year.

A person with a positive dope test report or negative comments would not be entitled to get a professional driving licence from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

However, the dope test would not be required for a non-professional licence.

A professional driving licence is a must for operating commercial vehicles or rental cars or doing government jobs as a driver.

BRTA going to introduce the system more than one year after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave directives to bring public transport workers under a dope testing system.

The drug addiction of bus and truck drivers is considered to be one of the major reasons behind road accidents.

BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder on Wednesday sent a circular in this regard to all divisional and circle offices to implement the decision.

The dope test can be done at all district-level government hospitals, six hospitals in Dhaka city and all laboratories approved by the Department of Narcotics Control, reads the circular.

The six hospitals in Dhaka city are Dhaka Medical College Hospital; National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital; National Institute of Laboratory Medicine and Referral Centre; National Institute of Diseases of the Chest and Hospital; National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation, also known as Pongu Hospital; and Kurmitool General Hospital.

Meanwhile, the Directorate General of Health Services on Tuesday wrote all government hospitals to take necessary steps for carrying out a dope test on the licence seekers, reads the circular.

Delivering her speech on October 22, 2020, to mark National Road Safety Day, Hasina directed the authorities to bring drivers under a dope testing system.

"We need to know whether those who are driving [vehicles] use drugs. They need to undergo dope testing. This test is essential for each driver.

You must do it," she had said.

Later, BRTA formed a committee that gave several other recommendations including carrying out an on-spot test to check whether a driver drank.

"We will have implemented other recommendations on phases," BRTA Spokesperson Mahbub-E-Rabbani said yesterday.

Earlier, transport leaders had announced to start dope tests on the drivers from December 2019.

Announcing the programme on September 18, 2019, Khondaker Enayet Ullah, general secretary of Dhaka Road Transport Owners' Association, had said that almost half of the public vehicle drivers in the capital are believed to be addicted to various drugs.

He said addiction has become the first and main reason for accidents in the capital. But the move did not see light at that time.

Experts said a driver can feel drowsy after taking drugs and they may lose control over the steering, causing accidents. In many cases, a driver may feel overconfident and try to dangerously overtake other vehicles after taking drugs, they said.

Army to be built as world-class force Says chief after winter training exercise

UNB, MYMENSINGH

The efforts to build the Bangladesh Army as a world-class force through realistic and up-to-date training will continue, said Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed yesterday.

"Apart from the training, Bangladesh Army stands by the people in all possible sectors," he told reporters after witnessing the army's winter exercise in Mymensingh.

The four-week long winter exercise of the Bangladesh Army concluded at Chechu Bazar in Muktagachcha upazila of the district.



The 9th Infantry Division of Bangladesh Army conducted the training titled 'Training Nabodiganta' successfully.

General Shafiuddin witnessed the exercise with other army personnel.

The army chief also said technology has advanced in the world and the use of technology in battlefields can be seen. "Artificial intelligence has also been taken under cognisance so that we can enrich the force by adding this technology in our future battle plan."

About the exercise session, he said it increases the capacity of army members to perform their duty efficiently and confidently.

Asked about procuring modern armoured vehicles, General Shafiuddin said, "The prime minister has set a goal to modernise the force, especially the aviation, with the addition of advanced airplanes and choppers."

About the capability of the force in the cyber field, he said there is a plan to enhance cyber capability in the force's goal.

"Note that everything cannot be covered in a single exercise. This exercise focused on logistics capability."

Female members from Bangladesh Army and fighter jets of Bangladesh Air Force alongside the armoured vehicles and MLRS participated in the exercise.

The principal staff officers of Army Headquarters, General Officer Commanding, Army Training and Doctrine Command (GOC ARTDOC) and senior military officers were present there.

On Sunday, Chief of General Staff Lieutenant General Ataul Hakim Sarwar Hasan briefed about the details of the exercise to the chief of army staff while Lieutenant General Md Saiful Alam, quarter master general, briefed about the logistics activities.

Members of Defence Journalist Association of Bangladesh and other media personnel were present there.

Later, the army chief also replied to different questions of media about the winter exercise while attending a press briefing held at Army Field Headquarter Media Cell.

Bangladesh Army organised the logistics field training exercise for the first time on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Bangladesh Army.

The arms and ammunition collected recently were used in the exercise, started on December 19, 2021.

35 children hurt as helium

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admitted patients are Riya Moni, 5, Samrat, 9, Nishu, 10, Nasir, 12, Saiful Islam, 12, Shah Alam, 55, Sahamuk Hasan, Anwar, 35, Abdur Rob, 27, Sakib, 15, Rubi, 10, Moriyom, Nayeem, 15, Popi, 10, Basir, 13, Emon, 16, Selina 50, Sabuj, Umme Habiba, 11, Sabuj, 18 -- all from the upazila's Biroli village.

Anwar's younger sister Farhana said Anwar, his two daughters Asnan and Moriyom, his sister Nasrin,

nephew Nazmul and niece Nusrat were all admitted to CMCH.

Mokara Union Parishad Chairman Md Saifuddin visited the hospital and promised to bear the medical costs.

Bus owners won't go by govt decision

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Asked whether they gave the transport association any verbal confirmation, he didn't give any direct answer.

Like other working days, yesterday -- the first day of the new government restrictions coming into effect -- buses were full to the brim.

A Mirpur-Motijheel bound Bikalpa Paribahan was packed, with at least 10 passengers standing.

"How can we run at half capacity? All offices are open but the number of buses has not increased... How can we leave someone during office hours?" said Moshir, a helper of the bus.

CURBS IGNORED ELSEWHERE

The new government-imposed restrictions on public movement and businesses were grossly ignored yesterday.

While one of the main instructions is to wear masks in all public places, including markets, malls, restaurants, offices and courts, many people were seen in places without masks and ignoring other health rules.

Vendors at Senpara Bazar, Kazipara Bazar, Shewrapara

Farmgate Bazar and Karwan Bazar were seen ignoring health guidelines as well.

Suman, a fish trader in Karwan Bazar, said it was difficult for him to breathe or talk to customers with the mask on.

"I keep it [mask] in my pocket so that I can wear it in case of a drive."

Helal Uddin, president of Bangladesh Shop Owners' Association, told The Daily Star that they have decided to hang banners and make loudspeaker announcements from tomorrow, urging customers and sellers to wear masks in all shops and malls.

Day labourers, especially rickshaw-pullers, were rarely seen with masks on. "It is difficult to wear one during such intense physical labour," they said.

A mobile court in Shahbagh conducted drives from 12:00pm and fined those violating the new restrictions.

Sanjib Das, executive magistrate of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told reporters that people who were not wearing masks in open places and on public transports in the area were fined Tk 50 to Tk 200.

"Today [yesterday]

Coerced by cops

FROM PAGE 1

In its annual report of 2021, the UN WGEID said they had repeatedly asked for information from the government regarding these cases, but to no avail.

Police went to Tulee's house as well.

"A team from Tejgaon Police Station came with a sheaf of case statements against my brother. I did not hear about these cases

all these years as I went from door to door looking for him," she said.

Ayesha Ali, mother of Abdul Quader Bhuiyan Masum, who has been traceless from Nakhhalpara since 2013, said she was visited by Tejgaon police thrice -- on Thursday, on Sunday and yesterday.

"I had to write in my GD that he went missing," said Ayesha.

Apurbo Hasan, officer-

in-charge of Tejgaon Police Station, refused to comment on the matter.

The OC of the police station in Sabujbagh could not be reached over phone despite repeated attempts.

Police also visited Rina Alam, wife of another victim Nur Alam, who was picked up from Gazipur in 2015.

She said she had mentioned in a GD that

her husband was picked up by unidentified men in law enforcers' clothes.

"He was picked up by men in uniform but I was not allowed to write that in the GD."

Meanwhile, rights body Ain o Salish Kendra has condemned such acts.

"Police are taking statements from the families saying the victims were hiding somewhere.

People suffer as chaos grips Mugda centre

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the centre, the correspondent saw there were only two booths administering vaccines to the huge turnout.

There were several hundred vaccine seekers gathered in front of the venue in the morning. Even as Covid cases surge, they were all crowded together as there seemed to be no separate lines for people seeking the first, second or third doses.

Their presence on the road created a huge traffic jam and there seemed to be no system in place to control the chaos.

Sahera Begum, 32, came to get vaccinated from Dakshingaoon area of Khilgaon with her two daughters -- one six years old and another a six-month old infant.

Neither daughter was wearing a mask. Sahera said she was forced to stand in such a crowd and risk getting infected along with her children because there was no one at home to take

care of them.

"I can't go and stand far away because I don't know when my serial will come," she said.

A volunteer of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society was reading out names serially over a loud speaker. If someone was at the rear of the crowd when called, he or she had to push through the crowd to get jabbed.

"I went to six or seven vaccine centres in Dhaka with my friends or colleagues. None were as bad as this one," said Abdul Alim, a school teacher who had come to the centre around 10:00am and was still waiting to be called around two hours later.

"They told us no first dose would be provided, and so a lot of vaccine seekers left. Now they are saying they have some vaccines for the first dose," he added.

CNG station employee Soheli Rana Shuvo lost his mobile phone while waiting outside the centre and then

missed his serial because he was talking to a member of police and the person he suspected of stealing his phone.

"When they called my serial, I was with the police and the man [suspected of stealing the phone]," Soheli said. "I have to take another day's leave to get the vaccine, which will be tough."

Inside the centre, one of the three attendees was instructing vaccine seekers to keep their sleeves folded, while a nurse was busy filling the syringe with the dose and another was hurrying to jab the recipients.

This correspondent found no space for people to rest after receiving the dose, as is common practice in most centres.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) in its guidelines for Covid vaccination said centres should ensure social distancing, mask wearing and other health measures.

Zakera Hannan Rubayat,

project manager of Population Services and Training Center [PSTC], which runs the vaccine centre, said before May last year they had to jab over 600 people a day and now the number is over 1,000.

She said there is a lack of space and manpower.

Contacted, Fazle Shamsul Kabir, chief health officer [in charge] of Dhaka South City Corporation, told The Daily Star that the vaccine centre has had limited facilities since it started.

"It has happened occasionally as there is limited space at the Matrisadan. In recent times, jab seekers who got the text [detailing the date and venue of vaccination] earlier have started to come, which is another reason for the crowd."

He said they had no way to increase manpower.

SCHOOL VACCINATION

The government is planning to provide vaccination to 75 lakh school children aged between 12 and 18

by this month in order to avoid closing educational institutions.

But the students' vaccination drive was also in a mess, according to guardians.

A guardian who went to the BIAM School and College at Eskaton with his son, said his child entered a centre around 11:15am and was vaccinated around 4:00pm.

"There was a huge gathering inside the school campus as well as at the gate," he said.

"We went there to be safe from coronavirus, but the gathering is putting us in danger," he added.

Get jabbed

FROM PAGE 1

gets vaccinated," she said.

The PM was addressing a programme marking the inauguration of the National Science and Technology Complex (NSTC) in the capital's Agargaon. She joined the event virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

It's nothing but trash

Says expatriates' welfare minister about media reports on recruiting syndicates for Malaysia

PORIMOL PALMA

"Media reports on recruiting syndicates for Malaysia are nothing but trash," remarked Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad, while talking to The Daily Star yesterday.

"The documents being circulated are fake," he said in reference to a report in the Malaysian newspaper Malaysiakini.

On January 10, the newspaper reported that it saw the document that mentions 25 Bangladeshi recruitment agencies (BRA) and 250 sub-agents who are expected to be involved in recruiting new workers bound for Malaysia, indicating manipulation of the process.

The issue surfaced after the minister and Malaysian Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri M Saravanan signed a memorandum of understanding on December 19.

Mentionable, this newspaper has obtained a copy of the document, which describes various stages of the recruitment process, starting from the application by employers to procedures upon arrival.

Under a section titled "Quota Auto Allocation to BRA and Engaging BRA", it states that workers to Malaysia will be recruited by 25 main BRAs that will be supported by 250 sub-BRAs. They will be automatically selected by the Foreign Workers Centralised Management System, an online application for managing recruitments.

In light of this, recruiting agents and labour migration activists said they're afraid that the syndicate will manipulate the recruitment process in a rehash of the 2016-18 period.

Back then, the Malaysian government allowed only 10 recruiting agencies from Bangladesh to send workers there, though Bangladesh government had sent a list of more than 700 recruiting agents.

Although the agreed migration cost was Tk 39,500, each Bangladeshi worker had to spend Tk four lakh on average due to malpractice.

Eventually, Malaysia froze recruitment from Bangladesh on September 1 in 2018, saying that the labour recruitment practices were leading to forced labour and debt bondage.

Speaking on the issue, Imran Ahmad said he was not the minister then and so he doesn't want to hear of the past.

"What I want is a system and policy through which our people can find jobs in Malaysia at a low cost," he said, without specifying what the cost could be and how it could be ensured.

He said he does not want to see visa trading -- a malpractice that increases the cost of recruitment, with a lot of agents and sub-agents competing to secure job demands from Malaysia.

According to sources in the recruitment industry, the process was manipulated through the online system in 2016-18, which allowed a Malaysian employer to select any one of the 10 agents for labour recruitment from Bangladesh.

Asked if the government knows any such online system, which would be applied this time too, he said this has not yet come to the table during discussions between the two countries.

He said he cannot deny it if such a system was proposed by the Malaysian government.

"Whatever system it is, it will be online, but it won't be like the previous one. We will also have a different system from our side," he said, adding that the specifics are yet to be finalised.

He also mentioned that Malaysian Home Minister Hamzah Zainudin is scheduled to visit later this month to discuss the recruitment process in detail.

Recruiting agents and labour migration activists said they're afraid that the syndicate will manipulate the recruitment process in a rehash of the 2016-18 period.




The government has issued an 11-point instruction to curb the spread of Omicron, yet another Covid variant. Under the new guidelines, one needs to show a vaccination certificate against Covid-19 to avail restaurant services. The photo was taken yesterday from the capital's Paltan area.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

87pc left without jobs during lockdowns

Finds BILS study on workers of transport, restaurant, retail sectors



FILE PHOTO

EFFECTS OF LOCKDOWN

- 95pc became unemployed in transport sector
- 83pc in retail and hotel-restaurant sectors
- Combined percentage drop in income 81pc
- Average income dropped from Tk 13,578 to Tk 2,524
- Part-time jobs increased by 215pc
- 20pc sold off properties, reduced meals, sent children to work
- 80pc workers' families took out loans, reduced savings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The lockdowns were grim for workers of the transport, hotel-restaurant and retail sectors, as they saw their jobs, incomes and savings disappear.

The combined unemployment rate in the sectors during lockdown periods in 2020 and 2021 was 87 percent, found a study. Among the three sectors, the highest rate, 95 percent, was recorded in the transport sector, while it was 83 percent in retail and hotel-restaurant sectors.

The numbers were revealed at a press conference of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), held at the institute's premises in the capital.

BILS conducted the research titled "Study on the status of social protection and job security of private-sector workers; experiences amid Covid-19 pandemic and way forward" from April 5 to August 10, 2021.

"Among the unemployed workers, seven percent are yet to find a job," said Md Manirul Islam, deputy director (research) of BILS, who presented the findings.

The findings noted that the combined percentage drop in income in the three sectors was 81 percent. The highest, 96 percent, was witnessed in the transport sector, while it was 83 percent in

the other two sectors.

The general average monthly income of a worker was Tk 13,578, which came down to Tk 2,524 during lockdown. After the lockdown, the income rose to Tk 12,529, said Manirul.

Part-time jobs increased by 215 percent during lockdown periods, he said.

Twenty percent of workers sold off their properties, reduced their meals and sent their children to work to cope with the financial crisis, he added. Besides, 80 percent of workers' families took out loans and reduced their savings after the lockdown period, the study found.

The three sectors were covered in the study as they were heavily affected due to two major country-wide restrictions on public movement in 2020 and 2021.

Speakers at the programme recommended preparing a complete database of private-sector workers and introducing an emergency humanitarian assistance programme for them.

They also suggested creating a policy provision to provide unemployment benefits to private-sector workers in emergencies.

Among others, BILS vice chairperson Amirul Haque Amin and directors Kohinoor Mahmood and Nazma Yesmin were present.

'Whom do you actually serve?' Shujan says EC depriving voters by not revealing candidates' wealth info

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) is "depriving voters from their rights" by not disclosing wealth information of candidates, claimed Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar.

"We've seen that the [Election] Commission stopped disclosing wealth statements of candidates since the Dhaka City Corporation polls (held in 2020). A similar situation was observed in the Narayanganj City Corporation polls," he said.

Wealth disclosure can help a voter make informed choice when electing candidates, he said.

"The EC is a constitutional organisation. It is a free organisation. We want to ask the Election Commission whose interest is it serving?" he asked.

Shujan Treasurer Syed Abu Naser Bukhtear Ahmed said the rights organisation has observed over the past five years that wealth statements of public representatives have swelled four to five times.

"How is this possible? Information regarding this can help voters to choose the right candidate," he said.

We've seen that the [Election] Commission stopped disclosing wealth statements of candidates since the Dhaka City Corporation polls (held in 2020). A similar situation was observed in the Narayanganj City Corporation polls.

SHUJAN SECRETARY
Badiul Alam Majumdar

They said this at a virtual press conference, centred on disclosing information of candidates for the Narayanganj City Corporation election and demanding free and fair polls.

According to Shujan, seven people are vying in the mayoral race, with 148 running for councillor posts and 34 in reserved seats.

Of them, 120 candidates have either passed SSC or failed to complete school education. Of the seven mayoral candidates, two are entrepreneurs, one lawyer, one physician and two are service holders. The other candidate didn't disclose his occupation.

Of them, three candidates are facing criminal cases, while 40 councillors are facing cases, eight of whom are facing charges in murder cases.

NCC's running mayor and a candidate for the upcoming polls Selina Hayat Ivy, who declared her profession as doctor, has the highest annual income -- Tk 19.38 lakh, earned through mayorship. Fifty-eight candidates have wealth less than Tk five lakh while 14 candidates have wealth over Tk one crore.

Meanwhile, Shujan's Badiul Alam Majumdar said there's allegation of violating election's code of conduct by AL lawmaker Shamim Osman.

He said violating the election code of conduct is a punishable offence. "CEC Nurul Huda's comment in this regard is not clear to us," he said.

Huda on Wednesday said, "He [the 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 him to book."

QAWWALI EVENT AT DU

Police foil protest rally

DU CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday foiled a protest rally against the attack, allegedly by Chhatra League activists, before a Qawwali performance at Dhaka University's TSC on Wednesday.

Peoples Activist Coalition (PAC) organised the rally in front of the National Museum at Shahbagh.

"Police charged us with batons while trying to stop our rally. At least five of our members have been injured," said PAC central unit secretary Shimul Chowdhury.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra Federation held another rally at Raju Memorial Sculpture. DU students also brought out a procession in protest of the attack.

Contacted, Officer-in-Charge of Shahbagh Police Station Moudut Hawlader said the protesters were asked not to hold the rally, considering the Covid situation.

"Allegations of baton-charging are not true," he claimed.

Silsila, a DU-based Qawwali band, organised a performance yesterday evening at the same venue, protesting Wednesday's attack.

Meanwhile, Ain O Salish Kendra yesterday demanded action against the perpetrators behind Wednesday's attack.




Walking on the capital's streets is turning into an ordeal with each passing day. Owing to encroachment by vendors, the footpaths are no longer pedestrian-friendly. With Covid cases on the rise once again, this has become even riskier as no social distancing can be maintained in this setup. The photo was taken from Green Road area yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

বিক্রয়
অত্যন্ত সুলভ মূল্যে বিভিন্ন মডেলের
YAMAHA কি-বোর্ড, গিটার ও
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IN MEMORIAM



Thirty First Death Anniversary of
Late Abul Qasem FCA (1919-1991)
Founder President (ICAB),
Former President (DCCI),
Founder, A. Qasem & Co., Chartered Accountants
In Fond Remembrance
Shakil, Farzana, Soheli, Jabeen, Sanjida, Mostaq
Sadaat, Sajid, Navid, Sadaaf, Omair, Ahnaf, Afraz
&
All Partners, Directors, Staff and Students of A. Qasem & Co.

বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘর
শাহবাগ, ঢাকা-১০০০
অন্তর্জাল তথ্যতীর্থঃ www.bangladeshmuseum.gov.bd
নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘরের রাজস্বখাতে স্থায়ী পদে ফিল্ম এডিটর ১টি, প্রকাশনা সহকারী ১টি, স্বাধীনতা জাদুঘরের রাজস্বখাতে সৃজনকৃত অস্থায়ী পদে সহকারী কীপার (ইতিহাস ও ধ্রুপদী শিল্পকলা) ১টি, উপসহকারী প্রকৌশলী (বিদ্যুৎ) ১টি, প্রদর্শক প্রভাষক ১টি, হিসাবরক্ষক ১টি, অফিস সহকারী কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক ১টি, বিক্রয় সহকারী ১টি, ইলেকট্রিশিয়ান ১টি, প্রজেকশন অপারেটর (অডিওভিজুয়াল) ১টি, সাউন্ড অপারেটর ১টি, লাইট অপারেটর ১টি, সাউন্ড এনিস্ট্যান্ট ১টি, অফিস সহায়ক ২টি এবং সাংবাদিক কাস্টাল হরিনাথ শ্মৃতি মিউজিয়ামের রাজস্বখাতে সৃজনকৃত অস্থায়ী পদে সংরক্ষণ সহকারী ১টি, হিসাব সহকারী কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক ১টি, লাইব্রেরী এটেন্ডেন্ট ১টি, অফিস সহায়ক ১টি, মোট ১৯টি শূন্য পদে জনবল নিয়োগের নিমিত্ত বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় মোবাইল অপারেটর টেলিটকের জবপোর্টাল <http://www.bangladeshmuseum.gov.bd> এবং টেলিটক লিমিটেড এর ওয়েবসাইট <http://bnm.teletalk.com.bd/> অথবা QR Code স্ক্যান এর মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় মোবাইল অপারেটর টেলিটকের জবপোর্টাল <https://alljobs.teletalk.com.bd> এ সরাসরি প্রবেশ করেও বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি পাওয়া যাবে। যে কোনো ব্যাখ্যার জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত ফোন নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারেঃ ০২২২৩৩৬৪৭৯৬/০২২২৩৩৬৫৫৯৬।

সচিব (যুগ্মসচিব)
জিডি-৮৪
বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘর

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Pubali Bank Limited, the largest online commercial Bank in Bangladesh, is hereby inviting sealed Tenders from the eligible Tenderers who can participate in the following Tender as defined in the tender documents of the under mentioned work as per Terms and Conditions stated below:

1. Purchasing **Zoom VC Software License for 03 (Three) years** for Pubali Bank Limited.

Please visit <https://www.pubalibangla.com/tender.asp> for more details. Interested Parties may purchase Tender documents by 20 January 2022 duly fulfilling all other requirements.

(Md. Helal Uddin)
GM & Division Head

পুতালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
PUBALI BANK LIMITED

ICT Operation Division
Head office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Center of Excellence in Higher Education

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

North South University (NSU), the first private university in Bangladesh, seeks applications from candidates with required qualifications and experiences for the following position:

Laboratory Officer, Department of Biochemistry & Microbiology:
2 (Two) positions

Please read the full job description very carefully before deciding whether you have the skills, knowledge and experience that we are looking for. Only eligible candidates will be contacted by NSU for written and viva tests.

Job Description:

- Preparing lab equipments for laboratory classes / research experiments.
- Assisting Faculties to conduct laboratory classes.
- Helping students to interpret results and recompile information into graphs and documents.
- Maintaining lab equipments and coordinating all types of laboratory management issues in sync with the Department.
- Any other task assigned by the authority as per requirement.

Qualifications:

- M.Sc. in Biochemistry/ Microbiology/ Biotechnology/ Molecular Biology/ Genetic Engineering or relevant subject.
- Minimum 1 year of laboratory experience in academic /research institutes or in any diagnostic laboratory (Work experience in Biochemical, Microbiological, Immunological and Molecular Biology Fields will be given priority).

Other Terms and Conditions:

- The candidates for this position should be aged between 25-35 years.
- Attractive salary packages and other allowances and service benefits with Provident Fund, Gratuity, Festival Bonuses, Group Insurance, in- house free Medical Consultation, as per NSU salary structure and policy will be offered.
- Candidates should have excellent verbal and written communication skills and well conversant in computer applications.
- Candidates should have adequate computer literacy and familiarity with MS Word, Excel and Internet Browsing for data search.
- Candidates should be able to work in shifts and holidays, if required.
- Third division/ class/ equivalent GPA in any educational level will not be accepted.
- NSU Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any application without giving any reason.

Candidates should apply from his/her own e-mail address with complete CV, photographs, copies of certificates, transcripts and other credentials by **23rd January 2022**.

Director (Administration)
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Plot# 15, Block# B, Bashundhara, Dhaka – 1229
Email: nsuhr@northsouth.edu, Website: www.northsouth.edu

NGOs faced pressure

FROM PAGE 12
The challenges pertained to fund-raising (69.4 percent), reaching remote areas (40.8 percent), getting the cooperation of local public representatives (24.5 percent), and political interference or influence of the locally powerful (18.4 percent).
Despite multifaceted

challenges, especially in fund-raising, the NGOs played a “praiseworthy and proactive” role in Covid-19 response, said TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman.
Apart from some exceptions, overall, the NGOs by practising integrity kept themselves away from irregularities and corruption and played a

proactive role on their own and as an auxiliary force to the government, he said.
During the pandemic, microcredit organisations faced relatively more financial constraints due to the shrinking microcredit activities. Among the surveyed NGOs, 54 percent are involved in microcredit activities.

Know your deshi superfoods

FROM PAGE 12
treat head lice in children.
Neem can help heal wounds as well and may also prevent septic infections.
Neem oil is believed to relieve skin dryness, itchiness and redness. It also prevents pimples and skin blemishes.

Over 140 diverse active compounds have been found in various parts of the plant. These active compounds are responsible for its antioxidant, antimicrobial, antiparasitic, anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, and wound-healing properties.

The mechanisms behind neem’s medicinal properties are not entirely clear, and research into this plant is ongoing.
Too much use can be harmful and it must be remembered that neem is not a replacement for medical treatment.

Critics, journos

FROM PAGE 1
“Authorities cracked down on critics, journalists, and even children who criticized the government or dared to question its response to the Covid-19 pandemic,” reads the report that was released yesterday.
Bangladesh security forces continue to commit enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings with impunity, it added.
“Relatives of some of those forcibly disappeared said that police refused to accept any complaint that included allegations against law enforcement, and that some families faced threats and harassment,” mentioned the report.
It also read that the government denied the findings of a report after HRW released it in August 2021 documenting enforced disappearances by “Bangladesh security

forces” under the Awami League-led government between 2009 and 2020.
Officials also denied the allegations made during a briefing held by the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the United States House of Representatives.
In the 752-page “World Report 2022”, its 32nd edition, the HRW reviews human rights practices in nearly 100 countries.
“The first goal of most autocrats is to chip away at the checks and balances on their authority. Democracy worthy of its name requires not only periodic elections but also free public debate, a healthy civil society, competitive political parties, and an independent judiciary capable of defending individual rights and holding officials to the rule of law,” said HRW Executive Director Kenneth Roth in his keynote.
Referring to the death of writer Mushtaq Ahmed in jail and torture of cartoonist Ahmed Kabir Kishore in detention, the report mentioned that the law enforcement and intelligence agencies in Bangladesh, as well as police and soldiers seconded into the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), were credibly accused of torture and ill-treatment of detainees and suspects.

Three killed

FROM PAGE 12
Mofizul early in the morning.
Both of them claimed that it was a planned murder. But they could not give any clue about who were behind the killings.

Police foil

FROM PAGE 3
ASK, in a statement signed by its executive director Monowar Kamal, demanded that the authorities identify the culprits – disregarding their political identity – and take proper steps after a fair investigation.
The rights group also demanded that the authorities concerned make public the steps they would take against those involved.
On Wednesday, a group of BCL members allegedly vandalised the stage of a Qawwali event and attacked the organisers and students of the university.

6 members

FROM PAGE 5
Mizanur Rahman (53) were shown arrested in the murder case.
Police said Abul Kalam is an accused in bank and jewellery shop robbery cases. The criminals got acquainted with each other in jail and formed the gang.
Shamsul Alam, additional commissioner (crime and operation) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, said, “The gang used to take people in a microbus on highway. They later snatched their valuables and left them in different areas.”

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate General of Family Planning
Logistics & Supply unit (5th Floor)
6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.
Invitation for Re-Tenders (Goods)

Memo No. 59.11.0000.302.07.13.2022.75
Date: 13/01/2022

1	Ministry/Division	Medical Education & Family Welfare Division Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
2	Agency	Directorate General of Family Planning
3	Procuring Entity Name	Director (Logistics and Supply) and Line Director (Procurement, Storage and Supply Management), Logistics & Supply Unit(5 th floor) , Directorate General of Family Planning, 6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not Used at present
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
6	Invitation for	Procurement of 13.40 Million Cycles Oral Pill (COP) (3rd Generation)
7	Invitation Ref No	Memo No. 59.11.0000.302.07.13.2022.75
8	Date	13/01/2022
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (NCT)
10	Budget and Source of Funds	GOB (Rev.)
11	Development Partner (if applicable)	-
12	Project / Programme Code (if applicable)	-
13	Project / Programme Name (if applicable)	4 th HPNSP
14	Tender Package No.	FSD/GR-02
15	Tender Package Name	Procurement of 13.40 Million Cycles Oral Pill (COP) (3rd Generation.)
16	Tender Publication Date	13/01/2022
17	Tender Last Selling Date	30/01/2022
18	Tender Closing Date and Time	31/01/2022 12:00 P.M.
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	31/01/2022 12:15 P.M.
20	Name & Address of the Office(s)	Address -Selling Tender Document (Principal) Office of the – Director (Logistics and Supply) and Line Director (Procurement, Storage and Supply Management), Logistics & Supply Unit (5 th floor), Directorate General of Family Planning, 6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215. -Selling Tender Document (Others) Office of the - Additional Director (Drugs & Stores) Central Warehouse, Directorate General of Family Planning Nandipara (Uttargaon) Trimohini, Union- Nasirabad, Thana- Khilgaon, Dhaka. -Receiving Tender Document Conference Room of the Director (Logistics & Supply) Logistics & Supply Unit (5th Floor) -Opening Tender Document Directorate General of Family Planning 6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.
21	Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	Pre-tender Meeting will be held at conference room of the Director (Logistics and Supply) and Line Director (Procurement, Storage and Supply Management), Logistics & Supply Unit (5 th floor), Directorate General of Family Planning, 6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215. Date: 18/01/2022; Time: 11:00 A.M.
22	Eligibility of Tenderer	As stated in the Tender Document.
23	Brief Description of Goods or Works	Procurement of 13.40 Million Cycles Oral Pill (COP) (3 rd Generation)
24	Brief Description of Related Services	Not Applicable
25	Price of Tender Document (Tk.)	Taka 2000/- (Taka Two thousand) only, non- refundable. Mode of payment should be made by Treasury Chalan from Bangladesh Bank/ Sonali Bank Limited. Code no: 1-7481-0000-2366 in favor of Director General, Directorate General of Family Planning, 6, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215. Original copy of the Treasury Chalan must be Online Verification/Certified (CTR) by the concerned Accounts Office.
26	Lot No.	Identification of Item Location Tender Security Amount (Tk.) Completion Time in Weeks/Months
27	Single Lot	4 Million Cycles Oral Pill (COP) (3rd Generation) Central Warehouse, Directorate General of Family Planning, Nandipara (Uttargaon) Trimohini, Union- Nasirabad, Thana- Khilgaon, Dhaka.
28	3.40 Million Cycles Oral Pill (COP) (3rd Generation)	Regional Warehouse, Family Planning, Chottogram.
29	3 Million Cycles Oral Pill (COP) (3rd Generation)	Regional Warehouse, Family Planning, Bogura.
30	3 Million Cycles Oral Pill (COP) (3rd Generation)	Regional Warehouse, Family Planning, Khulna.
31	PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS	
32	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Ratna Talukder
33	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director (Logistics and Supply) and Line Director (Procurement, Storage and Supply Management)
34	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Logistics & Supply Unit (5 th floor), Directorate General of Family Planning 6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.
35	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel. & Fax No:88-02- 55012349 E-mail: dirlsdgfp@gmail.com
36	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.	

GD-88

13/01/2022
(Ratna Talukder)
Director (Logistics and Supply) &
Line Director (PSSM-FP)
Directorate General of Family Planning
Phone: 55012349



It has been more than a month since Baikunthapur Tea Garden has been shut down. This has pushed the workers and their families' backs to the wall. Exhausting what meagre savings they made from their Tk 120 per day wages, some of them are taking out loans to feed their families. This photo was taken on Wednesday. PHOTO: STAR

Today's meal: salt, water, boiled tea-leaf

Food crisis puts Baikunthapur's tea workers, families in misery

MINTU DESHWARA, back from Habiganj

Mala Santal is an indigenous tea worker at Baikunthapur Tea Garden in Habiganj's Madhabpur. Since December, she has not received a single penny from the ration-wages she's owed. After a period of digging into her savings, she's now exhausted, leaving loans as the only means to sustain her family of four.

"I saved up some money for my three children's education. But without any ration-wages since December, I've spent up all of my savings," she told this correspondent yesterday. "I'm now taking out loans to ensure the minimum of meals for my family, but I don't know how I can pay it back."

Her eldest daughter Smriti Santal was supposed to get into ninth grade in Jagdishpur High School this year. But after the family ran out of money, this had to be put on hold.

In disarray, Mala has decided to leave her vocation of long and started to work as a construction worker these days. Though this new job will be difficult, at least it can pay for her family's meals.

When this correspondent went to visit tea worker couple Parbati and Sagar Kul's mudhouse, he only found their four kids at home, with the youngest sibling, Gaurab Kul, crying loudly.

"Mother and father went out to look for work," said their eldest child eight-year-old Prashanta. "They haven't left any food for us. Out of hunger, Gaurab has been crying non-stop."

Far from being isolated incidents, this food crisis is currently gripping all of Baikunthapur Tea Garden's 400



permanent workers' families. Children waiting out of hunger, their parents running to-and-fro for work, mothers feeding their child a mix of salt with boiled tea-leaf in water, it's as if the entire neighbourhood is crying out in despair.

NO POUISH SANGKRANTI THIS YEAR

The traditional Poush Sangkranti is scheduled for today. One of the biggest festivities observed by indigenous tea workers, the merriment was supposed to begin yesterday night, as the night before the Sangkranti is meant to be spent making pithas for the day.

The day was supposed to see families indulging in delicacies made out of muri, flattened rice, and molasses. But at a time when the families don't have

money to even afford rice, the joys of the Sangkranti will stay further away from Baikunthapur.

ORIGINS OF THE CRISIS

The crisis began after the tea garden closed down due to an untoward incident, which cut out the workers from earning their ration-wages.

According to the management and workers of the garden, the debacle began after the firing of tea worker Dilip Keut, a permanent worker of the garden who began constructing a house for himself on the agricultural land inside the garden in November last year. He was expelled earlier this month.

This followed meetings and clashes between the management and workers, which peaked after the workers allegedly

assaulted acting manager of the garden Mohammad Shamsul Haque Bhuiyan, prompting the authorities to close down the garden on December 8.

On December 14, Shamsul filed a case against 12 workers with Madhabpur Police Station.

Garden worker Mira Kairi said, "We work for Tk 120 per day and some ration. This was never enough to run the family, but now we don't even have that."

Talking to The Daily Star, ex-worker Dilip Keut said, "I am a permanent garden worker, working here for 15-16 years."

"As I didn't have a house, I used to live at my brother's. It was too small for both of our families, so I decided to build a house in a vacant place with the garden authorities' permission."

"But as the works neared completion, they suddenly objected, and even expelled me," he alleged.

However, acting manager Shamsul Haque said Dilip hadn't taken permission to build the house. "While the saga was going on, a few workers came to my office and attacked, which left me and another staff member injured. After that, in the interest of our safety, the owner stopped the activities of the garden."

"We have given the workers some conditions, but they're refusing to meet them. We won't reopen the garden until they meet the conditions," he said.

Nahidul Islam, deputy director of the Department of Labour, Srimangal, said, "I have visited the tea garden. Hopefully, both parties will reach an agreement soon."

Harmful bacteria, fungi found in buffalo yoghurt

Reveals research

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Researchers in Chattogram have found harmful bacterial and fungal presence in various brands of buffalo yoghurt in different districts of the country. Most cow yoghurt from popular brands, however, have been found to be safe with the expected nutrition level.

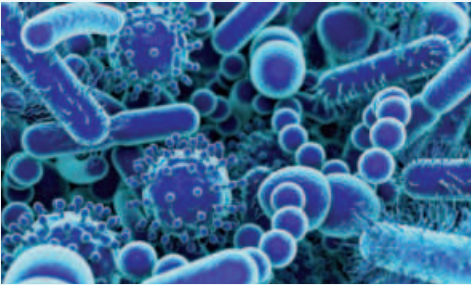
The research paper, titled "Insights into the nutritional properties and microbiome diversity in sweet and sour yoghurt manufactured in Bangladesh", was recently published in the scientific journal - Nature.

Dr SM Rafiqul Islam, professor of genetic engineering and biotechnology at Chittagong University, led the research. Dr Adnan Mannan, associate professor of the same Department, was one of the co-researchers.

The researchers collected yoghurt from different areas including Dhaka, Chattogram, Cumilla, Manikganj, Rangpur, Munshiganj, Bogura and Cox's Bazar for three consecutive months.

"Harmful bacteria including enterobacter, acinetobacter and aeromonas have been found in the buffalo yoghurt," said Dr Mannan, adding, "These bacteria can cause gastrointestinal tract infection."

Different types of fungus, including candida, iodofenuses and trichosporon, have been found in buffalo yoghurt, which can infect skin and intestine, he said.



Buffalo yoghurt collected from Dhaka, Ctg, Cumilla, Manikganj, Rangpur, Munshiganj, Bogura, Cox's Bazar

Bacteria in buffalo yoghurt can cause gastrointestinal tract infection

Fungi can infect skin, intestine

Most cow yoghurt found to be safe

“Buffalo yoghurt is made locally and the milk is not boiled at the ideal temperature while processing.”

DR SM RAFIQU L ISLAM
Prof of genetic engineering, biotechnology at CU

On the other hand, useful bacterial presence, including lactobacillus and streptococcus, was found in moderate amounts in sour cow yoghurt, as microorganisms cannot survive persistently in presence of sugar, said Dr Mannan.

According to Prof Rafiqul Islam, buffalo yoghurt is made locally and the milk is not boiled at the ideal temperature while processing.

The research was initiated in July 2019 and completed in August 2021, said Prof Islam.

Dr Mannan said it is the first research in the country initiated to identify the presence of microorganisms in all sorts of yoghurt available in the country.

Prof Junaid Siddiki, of Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, and Dr Nazmul Haque, associate professor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, were also among the researchers.

3 killed, 14 hurt in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed and 14 were injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Munshiganj, one person was killed and 10 were injured as a bus hit a cement-laden covered-van from behind on Dhaka-Mawa Expressway in Sreenagar upazila.

The deceased was identified as Md Ripon (22).

All the victims were passengers of the bus. Seven of the injured were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in serious condition, said Mahfuz Riben of Sreenagar Fire Service.

The accident took place in Bejgaon area around 8:00am, when the bus driver heading towards Shimulia Ghat from Dhaka lost control over the vehicle.

Police seized the bus, though its driver and helper managed to flee, said Md Humayun, sub-inspector of Hashara Highway Police Station.

In Brahmanbaria, two people were killed and four were injured after a CNG-run auto-rickshaw and a truck collided head-on at Kasba upazila.

The accident took place on the Cumilla-Brahmanbaria regional highway in Kharera area around 8:00am.

Two people -- the CNG driver and a passenger -- died on the spot, said police.

One of the deceased was identified as Kawser Mia (35), the auto-rickshaw driver, said OC Shahjalal Alam of Brahmanbaria Khantihata Highway Police Station.

The injured were taken to Brahmanbaria General Hospital, said the OC.



One person was killed and 10 were injured as this bus hit a cement-carrying covered-van from behind on Dhaka-Mawa Expressway in Sreenagar upazila of Munshiganj yesterday morning.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

6 members of robber gang held in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police have arrested six members of an inter-district robbery gang at a hotel in Chattogram city's City Gate area early yesterday.

The law enforcers said the gang used microbus and mugged people in guise of passengers.

The arrest was made in a joint drive after police started investigating the murder of Hossen Master, an expatriate in Dubai and a resident of Mirsarai upazila. He was mugged in similar fashion and beaten to death in Chattogram last month.

However, the microbus used in the robbery is yet to be recovered.

Shah Alam Akon (32), Abul Kalam (47), Jakir Hossen alias Towhid (36), Alamin (29), Nahidul Islam alias Harun (31) and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



I wanted to break myself as an artiste: Peya Jannatul

‘Chitmahal’ in theatres from today

Renowned model, anchor and actress Jannatul Ferdous Peya has always been selective about her silver-screen projects. After “Chorabali” and “Gangster Returns”, she will be seen in H R Habib directorial “Chitmahal”. The film released theatrically today.

The artiste, who is also an established lawyer, shared her experience in working on the project, and more. Even though the film released today, it was announced back in 2015. “We have waited for this release for a long time,” says the actress, “The entire crew is relieved that it could finally hit theatres,” says Peya.

Inspired by the true events of the lives of the enclaved people during the partition of India in 1947, “Chitmahal” was filmed in Panchagarh, Maroa Chitmahal.

“We cannot fathom the social and mental sufferings of an orphan who lives without the identity of their roots,” she asserts. “Enclaved people are unrecognised citizens, who have no identity of their land, and they are deprived from



citizen rights.” Peya says that while filming, a few old women came to see the shooting, and were emotional when they learned the film is based on their lives.

Peya will be portraying the role of a widow in this film. “I wanted to break myself as an artiste, I wanted to come out of my ‘western’ image, and experiment with something new,” she says.

Peya informs that while shooting the film, she was not as aware of these subjugated people. “Some films are made to document history, and this is one such film. The audience will get to be empathetic towards the suffering of these people.” The film will have a special screening for the residence of the said ‘Chitmahal’, on the day of release. Apart from acting, modelling and anchoring, Peya Jannatul is also an extremely busy lawyer. “It gets tough for me to manage the time. I have signed two films: Jaaz multimedia’s “Masud Rana” and Raihan Rafi’s “Shwapnobaji”, while shooting for “Chitmahal”.

“Chitmahal” also features Moushumi Hamid, Shimul Khan, and Arman Parvez Murad, among others.

PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL



20th Dhaka Int’l Film Festival kicks off tomorrow

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The 20th edition of the Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) is set to be inaugurated tomorrow at the Bangladesh National Museum Main Auditorium.

The festival has been arranged by Rainbow Film Society, an organisation dedicated to promoting a healthy cine-culture in Bangladesh since 1977.

During the programme, organisers expect to screen around 225 films from 70 different countries. The screenings will take place at the Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, STAR Cineplex, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Central Public Library, and Bangladesh National Museum Auditorium.

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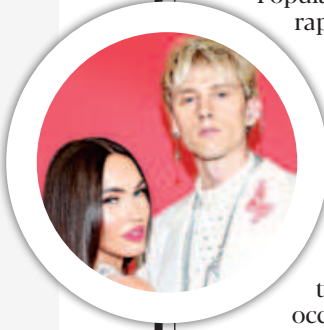
Megan Fox, Machine Gun Kelly engaged

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Popular American actress Megan Fox and rapper Machine Gun Kelly are engaged. Each posted a video on social media announcing their engagement. Fox shared a video on Instagram of Kelly kneeling in front of her at the top of a flight of outdoor stairs under the tree where the two said they fell in love in July 2020, as per reports.

Kelly also posted a video on Instagram, showing Fox wearing the two merged rings the rapper made for the occasion, with a diamond and an emerald that form “the obscure heart that is our love.”

Fox also wrote in her post that that she and the 31-year-old musician ‘drank each other’s blood’ to celebrate the occasion, which took place outside of the Spa Botánico at the Ritz-Carlton Dorado Beach in Puerto Rico.



COUNTRYWIDE

Focus on women

FROM PAGE 1

vote for. “But I want continuation of the development works in the city. I hope the city will be free from eve-teasing and separate toilets will be set up for women.”

Another university student Abdul Alim said he wants a drugs- and corruption-free green city where there will be no traffic jam.

“Teenage gang is a new worry for city residents. There are a number of such gangs in the city. The new mayor must take stern actions against those,” he said.

Voters are also worried about using EVM as many are going to use it for the first time. They said the voting may progress slowly due to use of the machine, which might have an impact on the polls results.

Sixty-year-old Tarikat Hossain said he has little idea about EVMs. “I never cast my ballots using an EVM. I may be able to use it, but what about uneducated people? Would they be able to cast their ballots? This will be a big issue.”

While campaigning in the city’s Paschim Dewbhog area, Ivy yesterday said she would carry out her duties honestly to fulfil the wishes of the new voters if she won the election.

“I have served the Narayanganj city residents rising above party and personal interests. I speak clearly and I never resort to lies. That’s why new voters will vote for me,” she said.

Taimur yesterday said he wants to bring a change in the city corporation and relieve city dwellers of the burden of city corporation tax.

“I am an independent candidate and I have been with the people for 50 years. So, if the voting is held in a peaceful manner, people from all walks of life will vote for me,” he added.

Although local AL lawmaker (Narayanganj-4) Shamim Osman extended his support to Ivy a few days ago, many believe it is still not clear what his role would be on polling day.

They said if Shamim’s supporters vote for Taimur, it would be tough for Ivy to win a third term as Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) mayor.

Rafiur Rabbi, senior vice president of Nagorik Committee of Narayanganj, said city residents will vote against criminalisation of politics and also in favour of development.

“New and women voters will play a key role in the election. It seems to me that women voters have a soft corner for Selina Hayat Ivy,” he said.

Nur Uddin, president of Amra Narayanganjbashi, a non-political and social platform, said women voters will play a key role in the election outcome as they usually cast their ballots in high numbers.

“The use of EVM is another key issue. If voters fail to cast their ballots due to technical glitches, it would be disastrous for the major contenders,” he said.

Young, experienced makes the difference



SHYKH SERAJ

The combination of experience and the spirit of youth could become good partners, whether in building society or running any organization. I have seen many successful examples built with this combination. A few days back, I went to see a wonderful initiative at Kachina village in Mymensingh’s Bhaluka upazila. Four visionary youths and three experienced farmers have joined hands to build an integrated farm. Such agricultural initiative is now an example of success to many. They have a project to cultivate malta, lemon and fish on 20 acres of land, combining agricultural experience of three pro-farmers and four tech-savvy young men.

“While studying, we always thought about how our higher studies in computer science would have an impact in our lives and we could stay close to the nature as well,” shared one of the youths. “Your agricultural reports on YouTube opened our eyes and we thought cultivating high-value fruit crops can be a great option,” added another young entrepreneur.

“We had the indomitable will and knowledge to use technology for the betterment of farming,” said another entrepreneur Shariful, who was talking

to me while working on a laptop. I felt good that intelligent youth are coming closer to the soil. Finally, their initiative started in 2017.

Shamsul Haque Suruj, aged around 60, is also a part of this initiative. “I have been working in the farming sector, especially paddy, jute, wheat and sugarcane, for many years now. But, I never thought I would join these boys and cultivate malta and orange. It was new to us. The young boys showed us your YouTube videos and we learned everything very fast. The video on the malta orchard of Shakhawat Hossain of Chuadanga inspired us a lot,” Suruj said.

“After visiting Shakhawat’s orchard I bought 1,700 malta saplings,” Suruj said. Besides, the government’s agriculture department first gave them 120 saplings and guidelines and later provided them another 300 saplings. “We bought another 230 saplings and extended our cultivation on one acre,” Suruj added. Let’s talk about the harvest. They sold about three tonnes of malta. Usually, the yield comes low in the first year. During the second harvest they got a bumper yield. “We sold 18 tonnes of malta and after all the expenses, we made a profit of Tk 15 lakh (USD 17492),” he added. They do not use pesticides, instead they use

sex pheromone traps that costs only Tk 5000 (USD 58) a year. Sometimes they all stay at the farm, because it is a dream for them.

Now farming has become technology-based. It can be said that technology is the foundation of such entrepreneurs. Another entrepreneur Engineer Moazzem Hossain Badal left his job opportunities in the IT sector. Now he is contributing his ICT skills in farming. His main goal is to build a modern farm, not just a conventional one. He wants to bring the world’s most advanced high-yielding crops into production. Badal said, “We decided to cultivate organically, because currently the world has a huge market for organic agricultural products.

Although local malta prices are half that of the imported ones, they are not unhappy with the price, compared to their production costs. Shariful Islam is working on the price, market policy and strategy. He said more fruits are sold online. He, however, mentioned some problems. Many people order for five or ten kilogram of malta, but there is no opportunity to deliver such a small amount online. The same happens during the mango season. Now, there are many courier services available for mango delivery and it would be nice

Shykh Seraj is Bangladesh’s pioneer development journalist. He received country’s two highest civilian honours, Swadhinata Puroshkar and Ekushey Padak, respectively. He is a BIDS, Ashoka and Bangla Academy Fellow. He also received highest award for agricultural journalism from the United Nations, FAO A.H. Boerma Award, Gusi Peace Prize (Philippines) and many other prestigious accolades at home and abroad. At Channel i, he’s the Founder Director and Head of News. He’s also Director and Host of Channel i’s popular agro-documentary, Hridoye Mati O Manush.



◀ **A group of young entrepreneurs and experienced farmers at their integrated farm at Kachina village in Mymensingh’s Bhaluka upazila.**

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

to have a year-round service available. Shariful’s words seemed to suggest another possibility.

Last year, they sold malta worth about Tk 43 lakh. This time, they are expecting to harvest at least 40 to 50 tonnes of malta and believe the profits would be much higher than the previous seasons. Another member of the team Mojibur Rahman, who has been engaged with farming for long, thinks integrated farming initiatives are gradually becoming more successful. He has seen a new life in diversified crops, especially high-valued crops like malta and other fruits. Now he’s looking at farming in a different way.

If you hold on to take any farming initiative with courage and devotion, one day you will find the path towards success. Today, agricultural projects of young entrepreneurs are the evidence of such success. Success in farming at Kachina village is an example. The hard work of educated youth, mixed with experienced farming brains, is just a perfect match. Successful aspects of technology-based organic farming practices are becoming popular now. I believe this will play a vital role in overall agricultural development in Bangladesh.

Volunteers in personal protective equipment (PPE) carry on a stretcher the body of a person who died due to the Covid-19, at a cremation ground in New Delhi, India, yesterday. With 247,417 new infections, India yesterday reported the highest number of daily cases since late May. The country also reported 380 Covid-19 deaths in the last 24 hours. Experts said new infections in Indian cities could peak next week after rising rapidly.

PHOTO: AFP

PHOTO: AFP

REUTERS, United Nations

Human Rights Watch yesterday criticised US President Joe Biden and other Western leaders for a weak defense of democracy and for failing to meet challenges from the climate crisis and Covid-19 pandemic to poverty, inequality and injustice.

In contrast to what Human Rights Executive Director Kenneth Roth described as former US president Donald Trump's "embrace of friendly autocrats", Biden took office in January 2021 with a pledge to put human rights at the center of his foreign policy.

"But he continued to sell arms to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel despite their persistent repression," Roth wrote in Human Rights Watch's annual World Report, released yesterday.

“Other Western leaders displayed similar weakness in their defense of democracy,” Roth wrote, naming French President Emmanuel Macron and former German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Roth also said that during key summits Biden “seemed to lose his voice when it came to public denunciation of serious human rights violations.”

"If democracies are to prevail in the global contest with autocracy, their leaders must do more than just spotlight the autocrats' inevitable shortcomings. They need to make a stronger, positive case for democratic rule," Roth said.

UK PM's future uncertain after lockdown party apology

REUTERS, London

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's premiership was in the balance yesterday as he faced calls from within his Conservative Party to resign after he admitted attending a party at his official residence during a coronavirus lockdown.

Johnson on Wednesday issued “heartfelt apologies” for attending the gathering at Downing Street in May 2020, telling parliament he understood the public’s rage at the revelations.

Senior ministers rallied around to offer support to their leader, who won a landslide election victory in 2019, although media said the backing of finance minister Rishi Sunak,

taking advantage of the lovely weather. "Bring your own booze", it said.

At the time, social contact was limited to a bare minimum and many people were furious that they had been unable to visit loved ones on their deathbeds or attend funerals.

In response to opponents' demands for his resignation, Johnson said people needed to wait for the outcome of an internal investigation being carried out by senior civil servant Sue Gray, whose report is expected in the next two weeks.

The revelation about the party follows similar allegations about rule-breaking by Johnson and his officials earlier in May 2020 and during a Christmas lockdown at the end of that year.



regarded as a potential successor to Johnson, appeared lukewarm.

Others were more direct. The Conservatives' leader in Scotland, along with a handful of other prominent lawmakers, called for Johnson to resign, saying his position was untenable.

"The mood isn't great," Conservative member of parliament Jake Berry told BBC radio.

"There is a lot of concern amongst my colleagues about the damage that these revelations are doing to the Conservative Party. But I think yesterday there was a bit of a turning point of opinion."

Johnson admitted for the first time on Wednesday he had joined a gathering held in the garden of Downing Street on May 20, 2020, saying he had stayed for about 25 minutes to thank staff at what he thought was a work event. He said he regretted his action.

Media reports have said tables in the garden were set out for food and wine, while an invitation sent to around 100 people suggested

‘unsuccessful’

REUTERS, Moscow

The Kremlin yesterday gave a bleak assessment of Russia's security talks with the United States and Nato this week, describing them as "unsuccessful" and saying there was disagreement on fundamental issues.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov also said Moscow viewed a sweeping sanctions bill unveiled by US Senate Democrats “extremely negatively” and that its timing meant it looked like an attempt to put pressure on Moscow.

Peskov said two rounds of talks so far this week between Russia and the West had produced some “positive nuances” but that Moscow was looking for concrete results, not nuances.

The talks, which moved to Vienna yesterday for a meeting of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, are centred around an array of security demands that Moscow has made of the West, while building up forces near Ukraine.

Moscow wants legally binding promises that Nato will never allow former Soviet Ukraine to become a member and that the alliance will pull back troops from former Communist states in central and eastern Europe.

The proposed sanctions legislation, backed by the White House, would target top Russian government and military officials, including President Vladimir Putin, and key banking institutions if Moscow engages in hostilities against Ukraine.



from Kazakhstan

AFP, Almaty

Over 2,000 Russia-led troops yesterday began withdrawing from Kazakhstan after being deployed when peaceful protests over an energy price hike turned into unprecedented violence claiming dozens of lives. "The peacekeeping operation is over ... the tasks have been fulfilled," said Russian General Andrei Serdyukov, commander of the CSTO contingent that saw troops from Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan sent to the former Soviet republic on January 6. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken earlier warned Kazakhstan that "once Russians are in your house, it's sometimes very difficult to get them to leave".

maritime claims

AFP, Washington

The United States on Wednesday laid out its most detailed case yet against Beijing's "unlawful" claims in the South China Sea, rejecting both the geographic and historic bases for its vast, divisive map. In a 47-page research paper, the State Department's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs said China had no basis under international law for claims that have put Beijing on a collision course with the Philippines, Vietnam and other Southeast Asian nations. Releasing the study, a State Department statement called again on Beijing "to cease its unlawful and coercive activities in the South China Sea." China hit back, claiming the report "distorts international law and misleads the public."



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No. 23.08.0000.006.38.002.17-87

Date: 12 January 2022

e-Tender Notice No. 1/2021-22

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for procurement as follows:

Tender ID No.	Description	Tender document last selling date and time	Tender closing date and time	Tender opening date and time
646792	e-GP-7: Procurement of Computer, Laptop, Monitor etc.	26-01-2022 16:00	27-01-2022 12:00	27-01-2022 12:00
647923	e-GP-8: Procurement of Printer, Scanner, Multimedia Projector etc.	30-01-2022 16:00	31-01-2022 12:00	31-01-2022 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any branch of the banks registered in the e-GP System. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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Telephone: 88-02-8170393

Believe 58pc Americans

REUTERS, Washington

One year after the storming of the US Capitol by supporters of Donald Trump, six out of 10 Americans believe the country's democracy is in danger of collapse, according to a poll released Wednesday.

Seventy-six percent of those surveyed in the poll by Quinnipiac University said they think political instability in the United States is a bigger danger than foreign threats.

A majority of those polled – 58 percent – said they think the nation's democracy is in danger of collapse. Thirty-seven percent disagreed.

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e-Tender Notice (OTM)

Memo No. 25.36.1500.112.07.443.13/100 Date: 13/01/2022 Eng.
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works given below.

SI No.	Tender ID No.	Name of works	Tender closing date & time
01	646960	Construction of 3-Storeyed 800sft. Staff Quarter (4-unit each floor) with 10-storeyed foundation at Chattogram Central Jail	07-Feb-2022 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Abhijeet Chowdhury
Executive Engineer,
Chittagong PWD Division-2
Rahamatgonj, Chattogram

GD-86

Tough time ahead with continuing Covid surge

Govt’s curbs must be well-thought-out and enforceable

AS has been predicted by health experts, the number of Covid-19 cases in the country has been rising at an alarming rate. The DGHS reported 3,359 new cases and 12 deaths in 24 hours till 8am Thursday, while the positivity rate jumped from 2.43 percent on January 1 to 12.03 percent on January 13. According to a DGHS spokesperson, if all the people with symptoms get tested, the real number of infections would be much higher. That being the case, we must do everything to prevent the impending crisis before it further cripples the economy and overwhelms our hospitals.

While we appreciate the health minister’s concerns regarding the issue, as he warned of a massive spike in cases in the coming days, what we expect from his ministry is that they would give the necessary guidelines to all our public hospitals and prepare them with the equipment and medicines needed. According to DGHS data, around 1,300 Covid patients were admitted to hospitals as of January 12. Since more patients may need hospitalisations and oxygen support, the ministry must ensure that no hospital suffers from lack of resources. Increasing hospital beds for Covid patients must also be considered since the existing 20,000 beds may not be sufficient in case of a massive surge. In addition, the government’s vaccination drives must also be expedited.

About the imposition of new Covid curbs—which took effect on January 13—we would like to point out that some of the curbs were not well-thought-out or practical: the directive given to the transport sector is one of them. Reportedly, the government ordered all public transports to run at half capacity in a bid to maintain social distancing. However, it does not seem like an enforceable idea given that all the offices, factories and shopping malls will remain open and people will have to go to their workplaces regularly. From our previous experiences, we know how difficult it would be for people to commute to their workplaces and that only the transport owners will be benefited from an increase in fares in the end. Thus, we think, the government should reconsider the decision.

Moreover, considering the effects of the pandemic on our education sector in the past two years, we think the government should not take the decision of closing down educational institutions, particularly schools, right away. The education ministry must come up with a proper plan, taking suggestions from the experts.

Since the government has already developed a zoning system to curb infections across the country, decisions about imposing restrictions should also be taken zone-wise, considering the infection rates in particular zones. Last but not the least, people should be encouraged to regularly maintain health safety guidelines including wearing masks, maintaining social distancing as well as getting vaccinated as soon as possible.

No room for road safety?

Plan to expand road safety division should be reconsidered

WE wonder how far removed from reality the public administration ministry must be for it to not approve the Roads and Highways Department’s much-needed plan to expand its road safety division. The RHD had sent a proposal to revise its organogram to the ministry in early 2020. Among other changes, the department proposed expanding the Road Safety Division into a circle of three divisions under a new wing, which reflected an urgent need for decisive interventions to address road safety concerns. But while the ministry partially approved some of the proposed changes in October 2021, it did not acknowledge the expansion plan for the road safety division, meaning that once the new organogram comes into force, the division will cease to exist.

This is, one can argue, the opposite of what we should be doing to tackle the ever-rising number of road accidents and fatalities. Given the gravity of the situation, shouldn’t the expansion plan have been looked over and approved on a priority basis? Instead, the RHD is now forced to revise its plan to somehow include road safety initiatives within its new organogram. The current road safety division consists of about 10 people, not nearly enough to handle the massive workload. Although it will be a while before the organogram comes into effect, it is unlikely that the RHD’s demands for more manpower will be met.

Already, the Road Transport Act 2018 is sitting largely idle and still being redone as per demands of transport associations. If the attitude of the public administration ministry is so dismissive towards a plan that could help reduce deaths on the roads, it is certainly a cause for concern.

The RHD chief engineer has said that their next course of action would be to resend the proposal, including the road safety division provision, to the public administration ministry. We hope it will be considered so that the department is better armed to decrease the likelihood of accidents occurring on our roads. Given the country’s appalling road safety scenario, if there is one sector that deserves all the resources it can get, it is the one dedicated to making our roads safer through auditing, investigation and coming up with corrective measures.

Is BB’s new decision good for the banking sector?



THE OVERTON WINDOW

Eresh Omar Jamal is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star. His Twitter handle is: @EreshOmarJamal

ERESH OMAR JAMAL

OVER the years, experts have identified two major problems in Bangladesh’s banking sector. The first is that we have too many banks, owned by a group of influential people. Many of these banks have repeatedly approved loans to subsidiary companies of other bank owners or people associated with them, who are among the major loan defaulters in our country. This is connected to the second problem, which is the massive growth of non-performing loans (NPLs) in the banking sector. Both are the results of the policies taken by our regulators, or have happened due to their inaction.

In a recent move, the Bangladesh Bank decided to permit banks not to treat borrowers as defaulters if they repaid only 15 percent (or more) of their total loan instalments payable—down from 25 percent in 2020. Additionally, banks were permitted to transfer the unrealised interest on the 85 percent (or less) of the loans to their income books—up from 75 percent the year before—even if the sums were not paid. Because of this relaxed policy, borrowers remained unclassified by paying only 15 percent of their loan amounts for the year. And banks were able to lower their provision requirement, which raised most banks’ operating profits in 2021.

According to experts, the high operating profit logged by banks did not reflect the real figure, which is giving an unrealistic picture—a dangerous thing for banks. The most glaring problem here is that there is no way that banks will actually realise the whole amount they are still owed—some of which they have already included in their operating profits for 2021. That is simply not how the banking system works anywhere in the world. And banks in Bangladesh have an even poorer track record when it comes to recovering such funds—which got worse after the pandemic. Therefore, the banks’ balance sheets have become increasingly more detached from reality.

Second, by inflating their incomes this way, banks are overstating their profits and are creating the scope for paying higher dividends to their owners and shareholders, without really making any extra earnings to pay their shareholders from. Even though the central bank has said it has directed banks to refrain from distributing dividends as an extra precaution, one wonders whether the central bank or the commercial banks will actually follow through with this, given



Almost all central banks around the world are trying to get commercial banks in their countries to increase provisions in order to offset the risks brought about by the pandemic. We seem to be doing the very opposite.

their poor track record of abiding by their own set of rules.

Third, by recording higher profits and creating the scope for giving out more dividends, banks are pushing their stock prices up—again, not by operating more efficiently or being more productive, but simply by changing the numbers. Meanwhile, the regulators cheer them on,

defaulters were left untouched along with their banker cronies, and the state decided not to punish the wilful and habitual defaulters but to “bail out” the banks using taxpayers’ money. This happened despite the fact that banks were clearly okay with, if not complicit in, the “corruption” that had destroyed their balance sheets. The state decided to shift the losses, caused by the wilful defaulters, “onto the public” by using taxpayers’ money to bail the banks out. Such practices cannot lead to financial discipline and a robust banking sector.

These interventions are clearly not in the interest of the public, or the banks themselves in the long run. Even though the Bangladesh Bank is allowing banks to pretend like they are performing well, the reality is that they are becoming more vulnerable.

Now, according to the central bank, this move was necessary to ensure that businesses are able to recover from the pandemic-induced setbacks. And it is true that the government should pursue policies that are business-friendly in order to get the economy back on track. We are in favour of such policies. But the one that the Bangladesh Bank is following could allow wilful defaulters and cronies to flourish, and do little to help the genuine businessmen to operate within the law. In the long run, this can endanger our already weakened banking sector—weakened by the past policies of the regulators and their failure to stop one scam after another.

At the end of the day, what is important is that genuine businesses that make profit by providing something of value to the people get support from the government, not those who make profit by getting subsidies by lobbying to the authorities. In regards to the central bank’s latest policy, how does it intend to ensure that is not the case—especially given what has happened in the banking sector over the past many years?

Around the world, governments are supporting businesses in their countries to recover from losses incurred during the pandemic. But at the same time, almost all central banks around the world are trying to get commercial banks in their countries to increase provisions in order to offset the risks brought about by the pandemic. We seem to be doing the very opposite.

Even though the Bangladesh Bank has asked banks to maintain an additional three percent (on top of the existing one percent) provisions, relaxing banking discipline and allowing habitual defaulters to potentially get more access to bank credits is dangerous, and may lead to further expansion of NPLs, which is already very high.

Again, one must ask, on what basis did the Bangladesh Bank make this decision? Was it based on any case study? The central bank owes the public an answer to this question.

PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

Saving Afghanistan

Gordon Brown, a former prime minister of the United Kingdom, is United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education. Martin Griffiths is Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

GORDON BROWN and MARTIN GRIFFITHS

IT is now more than four months since the dramatic exit of US and other Western forces from Afghanistan. By chartering special flights, loosening asylum rules, and releasing funds, Western countries airlifted a few thousand lucky Afghans to safety as the Taliban retook control of the country. But those left behind have been shut off from the rest of the world.

Foreign governments have frozen international banking transactions and trade with Afghanistan, mostly at the behest of the US. As a result, Afghan public-sector salaries have dried up, and the economy has tanked. Many development-aid projects, no matter how essential, have been paralysed or cancelled.

As a result, the onset of the harsh Afghan winter has brought rising prices, and food has become increasingly scarce. Schools, clinics, and hospitals across the country have stopped functioning. So, just when the Afghan people need more help, they are being denied even the basics.

International humanitarian aid workers and Afghan communities themselves are doing their best to keep food aid moving, clinics functioning, and schools open for boys and girls. But the challenges are huge. Afghans now

The international community needs to become smarter about how it engages with Afghanistan. Currently, the world is waiting for the Taliban to make progress on various international norms without clearly defining what it expects of the regime.

face destitution, and even famine, on a dramatic scale.

If the status quo continues, almost the entire country faces acute poverty this coming year. By the end of this winter, almost the entire country—97 percent of the population—could be too poor to survive without aid.

The rest of the world, and developed countries in particular, should not think that they can just shut the door and forget about this mounting tragedy. Basic morality aside, the instability resulting from Afghanistan’s collapse will be felt far beyond the country’s borders.

To be sure, it is right to stand up for Afghan girls’ education. But, as the Afghan analyst Orzala Nemat of the University of London’s School of Oriental and African Studies recently put it, it is not right to withhold aid for the basic services—food, water, and health care—that keep those girls alive.

The current meltdown is a nightmare. Instead of sticking its head in the sand, the international community needs to act. There are three measures in particular that can be taken without rewarding the Taliban.

First, money must be made available. The UN will seek to raise USD 4.5 billion in 2022 to help the most vulnerable in Afghanistan. This plan is a stopgap measure for more than 21 million people who need food, shelter, medicine, and protection. The international community can surely find such a sum.

In addition, the UN Security Council recently adopted a resolution exempting humanitarian activities from the sanctions regime imposed on some Taliban members. Governments and financial institutions must make the most of this fresh opportunity.

Second, there needs to be more

flexibility in how donor funding can be used. For example, the World Bank holds USD 1.5 billion in trust for Afghanistan, and recently announced an agreement to transfer USD 280 million—some to the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to provide health care, and some to the World Food Programme. The whole fund should now be reprogrammed to help the Afghan people.

It should also be possible to use donor funding to pay public-sector workers’ salaries and to help Afghan institutions deliver basic services such as healthcare and education, and still not be seen as rewarding the Taliban. Such support for essential state functions will give Afghans hope for the future and reason to stay in their country. Hollowing out the state, on the other hand, is a recipe for suffering and instability.

Third, the international community needs to become smarter about how it engages with Afghanistan. Currently, the world is waiting for the Taliban to make progress on various international norms without clearly defining what it expects of the regime. The Taliban, meanwhile, are either not inclined to meet these expectations or opaque about their intentions.

This approach virtually ensures failure. The international community needs to be much more decisive and specific in its demands, as well as far more engaged. This could include relaxing or lifting some economic sanctions, or gradually reintroducing longer-term development assistance, in response to progress on issues of international concern—including women’s and girls’ rights.

The world needs to provide the people of Afghanistan the support they need, because the catastrophic consequences of failure will not be theirs to suffer alone.

The long, winding road to remedy for spousal violence



NILIMA JAHAN

Nilima Jahan is a staff reporter of The Daily Star. Email: nilima.jahan@thedailystar.net.

WHILE covering a discussion on domestic violence last year, like many others in the audience, I was deeply touched by Rahela's story of helplessness. Rahela (not her real name), a domestic violence survivor from Atgharia upazila of Pabna, had been abused by her husband ever since she got married 15 years ago. Although initially her husband, a drug addict, would torture her occasionally, it became more frequent as time went by, she said, wiping her tears. But one day, during the Covid-induced lockdown last year, the 28-year-old mother of two could not bear the torture any longer. The man beat her severely with a stick, which landed her in a local hospital.

Later, when I contacted her personally, Rahela said that she had gone to the local UP chairman to complain about her husband's history of violence, but she was advised to go to the police station. After taking treatment at the hospital for two weeks, she went to the Atgharia Police Station, where the duty officer asked her to file a complaint, and that was all.

According to Rahela, police did nothing about her complaint, rather, after a month and a half, she was forced to return to her abuser as her parents could not bear the extra costs of keeping her two daughters and herself, while her in-laws and neighbours made a mockery of their situation saying, in Rahela's words, she "had to return eventually, even though she went to the police to teach him a lesson."

Although spousal violence is the most prevalent form of violence facing women in Bangladesh—according to a 2015 Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics survey, 73 percent of ever-married women reported having experienced violence from their husbands in their lifetime—an overwhelming majority of them have to endure a similar scenario while seeking remedies. They have to go through a myriad of other challenges including social stigma.

Data obtained from the national emergency helpline 999 also shows that the number of complaints against spousal violence has increased by 174 percent during the past two and a half years, with 3,348 complaints recorded in 2021, 1,123 in 2020, and 388 in 2019. In 2021, such complaints were almost half (47 percent) of the gender-violence-related calls attended by 999. However, in only a few instances, cases were filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000, as most survivors do not want to file a case, instead they want to see the matter resolved internally. Unlike Rahela, who at least showed the courage to go to the local UP chairman and police to seek remedies, victims mostly keep silent about the bodily harm and emotional abuse suffered.

Speaking up or taking action against an abusive husband is not an easy decision, as I have discovered while interviewing many survivors of domestic violence. Many think they have little choice in this regard, with social and familial pressures always hanging over their heads. They are advised to comply and endure silently, or risk losing it all. The shocking death of Elma Chowdhury Meghla—a student of Dhaka University's

Department of Dance—at the hands of her in-laws is a perfect example of how lack of support can force women to keep silent until their deaths.

Furthermore, in the absence of proper institutional support including shelter, psycho-social counselling, medical services and livelihood opportunities,

violence she had faced from her husband. During her eighth month of pregnancy, she said, she discovered that her husband was cheating on her, and when confronted, beat her severely. He also threatened to kick her out of the house, so she couldn't take any action against him.

district courts in the past 10 years, while the Barishal Chief Judicial Magistrate Court recorded only one in 2020, and that too was still pending disposal. A lawyer with 25 years of experience at the Metropolitan Magistrate Courts in Dhaka said that no one had approached him to file a case under the Act in the last 10



ILLUSTRATION:
ALBORZ KAMALIZAD

In order to prevent domestic violence, which went up alarmingly during the pandemic, we must make the DVPP Act successful by employing designated paralegals or separate desks at the Upazila Women Affairs offices to efficiently coordinate among the various implementing agencies.

According to Mehroo, based on her experience of working with her organisation, she found that the road to remedy under the DVPP Act is also uneven, complex as well as time-consuming, as the implementing authorities are not well aware of these progressive provisions. In her case, it was simply impossible to pursue a prolonged legal battle as she was heavily pregnant, unable to walk properly, let alone run to courts.

A 2020 study conducted by Prof Taslima Yasmin, an associate professor of law at Dhaka University, also found that 19 of the 20 survivors interviewed had never heard of the DVPP Act. Even when they went to law enforcement agencies or administrative officers, they were not informed that they could get remedy under the law. Clearly, there is a lack of orientation and training on the provisions and usage of the law.

Taslima's study also found that victims only seek remedy when physical torture reaches a severe level, or after they were denied access to their marital residence or the husband remarried.

Another shocking discovery was that although the study found case records from the Chief Judicial Magistrate Courts in over a dozen districts, it found no case filed under the law in Bhola and Sherpur

years; he saw only one case being heard in a court during this time. Similarly, the Judicial Magistrates in Gazipur, Narsingdi, and Mymensingh informed that they rarely saw any case being filed under this law.

According to the Act, the upazila women affairs officers have been made responsible as Enforcement Officer (EO) for reporting incidents of domestic violence to the court, accessing legal aid under the Legal Aid Act 2000, referring victims to safe shelters, if necessary, and much more. However, some organisations working on preventing violence against women said that the enforcement officers remain unavailable for immediate support, as they are overburdened with duties and under-equipped in the absence of any budget.

In order to prevent domestic violence, which went up alarmingly during the pandemic, we must make the DVPP Act successful by employing designated paralegals or separate desks at the Upazila Women Affairs offices to efficiently coordinate among the various implementing agencies. At the same time, there must be a mechanism (involving shelters, psycho-social counselling and medical services) for the survivors who literally have nowhere to go to escape the violence.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Pottery piece
6 Elephant of stories
11 Become narrower
12 Chosen few
13 Parts of hearts
14 Critical asset
15 Plug parts
17 Smidge
18 Cariou of "Blue Bloods"
19 Game quests
22 Harris and Asner
23 "Gunsmoke" marshal
24 Like some verbs
25 Beethoven's first

27 Rap's — Nas X
30 Prompts
31 Early hour
32 Pharaoh's symbol
33 Black Sea port
35 Act the coquette
38 Indian, e.g.
39 Ready for bed
40 Petulant sound
41 Garden starters
42 Famous

DOWN
1 Basic need
2 Enmity
3 Kitchen coverings
4 Horse halter
5 Severely

burdens
6 Track act
7 Imitating
8 Café's cousin
9 Reach
10 Oboe parts
16 Tied the knot
20 Hails
21 Maximum amount
24 1501, in old Rome
25 Caron of "Gigi"
26 Worker at home
27 Blow one's top
28 Preposterous
29 Inclined
30 River vessels
34 Cave sound
36 Danger signal
37 Six-pt. scores

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

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Health Engineering Department (HED)
Sirajganj Division
S.B Fazlul Haque Road, Sirajganj
Email: hedsirajgonj.015@gmail.com

Memo No. 45.02.0000.293.18.001.2022-337
Date: 13.01.2022

e-Tender Notice
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System LTM Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for 18 No. packages under Sirajganj Division.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Last selling date & time	Closing & opening date & time
01	02	04	05
01	647496, 647495, 647493, 647491, 647490, 647489, 647488, 647487, 647485, 647484, 647483, 647481, 647480, 647479, 647476, 647469, 647329, 647277	30-Jan-2022 Time: 17:00	31-Jan-2022 Time: 14.00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

1. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

2. Detail about the tender has shown in e-Tender Notice and e-Tender document.

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

Engr. Md. Farque Ahamed
Executive Engineer
Health Engineering Department (HED)
Sirajganj Division

GD-85



MESSAGE FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR


It takes immense pleasure to congratulate all of the graduates who have completed their BBA, MBA, EMBA, and DBA degrees this year from the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka. The year 2021 is significant in our nation's history because it marks the Golden Jubilee of Independence, the centenary of the University of Dhaka, and the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Given the juxtaposition of academic journey, I believe the graduating students of 2021 will embrace the world with the spirit of the liberation war in their hearts as taught by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, and will make their parents and teachers proud.

As the country struggles to recover from the COVID-19 global pandemic, the graduating students have persevered in the face of adversity and uncertainty. This achievement is a matter of enormous pride for these graduates. After overcoming various challenges, you have all achieved this goal. I extend my deepest congratulations to every one of these talented young minds. I hope you will not only treasure this success, but also use it to fulfill your responsibilities to the country. No matter where you go, always strive to be the best version of yourself. This will allow you to discover new possibilities, bring positive changes, and create a better future.

Dhaka University has always been proud of how IBA has withstood the progression and maintained its posture as a symbol of excellence for more than a half-century. This Institute is a cradle for future leaders and its legacy. Needless to say, this year's graduates are an important part of that legacy, and I believe them to carry the torch of excellence forward through a wide range of academic, professional, and entrepreneurial endeavors. Above all, I expect them to uphold the spirit of integrity, secularism, and humanitarian values that distinguish this University's graduates to the development of a knowledge-driven society. Today, the nation expects you to give your all in order to achieve sustainable development goals by 2030 and the long-term vision of becoming a developed country by 2041 as envisioned by the proud daughter of Bangabandhu, Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the IBA's learned faculties and staff, whose dedication and hard work has made IBA what it is today. At the same time, my humble request is to conduct more fundamental researches and pursue advanced studies. In addition, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of the graduates' parents and families, as well as everyone who has supported them in their endeavors. May the accomplishments of this year's graduates add luster to the reputation of IBA and the University of Dhaka. A very happy new year 2022 to you all.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu. Long live University of Dhaka. Long live Bangladesh.


Professor Dr. Md. Akhtaruzzaman
Vice Chancellor
University of Dhaka



MESSAGE FROM THE GRADUATION SPEAKER

It has been 25 years since one has cut the umbilical cord from Institute of Business Administration (IBA) and unfurled into the professional world. As one looks back, the graduation ceremony probably has been one of the marquee events in one's life, culminating the coming of age of all the hard work over the years to obtain the IBA branding that sets us up for success in life. The coveted seal of being an IBA alumni is for a select few who has gone through all the meandering along the walkways of IBA over the years to prepare oneself to take on the world. The endless long nights, rushed mornings, numerous reports and defenses of the dissertations have all prepared us to build our mettle and set us up to enter the professional world.

While IBA provides us with the right to passage, it is unto us what we do with that makes all the difference. Strong diligence, continuous strive for disruption and transformational leadership yields the unimaginable. Over the years, IBA has built the foundation of great next generation leaders, and today most of the leading organisations and institutes have CEOs and CXOs who adorn the badge of being an IBA graduate.

It is an absolute honor to be part of the 2021 Graduation Ceremony, especially as it also marks the 25th graduation of Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) along with the graduation of Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) and Master of Business Administration (MBA). Congratulations, everyone!

As the country concludes the celebration of the 50th anniversary of independence, IBA has been at the forefront of creating world class talents that powered the business community over these years. Significant investment has been made by the country to build each of the graduates. As the graduating class of 2021, I look forward to your astute leadership in the future to drive our country and economy to the next pinnacle of success. You are entering business during a wonderful time when work, workplace, and workforce are getting redefined. Your leadership will be crucial to see this through and create a business that will leverage technology to transform. You will also need to play a critical role in driving sustainable leadership by creating your impact through leaving behind a positive footprint on our environment, society, and the world we live in. Build your leadership muscles in such a way that you can give as much as you can and bring discernable difference to the next 50 years of the country.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the faculties and the administration of IBA for their leadership in building such a great institute. Your impact to the nation building has been far and deep. Thank you for being our guiding star.

My best wishes for a wonderful graduation ceremony and even a more wonderful professional career ahead.


Zaved Akhtar
Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director
Unilever Bangladesh Limited

IBA PROGRAMS

- Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Executive MBA (EMBA)
- Post Graduate Diploma in Garment Business (PGD-GB)
- Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Management Development Program (MDP)

RECENT CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES



- Battle of Minds 2020
- BizMaestros 2020
- Brandwitz X 2020
- International Blockchain Olympiad, Bangladesh 2020
- Creative 2020
- Ennovators 4.0 2020
- CASECASE Quarantine Challenge Week 2020
- IUB Ascension 2019
- Student to Startup Chapter 2 2019
- SANEM Youthonomics 7 2019
- Colgate Open 2018
- PWK Nationals 5.0 2018
- ABP Open 2017



MESSAGE FROM THE PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR (ADMINISTRATION)

On this remarkable occasion of Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Graduation 2021 at the University of Dhaka, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the graduating students of the BBA, MBA, and EMBA programs, and to the degree awardees of the DBA program.

Despite the unprecedented sufferings that have occurred in the recent past, the graduating students of 2021 have overcome all adversities and faced all challenges with resilience and fortitude. Graduation is an exciting, yet daunting step in everyone's life. It requires endurance, patience, tenacity, and persistence. You, the graduates of 2021, have accomplished the feat of completing your academic journey and graduating amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, which in itself, speaks volumes about your emotional resilience.

While you should be delighted at this achievement, keep in mind that this milestone is merely a bridge from your years as students of IBA to the real world of your careers. Remember that learning is never a thing of the past. You must be prepared to take on the unknown. If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is the importance of adaptability. Life will be unpredictable and capricious; it will place you in situations you never expected to be in. You will experience unexpected situations and come across new challenges that are even more daunting and difficult to overcome than the challenges you faced earlier. Facing those challenges with intelligence and integrity is the true mark of a graduate of IBA and the University of Dhaka.

As you make your mark on the world, I hope you always acknowledge the significance of honesty and empathy in all the decisions you make. The world is in dire need of more kindness, compassion, and integrity. I believe that you inculcate these virtues in yourselves for the betterment of the world we live in. It is now up to you to make the world a better, kinder place. I hope you always remember that you are now ambassadors not only of your personal brands but also of your institution and the country. I have no doubt that each of you will achieve your full potential and reflect the values IBA has instilled in you all these years.

Along with the graduates, I would like to thank and congratulate the faculty members and staff of IBA and the families of the graduates, without whose support, this achievement would not have been realized. My dear graduates, today we entrust you with something bigger than yourselves. May you do justice to your wondrous abilities, may you uphold the name of IBA of the University of Dhaka. Remember, this is just the beginning. I pray that your lives ahead are filled with joy and prosperity.


Professor Dr. Muhammad Samad
Pro-Vice Chancellor (Administration)
University of Dhaka




MESSAGE FROM THE PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC)

It gives me immense pleasure to write this heartfelt message of congratulations to all the students of Class 2021 on their graduation from the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka. The graduation ceremony is a culminating point in the academic journey of the university students, and it is expected to usher them into a different world of professional experiences. Indeed, this momentous event is like no other in the life of the freshly minted graduates of the institution, so I would like to take this opportunity to extend my warmest felicitations to all the graduates of the BBA, MBA and EMBA programs and the degree awardees of the DBA program of the flagship business institute of the nation.

The Institute of Business Administration has always nurtured the best of minds, making exemplary contributions to molding illustrious business leaders and professionals of the country since 1966. I hope the IBA graduates of this year will make us profoundly proud, surpassing all the previous records of success of our institutional accomplishments. Let me take this opportunity to express my wholehearted gratitude to all the teachers and administrative staff of IBA for mentoring the students in their journey. I would also like to thank the parents and family members for proving themselves to be a constant source of unflinching support for the graduates during the academic journey. Indeed, it is a moment of collective celebration for everyone of us.

Dear graduates, I believe this year has been one of the most challenging periods in your life, harrowingly ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic and characterized by the merciless collapse of global economy. While almost all of us, even the safely cloistered university students, have felt the unforeseen repercussions of the global health crisis, I am sure the most unusual year has also taught you how to make do with whatever we have, to adapt ourselves to the worst of times with perseverance, and to combat the unprecedented calamity with collective human efforts. Indeed, the whole nation looks up to you in the wake of such a period of massive economic catastrophes, and it devolves upon you as a moral responsibility to tackle the seemingly insurmountable economic crises haunting the industries not only in the country but also around the world. The professional life into which you are ready to enter is certainly a difficult one, but I am convinced that you would leave your mark of industriousness, innovative business ideas and resilience on everything you will be doing from now onwards.

I wish you every success, personal and professional, in your life.


Professor Dr. A. S. M. Maksud Kamal
Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic)
University of Dhaka



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I would like to begin this message by extending my heartfelt congratulations to the BBA, MBA, Executive MBA graduates, and DBA degree awardee of 2021!

As you look back today, you will see that there is a long and winding path that has led you to this moment. I know for certain that our graduating class has overcome extraordinary circumstances to forge that path and arrive today as a graduate. This class of 2021 is even more special as you are rising to the challenges of dealing with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

As you are about to carry forward the legacy of IBA and represent the true spirit and culture of IBA at your respective workplaces, you will see how Bangladesh has broken countless barriers over the years to establish itself as a developing nation to keep up with the rest of the world. The year of 2021 marks the 25 years of launching our undergraduate program, the BBA program, 100 years of our glorified University, and 50 years of our beloved Bangladesh. While such glorious occasions would traditionally call for celebrations in the hallways and auditorium of IBA, we mostly had to celebrate these achievements of our nation as well as our beloved Institute in virtual and unconventional ways. However, I am proud to say that even amid a global pandemic, we at IBA have found and demonstrated unity, strength, and joy.

As you are all aware, the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence coincided with our country's graduation from the Least Developed Countries (LDC) category as well as the centenary birth anniversary of our Father of the Nation. On this occasion, we must acknowledge the contributions that our graduates have made over the years for the development of our country. Over the years, our graduates have been leading some of the largest local conglomerates and MNCs in the country. From policymakers to CEOs, our alumni have contributed vastly to the development of our country and they have also been the flag-bearers of innovation and agility in workplaces in the face of one of the worst pandemics this world has witnessed.

Our faculties have worked relentlessly to revise the IBA curriculum and as a result, IBA has pioneered the introduction of many new and relevant courses and we are planning our collaboration with different universities in Asia and across Europe and the United States as well in an attempt to empower and upskill our students. Soon, Bangladesh will no longer be subject to certain preferential treatments that other LDC members can benefit from so we are anticipating many new challenges to arise for our businesses. In order to overcome these obstacles, Bangladesh will require adaptive and innovative strategies along with capable and responsible leaders like yourselves who can guide the nation through these uncertain times.

It is also crucial for us to acknowledge the support of the respected officials and authorities at Dhaka University towards IBA and its students. To implement our plans, IBA looks forward to collaborative and supportive efforts from industry experts and IBA alumni not just within the country but across the globe. In order to ensure sustainable growth and development for Bangladesh, we all need to come together, combine our resources to empower our graduates who are the future leaders of our country. As I end this message, I sincerely urge all our graduating batches to always remember that you are not only changing the business landscape in our country but also leading the way to serve our society in new and different ways.


Professor Mohammad A. Momen
Director
Institute of Business Administration (IBA)
University of Dhaka

DIRECTOR'S HONOR LIST

BBA Program

MD ABRAR ISLAM CGPA 3.95 Recipient of S.A Huq Memorial Gold Medal	SADIA HASAN CGPA 3.85
CHOWDHURY ASIM MAHMUD CGPA 3.94	AHMED MIRAJ HAIDER CGPA 3.85
SAJID ASBAT KHANDAKER CGPA 3.91	KAZI EMRAN MAHMUD CGPA 3.81
RAAD SHARER AHMED ARNAB CGPA 3.90	MONDRITA IFFAT RASHID CGPA 3.79

MBA Program

MD. AMIMUL EHSAN RAHAT CGPA 3.85 Recipient of A.F.M. Shamsur Rahman Gold Medal	MD. SAZZAD SHAHRIAR CGPA 3.75
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MIMOSA KAMAL
CGPA 3.78

EMBA Program

RAHAT BIN KAMAL CGPA 3.89 Recipient of EMBA Program Office Gold Medal	MD. FARHAD AHMED CGPA 3.75
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MD. RAKIBUL HASAN
CGPA 3.81
Recipient of EMBA Program Office Gold Medal



England hope for another gutsy display

REUTERS, MELBOURNE

England had already lost the series but at least rediscovered their stomach for a fight in Sydney and the battered tourists will look to produce a similar gutsy display in the final Ashes Test against Australia on Friday.

Australia retained the urn with comprehensive victories in Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne and while England managed to halt the juggernaut in Sydney, it was not without a price.

Wicketkeeper Jos Buttler's tour was cut short by a finger injury, while all-rounder Ben Stokes (side) and middle order batsman Jonny Bairstow (finger) are doubtful for the pink ball Test in Hobart after getting bruised in Sydney.

England are ready to play Stokes and stumper-batsman Bairstow purely as batters with Sam Billings likely to don the keeping gloves in his Test debut.

Pant ton ignites spark in Cape Town Test

REUTERS, CAPE TOWN

Rishabh Pant scored a brilliant unbeaten 100 from 139 balls as India were bowled out for 198 in their second innings on the stroke of tea, to set hosts South Africa a victory target of 212 on day three of the decisive third and final Test at Newlands.

Pant took the attack to the home bowlers after lunch and smashed four sixes in an innings of high quality on a difficult wicket for batting.

With the series on the line, South Africa will have to chase their target on a pitch with prodigious seam movement and against a high-quality Indian pace attack.

A fourth innings target of over 200 has been successfully chased only three times in 133 years at Newlands as India seek to claim a first ever series win in South Africa. One of those was when South Africa chased 211 against India in 2007 to win the Test.

South Africa scored 84 for one when the last report was filed.

‘Could have learned more if Gibson stayed’

Ebadot Hossain's unbelievable spell led to something Bangladesh had never achieved in the past in New Zealand, bringing a historic milestone as the Tigers defeated the Black Caps in a Test match for the first time. It was also Bangladesh's first win in any format on Kiwi soil and the hero of that match, Ebadot Hossain, shared details of that journey with the Daily Star's Ekush Tapader while also expressing disappointment at the departure of bowling coach Ottis Gibson. The excerpts are below:

The Daily Star (DS): Two different realities before and after the New Zealand tour. Can you feel the difference?

Ebadot Hossain (EH): I've been trying to do something good for a long time. There was a willingness to do something in my mind. Everyone showed tremendous endeavour from start to finish. The biggest thing is that we are the team who started winning here. The teams who will come after can take inspiration from us and they will win too. [Khaled Mahmud] Sujon sir gave us a motivational speech that stuck in our hearts. He said 'we didn't come here only to play and go back home. Someone has to stand out.' Then we thought that we were capable and could win with collective effort.

DS: You were quite expensive early on but you had a good economy in the Pakistan series as well.

EH: I was unorganised. It is difficult to get

success in international cricket while being ill-disciplined. I was trying to express myself. All of my matches were big. I debuted against New Zealand then played against India and Pakistan. I've worked with Ottis Gibson regarding this as well.

DS: Champaka Ramanayake said you used to get disappointed after not getting wickets.

EH: Test cricket is really about patience, for both bowlers and batters. Champaka used to tell me I would be successful when I found accuracy. He called me after we won the Test and said 'remember what I told you? You are successful today because of your accuracy and the world is clapping. You have to keep it going and take the graph higher from here'.

DS: You have heard that Ottis Gibson is not staying anymore? How much will you miss him? How much did you improve under him in two years?

EH: It's disappointing. He has coached great players. [James] Anderson, Stuart Broad, Mark Wood and [Kagiso] Rabada still call him and take advice from him. It would be good for us if he stayed because the graph of improvement is strong. I think all pace bowlers improved under him. You can ask Taskin or Shoriful or Rahi and they'll say the same thing. Everyone had great chemistry with him. We have the South Africa series ahead and Ottis has

good knowledge of their conditions. We could have learned a bit more if he stayed.

DS: You were bowling at consistent speeds for a longer time. What was Ottis's influence behind this?

EH: I've been working with him since the Pakistan tour [in 2020]. It's been a pleasure working with him because I benefitted a lot. I have made changes to my bowling action according to his suggestions in loading and gathering. My previous action was a lot like Brett Lee's and couldn't find consistency when I got tired. But now I can bowl for a longer period while maintaining speed.

DS: What did you discuss with the New Zealand pacers?

EH: I spoke with Tim Southee the other day about our upcoming South Africa tour. He suggested that I analyse the current conditions of their wicket with a computer analyst so that we can pick up the correct length to bowl there. [Neil] Wagner came to us after the first Test and told us that we deserved the victory. [Trent] Boult told us ahead of the warm-up for the second Test: 'Yesterday is gone, today is a new day, so enjoy your bowling'.

DS: How would you rate the New Zealand series?

EH: It's not wise to expect to be man-of-the-match in every match against the Test champions. There will be good days, and there will be bad. But I'll say I tried.

Stage set for youngsters to flourish

AGENCIES

With a promise of providing glimpses of the future cricket stars, the ICC Under-19 World Cup gets underway today with two matches in Guyana, as hosts West Indies take on Australia at Providence Stadium, and Sri Lanka facing Scotland at Everest Cricket Club.

Split into four groups, 16 teams will be fighting for glory in a total of 48 matches over 22 days with the final set to take place at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on February 5.

Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, St Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago will be hosting the matches of the 14th edition of the tournament across 10 venues.

Will this edition see a new champion or will Rakibul Hasan's Bangladesh be able to defend their title after being crowned champions for the first time by beating India in Potchefstroom two years ago?

Rakibul, who was part of the champion side and ended as the highest wicket-taker for Bangladesh in that edition, was confident of getting off to a good start when he attended a virtual press conference on Wednesday ahead of the start of the World Cup.

The defending champions' campaign, however, will begin on Sunday when they meet England at the Warner Park in St Kitts.

The tournament will see the top two teams from each of the four groups go through to the

ICC U19 WORLD CUP GROUPS

Group A: Bangladesh, Canada, England, UAE

Group B: India, Ireland, South Africa, Uganda

Group C: Afghanistan, Pakistan, PNG, Zimbabwe

Group D: Australia, Scotland, Sri Lanka, West Indies

Super League stage while the remaining teams will battle it out in the Plate competition.

Ten teams – Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, West Indies and Zimbabwe – were automatic qualifiers for the tournament, by virtue of their finish at the 2020 edition of the tournament.

Trinidad and Tobago will host the Plate competition between 25 and 31 January while the Super League action will commence on 26 January in Antigua and Barbuda.

The two semi-finals will be played on February 1 and 2 at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Ground and Coolidge Cricket Ground respectively.

Central and South reach BCL final

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan was there even though he really was not and ODI captain Tamim Iqbal and T20 skipper Mahmudullah Riyad wanted to be there but could not as the final group phase matches of the ongoing Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) one-day tournament yesterday took the shape of a virtual semifinal.

Shakib already decided about participating in two matches in Sylhet and his side Walton Central made the final before the final round of matches. So, Shakib left for Dhaka before the last round, leaving his national teammates Tamim and Mahmudullah to battle it out for East Zone and North Zone respectively.

Asked to bat, North Zone got off to a stuttering start before Mahmudullah and skipper Marshall Ayub put together a 120-run fourth-wicket rescue act. Mahmudullah departed to a run out after an 87-ball 66 and Marshall followed him back a couple of overs later before the innings crumbled, bowled out for 216.

Tamim got his side off to a smooth start and a six straight down the ground signaled his intent but Mahmudullah sent him back after a 38-ball 35. Imrul Kayes and Afif Hossain (26) held the innings together, with the former playing a match-winning 71 off 81 deliveries. Despite some wickets at the death, East Zone pulled through with a four-wicket victory.

Ultimately the victory did not bring them what they were looking for. A Walton Central Zone victory over South Zone in the other game would have seen East Zone make the final but South won by five wickets. South Zone and Central Zone will play the final on January 15.



A delighted Federico Valverde runs towards teammates in the sideline to celebrate the goal that sealed a 3-2 victory for Real Madrid over arch-rivals Barcelona in an exhilarating Spanish Super Cup semifinal on Wednesday. (Inset) Inter Milan players are jubilant after Alexis Sanchez's extra time winner helped them beat Juventus and clinch the Italian Super Cup for the first time in 11 years.

PHOTO:REUTERS



A view of the capital's 300-foot Purbachal highway, 70 percent work of which is already completed. The expressway is being constructed to connect Kuril with Kanchan bridge via Purbachal, and officials expect construction to be finished by March. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Star HEALTHLINE

Know your deshi superfoods

NEEM

STAR HEALTH DESK

Almost all parts of the neem tree, also known as *Azadirachta indica*, have medicinal properties and have been used in traditional home remedies for centuries.

Not only neem leaves, but seeds, roots and bark contain important compounds that have medicinal properties.

Neem leaves are known as an effective pest repellent. People also use it in hair and dental products.

The leaves are also used to treat fungal and bacterial infections and contain calcium and mineral content which may help in reducing inflammation.

Many Ayurveda experts recommend daily intake of neem capsules. Neem tea is also widely prescribed to reduce fever.

Chewing neem twigs may ensure good dental health and can cure mild gum diseases.

Applying neem extract shampoo to the scalp can

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Youngsters hardly off beaten track

Govt study finds most of them aspire to pursue mainstream career

REJAUL KARIM BYRON AND ASIFUR RAHMAN

Although the pressure to become a doctor or an engineer is gradually dissipating, the two professions still rank on the top among the youths, found a first-of-its-kind study by the government.

In most cases, they wanted to follow all the mainstream professions like doctor, engineer, teacher, banker, lawyer, mawlana [religious preachers].

According to the study, adolescents are dreaming about various off-track professions like YouTubers, professional gamers, content creators, voice artists, philanthropists, cricketers and so on.

"Yet they were trapped in the traditional classroom-learning structure, which has little or no significant role in fulfilling their dreams," said the report titled "Advancing Human Development in Bangladesh: Looking Ahead", prepared by the Economic Relations Division.

To get an understanding of the adolescents' minds regarding their dreams about the future, ERD researchers conducted an explorative survey among 145 adolescents at all eight divisions between August and September last year.

As many as 33 percent of the surveyed

adolescents, which comprised of students from both Bangla- and English-medium schools and Madrasas, harboured off-track dreams.

They expressed their desire to study specific subjects that can serve their purpose to pursue their dreams like fine arts and painting, content creation, and social media growth or ICT.

"Some were even ready to quit from this traditional mainstream schooling system that is not modern and unable to

"Yet they were trapped in the traditional classroom-learning structure, which has little or no significant role in fulfilling their dreams."

accommodate the arrays of dreams and goals of their lives," it said.

However, the most common dream of the parents is to see their children in teaching or to get into a government job, the study found.

Becoming doctors, engineers, bankers or lawyers were also the parents' aspirations.

Helping people was the adolescents' topmost aspiration, followed by simply

becoming successful.

"Another significant area of their dreams and aspirations are related to the prosperity of society and the country. Their enthusiasm to engage in the humanitarian cause and to work for the disadvantaged people is widely apparent," it said.

Becoming doctors, entrepreneurs and engineers were also coveted professions.

Only a small percentage wanted to go abroad for higher studies, while a bigger percentage wanted to become travellers.

There is no other alternative but to create an environment where the next generation of future Bangladesh can raise their voice, make them heard and exercise their agency.

"This is the key to the future trajectory of the adolescents in Bangladesh," said the report, which was published yesterday.

The Madrasa-going adolescents also had a diverse range of dreams.

Many of them want their future to be constructed around their academic knowledge like becoming a Madrasa teacher, mawlana, attaining higher degrees, joining the religious universities abroad, or writing about Islam.

"Simultaneously, some of them are focused on dreams like becoming doctors, and so on," the report said.

COVID RELIEF

NGOs faced pressure from local politicians

TIB study finds; 54pc had difficulty listing beneficiaries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly 54 percent of the non-government organisations involved in relief programmes during the pandemic faced challenges in preparing a list of beneficiaries, found Transparency International Bangladesh.

The NGOs were forced to include beneficiaries who were not eligible for relief due to the influence of local public representatives and politicians, said the study titled "The Role of Non-government Organisations in Response to Covid-19 Pandemic: Challenges and Way Forward".

In some cases, the local administration made the NGOs exclude the left-behind people, found the study, which was unveiled yesterday.

As many as 66.2 percent of the NGOs surveyed faced challenges at the field level in undertaking and implementing various Covid-19 response initiatives.

The initiatives include awareness programmes, distribution of health safety kits, relief distribution, emergency cash assistance, food assistance and relief, Covid-19 related healthcare services, and burial and funeral of the dead.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Three killed in Narayanganj 'mob beating'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, NARAYANGANJ

Police yesterday recovered the bodies of three people in Narayanganj's Araihaazar.

Suspecting them to be robbers, locals beat them to death, police said.

But the victims' families claimed that they were drivers and owner of a leguna, a locally-made motorised four-wheeler, and that they were killed in a planned way.

The victims are Mofizul Islam, 26, and Jahirul Islam Jesnu, 27, of Bostul Boubazar area of Sonargaon upazila, and Nobi Hossain, 30, of Madhabdi village in Araihaazar upazila.

Mofizul and Jahirul were drivers of the leguna and Jesnu was the owner, said family members.

Quoting locals, police said the three youths tried to rob a bus, which was carrying garments workers, in Singhodi area of Araihaazar around 5:00am.

But the workers foiled the robbery attempt and caught the three, who were later taken to Ilomdi Bazar area. Locals beat them up, said Anichur Rahman Mollah, officer-in-charge of Araihaazar Police Station.

The three died on the spot.

Contacted, victim Mofizul's mother said like other days, her son went out of home with the leguna around 4:00am. Leguna's owner Jesnu was with him. "Hours later, I came to know that my son was killed."

Another deceased Jahirul's younger brother Tareque said her brother went out of home with

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TRAIN DERAILMENT

5 killed, 45 hurt in West Bengal

Death toll likely to rise

HINDUSTAN TIMES ONLINE

Twelve coaches of the Guwahati-bound Bikaner Express derailed in the Moynaguri region of Indian state of West Bengal yesterday, leaving five passengers dead and many injured.

Jalpaiguri district magistrate Moumita Godara Basu said five bodies have been found till 7:00pm and 45 passengers with injuries rushed to Jalpaiguri district hospital and Moynaguri government hospital.

Many of the injured passengers were in a critical condition and the death toll may increase.

A railways spokesperson said the accident took place at 5:00pm, nearly seven minutes after the express train passed the New Domohani station. "12 coaches jumped off the tracks of which two capsized," Guneet Kaur, chief public relation officer of Northeast Frontier Railway said.

Railway officials, who rushed to the spot from different locations, said it was getting dark by the time the initial team of rescue workers reached the site.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED