



**Sepnil** stops germ

করোনা সংক্রমণ বাড়ছে\*, সেপনিল-এ সুরক্ষিত থাকুন

\*স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তরের স্বাস্থ্য সবেল বিজ্ঞান অনুযায়ী

## Ivy's hat-trick or Taimur's first?

Narayanganj picks mayor, councillors today

TOTAL WARDS	27	COUNCILLOR CANDIDATES GENERAL	148
RESERVED WARDS	9	COUNCILLOR CANDIDATES RESERVE	34
TOTAL VOTING CENTRES	192	MOBILE COURTS	27 executive magistrates and 14 judicial magistrates
TOTAL VOTERS	517,361	POLLS OBSERVERS	9
MALE VOTERS	259,846		
FEMALE VOTERS	257,511		
HJRA VOTERS	4		
MAYOR CANDIDATES	7		

First NCC election was held on Oct 30, 2011  
Second election on Dec 22, 2016  
Voting will be on EVM in all centres

**VOTING HOUR: 8 AM TO 4 PM WITHOUT ANY INTERVAL**

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA AND SANAD SAHA

Narayanganj goes to polls today to pick its mayor and 36 councillors, in an election that can be expected to be a departure from the recent violence-ridden voting for Union Parishad seats.

Outgoing mayor Selina Hayat Ivy is locking horns with Taimur Alam Khandakar, an independent candidate, to run the Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC), the seventh-largest city corporation in Bangladesh.

BNP has boycotted the polls citing that a free and fair election is not possible under the current Election Commission (EC) and the government.

A win for Ivy, who is contesting with the ruling party ticket as in the previous polls, means she remains the only mayor of NCC, which was formed in 2011.

For the veteran politician Taimur, the post of mayor is a long-coveted wish: he pulled out of the race in the maiden election and did not participate in the 2016 polls.

Like in previous elections, the Osman family remains at the centre of discussion due to Shamim Osman's longstanding rivalry with Ivy.

In 2011, Ivy had clinched the post of the mayor by beating the then ruling Awami League-backed candidate Shamim by a margin of more than one lakh votes. A total of 276,329 votes were cast in the maiden NCC polls.

While Shamim has gone on record to extend his support to Ivy, speculations are rife that he and his men might try to influence the polls today.

Tight security measures were put in place by the EC, whose tenure expires

on February 16, to ensure a peaceful atmosphere for the polls, being held on partisan lines.

"The election atmosphere is very good," said Mahfuza Akter, the returning officer of the NCC polls, while urging the voters to come to the polling centres following all health guidelines and to cast their votes without fear.

Voting will start at 8 am and will continue until 4 pm without any break.

Ivy's clean image, popularity and the development activities she had carried out during her first term might benefit her in the polls today, said residents of Narayanganj, which houses more than five lakh voters.

Over the past decade, a period that coincided with Ivy's reign as the mayor, the road network in Narayanganj, Bangladesh's industrial hub, has improved noticeably.

But her campaign promise of building a bridge to connect Bandar, which lies on the other side of the Shitalakshya river, with the town centre remains unfulfilled.

On the other hand, Taimur's political career, which spans more than 50 years, and his connection with the city's working-class people might give him an edge along with the anti-government sentiment.

Both the candidates have wrapped up their campaigning on Friday.

Following the electoral code of conduct, Ivy declined to make any comment to the media yesterday.

If free and fair polls are held, Ivy will win the polls by a margin of one lakh votes, said Adinath Basu, her chief election agent.

Taimur, however, spoke with the media on the eve of the polls.

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Secured boxes containing Electronic Voting Machines kept at the Morgan Girls' High School in Narayanganj, moments before they were dispatched to polling centres across the city yesterday for the city corporation election being held today.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Leahy law poses new challenge to Dhaka

ZYMA ISLAM

For a second time in a month, Dhaka has sought more time to notify the US whether it would consent to the Leahy law, which was invoked at the beginning of the new year.

The Leahy amendment is a law that restricts assistance to entities accused of committing human rights violations. This clause specifically governs assistance from the State Department and the Department of Defense to other countries.

The US State Department website lists torture, extrajudicial killing, enforced disappearance and rape as acts of "gross human rights violations".

In December, the US sent a letter to Bangladesh saying that the Leahy law will be activated beginning January 1, 2022, and asking if Bangladesh consents to being subject to it.

Originally, Dhaka was asked to respond by December 31. But it requested two extensions so far - first on December 15, 2021, and second on January 1, 2022.

Asked when Dhaka will respond, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen on Thursday said

the law ministry was looking into the law and its impacts, and that the government would respond after the scrutiny.

Experts say the law puts Bangladesh in a fix - consent and submit to scrutiny regarding how it spends assistance, or decline and risk having aid dry up.

According to the State Department's website, this will affect training, equipment and other support.

"The USA will scrutinise every single penny, which forces the assistance is being spent on and to what end," said Ali Riaz, political scientist and distinguished professor at US's Illinois State University.

Just Security, a platform that analyses security and foreign policy, based at New York University School of Law, published an article analysing the Leahy law, and said that the challenge lies in deciding if one unit is blacklisted, would another that works in collaboration be affected too?

"Should the violations attributable to members from 'joint' units affect their unit of origin, or just the composite unit to which

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## COVID PATIENTS Hospitals in 3 divisions see a spike

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Hospitals in three divisions have seen a rise in the number of patients being admitted with the Omicron variant of the coronavirus, according to the health directorate.

The divisions are Dhaka, Chattogram, and Rajshahi.

Dhaka division had the highest 14 percent bed occupancy rate in Covid-19 hospitals yesterday. It was 13 percent in Chattogram and 10 percent in Rajshahi divisions.

According to experts, the number of Covid-19 patients would continue to increase in the coming days due to the spread of the new coronavirus variant.

Dr Abu Jamil Faisal, member of Public Health Advisory Committee of the DGHS, said, "Omicron will continue to infect more people in the coming days. The rush of patients to the hospitals will also rise."

According to the Covid-19 dynamic dashboard data, the bed occupancy

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## DISAPPEARANCES

### Allow a UN panel probe

Victim families urge the govt; DMP denies coercion allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances should be allowed to visit Bangladesh to conduct an impartial investigation into the state of enforced disappearances, said victims' families.

Afroza Islam Akhi, who runs Mayer Daak, a platform of families of the victims of enforced disappearance, made this appeal to the government at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

According to its annual report of 2021, the Working Group has made several requests to the government since 2013 to invite it to visit the country for an impartial investigation, but it is yet to get the green signal.

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Inam, aged around five, holds a picture of his father Ismail Hossain, who went missing on June 16, 2019.

PHOTO: STAR

**Inauguration of Relocated Gulshan Corporate Branch**  
of Trust Bank Limited

**Gulshan Corporate Branch**  
Khandker Tower (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)  
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## BOOK FAIR

### Cut it short but hold it in February

#### Publishers urge the authorities

DU CORRESPONDENT

Writers and publishers yesterday demanded the authorities take an initiative to hold Ekushey Book Fair in February.

If necessary, the authorities can arrange the fair for 15 days due to the spread of Covid Omicron variant, they said.

They made the demand at a press conference, organised by Boibari, at Pathak Samabesh Centre in the capital's Shahbagh.

Publishers claimed they have information that the authorities will not hold the fair this year.

According to the speakers, Bangla Academy authorities said if the government asks them to hold the fair, they will take steps to organise it.

Preparatory work for the event at Suhrawardy U'dyan and Bangla Academy now remains suspended.

The speakers said if the authorities arrange the fair sometime after February, they will not take part in it, as they will have to deal with rain and storm at that time.

Due to the pandemic, the fair, traditionally organised in the month of February, was held in March last year.

Publisher Robin Ahsan said writers and publishers recommended organising the fair ensuring health safety amid the pandemic situation. They will meet Bangla Academy Director General Mohammad Nurul Huda today to put forward their suggestions.

The traditional Amar Ekushey Boi Mela began informally in 1972 on the Bangla Academy premises. However, the academy officially took the responsibility to arrange the fair every year since 1978.



A child playing with the discarded balloons that were used to decorate a shop for an event. The photo was taken at Chattogram city's Kazir Dewri area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

# US Omicron cases receding in big cities

France sees drop in ICU patients despite record cases; India reports 268,833 new infections

AGENCIES

The United States' Omicron wave is beginning to recede in New York and other major cities, official data showed this week, as France reported fewer hospitalizations despite record cases.

The trend of explosive rises in Omicron cases followed by equally fast declines follows similar patterns seen in Britain and in South Africa, where the variant was first reported in late November.

In New York city, the seven-day average of new daily cases has been falling since around January 2, when they peaked at 40,000 a day – an all-time record.

The figure stood at around 28,500 on January 10, still higher than anything seen in previous waves caused by other strains, an official tracker showed Friday.

Similar drops were visible in New York state, New Jersey and Chicago, the country's third-largest city, as well as in the capital Washington.

But the nationwide average is still rising, with more than 750,000 cases per day, as infections continue to shoot up in most states.

While milder for most people compared to past strains, the transmissibility of Omicron has meant the small fraction who become severely ill amount to a large number, overwhelming hospitals.

More than 157,000 inpatient beds are occupied by Covid patients, according to the Health and Human Services Department, a record high. The seven-day average of daily deaths is over 1,700, approaching the peak last seen during the Delta variant wave in September 2021, which was around 1,900 per day.

The all-time peak came in January 2021, when more than 3,400 people lost their lives per day.

In France, the number of Covid-19 patients in intensive care units has fallen for the second day in a row, despite a record infection rate, health ministry data showed on Friday.

France reported 3,895 Covid-19 patients were in intensive care units on Friday, 44 fewer than Thursday, and the second consecutive fall, despite the seven-day moving average of new infections reaching a new high of nearly 294,000 on Thursday.

In India, authorities yesterday reported 268,833 new cases of the coronavirus in the last 24 hours, taking its total tally to 36.84 million. Deaths from Covid-19 rose by 402 to 485,752, the ministry said.

Meanwhile, Australia yesterday said it has likely neared the peak of its Omicron wave, but warned daily infections will linger near record levels for "the next few weeks" after more than 100,000 cases were reported for a fourth straight day.

Having limited the spread of the coronavirus through tough restrictions earlier in the pandemic, Australia is now suffering record case loads from the Omicron variant. Most parts of the country have shifted to a strategy of living with the virus as they reached higher vaccination rates.

More than 1.2 million infections have been recorded this year, compared with 200,000 for 2020 and 2021 combined.

Infections have dipped over the last three days while the rise in hospitalisations in worst-hit New South Wales, Australia's most populous state, has slowed slightly, official data showed.

## Hospitals

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rate this week has increased the most in Chattogram division from the previous week, from 4.71 percent to 9.86 percent.

In the same duration, the bed occupancy rate has increased from 7.29 percent to 8.71 percent in Rajshahi division and from 10.29 percent to 12.14 percent in Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

In all other divisions, the bed occupancy rate has increased steadily during the same period, but still below 5 percent, except in Khulna division where it is 5.14 percent.

Since the Omicron cases were reported in the second week of December, the bed occupancy rate has reached 10 percent mark on December 26 in Dhaka division.

The rates, however, reached to 10 percent mark on Friday in Rajshahi division and on Wednesday in Chattogram.

Dr Arifa Akram, head of virology department at the National Institute of Laboratory Medicine and Referral Center, said "The trend will continue to rise because we are getting a higher positivity rate – 15 to 16 percent – recently."

## Key accused

FROM PAGE 12

police recovered my mother's body from a near a bush adjacent to her rented house in Kashimpur the same day," said Jahir.

Sheikh Mizanur Rahman, inspector (investigation) of Kashimpur Police Station, said that during primary interrogation, Anwarul confessed to strangling Sayeda Ghaffar to death to loot her money.

## Leahy law poses new challenge to Dhaka

FROM PAGE 1

they are currently assigned?" asks the article's author Daniel R Mahanty, who also set up the Office of Security and Human Rights at the State Department.

The State's website also says, "When vetting an individual for eligibility to receive US training, the individual's unit is also vetted."

Many security units, like Rab, source their manpower from the combined forces.

Furthermore, there is an active demand from several quarters that officers who have served in Rab be banned from joining UN peacekeeping missions. Such a demand was placed last year at the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, which is a caucus body of the US House of Representatives.

Last fiscal year, the US provided 28 percent of the contributions made globally to the UN peacekeeping operations, making it a top donor.

This intertwining

between forces creates the current conundrum, since some security forces have consistently received US assistance, while the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and the Investigation Wing of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit have been blacklisted in 2018, said a statement by the office of the Secretary of State.

It declared it is invoking the Leahy law upon those units for committing human rights violations, as per credible information.

This was followed by sanctions on Rab late last year by the Department of the Treasury.

Since the Rab and the CITC are already flagged, how will the activation of the Leahy law affect funding to other forces that work in tandem? In short, what is at stake?

US government data shows, since 1977, Bangladesh has been offered \$368 million (Tk 3,177 crores) for "peace and

security". The assistance can be broadly divided into three brackets – weapons and equipment supply, capacity building and training of police, defence, border and security officials, and programmatic support for civil society organisations.

Over the last four decades, around 60-70 percent of these funds were directly earmarked for military spending.

In some of the categories, the expenditures include "stabilisation operations and security sector reform", counter-terrorism, transnational crime, counter-narcotics and conflict mitigation.

Of them, "stabilisation and security sector reform" received the majority chunk or \$174 million (Tk 1,500 crores). The primary recipient of this money has seemingly been the combined forces, data shows.

Every year from 2004 to 2020, Bangladesh received credit for procurement of

defence articles, defence services, and design and construction services.

A State department release made in June last year said, "Since 2015, the United States provided \$66.9 million in Foreign Military Financing and \$7.29 million in International Military Education and Training assistance to Bangladesh."

"Additionally, Bangladesh received 50 EDA MRAP vehicles [heavy armoured fighting vehicles] in 2019 to support its peacekeepers in Mali."

Similarly, between 2001 and 2011, the country was given \$9.3 million for foreign military students, shows US data.

Details of \$63 million worth of aid were redacted by the website citing confidentiality. It is not possible to determine what this money was spent for, as US investments, for example, in foreign countries are covered by confidentiality clauses

Between 2005 and 2012, Bangladesh received \$9 million for the elimination of illegal arms to counter terrorism.

In 2011-2012, the aid supported "military and stability operations" to combat terrorism. Between 2005-2017, \$3 million were given to train and arm counter-narcotics law enforcement. About two million dollars have been spent on border security.

The highest aid received for military goals was in 2014 – a total of \$88m. Lt Abu Rushd, editor of the Bangladesh Defence Journal, said Bangladesh will have to prove its transparency. "Money, or arms meant for one force cannot be spent on another."

Professor Riaz pointed out that Dhaka said it is looking for wiggle room.

"I don't think Dhaka can attach any conditions. They can either agree or disagree. And once the US starts an enquiry, other countries might follow suit."

He expressed his firm determination to not leave the election race and urged the local administration not to harass his campaigners for the sake of a free and fair poll.

Taimur, a former top BNP leader, went on to express concern over the returning officer's move to switch off the security cameras installed at some polling stations.

He demanded that the closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras be turned on in the centres today.

Akter, however, said there is no possibility of having functional security cameras inside the polling booths "for the sake of voters' privacy."

"There will be no privacy if the polling booths remain under CCTV coverage. The booths are usually not monitored, but if any booth has a camera installed, it will be switched off," she said.

Contacted, Narayanganj Deputy Commissioner

## President to address the House today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Abdul Hamid is scheduled to address the 16th session of the 11th parliament this afternoon.

According to the constitution, the president will deliver his speech in the House's first session of the new year.

On January 1, the head of state convened the first Jatiya Sangsad session of 2022 exercising the powers conferred on him by article 72 (1) of the constitution.

The president's speech has already been approved by the cabinet.

The Awami League government's successes and future plans, including the development activities, will be highlighted in his address, sources at the parliament secretariat said.

The duration of the first session of the year is usually longer than others. The JS holds a long discussion on the "thanksgiving motion on the president's address".

Like the previous sessions in the last two years, journalists will not be allowed to cover the new year's first JS session in person.

The parliament secretariat has requested journalists to cover the session through following its live telecast on Sangsad Television.

## Tangail-7 goes to by-election

OUR CORRESPONDENT, TANGAIL

The by-polls to Tangail-7 (Mirzapur) is being held today.

The Election Commission said the by-polls will be held using electronic voting machines (EVMs) and all concerned have been given necessary training. Health safety items will be kept at the polling centres, it added.

The parliamentary seat fell vacant after the death of Awami League lawmaker Ekabbar Hossain on November 16 last year.

Five candidates – Khan Ahmed Shuvo (boat), Jahirul Islam Jahir (plough), Golam Nawjab Power (hammer), Rupa Roy Chowdhury (green coconut) and Nurul Islam Nuru (car) – are contesting the by-polls.

Several voters said the main contest will be between AL candidate Shuvo and Jatiya Party contender Jahir.

There are 3,40,379 voters in the constituency, including 1,69,078 females.

Voting will be held in 121 polling centres and 57 of them have been identified as risky, said sources at the EC.

Meanwhile, Riziaul Haque Dipu, officer-in-charge of Mirzapur Police Station, was withdrawn on Thursday as per the EC directives.

The OC was withdrawn over administrative reasons, said Shaheddunnabi Chowdhury, regional election officer in Mymensingh and returning officer of the by-polls.

He said preparations have been completed to hold the by-polls in a free and fair manner.

## Ivy's hat-trick or

FROM PAGE 1

Mostain Billah said there is nothing that can be done over the issue as it was the decision of the EC, which is overseeing the election.

Since it assumed office in February 2017, the EC has been under severe criticism for widespread electoral anomalies in the national and different local government polls.

Besides, not all polling centres have CCTV cameras installed, Billah added.

"We want to give the people of the country a model election in a festive atmosphere," said Zaidul Alam, Narayanganj District's police superintendent.

A three-tier security zone has been established to ensure violence-free polls, he added.

Until last night, the atmosphere in the city, which is about 16 kilometres from Dhaka, was largely peaceful, raising hope of clean polls.

The total votes cast in the 2011 polls was 70 percent. It came down to 62 percent in 2016.

Contacted, Narayanganj Deputy Commissioner

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Contacted, Narayanganj Deputy Commissioner

## Allow a UN panel probe

FROM PAGE 1

The victims' families joined the programme yesterday to demand an accountable investigation and protest against "harassment by the police" in the past week.

"We are happy to cooperate with the police and give them whatever information they need, but they cannot harass the families," said Akhi, whose brother Sajedul Islam Suman remains missing after being picked up.

Over the last week, several families alleged that they were being harassed by the police in the name of investigation.

"MPs and ministers make fun of our tears. They say our husbands got married again and moved away and that there is no enforced disappearance in the country," said Nasima Akter Smriti, wife of timber trader Ismail Hossain Baten.

Ismail was picked up allegedly by Rapid Action Battalion-4 from his business office on June 19,

2019. He has been missing since then.

Nasima said, "I went from door to door after my husband was picked up. Police refused to record a GD [general diary] against Rab. After three years, police are visiting me and asking if it is true that my husband has disappeared."

Jahid Khan described how the police went to his house with a previously-written statement that said the family while filing a complaint in 2013

had intentionally hidden information about who up picked his brother Mahabub Hasan Shujon.

"We were only allowed to say that he is missing. If we did not do what we were told to, they would not record the complaint," said Jahid.

REPORTS 'FABRICATED': DMP In a statement issued on Friday, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police protested some media reports on the alleged harassment of the victims' families.

The DMP claimed the reports contained "exaggerated" and "fabricated" information and that it was an attempt to tarnish police's image.

"It is the police's responsibility to keep in touch with the families during an investigation," it said.

According to the DMP statement, Shujon's brother Jahid was spreading lies by saying that the police tried to make their family sign

blank papers. "We asked them to provide us with their statement, but they refused to do so."

However, the family of another victim, Kazi Farhad who went missing along with Sujon, gave their statement, police said.

The DMP said police take all complaints seriously and conduct investigations following legal steps. It asked all the people concerned to refrain from disclosing "fabricated" information.



Cloaking her toddler with warm clothes to resist the biting cold, a mother rushes towards the train at Kamalapur Rail Station yesterday morning. In line with the government's 11-point instruction to curb the rise of Covid cases, trains have started carrying passengers at half the capacity.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Scripted to a T Syndicate making crores from unsuspecting victims by selling fake 'rare coins'

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

They first make some magnetic coins by melting copper wire.

Then, a special chemical is prepared, using shampoo, sanitiser and hand wash. This mix's job is to draw colourful marks on the coins. The coins are also dressed up with some interesting symbols.

Finally, they spread the news that some rare coins have been found in some remote area of the country among collectors, who work themselves up to a frenzy over the prospect of securing the coins.

When anyone shows interest to buy the coins, the syndicate calls them over for a meeting at luxurious hotels in the capital, to set the stage for their exorbitant demands.

They plan the conversation so well that the interested buyer is convinced that the coins are real.

They also convince the buyer that the coins are worth more than crores according to international standards.

The syndicate then bring out their ace. They tell the interested buyer that there's another buyer -- who is one of the syndicate's members, posing as a foreign coin collector -- who is willing to jointly buy the coins.

The syndicate then asks for advanced payment, to be split by the two buyers.

But as soon as the victim pays their share, the syndicate members simply disappear.

Using this very script, the syndicate has made over Tk 3 crore over the last couple of years.

Police's Detective Branch (DB) claimed to have unearthed this information after arresting four of its members from Manikganj and Dhaka in a special drive over the last two days.

The arrestees are Saiful Islam alias Bishnu, Saidul Islam Jihad, Sayed Mustakin and Matin Molla.

Police recovered around Tk 11 lakh and 42 different types of copper coins from their possession, said Mashur Rahman, deputy commissioner of DB police.

He also said all of the arrestees are accused in several cases.

The syndicate has around eight to nine members, who worked in three groups.

The first group is led by Saidul, who worked on spreading news of the discovery of the coins.

Saiful, the leader of the second group, acted as the one who came across the coins while working at his farm or bamboo field.

The third group is led by Mustakin, who poses as an interested foreign buyer, investigators said.

DC Mashur further elaborated their process. After the target is brought in for the meeting, Mustakin -- under the pretense of being a foreign coin collector -- comes in and says he has brought a chemist to check the authenticity of the coins.

This is when another syndicate member walks in dressed up as a chemist.

He checks the coin using some machines and approves of the coins' authenticity.

After this, the bargaining reaches a point where Mustakin offers to buy the coins jointly with the target collector, saying they can resell for higher sums.

He then pretends to only have a portion of the money, asking the victim to pay the rest.

But once this money is paid, all contact is severed with the victim.

The Daily Star obtained some footage of the syndicate members' activities and minutes from the staged meetings.

DC Mashur Rahman said they are now trying to arrest the other members of the syndicate.

"People need to be cautious while making this type of deals as they can turn out to be fraudulent," he said.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

## It took 42 years, but they're finally out!

BSCIC reclaims 162 decimals of land from occupiers



PHOTO: COLLECTED

SUKANTA HALDER and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Way back in 1960, Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) bought 162 decimals of land from an Indian private company in Nolgola area of Old Dhaka, on the banks of Buriganga near Mitford Hospital.

The corporation ran offices and warehouses there till 1977, when it was rented out to 33 entrepreneurs on a monthly basis.

But over time, the leaseholders stopped paying rent and started staying there by force. BSCIC issued its first eviction notice for them on March 16, 1983, but to no avail.

Despite repeated attempts since then, BSCIC could never evict the illegal occupiers, who kept going to court, seeking permanent ban on the notice, saying that they wish to buy the land, now roughly worth Tk 300 crore.

After 42 years of back and forth, BSCIC finally succeeded in reclaiming the land on January 2.

"We got the High Court verdict in March last year, but the leaseholders delayed their exit by applying for a temporary ban on the decision,"

said Akter Hossain Didar, law officer at BSCIC. "Finally on November last year, the court denied their application."

He said BSCIC had formed a 16-member committee, led by the director of industries development Mohammad Jakir Hossain, to deal with the matter. The committee jointly held an eviction drive, along with the executive magistrate and AC (land) of Dhaka, from December 30 to January 2.

These correspondents went to the spot on Saturday and found that the land was being cleared of the remnants of the occupiers' establishments.

Md Rashedur Rahman, deputy general manager (planning) of BSCIC, said they are planning to build a multipurpose complex there.

Meanwhile, an official of BSCIC, wishing anonymity, said some of their staffers may have been involved to prolong the saga.

**CHRONOLOGY OF DISPUTE**

After getting the first notice to vacate the area in 1983, the leaseholders -- Nolgola BSCIC Warehouse Owners' Association -- filed a case with the fifth

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ALOK NIBASH

## Ensuring the care they deserve

First holistic cancer-care  
home launched in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If a cancer patient goes to Dhaka for treatment, they have to find a room in a hotel or relative's house, where they will not have access to any specialised medical care.

Besides visiting the doctor, attendants may have to go to hospital frequently to seek emergency medical treatment for their patient.

Considering the situation of such critical patients, Bangladesh Cancer Aid Trust (BANCAT) yesterday launched "Alok Nibash", the first-of-its-kind cancer care home in Bangladesh.

Located at Block-A of Bashundhara Residential Area, the facility can house 24 cancer patients and attendants seeking treatment in Dhaka.

At Alok Nibash, patients will be provided with mental health support, physical wellness training, proper nutrition, and transport to medical facilities.

At present, there are four specially trained nurses, two ward-staffers and other support staff to care for the patients.

Anis A Khan, senior vice president of BANCAT, said, "Our aim is to ensure that a patient gets the complete care they deserve throughout the treatment period, as care is the most vital element to increase the probability of a patient healing soon."

"The 'Alok Nibash' name symbolises succour, courage, shelter and care for cancer warriors," he added.

The launching ceremony of Alok Nibash was attended by Mominul Islam, managing director and CEO of IPDC; Murtaza Karim, country manager of EXPO Group; Imran Rahman, vice-chancellor and dean of School of Business at University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh; and many other distinguished personalities.

## Don't pay heed to rumours

Says education ministry  
over school closure

UNB, Dhaka

The education ministry has urged the people of the country not to pay heed to any rumour over the closure of educational institutions due to the spike in Covid-19 cases.

"Quoting Education Minister Dipu Moni, it is being spread on social media that educational institutions will be closed for an indefinite period, which is a rumour, and the minister didn't give any statement in this regard recently," the ministry said in a notice issued yesterday.

"The government is monitoring the overall Covid situation and it will sit with the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid again and will decide later," it added.

However, now the government is giving priority to ensuring vaccination of all students, added the notice.

## PFIZER JABS US gives 9.6m more doses

UNB, Dhaka

The United States yesterday donated 9.6 million doses of Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine to Bangladesh, a gift from the American people.

This donation of Pfizer vaccine brings the US government vaccine contribution to over 28 million doses.

"Nothing has made me prouder as US Ambassador to Bangladesh over the past three years than the work we are doing together to combat the Covid-19 pandemic," said US Ambassador Earl R Miller.

This delivery of Pfizer vaccine doses is part of the United States' commitment to lead the global Covid-19 response by donating a billion doses of Pfizer vaccine around the world through 2022.



Motorcycles parked along the footpath take up a significant portion of this busy street right in front of the capital's Rajarbagh Police Hospital. As a result, traffic congestion has become a never-ending fixture around the area. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

# Dhaka air still 'unhealthy'

UNB, Dhaka  
Dhaka's air quality continues to be "unhealthy".  
The capital, however, slipped to the fourth position in the latest list of world cities with the worst air quality.  
Yesterday, the capital's air quality index (AQI) was recorded at 189 at 9:04am.  
Bosnia Herzegovina's Sarajevo, Croatia's Zagreb and Pakistan's Lahore occupied the first three spots, with AQI scores of 268, 209 and 202, respectively.  
An AQI between 101 and 200 is considered "unhealthy", particularly for sensitive groups.  
Similarly, an AQI between 201 and 300 is said to be "poor", while a reading of 301 to 400 is considered "hazardous", posing serious health risks to residents.  
AQI, an index for reporting daily air quality, is used by government agencies to inform people how clean or polluted the air of a certain city is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for them. In Bangladesh, the AQI is based on five criteria pollutants -- Particulate Matter (PM10 and PM2.5), NO2, CO, SO2 and Ozone.  
Dhaka has long been grappling with

air pollution issues. Its air quality usually turns unhealthy during winter and improves during monsoon.  
A report by the Department of Environment and the World Bank in March 2019 pointed out that the three main sources of air pollution in Dhaka "are brick kilns, fumes from vehicles and dust from construction sites".  
With the advent of winter, the city's air quality starts deteriorating sharply due to the massive discharge of pollutant particles from construction work, rundown roads, brick kilns and other sources.  
Air pollution consistently ranks among the top risk factors for death and disability worldwide. Breathing polluted air has long been recognised as increasing a person's chances of developing heart disease, chronic respiratory diseases, lung infections and cancer, according to several studies.  
As per the World Health Organization, air pollution kills an estimated seven million people worldwide every year, largely as a result of increased mortality from stroke, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer and acute respiratory infections.



Every winter brings with it dusty streets and alleys in Dhaka. With so much construction going on, a scene like this is not surprising. This photo was taken recently from near Jatiya Press Club.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Kazirhaat loses another ferry Long gridlock, truckers' misery continue

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Barely a month after losing its two big ferries and their pontoon, Kazirhaat ferry ghat -- the busiest ferry port for loaded trucks in the northern region -- has now lost one of its two smaller ferries.  
This means over 300 vehicles plying on the Kazirhaat-Aricha route is now stranded in the area, without adequate food, accommodation or sanitation facilities for the truckers.  
Talking to The Daily Star, Mahabubur Rahman, manager of the ghat, the ghat had two small ferries, "Kadam" and "Camelia", for the last one month.  
Before this, the ghat had two more larger Ro Ro ferries plying the route, he said.  
But on Monday, Camelia had to be taken to the dock yard due to technical fault, leaving only Kadam to carry vehicles on the route for the last five days.  
"Kadam can only carry 25 to 30 trucks and 20 to 25 small vehicles like cars and motorbikes at a time. As a result, more than 300 vehicles remain stranded



PHOTO: STAR

on both sides of the ghat," Mahabub said.  
Contacted, Md Khaled Newaz, deputy general manager of Aricha ghat, said the crisis won't be resolved any time soon due to a shortage of ferries.  
Meanwhile, truckers said they're stuck at the ghat under immensely difficult conditions. As the ghat area doesn't have adequate food and accommodation, they have to buy food from afar and spend the nights inside their trucks. They're also suffering due to the lack of toilet facilities.

# Woman found dead in Savar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police recovered the body of a woman, aged around 21, at a house in Kathgora area of Ashulia in Savar yesterday.  
The deceased Brishya Akhter, wife of Asadul Islam, hailed from Taljanga village of Kishorganj district, said Tanim Hasan, sub-inspector of Ashulia Police Station.  
Brishya and her husband worked at a readymade garment factory in Ashulia and used to stay at a rented house in Kathgora area, said police.  
On information, police recovered the body in the afternoon and sent it to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsies, the SI said.  
The deceased's husband is on the run since the incident, he added.  
The body bore multiple injury marks, the SI said, adding that they have started investigation into the matter.

# Govt to create mangrove forest on 17,000 hectares of land

UNB, Dhaka

The government has taken a plan to create mangrove forests on 17,000 hectares of land during 2021-22 to 2023-24 fiscal, aiming to protect and preserve forestry and wildlife in coastal areas, according to an official document.  
Besides, an updated version of the Climate Fiscal Framework will be published in line with Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 and SDGs.  
The Bangladesh Climate Fiscal Framework 2020 has been developed as an updated version of the Climate Fiscal Framework 2014 by the Finance Division, with support from its Inclusive Budgeting and Financing for Climate Resilience Project.  
The project is financed by the government and United Nations Development Programme.  
The Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 is a long-term, integrated, and holistic vision of water and land management throughout Bangladesh. Initiatives will be taken to implement projects or programmes for adaptation to, and mitigation of, climate change, reduction of environment pollution, improvement of biodiversity and enhancement of mangrove forest in coastal areas.

# Manik Saha's death anniv observed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The 18th death anniversary of journalist Manik Saha, who was killed in a bomb attack on January 15, 2004 at Chhoto Mirzapur near Khulna Press Club, was observed yesterday.  
The Press Club authorities and his family placed wreaths at the monument built at the press club in memory of the slain journalists. Later, they arranged a discussion on his life and works.  
Manik, a freedom fighter, received Ekushey Padak in 2009. He worked for the Daily Sangbad, The New Age, Ekushey Television, and BBC Bangla. In 2016, a speedy tribunal in Khulna sentenced nine people to life imprisonment for killing the journalist.



**To-Let Office/Company**  
Lalmatia Block-A, Near Mainroad, with 5 unit and 10 car park whole Building for Rent. Pls. Cont: 01911-340222, 01707-340222

**Commercial Floors Rent**  
Commercial floors for rent at Gulshan Circle-2, Ground & 1st Floor (approx. 5800 sqft) right on Gulshan ave. main road only available for Bank and Financial institutions. Please contact below: 01845033026.

**Bangladesh Services Limited**  
(Owner of InterContinental Dhaka)  
1 Minto Road, Dhaka-1000  
13th January 2022

**Tender Notice**  
Sealed tenders in two envelope system are hereby invited by Bangladesh Services Limited (BSL) at 1, Minto Road, Dhaka-1000 for the following works:

Name of the works	Selling date of Tender Document	Date of Submission & opening of the tender
Supply, installation, testing, commissioning and balancing of 1 (one) passenger elevator at 5-storied building No. 3 of BSL Office Complex	From 16/01/2022 to 31/01/2022	07/02/2022

Tenders will be received on 07/02/2022 up to 12:00 noon and opened at 12:30 PM on same day. The details of this Tender Notice may be seen at [www.bsl.gov.bd](http://www.bsl.gov.bd) website. The Tender Document will be available at the office of the undersigned located at 4th floor, Building No. 3, BSL office Complex, 1 Minto Road, Dhaka-1000.  
sd/-  
(Md. Abdul Quaiyum)  
Managing Director (Additional Secretary)

# Half a decade

FROM PAGE 5  
leaving two cut-points for water to enter and recede from. When the water recedes during low tide, it takes the sediment deposited on the riverbed in a process of natural excavation.  
Ignoring this approach, WDB in Jashore has been trying to solve the longstanding problem by pumping out stagnant water using 20 pumps. The project began since the beginning of 2021 at a cost of Tk 2.5 crore.  
However, Md Tauhidul Islam, executive engineer of Jashore WDB, said the project is not successful in its aim yet, as the capacity of the pumps are as low as five-cusec water.  
He said once they are able to install high capacity pumps, each of which could pump out around 40-cusec

water, the stagnant water will recede, bringing relief to the area's people. The Tk 45.6 crore proposed project is currently at the planning ministry for approval, he added.  
However, the sangram committee rejected the water pump project, terming it impractical.  
Protesting it, along with putting forward five more demands, the committee held a sit-in at Jashore deputy commissioner's office for five days till Thursday.  
Iqbal Kabir Zahid, adviser of the committee, said tougher movements will be waged if their six-point demand is not met. The demands include tidal river management before the full moon, cancellation of the proposed water pumping project, Amdanga canal excavation and more.

# It took 42

FROM PAGE 3  
sub-judge court, seeking permanent ban on the notice, because they wished to buy the land.  
Thirteen years later, the case was shifted to the Money Lending Court, before it was moved back to the previous court in 2000.  
The court dismissed the case in 2000, but the occupiers then made an appeal to the HC, which accepted it, but the occupiers sent the title suit to a lower court for a fresh hearing on September 17, 2013. After another eight years, they again urged for a temporary ban on BSCIC's notice on March 15 last year. The court issued a show-cause notice and dismissed the occupiers' application, leading to BSCIC getting it back.  
Contacted, the association's general secretary Kamrul Hossain admitted that they took the land as lease from BSCIC but continued business defying the notice.

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**  
বিদ্যুৎ, জ্বালানি ও খনিজ সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়  
বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ  
টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ (শ্রেডা)  
আইইবি ভবন (১১ তলা), রমনা, ঢাকা  
[www.sreda.gov.bd](http://www.sreda.gov.bd)

নংঃ ২৭.০২.০০০০.০২২.১৮.০০১.২২-১০ তারিখঃ ১২ জানুয়ারি ২০২২খ্রিঃ

**২য় জ্বালানি নিরীক্ষক সনদ পরীক্ষার বিজ্ঞপ্তি**  
জ্বালানি দক্ষতা ও সংরক্ষণ বিধিমালা-২০১৬ এবং জ্বালানি নিরীক্ষা প্রবিধানমালা-২০১৮ অনুযায়ী বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানির বৃহৎ ব্যবহারকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহে জ্বালানির দক্ষ ও সাশ্রয়ী ব্যবহার চিহ্নিত এবং নিশ্চিত করতে শ্রেডা দেশে পর্যাপ্ত সংখ্যক জ্বালানি নিরীক্ষক তৈরীর লক্ষ্যে ২য় জ্বালানি নিরীক্ষক সনদ পরীক্ষা আয়োজন করতে যাচ্ছে। উক্ত পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণে আগ্রহী যথাযথ যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের আগামী ২৭ জানুয়ারি ২০২২খ্রিঃ তারিখের মধ্যে অনলাইনে আবেদন সম্পন্ন করতে হবে।  
অনলাইন আবেদন ফরমের লিংকঃ <https://tinyurl.com/2p8psmnd>  
২. উল্লেখ্য, আবেদন প্রাপ্তির পর শ্রেডা কর্তৃক যাচাইয়ের মাধ্যমে প্রাথমিকভাবে যোগ্য আবেদনকারী নির্বাচন করা হবে। পরবর্তীতে প্রাথমিকভাবে নির্বাচিত আবেদনকারী কর্তৃক পরীক্ষা এবং আবেদন ফি বাবদ মোট ১০,০০০/- (দশ হাজার) টাকার ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার (অফেরতযোগ্য) জমা প্রদান সাপেক্ষে চূড়ান্তভাবে যোগ্য পরীক্ষার্থী নির্বাচন করা হবে। বিস্তারিত তথ্য, অন্যান্য শর্তাবলীর জন্য ভিজিট করুন [www.sreda.gov.bd](http://www.sreda.gov.bd) ওয়েবপেজ।  
স্বা/=  
মোঃ আব্দুল্লাহ আল মামুন  
জিডি-৯০ সহকারী পরিচালক (জ্বালানি নিরীক্ষা ও এক্সিডিটেশন)

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**  
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়  
টেকনাফ, কক্সবাজার  
Email: [teknaf@uhfpo.dqhs.gov.bd](mailto:teknaf@uhfpo.dqhs.gov.bd)  
তারিখঃ ১৩/০১/২০২২ইং

স্মারক নং-উপস্বাস্থ্যকর্ম/টেকনাফ/এমএসআর/২০২১-২২/১৬৭

**দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন ২০০৬ ও তৎপরবর্তী সংশোধনী এবং সংগ্রহ বিধিমালা ২০০৮ ও তৎপরবর্তী সংশোধনী ২০১৯ মোতাবেক নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে ২০২১-২০২২ইং অর্থ বছরের জন্য ৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্স, টেকনাফ, কক্সবাজারস্থ এই নিয়ন্ত্রণাধীন সকল উপ-স্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রসমূহের জন্য এম.এস.আর সামগ্রী ক্রয়/সরবরাহের নিমিত্তে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত আর্থিক স্বচ্ছতা সম্পন্ন ব্যক্তি/প্রকৃত উষধ ব্যবসায়ী/সরবরাহকারী/প্রস্তুতকারী/টিকাদারগণের নিকট হইতে নির্ধারিত ছকে ও তফসীল মোতাবেক নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর বরাবর লিখিত, স্বাক্ষরিত ও সীলমালা খামে পৃথক পৃথক দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রমিক নং	গ্রুপ	গ্রুপের নাম	সিডিউলের মূল্য	দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ
১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় (স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগ)।		
২	সংস্থা/প্রতিষ্ঠান	স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর, মহাশালী, ঢাকা-১২১২।		
৩	বাজেট/তহবিলের উৎস	২০২১-২০২২ইং আর্থিক বছরে স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় এবং স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর হইতে প্রাপ্ত সকল নিয়মিত রাজস্ব/খোক/অতিরিক্ত ও উন্নয়ন খাত বরাদ্দ।		
৪	সংগ্রহকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তা, টেকনাফ, কক্সবাজার।		
৫	দরপত্র ক্রয় ও সংগ্রহের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র।		
৬	দরপত্র প্যাকেজের নাম	(ক) উষধপত্র (ইউসিএল বহির্ভূত) (খ) এম.এস.আর যন্ত্রপাতি (গ) ক্যামিক্যাল/রিএজেন্ট, এন্ড-রে ফিল্ম (ঘ) গজ, ব্যাভেজ, তুলা ইত্যাদি (ঙ) লিনেন সামগ্রী (চ) এম.এস.আর আসবাবপত্র।		
৭	দরদাতা/যোগাযোগ/সরবরাহকারীর যোগ্যতা	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির শর্তাবলী এবং সিডিউলে সংযুক্ত শর্তাবলী মতে।		
৮	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, টেকনাফ, কক্সবাজার (হিসাব শাখা)।		
৯	দরপত্র জমা দেওয়ার স্থান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, টেকনাফ, কক্সবাজার।		
১০	দরপত্র সিডিউল প্রাপ্তির শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	পরিকল্পনা প্রকাশের পর হইতে ০৩/০২/২০২২ইং দুপুর ২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।		
১১	দরপত্র জমাদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৬/০২/২০২২ইং দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।		
১২	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	০৬/০২/২০২২ইং দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা (দরপত্রজামানতের সম্মুখে যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।		
১৩	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারীর অফিস ও ঠিকানা	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, টেকনাফ, কক্সবাজার।		
১৪	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির স্থান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, টেকনাফ, কক্সবাজার। (হিসাব শাখা)।		
১৫	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, টেকনাফ, কক্সবাজার।		
১৬	সিডিউলের মূল্য ও দরপত্র জামানত (আর্নেস্টমনি)-এর পরিমাণ নিম্নরূপঃ			

উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তা, টেকনাফ, কক্সবাজার বরাবরে সোনালী ব্যাংক টেকনাফ শাখায় চালান মূল্যে ১-২৭১১-০০০০-২৩৬৬ কোডে জমা করে পরিকল্পনা প্রকাশের দিন হইতে অত্র কার্যালয়ের হিসাব শাখায় চালানের মূলকপি ও কোম্পানির নিজস্ব প্যাডে আবেদন জমাদানপূর্বক সিডিউল ক্রয় করিতে হইবে।

**বিশেষ জ্ঞাতব্যঃ**  
ক। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র অথবা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ/পাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। অনিবার্য কারণবশত অত্র কার্যালয়ের নোটিশে বর্ণিত তারিখ ও সময়ে দরপত্র বাত্র খোলা না হলে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসে একই সময় ও স্থানে দরপত্র বাত্র খোলা হইবে।  
খ। অনুমোদিত বরাদ্দের আলোকে বিল প্রদান করা হইবে। এতদসংক্রান্ত কোন আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হইবে না।  
গ। গণখাতে সংগ্রহ বিধিমালা পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন ২০০৬ইং ও পিপিআর ২০০৮ইং এবং তৎপরবর্তী সকল সংশোধনী বিধিবিধান ও দরপত্র সিডিউলের সহিত সরবরাহকৃত/আরোপিত শর্তাবলী/অন্যান্য নির্দেশিকা/বিশেষ নির্দেশিকা/অন্যভাবে অনুসরণ করা হইবে।  
ঘ। বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী সিডিউলের সহিত সংযুক্ত থাকিবে।

ডাঃ টিউ চন্দ্র শীল  
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তা  
টেকনাফ, কক্সবাজার



Throughout the region, only roads can be found rising above the water, while almost all the establishments and croplands lie under it. As a result, villagers build makeshift solutions, like this line of sandbags, to get to their inundated homes from the main roads.

PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO

## Port city to get HC circuit bench this year

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said a circuit bench of the High Court will soon be established in the port city this year, as the chief justice has taken the matter into consideration.

Circuit benches are established in different regions to deal with cases of those areas, and in the process, help ensure swift legal procedures. "The prime minister also wants a circuit bench in Chattogram city. A formal announcement will be given soon in this regard," he said.

He was speaking virtually as chief guest in the annual get-together of Chattogram District Bar Association. The event was held at the Chattogram court building area.

Deputy Minister for Education Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Nowfel and Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Barrister Sheikh Fazle Nur Taposh also joined the programme virtually as special guests.

## REMOVAL OF HALL PROVOST

## Protests rage on at Sust

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Students of a female dormitory at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) in Sylhet continued their protests yesterday, demanding removal of the hall's provost.

Students of Begum Sirajunnesa Hall started demonstrating on Thursday night after the provost Zafrin Ahmed Liza allegedly "misbehaved" with a student when she approached the provost with some problems.

Besides her removal, the students said they also demand a student-friendly hall provost committee and resolving mismanagement at the dormitory. After beginning the demonstrations on Thursday, the students returned to their rooms that night, as the VC assured them of meeting their demands the next morning.

However, the authorities are yet to meet all three demands, said the students, adding that they will continue protests until they are met.

On Friday, a representative of the students met the VC. After the meeting, protesters claimed that the authorities have not fulfilled their conditions and as such, they gave a 24-hour ultimatum.

Sust VC Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed claimed that they have resolved some problems relating to mismanagement on Friday. Meanwhile, as provost Zafrin Ahmed is on leave due to illness, Prof Zubaida Kanak Khan has been assigned as temporary provost of the hall, said the VC.

The VC also said, "I've assured students of resolving their problems soon. But some are trying to blow it out of proportions for unknown reasons." Zafrin did not respond to the phone calls made by this correspondent.

PRAYER  
TIMING  
JAN 16



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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

# Half a decade under water

1.5 lakh people of Bhabadah region suffer from perennial waterlogging

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, back from Jashore

Around 120 villages in the Bhabadah region in Jashore and Khulna are still under water, even as winter marches.

Not only are the croplands belonging to the 1.5 lakh people of this region flooded, even their homesteads are under waist-to-knee deep water.

"Our homes have been under water for half a decade. Our lives are just an endless series of misery," said Shefali Biswas of Dahar Mashihati village under Monirampur upazila of Jashore.

She said while water recedes a little bit during winter, it never disappears completely, putting homes like Shefali's tin-roofed residence, which is under knee deep water even after it's built at three feet height from the ground. Their cowshed is also built in high to avoid the inundation.

"I have no way to cultivate paddy in my three-bigha land, which is under five-to-six feet water," said Swarn Biswas of Sujatpur village in Monirampur. "I'm forced to lease out the space for fish farming for Tk 140,000 per year, although this is not a satisfactory amount."

"Since we can't farm our crop lands, nor do we have to money to buy feed, we can only feed our cattle with water hyacinths," said Khokon Mandol, of Dahar Mashihati village.



Ranojit Bauali, convener of Bhabadah Pani Niskashan Sangram Committee, said the situation worsened this year after the heavy rains of September.

"Even my house [at Dumurtola village in Abhaynagar] is still under knee-deep water," he said.

The Bhabadah region comprises of around 52 beels in Jashore Sadar, Abhaynagar, Monirampur, and Keshabpur upazilas of Jashore and Dumuria upazila of Khulna. These areas,

especially villages adjacent to the beels, remain largely inundated, especially during the rainy season.

The water logged villages in Jashore fall under Kultia, Nehalpur, Haridaskati, Manoharpur and Dhakuria unions of Monirampur upazila; Sundali, Cholia, Prebhang and Payra unions in Abhaynagar upazila; Durbadanga union in Keshabpur upazila; while from Khulna some parts of Dumuria upazila are still under water, said Ranojit.

During a recent visit to Monirampur and Abhaynagar upazilas, this correspondent found that only the roads in these villages were above the water, while almost everything else was inundated.

People were seen using small boats or bamboo or coconut tree-made single line bridges to reach their homes from the roads.

However, for an area so marooned, heavy activity was seen at large fish farms of the area.

According to Anil Biswas, adviser of the Bhabadah Pani Niskashan Sangram Committee, the Mukteshwari, Tekka, Hari, and Sree rivers, which originate mainly from the Bhairab, pass through the Bhabadah region carrying excessive sediment and deposit this on the riverbed during high tide.

Once the riverbed rises, so does the water level of the surrounding beels, which blocks drainage in the region, leading to the whole region becoming waterlogged.

Experts and local activists say tidal river management (TRM) approach, proven to be the most effective way of relieving waterlogging in similar regions, is ignored by the Water Development Board (WDB).

Through this approach, an embankment is built around a beel,

## Two brothers killed in road accident

UNB, Feni

Two brothers were killed and two people were injured when a private car hit a tree beside Dhaka-Chattogram highway near BSCIC Industrial area in Feni yesterday.

The deceased are Biplob (32), an assistant teacher of Mirsarai Sasarat Government Primary School, and his brother Tushar (40), an expatriate.

Police said the car carrying the brothers rammed a tree when its driver lost control over the steering, leaving them dead on the spot. The driver and another passenger sustained injuries. Tushar had gone to Dhaka for treatment. The accident occurred while they were returning from there.

Meanwhile, four people were killed in road accidents in Mymensingh and Rajshahi on Friday.

In Mymensingh, three bikers were killed and another injured when a truck hit their motorcycle on China intersection in Shambhuganj. Babu Mia (25), Yasin Ali (18), and Ripon Mia (20) died on the spot, said police.

In Rajshahi, biker Firoz Hossain (16) was killed after his bike collided with a pick-up van around 11am.

## JAYWALKING, OUT OF NECESSITY



For some time, construction work has been going on at Khulna city's KDA Road area. While that's a burden by itself, that the work is underway occupying the footpath is spelling additional misery for pedestrians on a busy street. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## COVID CURBS

## Mobile courts slap fines, but many still apathetic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chattogram District Administration yesterday conducted mobile courts in the port city to enforce health guidelines to curb Covid-19 transmission.

At Pahartoli Bazar and Alankar intersection, 12 people were fined a total of Tk 4,400 for violating health guidelines, said Executive Magistrate Subal Chakma, who conducted the drive.

Meanwhile, people were still seen showing apathy towards following health rules. Many were seen without face-masks in different areas. Public vehicles were carrying passengers beyond their seat capacity, defying the government instruction.

Besides, public vehicles were sparse at Anderkillah, Jamal Khan, Sholashahar Gate-2, Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Oxygen, Laldighir Par, New Market and Chawkbazar areas.

Many office goers said they faced difficulties while going to workplaces, as number of vehicles on the road was not enough. DC Mominur Rahman said they will continue the drives.

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E-mail: [principal.mmc.jessore@gmail.com](mailto:principal.mmc.jessore@gmail.com)

**Corrigendum of Invitation for Tender**  
**e-Tender Notice 03/2021-22**

Memo No. CEDP/GMMC/2021-2022/NY-02/100 Date: 16/01/2022  
The undersigned has to inform that due to unavoidable circumstances Memo No. CEDP/GMMC/2021-2022/W-02/079, Date: 10/01/2022 of e-Tender (Package-W-02 & package name: Renovation of Classrooms, office room, washrooms, library and Laboratory) are revised as follows:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of goods	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1.	646791	Renovation of Classrooms, office room, washrooms, library and Laboratory <b>Package-W-02</b>	26-01-2022 1:00pm	26-01-2022 2:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to 25/01/2022, 4:00pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)). All other things of published IFT (Reference No. CEDP/PMUIP/(IDG-1020)/75/2019-1611, date: 27.12.2021) will remain unchanged.

Prof. Morzina Akter  
Principal (In charge)  
Govt. Michael Madhusudan College, Jashore  
Phone: 0421-68554/68564

GD-91

# We can change the industry together

Ilias Kanchan

**Renowned actor Ilias Kanchan is a powerhouse performer who carved a place into the hearts of audiences with his super hit moves and iconic characters.**

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

The actor will participate the upcoming Bangladesh Film Artistes' Association election, for the post of President.

In a candid conversation with The Daily Star, the "Beder Mey Josna" actor talks about what inspired him to take on the this particular challenge.

**Why did you decide to run for the President in this election?**

Nipun came up to me, and asked me numerous times to participate in the election. She requested me at least 10 times to contest for this role, and I obliged later.

There needs

**What is your opinion regarding the previous committee?**

I won't say anything against anyone, as I want everyone to work with everyone in the film fraternity. However, the miserable condition of the artistes is something that truly troubles me. Why do we need to give relief to artistes, when we can give them work?

I want to create a healthy environment, so that our film industry can develop efficiently.

**How are you planning on helping the artistes in need?**

I don't understand why do we have to use the term 'artiste in need'. Artistes have the full right to live their life with full dignity. I don't understand the meaning of going Facebook live and showcasing clips distributing 'relief' to artistes. If we are able to make more films, then the artistes will not have to depend on such temporary basic needs.

**What do you think about the current crisis in the film industry?**

The crisis didn't occur in a single day, all of needs to work unanimously to some together and face this crisis bravely.

If I am able to win the election, I would ask for a special fund from the Prime Minister, and I will use that fund for the development of the film industry.

Our honourable Prime Minister had already allocated 1000 crore for hall owners, which they refused to take. No hall owners took the money, as it is futile to restore the halls if there are scarcity of movies.

To solve the crises, we will definitely make more films.



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL



## 'Epic 1971' commences at Galleri Kaya

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Celebrating 50 years of the independence of Bangladesh, Gallery Kaya unveiled its much-anticipated art exhibition 'Epic 1971' on January 14.

The exhibition featured fabulous paintings by masters like Shahabuddin Ahmed, Somnath Hore, Jamal Ahmed, Ranjit Das, Chanda Bhattacharjee, Aditya Basak, Atin Basak and Aloptogin Tushar.

The inaugural ceremony, which followed proper Covid protocols, were attended by the Trustee of Bangladesh Liberation War, Mofidul Hoque and the Editor of the daily Prothom Alo, Matiur Rahman, among other guests.

"Epic 1971" is open for all until January 29, from 11:30 am to 7:30 pm.

READ FULL NEWS ONLINE

## BAHAR to air season 3 from today

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The first two seasons of Turkish series "Bahar" earned immense popularity among Bangladeshi audience, after it was licensed and dubbed in Bangla.

Aired on Deepto television, the series is voiced by local artistes. The third and the last season of "Bahar" will commence airing from today, everyday from 6 pm and 9 pm onwards.

The voice-overs are directed by Shafiqul Islam, and produced by Taslima Tahrin.

The series, originally titled "Kadin", was aired on Turkey's Fox Television.



to be changes in the industry, and I think we can do that together.

My son also encouraged me to participate in the election so that I can fulfill my duty towards the industry which gave me stardom.

# COUNTRYWIDE

## Peace lost to personal rivalry Feud between incumbent, ex-UP chairman makes people suffer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

People of Kadamtala union in Pirojpur Sadar upazila are passing days amid panic, fearing police arrest.

The situation arises due to a longstanding rivalry between incumbent Kadamtala Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Sheikh Shihab Hossain, and Mohammad Hanif Khan, former chairman of the UP.

Local people, seeking anonymity, said the atmosphere of the area turned worsened since Shihab's men allegedly severed the right hand of Nadim, one of Hanif's supporters, on Thursday.

Later, victim Nadim's aunt Tamanna filed a case with Sadar Police Station accusing 32 people, including Shihab, and 20 to 25 other unnamed on Friday.

Pirojpur Superintendent of Police (SP) Mohammad Saidur Rahman said additional police have been deployed at different points to avoid any untoward incident.

Earlier on December 8, Shihab's men allegedly broke both the legs of Hanif's another supporter Ruhul Amin Sheikh, a member of Ward No 9 under adjacent Sikdar Mollic union.

Locals alleged that incidents of attacks and counter attacks between the two rival groups have become a common scenario.

The rivalry started since the first phase of the UP polls held on June 21 last year, they said.

The two groups have also filed over a dozen of cases with Pirojpur Sadar Police Station against each other.

A number of villagers alleged that frustration is mounting among local residents over police role for failing to bring the situation under control.

While visiting the union on Friday this correspondent noticed fewer presence of people on roads and outside homes.

Local resident Shahidul Islam said Hanif's role was not satisfactory when he was the chairman of the UP.

Another villager Humayun Kabir Sheikh said they are passing days amid fear as clashes are often occurring among Hanif and Shihab's men.

Contacted, Hanif, also general secretary of the union unit Awami League, said many of his supporters have left the locality, fearing Shihab wrath.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach Shihab over phone for his comment.

## MADHAIKHAL BEEL IN KURIGRAM

# Leased out to non-fishermen, fishermen deprived

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Madhaikhal beel, which lies on 157 acres of land in Kurigram's Nageshwari upazila, was the main source of income for more than four hundred fishermen families.

The water body was open for all and anyone could catch fish even 15 years ago.

Apart from the fishermen families, hundreds of locals also made a living by fishing in the beel which had an abundant supply of indigenous varieties of fish.

But now the Land Ministry has

leased the water body to a section of non-fishermen who solely control the waterbody depriving the fishermen.

Fisherman Suren Chandra Das, 72, of Madhaikhal village, who inherited the profession from his father, said his father Prabhat Chandra Das and his grandfather Lengtu Chandra Das used to fish in the beel. He used to run his family by fishing in this beel.

But his sons and grandsons can no longer fish in this beel.

"The lessees of this beel do not allow the fishermen to catch fish in the beel. Many fishermen have been forced to give up their ancestral profession," he said.

Aftab Ali, a local of Madhaikhal village, said not only the fishermen but also the locals used to make a living by fishing in the beel. Now they are not allowed to fish in the beel.

Dinesh Chandra Bishwas, president of Kaliganj Fishermen's Association, said 500 families are getting benefits from the beel.

Of these, only 25 are families, whose ancestral profession was fishing. Although the beel is leased in the name of fishermen, the non-fishermen have become partners due to money.

"We don't have money that's why we have had to involve the non-fishermen

as partners," Dinesh said, adding that although local fishermen are not partners in the beel, they are hired and paid for fishing here.

Former UP member Abdul Jalil said the beel is being leased for more than Tk 9 lakh every year. Even though outsiders can't catch fish here, they are given fish.

Kurigram District Fisheries Officer Kalipada Roy said the beel was leased from the Land Ministry.

"It is up to the ministry to decide whether the Madhaikhal beel will be open to all as it was in the past," he added.



The lessees do not allow fishermen to catch fish in Madhaikhal beel of Kurigram forcing many fishermen to leave their ancestral profession.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY



An aurora borealis, also known as Northern Lights, illuminates the night sky above the Yllas Fell in Kolari, Finnish Lapland, early yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## China, Iran eye deepening ties Slams US sanctions, begin implementation of 25-year strategic agreement

REUTERS, Shanghai

China reaffirmed its opposition to unilateral sanctions by the United States against Iran as the Chinese and Iranian foreign ministers announced the launch of a 25-year cooperation agreement aimed at strengthening economic and political ties.

In a meeting on Friday in the city of Wuxi, in Jiangsu province, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi also backed efforts to revive a 2015 nuclear deal between major powers and Iran.

Chief negotiators from Iran and Europe returned home for consultations as talks to revive the 2015 nuclear deal reached a critical stage, state media in the Islamic republic said yesterday.

A summary of the meeting between Wang and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian was posted on China's foreign ministry website yesterday. Wang said the US bore primary responsibility for the ongoing difficulties with Iran, having unilaterally withdrawn from a 2015 nuclear deal between the major powers and Iran.

China and Iran, both subject to US sanctions, signed the 25-year cooperation agreement last March, bringing Iran into China's Belt and Road Initiative, a multi-trillion dollar infrastructure scheme intended to stretch from East Asia to Europe.

The project aims to significantly expand China's economic and political influence, and has raised concerns in the United States and elsewhere.

The foreign ministry summary said the agreement would deepen Sino-Iranian cooperation in areas including energy, infrastructure, agriculture, health care and culture, as well as cyber security and cooperation with other countries.

Few details of the secretive deal have been published, but the New York Times reported in 2020 that it would secure a regular supply of oil for China, citing a draft of the agreement leaked to the paper.

China has officially stopped importing oil from Iran, but analysts say Iranian crude is continuing to enter the country disguised as imports from other countries.



## 'Unfounded' claims

Says Russia as it rejects US allegations that it is preparing stage for invading Ukraine



AFP, Kyiv

The United States has accused Russia of sending saboteurs trained in explosives to stage a pretext to invade Ukraine, where government websites were knocked out in a cyberattack linked to Moscow.

The allegations and incident mark a striking new escalation in tensions over Ukraine, just after a week of talks between the West and Russia that sought a diplomatic solution.

Russia has amassed tanks, artillery and tens of thousands of troops near the border of Ukraine as it demands guarantees that its neighbour will never join Nato – which on Friday announced new cyber cooperation with Kyiv in response to the attack.

Detailing intelligence findings, the White House Friday said that Russia was "laying the groundwork to have the option of fabricating a pretext for invasion" by blaming Ukraine.

"We have information that indicates Russia has already prepositioned a group of operatives to conduct a false flag operation in eastern Ukraine," said Jen Psaki, the White House press secretary. "The operatives are trained in urban warfare and in using explosives to carry out acts of sabotage against Russia's own proxy forces."

US intelligence believes Russia could begin the operations several weeks before a military invasion, which could start between mid-January and mid-

February, Psaki said.

Russia has denied plans to invade Ukraine and quickly dismissed the latest US statements, with Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov calling them "unfounded".

With the world on alert for any signs of invasion, government sites across Ukraine including of the emergency ministry, education ministry and cabinet went down early Friday.

Ukraine was still conducting an investigation but preliminary indications suggested that "hacker groups associated with the Russian secret services may stand behind today's massive cyberattack on government websites", foreign ministry spokesman Oleg Nikolenko said on Twitter.

European Union foreign ministers, meeting in the French city of Brest, promised support, with several saying that they had feared a cyberattack to set the stage for a Russian invasion.

US President Joe Biden has warned his counterpart Vladimir Putin in two telephone calls of severe economic consequences if Russia invades.

Moscow said the military drill was a response to what it sees as the growing presence of Nato in its sphere of influence, where it fiercely opposes the expansion of the Atlantic alliance.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Thursday that Moscow saw no reason to hold a new round of security talks with the West following what he saw as no progress in talks in Geneva, Brussels and Vienna.

## Myanmar junta hits Suu Kyi with five new charges

AFP, YANGON

A Myanmar junta court has hit ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi with five new corruption charges related to the alleged hiring and purchase of a helicopter, sources close to the case told AFP.

The Nobel laureate, 76, has been detained since the February 1 coup last year which triggered mass protests and a bloody crackdown on dissent with more than 1,400 civilians killed, according to a local monitoring group.

Suu Kyi is facing a raft of criminal and corruption charges – including violating the country's official secrets laws – and if convicted of all of them could face sentences tallying more than 100 years of prison.

The charges were levelled against Suu Kyi on Friday afternoon and related to the hire, maintenance and purchase of a helicopter, the sources said. Former Myanmar president U Win Myint was also hit with the same charges.

A Myanmar court on Monday convicted Suu Kyi of three criminal charges related to illegally importing and owning walkie talkies and breaking coronavirus rules.

She was sentenced to four years in prison.

In December, she also received a two-year jail sentence for incitement against the military and for other coronavirus violations.



## Tongans flee tsunami following volcanic eruption

AFP, Nuku'alofa

Frightened Tongans fled to higher ground yesterday after a massive volcanic eruption – heard in neighbouring countries – triggered tsunami warnings across the South Pacific. "A 1.2 metre tsunami wave has been observed at Nuku'alofa," Australia's Bureau of Meteorology tweeted. The latest eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano came just a few hours after a separate Friday tsunami warning was lifted due to the eruption. The eruption was so intense it was heard as "loud thunder sounds" in Fiji more than 800 kilometres (500 miles) away, officials in Suva said.

## Philippines to buy Indian missile system for \$375m

REUTERS, Manila

The Philippines has finalised a deal to acquire a shore-based anti-ship missile system from India for nearly \$375 million to beef up its navy, the Southeast Asian nation's defence minister said. Under the deal negotiated with the government of India, Brahmos Aerospace Private Ltd will deliver three batteries, train operators and maintainers, and provide logistics support, Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said in a Facebook post late on Friday. It was conceptualised in 2017, but faced delays in budget allocation and due to the coronavirus pandemic. The new anti-ship system aims to deter foreign vessels from encroaching on the country's 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone.

### PARTICIPATION IN ASEAN MEETINGS

## S'pore PM backs continued exclusion of Myanmar junta

REUTERS, Singapore

Singapore's leader said the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) should continue excluding Myanmar's junta from its meeting until it cooperates on an agreed peace plans.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in a video call on Friday urged the regional group's new chair, Cambodia, to engage all sides in Myanmar's conflict, Singapore's foreign ministry said yesterday.

Lee told his Cambodian counterpart Hun Sen that Asean should continue inviting a non-political representative from Myanmar to its meetings and any decision to change that "had to be based on new facts".

His remarks follow a controversial visit last week by Hun Sen to Myanmar, where he met Min Aung Hlaing, the head of the military government whom Asean excluded from its leaders' summit for his failure to implement the five-point plan to end hostilities and

allow dialogue after a coup last year.

Malaysia's foreign minister, Saifuddin Abdullah, made similar comments on Thursday, saying some Asean members felt Hun Sen should have discussed his trip with fellow leaders beforehand, as it could be seen as recognising the junta.

Lee told Hun Sen any engagement with Myanmar needed to include "all parties concerned", including Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's ousted ruling party. The Singapore leader said that despite Myanmar's peace commitments, the military has made further attacks against its political opponents and imposed further prison sentences on Suu Kyi.

Hun Sen made some proposals to Lee on how to coordinate a ceasefire in Myanmar and deliver humanitarian assistance, according to the statement. Lee responded these could be complicated because there had been no access to all parties, although Singapore did not object to the idea in principle.



In this photo released yesterday by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), a railway-borne missile is launched during firing drills at an undisclosed location in North Korea. North Korea on Friday fired two railway-borne tactical guided missiles, the country's third weapons test this month despite a volley of new United States sanctions.

PHOTO: REUTERS



**We're arriving at the end of a long process... there's a better atmosphere since Christmas – before Christmas I was very pessimistic. Today I believe reaching an accord is possible.**

EU foreign policy chief **Josep Borrell** on Iran nuclear deal

## The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

### Stop harassing families of the disappeared

Govt must give them protection, find their missing relatives

**W**E are extremely concerned at the way police have reportedly harassed the families of the victims of enforced disappearance. According to a report by this daily, a number of families alleged that they were being coerced by police into signing pre-written statements "admitting" that they had deliberately misled the authorities by concealing information about their "missing" relatives. According to Mayer Daak, a platform for the families of disappearance victims, police have visited at least 10 such families recently and forced them to change their statements (in the General Diaries). Reportedly, while some of the families were able to avoid signing the statements, others had to give in to the pressure. They claimed that law enforcers were doing this to deflect blame from themselves, although the latter have denied the allegations saying that through their visits to the families they only wanted to "update" their information as part of their investigations.

It has been widely reported in the media how plainclothes officers picked up many of the victims. But in most cases, their families could not file any case despite the fact that there was enough circumstantial evidence suggesting the former's involvement, according to human rights activists. These families could mostly only file GDs, and now they are being forced to retract their claims.

As has been reported in the media, some of the incidents of enforced disappearance happened many years ago. So, what prompted the police to suddenly start putting pressure on their families? This, we think, may have something to do with recent international pressures, now that some of the country's institutions have been identified and sanctioned for human rights violations. Clearly, our law enforcement agencies are trying to clear their names in the wrong way: instead of finding the "disappeared", they are further victimising them and their families.

The questions here are: If the police terrorise ordinary citizens instead of protecting them, where will they go? Also, why couldn't we, as a country, still develop a system that protects the victims rather than terrorising them? The families of the victims of enforced disappearance are seeking protection from the state, quite deservedly, but are being harassed instead. They also want their plight to be recognised by the state. This is an important point as state officials have often rubbished disappearance claims by saying the victims had fled away of their own volition. If this is indeed the case, the burden of proof falls on the state, not the victims.

We urge the government to take this matter in the manner it deserves and give specific directives to our law enforcement agencies to stop harassing these families, ensure their security, as well as find the missing individuals through proper investigations. Such coercion and high-handedness by the police force against general citizens are condemnable. This will only damage the country's image.

### We need a workable traffic control system

A capital city cannot function without one

**N**OTHING seems to have worked with the capital's traffic signal system even after spending Tk 119 crore over the last 15 years. Its method of controlling traffic flow on the roads remains as primitive as ever, with traffic policemen jumping right in front of running cars and using their hands to direct vehicular movement. Even ropes, cones and bamboo fences are used to control the extremely disorderly city traffic.

Dhaka ranked 10th in terms of poor traffic management among 228 cities in the World Traffic Index 2020, and to substantiate the veracity of the ranking, one only needs to go out in a motorised vehicle during office hours. Almost every working day, city roads get clogged by thousands of vehicles of every description from dawn to dusk. According to Buet's Accident Research Institute (ARI), in 2021, the country lost an estimated Tk 55,685 crore because of traffic congestion in Dhaka city.

It is no surprise that urban transport experts blame an unworkable traffic management system and unrealistic projects for the situation. They also point to impractical permits given to new vehicles that are way beyond the road capacity, contributing to the traffic congestion. Poor road conditions, defective public transport, jaywalking and movement of non-motorised vehicles also contribute to worsening the tailback. The following remarks by Buet experts are quite telling: "We are allowing vehicles without considering the road capacity. No signal system will work with this existing pressure of vehicles. We must think of striking a balance between road capacity and number of vehicles."

In their bid to modernise the capital's traffic control system, a number of ambitious projects have been undertaken over the past decades, including digitising signal lights, installing countdown timers and digital display boards installed at some major intersections. But experts say that in many cases, projects were taken up without considering the rising number of vehicles and overall road conditions. Also, the system was initiated based on a flawed plan, without taking traffic volume and speed into consideration. As a result, after expensive trials and errors, officials of the two city corporations and the traffic police department were forced to ditch the new signal systems and return to manual traffic management. We urge the traffic management authorities to find a system that really works for our fast-growing capital.

# How to secure jobs amid looming automation



Dr Sayeed Ahmed is a consulting engineer and the CEO of Bayside Analytics, a technology-focused strategy and management consulting organisation.

SAYEED AHMED

**O**N December 19, *The Daily Star* published a refreshing story that offered a window into the changing landscape of our job market. Electronics manufacturers, according to the report, are scrambling for graduates from the polytechnic institutes, often recruiting them straight from the campus. It appears that those graduates are not looking for jobs; jobs are finding them instead.

In a different case, Luna, a junior nurse, administers injections for my mother. She qualified as a nurse a few years ago but is already in two separate jobs. "No one wants to let me go," Luna chuckles, in response to my question about her profession.

These are two random cases where there simply aren't enough graduates to meet the demand of the job market. Unfortunately, Bangladesh's overall employment situation is not as encouraging.

For example, a December 2019 study by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) paints a bleak picture of employment, with the average rates of full-time employment and unemployment being at 43 percent and 33 percent, respectively. That means, among other things, that the skills of most of the job-seekers are not aligned with industry demands. Should Bangladesh's educated youth continue being underemployed or unemployed? Or should they learn necessary skills to cater to the country's current and future industrial and social needs?

In its "The Future of Jobs" report (October 2020), the World Economic Forum (WEF) predicts that by 2025 the Fourth Industrial Revolution with its automation boom will replace 85 million jobs worldwide. It will also create 97 million new tech-oriented jobs. The report lists ten professions that will diminish, including that of data entry clerks and factory workers. It mentions another ten sectors that will create new positions (e.g. data scientists and process automation specialists). The WEF forecasts that only the tech-related jobs will remain relevant while manual work will gradually go to automation. But it reassures us that the 4IR will create more jobs than it will eliminate, as did the previous industrial revolutions.

Such a simplistic view of the future may not apply everywhere. Countries differ in socio-economic conditions,

state of industrialisation, population structure, and skill level, among other things. Besides, it is not only factory workers or data entry clerks who may become redundant because of automation. Any predictable intellectual work is also susceptible to automation because software can perform it. Many stable earning jobs such as those of

Midwifery Council (BNMC). No wonder many nurses have two jobs.

The global scenario in the nursing profession is not much different either. A study by the British Centre for Health and Social Care Research estimates that shortage of nurses will stand at 7 million globally by 2030. There aren't enough new nurses to fill up the vacancies created



▲ **Human nurses will remain in high demand for many more years, given that robots are still a long way from offering the empathy, care, and dexterity that the profession requires.**

PHOTO: WHO BANGLADESH/TATIANA ALMEIDA

copywriters, journalists or medical image analysts are vulnerable, too. Software will make such jobs so easy that a low-wage worker with some training can accomplish them. Manual work is at lower risk of automation as it requires operating an expensive robot, as opposed to software. Even if robots take over much of the manual work, that will create new demands for robot technicians with hands-on skills. That's good news for the polytechnic graduates with technical backgrounds; their skills will remain relevant and further possibilities may open up.

Here is one example. Trained operators somewhere in the USA can fly drones in Afghanistan, Syria, or Libya to carry out surveillance activities. Similarly, technicians can also operate and repair machines anywhere in the world, provided they have the required skills and dexterity—and that too at a fraction of the cost.

Meanwhile, Luna and others like her will continue to receive more job offers. Why? The World Health Organization (WHO) reports, as per 2011 estimates, that there are about 3.05 physicians and 1.07 nurses per 10,000 people in Bangladesh. The situation has worsened over the subsequent decade which the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed. Bangladesh has only 24 percent of the nurses it needs, according to Bangladesh Nursing and

by retiring ones. Higher life expectancy has resulted in an increasing number of adult populations requiring more nurses. The USA will need 175,900 new nurses each year until 2029. For the UK, the nursing crisis has severely affected its ability to fight the Covid-19 situation. In Australia, a federal government agency predicts a shortfall of 85,000 nurses by 2025 and 123,000 by 2030. Automation is unlikely to be of any help to these developed countries.

Robots are still a long way from offering the empathy, care, and dexterity that the profession requires. Human nurses will remain in high demand for many more years. Only they have the skills to solve problems in unpredictable environments that nurses often face. Populous countries such as Bangladesh can benefit from such a situation.

Bangladesh must look at its own needs and the global market demands. The automation trend will increase in every sector, more or less. The country will require an adequately trained workforce that only relevant technical training can produce. It will also need many more nurses to deliver quality healthcare services that are also essential for sustained economic growth. Bangladesh will not have to send unskilled workers to foreign lands or sell low-tech products anymore. Instead, it can offer higher-value skill, knowledge, and care to the world.

## Climate action incomplete without women's contribution

Joyce Chimbi is a Kenya-based journalist who focuses on climate change, gender and health. Copyright: Inter Press Service

JOYCE CHIMBI

**J**UDY Wangari is one of an estimated 800,000 smallholder potato farmers who, according to the National Potato Council of Kenya, contribute at least 83 percent of the total potato production.

In a good season, her two acres in Molo in Kenya's Rift Valley region produce between 60 kg and 80 kg bags of potato per acre. Due to drastic and erratic weather patterns, Wangari says that a good season is often not guaranteed.

"The rains come too early or too late. Two years after I started potato farming back in 2018, I lost all my potatoes to heavy rainfall," she says.

Women make up 75 percent of the agricultural labour force in this East African nation.

Overall, women also manage approximately 40 percent of the smallholder farms. As pillars of food production and largely lacking in financial and technical support, women are increasingly exposed to the effects of climate change and consequent land degradation.

"We may be in the same storm, but we are definitely not in the same boat. Nowhere is this truer than for women in the face of climate change," says Patricia Scotland, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

**"We may be in the same storm, but we are definitely not in the same boat. Nowhere is this truer than for women in the face of climate change."**

A Commonwealth report titled Gender Integration for Climate Action: A Review of Commonwealth Member Country Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), presented at the recent UN climate summit COP26, shows how underrepresentation of women in climate policies and plans, poor access to climate finance, technologies, and lack of capacity for effective decision-making compound inequality.

The lack of representation also creates a barrier to women fully contributing to climate action, reinforcing the circle, and continuing vulnerability.

However, the report also showed that countries are increasingly acknowledging the vulnerability and inequality of women in climate action, taking concrete steps to address it.

At the heart of the review is a macro-level overview of the extent of gender integration in NDCs—the technical term for national climate action plans under the Paris Agreement—in Commonwealth member countries.

Overall, 65 percent of Commonwealth countries included gender as a cross-cutting or mainstreaming priority in new or updated NDCs.

Countries have also identified challenges, particularly in finance, where international support is urgently needed.

The role of women in smart agriculture practices, including agro-processing, is now embraced all across the small island nation of Saint Lucia. While not the main economic stay, agriculture contributes significantly to the country's revenue.

"Noteworthy, women have assumed entrepreneurial roles over regular farming skills, in women-only farming groups. Consequently, as entrepreneurs, women can actively influence the

strategic decision-making requirements necessary for the agriculture sector to become more climate-resilient," says the country's Chief Sustainable Development and Environment Officer, Annette Rattigan-Leo.

Experts such as Aina-Maria Iteta, head of Monitoring and Evaluation Unit at the Environmental Investment Fund in Namibia, are quick to point out that even though the review finds considerable progress towards gender representation in policies, plans and strategies, additional financial and technical support is needed.

"There is a gap in the budgeting of climate action on gender, overall. Gender initiatives or actions are always planned and funded on an ad hoc basis making it difficult to ensure this goal of gender mainstreaming in climate action is achieved," Iteta says. "The Commonwealth can facilitate access to financing gender climate-action initiatives."

"Capacity-building specific to strategic gender budget approaches is an area that can benefit from the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub's expertise. With the country's existing financial constraints, especially in the face of Covid-19 related recovery efforts, it would help to determine the best entry points," Rattigan-Leo says.

For local farmers such as Wangari, the help cannot come soon enough because they continue to struggle to survive and provide for their families on the front lines of climate change.

"If we do not tackle climate change with sufficient urgency and success, those on the wrong end of inequalities, especially women, will bear the hardest burden," Secretary-General Scotland concluded.

50 YEARS OF BANGLADESH

# The path to development is riddled with challenges



SELIM RAIHAN

Dr Selim Raihan is a professor of economics at Dhaka University, and Executive Director at South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM). Email: selim.raihan@gmail.com

**A**S we continue to celebrate 50 years of Bangladesh's independence, there is a need for an elaborate discussion about the development challenges we are about to face in the days to come. Bangladesh's development challenges are associated with its larger development goals. The country aims to become an upper-middle-income country by 2031 and a high-income one by 2041. Also, there are still development targets to be achieved by 2030 under the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

If we look back at the past 50 years, Bangladesh has achieved huge progress after coming out of a devastating war in 1971. The country made a significant improvement in per capita GDP from a small base in 1971. Its economic growth performance over the last three decades has been particularly impressive. Bangladesh graduated from the low-income category (as per the classification of World Bank) to the lower-middle-income category in 2015, and is set to graduate from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category by 2026. The remarkable success achieved in RMG production and exports has made the country the second-largest RMG exporter in the world.

There have also been notable improvements in some social indicators. Both maternal and child mortality rates have declined substantially, while life expectancy at birth has increased dramatically. The country achieved universal gross enrolment in primary education. Also, there has been some notable progress in gender parity and women's empowerment. However, given its weak performance in terms of formal institutional capabilities (both economic and political), Bangladesh's achievements so far have prompted many to argue whether Bangladesh was an outlier in the development experience. Some recent political economy analyses, however, indicate that while Bangladesh did act like an outlier in terms of progress in some social indicators, things were different in case of its economic performance.

From the past experiences of development in Bangladesh, we can highlight four areas/lessons that will have an important bearing on the future: (i) the supremacy of pockets of functional informal institutions over weak formal institutions; (ii) the supremacy of a "deals environment" over a coordinated industrial policy; (iii) the challenges of effective regulation; and (iv) the challenges of state capacity.

Against an overall distressing picture of the formal institutions, Bangladesh has been successful in creating some pockets of functional informal institutions. Examples of such pockets include the well-functioning privileges and special arrangements made for the RMG sector, promotion of labour exports, agricultural research and development related to food security, and microfinance. The fundamental question, however, remains whether

Bangladesh will be able to achieve its larger development goals with the weaker formal institutions.

Informal institutions can have two distinct roles in various stages of development. If a country can steer informal institutions to make them growth-enhancing at an early stage of development, it can achieve strong economic growth and also some

A recent political economy analysis suggests that this "deals environment", rather than any coordinated industrial policy, has been a major feature of Bangladesh's development process. Such an environment is discriminatory and does not allow diversification of the economy. Though the "deals" involving RMG exports resulted in positive outcomes, many other sectors remained

in the banking sector or ad-hoc use of Statutory Regulatory Orders (SROs) in taxation and their misallocation, social damage and lost lives in Rana Plaza-like accidents, and rising inequality, with the culture of violating rules disproportionately benefitting the wealthy and harming the poor.

The economic costs of these violations of rules may be significant, despite how



improvements in the social sector. However, for the transition from a lower stage of development to a higher stage, whether the country can maintain a high growth rate and achieve further development goals depends on the dynamics of how informal institutions evolve and whether formal institutions become stronger and functional. Not many developing countries have been able to make this transition. Certainly, East Asian and most Southeast Asian countries are success stories in terms of using informal institutions efficiently at an early stage of development, as well as achieving some notable successes in the transition to functional formal institutions. Bangladesh's progress in developing formal institutions over the years has, unfortunately, remained weak, and this will certainly act as a binding constraint to its development process in the days to come.

Under the "deals environment" mentioned above, its industrial or—more broadly—development strategies, as well as significant investment or resource allocation choices, are frequently an outcome of agreements or "deals" made between the political and business elites. These arrangements are for specific activities or programmes that are decided on an ad hoc basis, rather than following a well-defined overall strategy.

**Now that Bangladesh has reached the mature age of fifty, one expects a serious undertaking guided by well-thought-out plans to get rid of its development challenges.**

PHOTO: STAR

**Effective regulatory reforms in critical economic domains like the financial and taxation sectors will be extremely important in the coming days.**

excluded and have not benefitted from the "deals environment".

Bangladesh needs to pursue a coordinated industrial policy that is inextricably linked to the government's other policy instruments, such as the macroeconomic policy (e.g. the real exchange rate), public infrastructure, and SEZ management. Transparency and accountability regarding the implications of these policies for industrial development are also hugely important. There is a need to make a substantial improvement in the general business climate too.

The challenge that the government faces in regulating certain key activities to achieve more efficiency and equity in the economy is referred to as the "problem of effective regulation". In some cases, the legal framework for such regulation is an issue, which may be antiquated or otherwise inadequate for the goals pursued, and in which reform attempts have continually failed. In other cases, a framework may exist but there is simply not enough capacity to put it into action. The banking system's weaknesses, the difficulties to ensure ideal labour conditions in a crucial sector like RMG, or the poor performance of taxation are some of the examples of the latter case. The result is a waste of resources, such as excessive non-performing loans

difficult it is to assess them. Effective regulatory reforms in critical economic domains like the financial and taxation sectors will be extremely important in the coming days.

The challenges of state capacity are manifested in a variety of ways in which Bangladesh has to make a substantial improvement to achieve its larger development goals. Some of these challenges are obvious, such as a lack of public resources (e.g. low level of domestic resource mobilisation through taxation), resulting in limited provisions and low quality of public goods (e.g. very low level of public spending on health, education and social protection), a lack of public service capabilities, or lack of efficiency in the administrative structure. Other challenges are less obvious, such as corruption in most administrative clusters, which makes public service delivery inefficient and inequitable, cuts revenues, and discourages economic projects. The capacity of the state to implement its mega projects in a cost-effective and timely manner also remains a big challenge.

Now that Bangladesh has reached the mature age of fifty, one expects a serious undertaking based on lessons learnt from the past and guided by well-thought-out plans to get rid of these challenges.

QUOTABLE Quote



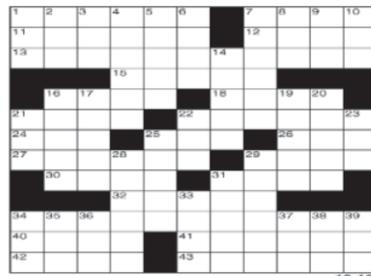
ALICE WALKER

American author (born February 9, 1944)

**The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.**

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- |                         |                     |                        |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>           | 32 Harp's ancestors | 16 Brown shade         |
| 1 Taunts                | 34 Post office      | 17 Spanish snacks      |
| 2 Chess win             | 11 "1984" author    | 19 Snowy bird          |
| 12 Sleep like _         | 40 Wheel connector  | 20 Puts on             |
| 13 Bromantic activity   | 41 Broad street     | 21 Naughty             |
| 15 Outlet output        | 42 Fuse together    | 22 Zodiac sign         |
| 16 Hearty dish          | 43 Feel empathy     | 23 Ready to go         |
| 18 Look upon            | <b>DOWN</b>         | 25 Theater productions |
| 21 Abacus piece         | 1 Male cat          | 28 Charged             |
| 22 Pigeon perches       | 2 Historic time     | 29 Soft color          |
| 24 Phone download       | 3 Cobbler's tool    | 31 Audacity            |
| 25 For each             | 4 Oozed             | 33 Lion sound          |
| 26 "Norma _"            | 5 Macaroni shape    | 34 Gullet              |
| 27 The Cisco            | 6 Lethargic         | 35 Woodsman's tool     |
| Kid's horse             | 7 Spain's capital   | 36 Sick                |
| 29 Sassy                | 8 Boxing great      | 37 " _ pig's eye!"     |
| 30 Tibet setting        | 9 Great weight      | 38 Cashew or pecan     |
| 31 D.C. team, for short | 10 Nest item        | 39 "My word!"          |
|                         | 14 "Forget it!"     |                        |



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



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

# Oxygen therapy saves life MAY TAKE LIFE AS WELL

PROF M KARIM KHAN

Oxygen is a drug, and it is being used regularly to treat patients everywhere. In general, any patient comes with Acute Asthma, Respiratory distress, Heart failure, Severe pneumonia, Bronchiolitis, Myocardial infarction, Diabetic ketoacidosis, Status Epilepsy, acute poisoning etc., we first give oxygen



**We all became familiar with the pulse oximeter and its use. With this simple instrument, we can measure our oxygen saturation instantly.**

therapy by cannula or mask and it helps a lot to the patients to make their breath easier and spontaneously they feel better.

During the last COVID-19 episode, we learned the value of oxygen. Unfortunately, there was a crisis of oxygen worldwide in the COVID-19 pandemic situation. In Bangladesh, India and elsewhere, many COVID-19 patients died because of oxygen scarcity.

The air we breathe is about 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen and 1% other gases, including carbon dioxide. But the concentration of medical oxygen in a cylinder is around 95-99%. So, while giving oxygen by cannula or mask, it mix-up with air and attention comes down to about 95-96%. Oxygen can be given to a patient by cannula, mask, headbox, high flow nasal cannula and by the

ventilator.

Every drug has some toxicity and oxygen therapy also has much toxicity if not given properly. If oxygen is provided for a prolonged time in a high concentration may damage the lungs, retina, may produce encephalopathy and subsequently affect other organs like the liver, kidney, heart etc. and eventually may lead to death. It may cause alveolar damage,

collapse of lungs and breathing difficulty in the lungs. There may be retinal detachment, especially in preterm low birth weight newborns may cause blindness, which we call Retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). There may be convulsion and impaired consciousness in the central nervous system affection. There may be hemolysis, acute kidney injury and hepatocellular damage. Sometimes the death may occur. So, oxygen saves a life, but indiscriminate use may cause death.

We all became familiar with the pulse oximeter and its use. With this simple instrument, we can measure our oxygen saturation instantly. The normal value is 90-100. But less than 90 indicates there is less oxygen in the blood, so oxygen is to be given. It can also be measured by arterial blood gas analysis, usually done in ICU patients. So to avoid oxygen toxicity, oxygen is to be delivered, in the right amount, in the right indication and in the right duration in the right way by the right person.

Be happy and healthy now and always.

The author is a Professor of Paediatrics at Community Based Medical College (CBMC), Mymensingh.  
E-mail: mmukhkan@gmail.com

## Don't forget leprosy

The Coronavirus pandemic's social and economic disruptions have been especially hard on leprosy patients and their families, many of whom were already vulnerable. Government-imposed restrictions have hampered their access to treatment and care, deprived them of employment possibilities, and aggravated the already dire conditions in their neglected areas.

In August 2021, a campaign named "Don't forget leprosy" was started. The campaign attempts to put leprosy in the spotlight during the COVID-19 outbreak and not ignore the disease's victims. The World Health Organisation (WHO) reported in September 2021 that new cases fell 37% from the previous year. However, the pandemic has interrupted leprosy control



methods in several nations, including case detection and treatment. These programmes must continue since delays in detection and treatment might cause irreparable physical disability. That is why it is crucial seeking government and medical assistance for the "Don't forget leprosy" campaign.

Leprosy is an infectious illness caused by the bacteria *M. leprae*. But, even if exposed to leprosy bacilli, most people will not get the illness. What makes leprosy so challenging is the prejudice that comes with it. If we can tackle the leprosy discrimination issue, we can solve all human rights issues globally.

## What can ginger really do for you?

Ginger has many health benefits if taken regularly once. The following are the advantage of having ginger regularly:

1. Fights germs - Certain chemical compounds in fresh ginger help halt the growth of bacteria like *E. coli* and shigella.
2. Active compounds in ginger keep oral bacteria from growing.
3. Ginger may work by breaking up and getting rid of built-up gas in your intestines and calms nausea.
4. Ginger may tame muscle soreness over time.
5. Ginger is an anti-inflammatory, which means it reduces swelling especially for rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis.
6. Bioactive molecules in ginger may slow down the growth of some cancers.
7. Ginger may help your body use insulin better and could help improve blood sugar levels.
8. Ginger helps to ease period cycle in women.
9. A daily dose of ginger may help battle your "bad" or LDL cholesterol levels.
10. Ginger is loaded with antioxidants; it promotes healthy ageing.
11. Ginger before meals may relieve indigestion.  
It is better to be healthy in a natural way.



### HEALTH BULLETIN

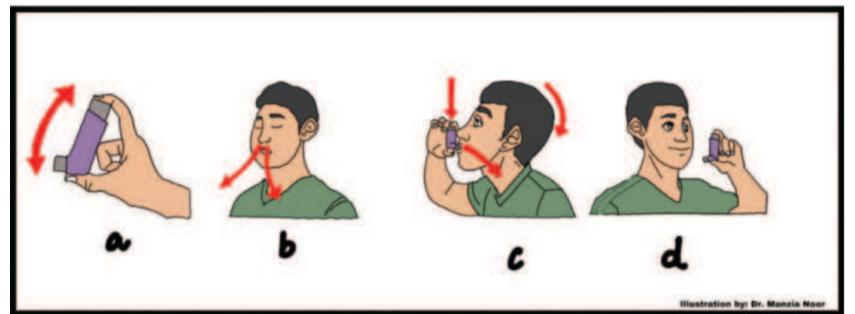
## Global dementia cases set to triple by 2050

The first comprehensive analysis published in The Lancet forecasts dementia prevalence in 195 countries and territories and examines the impact of expected trends in exposure to four important risk factors - smoking, obesity, high blood sugar, and low education.

By 2050, 153 million people are expected to be living with dementia worldwide, up from 57 million in 2019, largely due to population growth and population ageing. Dementia cases will rise in every country, with the smallest estimated increases in the high-income Asia Pacific (53%) and western Europe (74%), and the largest growth in north Africa and the Middle East (367%) and eastern sub-Saharan Africa (357%).

However, experts project that improved access to education could lead to 6 million fewer cases of dementia worldwide by 2050. But they caution that this decrease would be offset by a projected 7 million additional dementia cases linked to projected rates of obesity, high blood sugar, and smoking.

Authors call for more aggressive prevention efforts to reduce dementia risk through lifestyle factors, such as education, diet, and exercise, and by expanding much-needed health and social care resources.



## Optimise your inhaler technique this winter

DR MANZIA NOOR

Winter can be particularly difficult for asthma patients. Cold air might cause your airways to narrow causing shortness of breath and chest tightness. Refresh your memory on how to use your asthma inhalers properly to get rapid and substantial relief, by the following steps:

1. Priming your inhaler: This is only done when you first use a new inhaler or have not used it in a while (the duration could vary from 3 days to 28 days according to the brand of inhaler). The priming instructions vary by inhaler type. So, read the instructions on the information booklet that came with your inhaler. Priming is done by shaking the inhaler and spraying it into the air away from your face a few times.
2. Stand up or sit straight. This allows your lungs to fully breathe in and out.
3. Remove the protective cap from the mouth piece.
4. Hold the inhaler with your thumb at the base and index finger on the canister. (a)
5. Shake the inhaler in the upwards and downwards direction. This facilitates the drug to mix well with

the propellant present inside the canister. (a)

6. Breathe out fully. This will create more space in the lungs for the next breath in to allow longer inhalation of the drug. (b)
  7. Place the mouthpiece in your mouth between your teeth and above your tongue and seal your lips tightly around it to ensure no medication escape into the air. (c)
  8. Incline your head backwards. This will minimise the deposition of the drug at the back of your mouth and throat. (c)
  9. Begin a slow deep inhalation and simultaneously push down the canister while you continue to inhale. (c)
  10. Remove the inhaler from your mouth carefully. (d)
  11. Hold your breath for 10 seconds or as long as it is comfortable. (d)
  12. Breathe out gently. (d)
  13. If you are instructed to take another puff, repeat the process again after 30 to 60 seconds. Do not forget to shake the inhaler before every puff.
- Now that you mastered the technique, you can go on to help others optimise their inhaler use.

Dr Manzia Noor works at Comilla Medical College. E-mail: manzianoor95@gmail.com

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## Kohli now quits Test captaincy

AFP, New Delhi

India's Virat Kohli announced Saturday he was stepping down as Test captain, a day after his side lost a three-match series to South Africa.

"Everything has to come to a halt at some stage and for me as Test captain of India, it's now," he posted on Twitter after seven years in the high-pressure position.

The 33-year-old Kohli, who quit as Twenty20 skipper after a debacle at the World Cup and then lost the one-day job, took over the India leadership across formats from MS Dhoni in 2017.

"There have been many ups and also some downs along the journey, but never has there been a lack of effort or lack of belief," Kohli said. "I have always believed in giving my 120 percent in everything I do, and if I can't do that, I know it's not the right thing to do."



Bangladesh Test captain Mominul Haque leads the team out of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Saturday evening after arriving from New Zealand where they drew the two-match Test series 1-1 following a historic first-ever win in the country. The skipper, while speaking to reporters, stressed on the importance of continuous improvement, both at home and abroad.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'Work on RCA to begin shortly'

SPORTS REPORTER

from Sylhet

The formation of regional cricket associations (RCA) has been an unfulfilled promise in Nazmul Hassan's last two terms as Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president.

While talking to reporters at Sylhet Cricket Stadium yesterday, BCB director Shaiful Alam Chowdhury Nadel informed that work on the formation of RCAs will begin shortly following an extraordinary general meeting (EGM). "We tried the RCA with the last two terms of the board. Unfortunately, it has not been very effective. The amendments have been made to BCB's constitution which will be approved in the EGM. "We're hoping that in the next month or the month after that, we will hold an EGM and officially begin activities for enacting the RCA this year through the amendments made in the constitution," Nadel said.

## Wickets confound in BCL

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

Central Zone completed a double at South Zone's expense as yesterday's Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) final played out in similar manner to a majority of matches since the one-day version of the tournament began on January 9.

Central Zone had clinched the title in the four-day version of the BCL in Mirpur on January 6 against the same opposition and secured a second trophy with a six-wicket win at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Wickets in Sylhet are known for producing run-fests but -- barring the one game where Central Zone put up 262 for five against North Zone at the Sylhet Academy ground -- the scores were average and batters failed to make hay.

On a slightly hazy morning, Central Zone elected to field after winning the toss but South Zone openers Pinak Ghosh (35) and Anamul Haque (20) put together a 51-run stand. Then the spinners and medium pacers once again came to the fore as Nazmul Islam, Mosaddek Hossain, Hasan Murad and Soumya Sarkar dictated proceedings with two wickets each. Eventually, South Zone were bowled out for just 163.

Central openers got their team off to a solid start as Soumya and Mizanur Rahman strung together a 65-run stand before South Zone's spinners pulled things back. Soumya departed to Nasum after a 25-ball 21 before spinner Mahedi Hasan sent back Abdul Mazid for 1. Nasum then scalped



both Mohammad Mithun (4) and set opener Mizanur (39) to set up a tense finale.

However, Skipper Mosaddek's 33 and Mohammad Al Amin's 53 during an unbroken 88-run stand saw Central celebrate another title in the space of days.

While the tournament's competitiveness was applauded on many fronts, the lack of runs did not amuse batters. "How can one time shots if the ball does not arrive? It's hard to get any pace on it if it comes on slow," a batter claimed after one of the matches.

There was some movement for seamers due to the conditions but how the surfaces played, with batters failing to judge the pace and uneven bounce against spinners and medium pace, made run-scoring difficult. "Yesterday, we thought this would be a

high-scoring affair with around 250 runs on the board. Sometime there can be low scores because it's a final but the wicket could have been better," opined Central Zone skipper Mosaddek, who stated after their last league match that it was difficult to hone one's skill for shorter formats on these wickets.

However, it was difficult to find any information on the technicalities of making wickets in Sylhet.

Upon several requests from this reporter to talk to the curator, no permission was given from the board. While the tournament had its ups and downs for cricketers involved, the mystifying nature of why wickets do not behave the way they should continue to bubble in Bangladesh cricket.

## Young Tigers begin title defence

SPORTS REPORTER

With an aim of retaining the title, defending champions Bangladesh take on England in their opening game of the ICC Under-19 World Cup at the Warner Park, Basseterre in the West Indies today.

Bangladesh, placed in group A, will also face Canada and the United Arab Emirates in their next two group games scheduled to take place on January 20 and 22 respectively.

The expectations from this lot remain sky-high after the previous batch brought Bangladesh its first World Cup with the Akbar Ali-led side beating India in the final to re-write history.

Rakibul Hasan, who was a member of that World Cup-winning team, will be leading the young Tigers this time around. The likes of Tanzim Hasan Sakib and Prantik Nawrose Nabil, playing in this tournament, were also part of the previous squad. Preparation-wise, the current squad lag behind as the previous batch of the young Tigers had played more than 30 matches as the lead-up to the 2020 edition of the World Cup.

But, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the game development committee was unable to arrange as many matches ahead of the upcoming Under-19 World Cup as Bangladesh played just 12 games, managing wins in just three of those, before they headed to the Caribbean.

Bangladesh were thrashed 5-0 by Sri Lanka in a series in October last year which forced the selectors to include experienced Rakibul and Tanzim in the side. After that, the young Tigers won a triangular series in India and also reached the semifinal of the ACC Asia Cup in December last year. Bangladesh also registered a comprehensive 155-run win against Zimbabwe in only the official warm-up game prior to the World Cup.

Middle-order batter Aich Mollah will be the player to watch in the Tigers' batting department. He scored a run-a-ball 82 against Zimbabwe in the warm-up game. The likes of Ariful Islam, Mahjiful Islam and Prantik are also expected to play key roles with the bat for the title defenders.

Bangladesh's strength, however, lies in their bowling department with the presence of experienced left-arm spinner Rakibul and seamer Tanzim. Another left-arm spinner, Naimur Rohoman will also boost the bowling attack. He picked 18 wickets in eleven games at an average of just below 20 while also bagging a five-wicket haul.

The World Cup-winning squad in the previous edition provided the Bangladesh national side with a few talents and it is expected that the country will get a few more future stars from this lot of young cricketers.



Australia got things underway with a six-wicket win over West Indies in the ICC U-19 World Cup in Providence on Friday.

PHOTO: ICC

## All to play for as Djokovic returns to detention

REUTERS, Melbourne

Clinging to his dream of winning a record 21st major title at the Australian Open, tennis world number one Novak Djokovic returned to an all too familiar immigration detention hotel on Saturday, waiting for a court to decide if he should be deported.

Djokovic arrived at Melbourne's Park Hotel around 3:30 pm, according to a Reuters witness. It is the same immigration detention hotel where the unvaccinated Serbian superstar was held last week over visa problems related to a COVID-19 medical exemption.

About a dozen refugee activists chanted "stop the torture ... let them out" as Djokovic and Border Force guards drove into the underground garage of the hotel, which is also being used to hold 33 asylum seekers and travellers in COVID-19 quarantine.

A man cycling past the hotel shouted: "Go home, Novak!"

A Border Force spokesperson confirmed that Djokovic has been detained.

The saga that has dominated headlines worldwide for the past week could climax on Sunday, when a Federal Court convenes to hear the 34-year-old's appeal against the Australian government's second attempt to boot him out.

The tournament, which Djokovic has won nine times previously, starts on Monday.

Djokovic's leading rivals have become increasingly impatient with the uncertainty

hanging over the draw and the cloud hanging over their sport.

"Honestly I'm little bit tired of the situation because I just believe that it's important to talk about our sport, about tennis," Spaniard Rafa Nadal, who is tied on 20 major titles with Djokovic, told reporters at Melbourne Park, where the event will be played.

German Alexander Zverev, the world number three, said Djokovic had been treated unfairly and that the Serb might have been used as a political pawn by Australian authorities, something Canberra has denied. "This is obviously not a nice thing for everyone, for him especially. But don't question his legacy because of this," Zverev said.

A Croatian tennis coach, who was among a handful of visitors granted a medical exemption for the Australian Open, told The Australian newspaper he had to leave the country because Djokovic had become a political target.

Djokovic, who is scheduled to play fellow Serb Miomir Kecmanovi in the first round of the Open, is hunting a record-breaking 21st Grand Slam title. He could still withdraw and leave Australia of his own accord rather than suffer the humiliation of being deported.

"Australian Open is much more important than any player," said Nadal, whom Djokovic considers his greatest rival. "If he's playing finally, OK. If he's not playing, Australian Open will be great ... with or without him."



Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne (C) sets off to celebrate his decisive goal against title-rivals Chelsea in a top-of-the-table clash of the Premier League at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester on Saturday. The victory took Pep Guardiola's charges to 56 points, 13 clear of their London rivals.

PHOTO: AFP

## Mercury may drop over the next two days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The temperature at night may fall further in the next two days, said a government weather bulletin.

Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) yesterday came up with the weather forecast in its two-day weather outlook.

The bulletin was released at 6:00pm last evening.

The bulletin said, "Night temperature may fall by one to three degrees Celsius and day temperature may rise by one to two degrees Celsius over the country."

"Weather may remain mainly dry with the temporary partly cloudy sky over the country."

The bulletin also said, "Moderate to thick fog may occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere over the country during midnight to morning."

Yesterday's lowest temperature was recorded at 8.9 degrees Celsius at Tetulia in Panchagarh.



A bus carrying passengers at full capacity, ignoring the government's January 10 directive for all public transport to operate at half capacity. Most of the buses in the capital violated the restriction yesterday -- the first day of the order coming into effect. The photo was taken in front of the National Press Club.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

# Follow curbs or brace for a disaster

## Warns health minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, MANIKGANJ

There has been an alarming rise in Covid-19 transmission and the situation will be disastrous if the government's 11-point restriction is not followed, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

"The government is not imposing a lockdown as it causes the country to suffer," he said while inaugurating a CT-scan machine and a dialysis unit at Manikganj Sadar Hospital yesterday.

He made the comment a day after Covid cases crossed the 4,000-mark -- the highest since August 26 last year.

According to the health officials, the latest spike is caused by the highly-transmissible Omicron variant.

Health guidelines are not being observed properly in many places, including the Dhaka International Trade Fair, Maleque said, adding, "This is a matter of concern... There is no substitute for wearing masks. We have to wear masks if we want to avoid contracting the disease."

Urging everyone to get vaccinated, he said, "Everyone needs to be inoculated. We have no shortage of vaccines, and around 14.25 crore people, including 70 lakh schoolchildren, have already been jabbed."

The government directives, in effect from last Thursday, include: People must wear masks at all public places, including at shops, shopping malls and restaurants; vaccination certificates must be shown at restaurants or hotels; trains, buses and launches must operate at half-capacity; and all kinds of social, political, religious gatherings and rallies will remain suspended till further notice.

# Buses disobey govt order

## Rail complies with the instruction to ply at half capacity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bus operators blatantly ignored the government directive to operate at half capacity yesterday -- the first day of the order coming into effect.

Many buses in the capital were seen with standing passengers, while most of the staffers disregarded health rules, including the directive to wear masks inside public transport.

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) buses were also seen plying with standing passengers -- clearly violating government restrictions.

Although transport operators said they were operating buses at full capacity after "getting verbal directives" from the authorities concerned, no such order was issued till last night.

Launch operators operated as usual, meaning the cabinet division's directives on half-capacity operation has not yet been enforced in the water transport sector as well.

Only Bangladesh Railway (BR), the state-run transport agency, yesterday started carrying passengers at half capacity and tried to maintain health safety guidelines inside the trains.

On January 10, 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 (BRTA) demanded that the government change its decision and allow them to operate at full capacity.

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

But Dhaka Road Transport Owners' Association on Thursday told its members to operate their

vehicles at full capacity, saying the ministry concerned has "verbally" informed them that the government would allow it.

Bangladesh Bus Truck Owners' Association, another major association of bus owners who operate on inter-district routes, also informed its members to operate their vehicles at full capacity.

"Inter-district buses plied at full capacity... Enforcing half capacity operation for public transports while keeping everything [businesses and workplaces] open will create havoc," a top leader of the association told The Daily Star yesterday.

Speaking to this correspondent, a BRTC bus staffer said, "The government had earlier issued a directive to carry passenger of half capacity but that was not approved later. So, we are carrying passengers as usual."

BRTC Chairman Tazul Islam could not be reached over phone for comments.

Khandaker Enayet Ullah, general secretary of Dhaka Road Transport Owners' Association, said they have operated buses with full capacity following a "verbal decision" of the ministry concerned.

About standing passengers and violations of health safety guidelines, he said BRTA mobile courts are supposed to take action against the those who violate the rules.

Meanwhile, BIWTA has not fixed any date from when launch owners would start following the restrictions and instead wrote to the shipping ministry to change the decision of operating at half capacity.

"Launches were operating as usual. We have given priority to maintaining health safety guidelines," Zainal Abedin, joint director of BIWTA at Sadarghat said.

## ROHINGYA GENOCIDE CASE

# Hearings to start from Feb 21 at World Court

REUTERS, DAKAR/THE HAGUE

Representatives of Myanmar's junta are expected to challenge the jurisdiction of the World Court to hear allegations the country committed genocide against its Rohingya minority in a fresh round of hearings from Feb 21, the attorney general of Gambia, which brought the case, told Reuters on Friday.

"A hybrid hearing (is) set to commence on the 21st of February, 2022," Gambian Attorney General Dawda Jallow said.

He added that Aung San Suu Kyi, who led Myanmar's defence at the first public hearings in 2019 but has since been deposed by the military, had been formally replaced as its top representative in the case.

A hybrid hearing is a procedure where some of the participants are present in person and others participate online due to Covid-19 measures.

More than 730,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar after a military-led crackdown in 2017, and were forced into camps across the border in Bangladesh. UN investigators concluded that the military campaign had been executed with "genocidal intent".

Since the February 1 coup last year, the military government has been fighting for international recognition and could be eager for the opportunity to show themselves as Myanmar's legitimate representatives at the UN's top court.

The next step in ICJ proceedings is Myanmar's challenge to the jurisdiction of the court.

## DU TEACHER MURDER

# Key accused placed on a 3-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, GAZIPUR

A Gazipur court yesterday placed the key accused on a three-day remand in the Sayeda Ghaffar Khaleque murder case.

Gazipur Metropolitan Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Mehedi Pavel Sweet passed the order.

Accused Anwarul Islam, 25, was an assistant mason who worked at the under-construction building owned by the victim in Gazipur.

Fahim Azad, assistant commissioner (prosecution) of Gazipur Metropolitan Police, said police produced Anwarul before the court seeking a 10-day remand for him. "After a hearing, the court placed him on a three-day remand."

Sayeda Ghaffar was a professor of Dhaka University's Institute of Nutrition and Food Science. She retired in 2016. Her husband Kibria Ul Khaleque was also a DU teacher.

Contacted, the victim's son Sayed Ifthekhar Bin Jahir said, "Construction work of our new building was going on at the Dhaka University Teachers' Housing Project in Kashimpur and my mother used to live in a rented home nearby to look after it."

"She went missing on the evening January 12 [Wednesday]. That night, we filed a general diary with Kashimpur Police Station."

On Friday morning, police arrested Anwarul, 25, from Gaibandha.

"As per Anwarul's confessional statement,

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# Facebook faces \$3.2b UK class action over market dominance

REUTERS, LONDON

Social media giant Facebook, now known as Meta Platforms, faces a 2.3 billion pound plus (\$3.2 billion plus) class action in Britain over allegations it abused its market dominance by exploiting the personal data of 44 million users.

Liza Lovdahl Gormsen, a senior adviser to Britain's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) watchdog and a competition law academic, said she was bringing the case on behalf of people in Britain who had used Facebook between 2015 and 2019.

The lawsuit, which will be heard by London's Competition Appeal Tribunal, alleges Facebook made billions of pounds by imposing unfair terms and conditions that demanded consumers surrender valuable personal data to access the network.

Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, the law firm representing Lovdahl Gormsen, has

notified Facebook of the claim.

Facebook said people used its services because it delivered value for them and "they have meaningful control of what information they share on Meta's platforms and who with."

"In the 17 years since it was created, Facebook became the sole social network in the UK where you could be sure to connect with friends and family in one place," Lovdahl Gormsen said.

"Yet, there was a dark side to Facebook; it abused its market dominance to impose unfair terms and conditions on ordinary Britons, giving it the power to exploit their personal data."

Lovdahl Gormsen alleges Facebook collected data within its platform and through mechanisms like the Facebook Pixel, allowing it to build an "all-seeing picture" of Internet usage and generate valuable, deep data profiles of users.



The construction work for Dhaka's first elevated expressway continues in full swing as the authorities concerned aim to deliver a portion of the project, from the airport to Tejgaon, by December 2022. The photo was taken in Banani recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ