Flood ravages on, claims 14 lives in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Dinajpur

In **Dinajpur**, at least five people including two children were killed in Nawabganj, Biral and Birganj upazila, police said.

Md Amanullah, 10, son of Ramzan Ali, and Amir Hamza, 5, son of Dabirul Islam, of Birganj upazila, Motiur Rahman, 60, and Jonab Ali, 65, of Nawabganj upazila, said Subrata Sarker and Abu Akkas, officers-in-charge of Birganj and Nawabganj police station.

Amanullah, Amir and Motiur drowned in water while Jonab Ali killed in wall collapse due to flood, they said.

Meanwhile, villagers recovered body of a 5-year-old girl, whose identity could not be known, in Biral upazila, said Mir Khairul Alam, deputy commissioner in Dinajpur.

Besides, Jahangir Islam, 38, in Birganj upazila remained missing since Sunday night.

# Flood worsens in Kurigram, Nilphamari districts

The flood situation is getting worse in Kurigram and Nilphamari as the Brahmaputra, Dharla and Teesta rivers are flowing above the danger level, while it has remained unchanged in Lalmonirhat.

In Kurigram, the situation has worsened as the water level of the Brahmaputra and Dharla rivers is rising and inundating more areas.

Around 55 thousand people of over 200 char areas in 30 unions under seven upazilas of the district were marooned as the low-lying char areas of the Brahmaputra and the Dharla rivers got flooded due to downpour and onrush of water from upstream for the last three days.

# Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: Return to start in two months

## Bangladesh and Myanmar have reached an arrangement to begin in two months the repatriation of the Rohingyas who have fled to Bangladesh from Rakhine State over the last one year to escape persecution.

“The return shall commence within two months,” Bangladesh foreign ministry said in a statement issued hours after the signing of an “arrangement” yesterday on the repatriation of the refugees sheltered in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and Myanmar Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe signed the instrument at the State Counsellor's Office in Naypyitaw.

Later, Mahmood told reporters that this is the “first step”. He, however, didn't mention any timeframe for concluding the repatriation.

# Health security should be our first priority

In 1988, being extremely poor and thanks to the poor state of the health sector in the country, my mother died due to maternal health related complication. Till date, I am pained by this loss every waking moment of the day. However, my mother's story is not a unique one. Over the years, thousands of women have died in Bangladesh due to maternal health related causes because of a lack of medical facilities. In fact according to a report published in The Daily Star on May 17, 2012, around “20 mothers die each day” in the country while giving birth.

Estimates based on these figures suggest that each year, 7,300 mothers die while giving birth, which translates into roughly 3,06,600 maternal deaths from 1971-2013. Actual figures are probably higher because maternal mortality rates were higher in the early years but often went unreported.

With regard to child death rate, according to a report published by Save the Children titled “Ending New born Deaths” (2014), 90,000 babies die during childbirth or within 24 hours of their birth every year in Bangladesh due to the absence of trained midwives. Moreover, as an editorial published in daily on April 16, 2017, suggests diarrhoea kills 45,000 children annually in Bangladesh. It is also worth noting that another editorial published in this daily (March 8, 2017) contends pollution, and its many manifestations, is responsible for the death of around 280,000 children in Bangladesh annually, which could be avoided or the number drastically reduced if we had only chosen to act decisively at the right time. This picture, in fact, shows us the poor state of health security in the country which merits serious attention.

# Rohingya crisis: South Korea urges international community to help Bangladesh

# Education policy: Challenges of implementation

# Revisiting position of women in Bangladesh

# The discussion on women, women education and women empowerment in Bangladesh are not new, rather these are much voiced issues. Still the concern remains where we are heading in regard to these socio-legal issues. Starting with the issue of education, we can simply put that education is the first and foremost factor of any change in the family, society or the country. As women constitute more or less 50% of the total populace of Bangladesh, women education is much crucial to bring positive and real changes in the country. Though governments of Bangladesh took many initiatives to bring women education into play by the ways of stipends and various projects and Bangladesh has good parchment-record of escalating women education rate, still we are not well-developed in our faculty regarding education and empowerment of women. We can recall the words of Napoleon, 'Give me an educated mother; I will give you an educated nation'. Without proper women education, the dream of Bangladesh as a proper and prosperous country will never be materialised. The question may come forward; women education rate is good then what is the next step? The matter of concern is that still we impose our ideas, dreams, notions on women that what they should learn and to what extent. Still women education is popped-up as a good marriage point. How good your degrees are, how well-off husband you will get. Ridiculous indeed! If we dare to observe meticulously, we can see that a sustainable women education pays off fully in regard to the social devoir and irrespective of marital status-single or married.  Even if she is single, she can contribute a lot to the furtherance of the society and country. She can enlighten her surroundings; she can serve the society by bringing positive change. When an educated woman gets married, she may face a lot of challenge in the new circumstances where her education may become a vital point of own survival and moving on. If she becomes a mother, she can raise her children more properly than not educated or poorly educated women. In this modern age, where giving birth of a female child is still a challenge in many male-preferred families, the education of the mother can give her inner strength to face the undesired family odds to save the life and dignity of her female child. In upbringing children, a properly educated mother does not discriminate and does not allow others to discriminate among her male and female children as she knows all are equal and need to be properly guided as these children will be grown-up to be adult and they will reflect to the society what they learn from their family.

# Bangladesh medical camp serving Rohingya refugees

**Border Guard Bangladesh has set up a medical camp to extend support to the thousands of Rohingya refugees who have taken shelter in Naikhyangchhari of Bandarban fleeing persecution in Myanmar.**

The refugees have set up the makeshift tents near Tumbru canal for the last six days.

At least 200-300 Rohingya refugees have been seeking treatment daily at the medical camp which was set up two days back, reports our Chief Reporter Pinaki Roy from the spot.

# Open help desks on chikungunya

The health and family welfare ministry yesterday directed all medical colleges and public hospitals to open help desks to effectively tackle the already widespread chikungunya disease, transmitted to humans by infected mosquitoes.

Health Minister Mohammad Nasim gave the directive and Director General of Directorate General of Health Service (DGHS) Prof Dr Abul Kalam Azad conveyed it to all medical colleges and hospitals, says a press release.

The release adds initiatives have also been taken to set up, if necessary, a joint pain clinic at every hospital to mitigate sufferings of chikungunya patients. From the clinics, patients would be given physiotherapy or medicine, if needed. This service will be given at the medical colleges and hospitals at district and upazila levels, says the release issued by the ministry.

A control room on public health emergency operation centre [chikungunya disease control room] was launched on July 3 at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR). A workgroup has also been formed to work 24 hours a day under the IEDCR, informs the release.

A round-the-clock hotline for answering people and doctors on chikungunya has also been set up. The hotline numbers are 01937110011 and 01937000011.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Zahid Maleque has meanwhile claimed chikungunya has not spread in an epidemic form and is limited to Dhaka city.

"People outside Dhaka are not infected by chikungunya as of now… So, it has not reached epidemic proportions," he told a press conference at the conference room of the ministry yesterday.

# Against the odds, Bangladesh puts mothers at the forefront of medical practice

Ruby Akthar can still remember the agony of her first labour. Nestled away in one of Bangladesh’s many urban slums—aged just 20—a frightened Akthar attempted to deliver her first baby at home without medical assistance. But following hours of agony due to the baby being in a difficult position, she and a family member bundled into a taxi and crossed a stiflingly humid Dhaka to seek medical help from a NGO health centre. Now a proud mother Akthar smiles; thinking of her six year old daughter, but without medical assistance during the birth it is possible that neither mother nor daughter would be here today.

WHO estimates that in 2016, 830 women died everyday as a result of childbirth. In Bangladesh, the combination of high rates of poverty, poor access to medical resources, elevated cases of child marriage and deep-rooted attitudes towards gender roles means that in 2016, somewhere between 6,000 and 7,000 mothers died. But Bangladesh, one of the poorest and most densely populated countries in the world, is full of surprises.

A 2016 Unicef report claims that the nation has the second highest rate of child marriage in the world—in its rural areas 74 percent of young women are married before their 18th birthday. Early marriage puts young women’s health under immense risk. Premature and closely spaced multiple pregnancies increase the likelihood of uterine prolapse and obstetric fistula; a complication during birth which causes the reproductive organs, bladder and rectum to split, leaving women incontinent. This condition can potentially lead to abandonment from their husbands, ostracisation from their communities and if severe, death.

# Can Bangladesh eliminate extreme poverty

Bangladesh has set an ambitious target to eliminate extreme poverty by FY2031. The results of the latest Household Income and Expenditure Survey done in 2016 (HIES 2016) suggest that this is a feasible target but by no means assured.  HIES 2016 shows that moderate poverty (percent of population below the Upper Poverty Line or UPL) has fallen from 31.5 percent in 2010 to 24.3 percent in 2016, while extreme poverty (percent of population below the Lower Poverty Line or LPL) has declined from 17.6 percent to 12.9 percent over the same periods.

Research shows that several factors have contributed to continued progress with poverty reduction in Bangladesh including rapid economic growth, public spending on health, education, social protection and infrastructure, rapid inflow of external remittances and expansion of micro-credit programmes. Continued progress on these fronts will be important for further poverty reduction.

# Poor show in English does the damage

The results of this year's HSC examinations saw a significant fall in both the success rate and the number of highest achievers due to the introduction of a new evaluation method, students' poor performance in English and shocking performance of students of Comilla board.

The overall pass rate of Higher Secondary Certificate examinees under eight general education boards dropped by more than 5 percentage points to 66.84 percent. The number of students having achieved the highest grade -- GPA 5 -- also came down to 33,242 from last year's 48,950.

The combined pass rate under all the 10 education boards, including madrasa and technical boards, also declined to 68.91 percent from last year's 74.70 percent. Similarly, GPA-5 achievers under the 10 boards fell to 37,969 from last year's 58,276.

"There is nothing to be surprised.... We are getting the right assessment now, thanks to new evaluation method,” said Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid as he announced results at a crowded press conference at the ministry.

The method named "standardisation of answer scripts" was first introduced for Secondary School Certificate examinees this year. And subsequently, the results showed a significant fall in the pass rate.

# Beat the winter blues this January

## January can be a depressing time of the year after the fun and excitement of the holidays, and spring can still feel a long way off. Here we round up four ways to help you embrace the season for a happier and healthier start to the new year.

## Make the most of daylight

A lack of daylight can lead to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), also known as winter depression, which can affect many of us around the world experiencing shorter, darker days.

To help combat this depression try to get outdoors as much as possible to make the most of the daylight. Make an effort to get out of the office and take a walk at lunchtime or bundle up and head outdoors on the weekend. Just a few minutes of sunlight a day is also important for topping up levels of vitamin D, with sufficient levels previously linked to a reduced risk of colds and flu.