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Tk 5,000cr for workers' pay

PM announces for export-oriented industries; narrates govt measures to fight coronavirus in address to nation

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday announced a stimulus package of Tk 5,000 crore for the export-oriented industries to fight the adverse impact of coronavirus on the country's economy.

She said the money would be used for providing the salaries and wages of workers and employees.

Hasina was addressing the nation in the evening on the occasion of the Independence and National Day 2020.

State-owned Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television simultaneously broadcast her address. Private television channels and radio stations also aired the over 23-minute speech.

The PM said Bangladesh Bank has already taken some pro-business steps. The central bank would not declare any customer loan defaulter till June, she added.

She said the timeframe for realising export earnings has been increased to six months from two months. Likewise,



Don't panic, stay at home

Follow home quarantine rules

Abide by health instructions

the timeframe for meeting import expenses has been increased to six months from four months.

The PM said the limit of mobile banking has been increased, the payment deadline for power, water and gas bills have been extended to June without any fine or surcharge and the payment of NGOs' loan instalments has been suspended.

"The whole world is now going through uncertainty, but our government is ready to face any kind of tough situation. We are the government of the people and we are always with the people. I am keeping my eyes on the situation."

Terming the fight against coronavirus a war, the premier urged the people to stay at home.

"We won in 1971 against our enemy by standing shoulder to shoulder. Fighting coronavirus is also a war. In this war, your responsibility is to stay at home. Inshallah, we will win the war with everyone's efforts."

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BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia leaving Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) in a car around 4:15pm yesterday. On Tuesday, the government announced its decision to suspend Khaleda's sentence for six months on humanitarian grounds.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Khaleda Zia freed, gets back home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was released from prison yesterday after 776 days.

The government through an executive order released her for six months on conditions that she will stay at her home in the capital and not leave the country.

The 74-year-old former prime minister is out jail at a time of global crisis over the Covid-19 pandemic.

Wearing her signature pink saree, surgical mask, and white gloves, Khaleda came out of the hospital cabin in a wheelchair around 4:15pm.

Hundreds of BNP leaders and activists who had been waiting there since the morning chanted slogans although the hospital authorities, law enforcers and party leaders repeatedly asked them not to form crowds.

She went to her home Firoza in Gulshan in her brother's car. There were four other vehicles used by her bodyguards and family members.

Many BNP leaders and activists wearing masks and

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Prices of essentials shoot up

City residents crowd kitchen markets prior to 10-day shutdown

ASIFUR RAHMAN and RASHIDUL HASAN

The prices of essentials, including rice, vegetables, cooking oil, spices, and cleaning items, have increased several folds over the last one week.

Even lemons, which were sold for Tk 10 a week ago, are now being sold at Tk 20-25 per piece.

As the country is in near-lockdown and a 10-day holiday for all government and most private organisations beginning from today, people thronged different kitchen markets fearing short supply.

A day after declaring the 10-day holiday, the government on Tuesday decided to suspend all public transport services to slow the spread of the

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COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION

It may be happening on a 'limited scale'

Says IEDCR, another dies from coronavirus raising death toll to 5; no new cases detected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time, the IEDCR yesterday said novel coronavirus might have spread at the community level but "on a limited scale".

Besides, it reported one more death from Covid-19. So far, five people who tested positive for the virus have died in the country.

"The sources of coronavirus transmission [in two of the five cases] could not be known yet. For this reason, we think community transmission might have taken place," said Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora, director of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

Briefing journalists through videoconferencing from her office, she said the IEDCR was working to know whether there was any community transmission. "Before confirming it, we need an analysis of information in detail."

Before yesterday, the IEDCR had maintained that there had been no cases of community transmission in the country, meaning all the coronavirus patients were either the ones who travelled from countries badly affected by the coronavirus pandemic or their family members who came in contact with them.

Prof Flora said the area where they suspect community transmission might have taken place has been isolated as part of efforts to contain the spread of the virus.

"So far, however, there is no such situation that this [coronavirus] has spread at community level across Bangladesh," she said.

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WHOLE OF HUMANITY AT RISK: UN -- PAGE 8

Noab urges all to read newspapers

Says newspapers don't spread coronavirus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) yesterday urged people to keep reading newspapers, citing research findings that newspapers do not spread coronavirus.

In a statement, Noab referred to claims made on social media that the virus could spread through newspapers and said such ideas have no basis.

Rather, people should read the newspapers to know about the ongoing research, new health rules and methods that must be followed, it added.

The following is the full text of the statement:

The spread of coronavirus all over the world has made all people fearful and anxious. This panic no doubt has

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RELATED STORY ON PAGE 2

Zero incidents of virus transmission from newspapers

Says Int'l News Media Association

EARL J WILKINSON

There has never been a documented incident where Covid-19 has been transmitted from a print newspaper, print magazine, print letter, or print package, according to the world's top doctors and scientists.

The International News Media Association (INMA) received inquiries about this. INMA has cited World Health Organization (WHO) guidance on the matter. Yet the unprecedented global pandemic naturally breeds a paranoia about everything we touch, so let me present to you what INMA knows on this subject.

This article distills research and guidance from four sources -- World Health Organization, The Journal of Hospital Infection, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and John Innes Centre -- that debunk concerns.

WHAT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH SHOWS

"The likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes Covid-19 from a package that has been moved, travelled, and exposed to different conditions and temperate is also low," says WHO.

The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says "it may be possible" for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface that has the virus on it, "but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads."

Both statements sound like a hedging of the unknown -- fair enough in these times. Yet the fact remains there have been no incidents of transmission on print materials.

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INDEPENDENCE DAY

Love in the days of war

SUSHANTA GHOSH

"Why can't I become a freedom fighter? I, too, took training. If we die, we will die together," Rama Das had said to her fiancé in 1971.

Rama is one of the few women who did not bid farewell to her beloved and wait for his victorious return from the war, as depicted in most movies and literature.

Rather, she herself joined the war for her motherland and was reunited with her betrothed, Parthasarathi Das, coincidentally.

Forty-nine years later, the 74-year-old freedom fighter reflected on those tumultuous days of the war.

"We got engaged a couple of months before the war started. Our wedding date was set for the month of Boishakh," she remembered.

In March 1971, Rama was a Master's student at Dhaka University's Bangla department.

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A man washes his hands at a sink in the capital's Karwan Bazar yesterday while another man waits his turn. Dhaka Wasa set up the sink and placed soaps there in its efforts to contain the spread of coronavirus. Inset, a magistrate, using a megaphone, asking traders not to sell daily essentials at higher prices at a kitchen market in Motijheel.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS/ SK ENAMUL HAQ

49th Independence Day
MADE IN BANGLADESH

প্রতিটি মেলাইয়ে রক্ষা করে যাচ্ছি স্বাধীনতা।

আসুন, এই কঠিন সময়ে সবাই মিলে বুখ দাড়াই আরও একবার।

From the house of KDS

Khaleda at 'Firoza' after 776 days

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Deserted for the last 25 months, the house on Road no-79 in the capital's Gulshan-2, was decked up yesterday as its tenant, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, came back after spending 776 days in jail.

Khaleda's younger brother Shamim Iskandar took Khaleda in his car to the two-storey house named "Firoza" around 5:20pm yesterday. His wife Kaniz Fatema was sitting next to the former prime minister in the car as it left Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, where Khaleda was receiving treatment.

Khaleda's sister and brother-in-law, Selima Islam and Rafiqul Islam, and other family members welcomed the BNP chief, who was behind bars on charge of corruption. Khaleda was released following an executive order.

Since Tuesday, when the law minister announced her release from jail, the house was cleaned and party leaders and activists started thronging in front of the house. They chanted slogans as their party chairperson came back home.

Security men of the house said Shamim Iskandar and his wife supervised the cleaning of the house.

One of Khaleda's security officials said all the rooms of the house were cleaned, including her bedroom, reading room and drawing room on the first floor, and the one on the ground floor.

On the entrance of the first floor, flower tubs were placed, just like they were when she left the house on February 8, 2018.

Sources said daily essentials including rice, lentils, spices, oil, fruits were bought in the morning. Around 3:00pm, Shamim Iskandar brought cooked food for Khaleda.

Tarique Rahman, grandchildren, skyping. Crying.

Family members are thinking of keeping her in quarantine and urging that she avoid public gatherings, didn't meet any neta, went to her room. Nurse and doctor for home treatment.

Khaleda's aide Fatema Begum, who was with Khaleda during her imprisonment days, also returned to the house.

The house was crowded with party leaders and activists on February 8, 2018, when BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia left to appear before court for the verdict over a corruption case.

That very day, she was sent to the old jail in Najimuddin Road and had been behind bars since then and the house remained vacant, except four security personnel looked after it by rotation.

Khaleda's younger son Arafat Rahman Koko's wife Sharmila Rahman Shithi, along with her two daughters, stayed in the house for around 12 days.

Gas connections and telephone lines of the house were disconnected, said a family member of Khaleda wishing not to be named.

Before landing in jail, a police team provided security for Khaleda but after her jailing, the police protection was withdrawn.

The 74-year-old former prime minister had been staying in the house since 2011, after she was ousted from her long-time home in Dhaka cantonment following a High Court verdict.

The court ruled it was "highly illegal" and "contrary to public interest" for the military chief to give away a cantonment house to Khaleda with the president's approval.

After being hosted by her younger brother Shamim Iskandar, she started living in the house.

Built on one bigha of land, the two-storey house in Gulshan was decorated to her taste before she moved in.

Facing the Russian embassy, the house with a lush green lawn is also close to the Pakistan High Commission.

The house was "rented" from Ianveer Islam, younger son of retired major and former BNP state minister Quamrul Islam.

After Khaleda came back home yesterday, she called her son Tarique Rahman over Skype and video-chatted with him and his children as they cried together.

While her home was crowded with people, Khaleda did not meet or speak to any of her party leaders or activists and went straight to her bedroom on the first floor.

Her family members said they are thinking of keeping her in quarantine to keep her safe and away from public gatherings at the moment, adding that they are also arranging for nurses and doctors to take care of her at home.

Three US sailors test positive for virus on aircraft carrier

AFP, Washington

Three US sailors from the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt have been diagnosed with the novel coronavirus, the first cases reported on a US Navy ship currently on deployment, officials said Tuesday.

The three have been evacuated and all those they had come into contact with on the vessel, which has more than 5,000 personnel on board, have been quarantined, Acting Navy Secretary Thomas B. Modly told reporters.



Defying social distancing guidance on coronavirus, BNP leaders and activists escort party Chairperson Khaleda Zia to her Gulshan home after she was freed from jail yesterday for six months. The photo was taken in the capital's Paribagh area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Khaleda Zia freed, gets back home

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gloves followed the vehicles from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University to Gulshan.

Law Minister Anisul Huq told journalists on Tuesday that Khaleda would be released from jail on humanitarian grounds for six months.

The government made the decision as per section 401 (1) of the Criminal Code of Procedure (CrPC), the minister

mentioned.

The BNP chief landed in jail on February 8, 2018, after a special court sentenced her to five years in prison in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case. On October 30, 2018, the High Court raised her punishment to 10 years.

Party leaders threatened to take to the streets and fight legally to release her. After they failed to get her released, the family members repeatedly urged

the government to release her on bail.

They alleged that her health had declined due to improper treatment at the BSMMU where she had been admitted since April 1 last year. They wrote to the government twice and also met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

While coming out of the hospital, she neither talked to reporters nor waved at the activists.

In the Zia Charitable Trust corruption

case on October 29, 2018, a court jailed Khaleda and three others for seven years. The HC rejected her bail petition three times and the Supreme Court once.

Yesterday afternoon, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, several other senior leaders and Khaleda's family members reached the hospital about an hour before she was released.

Fakhrul repeatedly urged the crowd to disperse, but no one listened to him.

It may be happening on a 'limited scale'

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She also informed journalists that no confirmed Covid-19 cases were detected in 24 hours till 1:00pm yesterday. So, the total number of those infected remained same at 39 from the previous day.

So far, the IEDCR has tested 794 suspected cases, including 82 in last 24 hours till 1:00pm.

The fifth person who died from Covid-19 breathed his last yesterday morning at a hospital in Dhaka. He

had been tested novel coronavirus positive on March 18, according to IEDCR.

The patient - male and aged 65 -- had diabetes and hypertension. Initially after the diagnosis, he was being treated in isolation in his locality and was brought to Dhaka on March 21, said sources.

Of the 39 infected patients, five died, nine recovered and were discharged from hospitals while 25 are under treatment. Two people were

discharged yesterday.

Forty-seven people suspected to have contracted the virus are now kept in isolation while 47 others are in institutional quarantine, said IEDCR sources.

The IEDCR director also said facilities for testing coronavirus infection would be expanded to several hospitals and institutions in Dhaka and elsewhere. Currently, such tests are carried out only at the IEDCR in the capital's Mohakhali.

Prof Flora asked people to call 01944333222 and 10655 to inform them about any suspected coronavirus cases. People can also call 16263 for any health-related issues, she said.

She came up with the information after many complained that they were facing difficulties in reaching the IEDCR hotline numbers.

IEDCR can also be reached through iedcricovid19@gmail.com, she added.

Tk 5,000cr for workers' pay

FROM PAGE 1
she said.

Hasina asked the people to strictly follow health instructions to fight against coronavirus and avoid public gatherings.

She said right now the highest priority for the government is to save people from the virus.

Bangladesh has so far confirmed 39 cases after testing 794 people. Of them, five have died so far and seven others recovered.

The PM said the World Health Organization has already declared the coronavirus crisis a pandemic. She noted that the Independence Day would be observed in a different context this year due to the outbreak of Covid-19.

"Be they rich or poor, developed or developing, small or big, all countries are more or less affected by this virus. Bangladesh is not free from this infection as well."

She urged everyone to avoid organising programmes which require public gatherings.

Hasina said she was aware that people were passing their days in a kind of panic and worry. "I can understand their psychological condition, but at this crisis moment, we have to face the situation with patience and courage."

She called on the expatriates who returned from coronavirus-hit countries to thoroughly follow home quarantine rules. "Just stay separately for only 14 days. These instructions have to be followed to save your

family, neighbours, people of the area, and above all, the people of the country."

She requested the Muslims to offer prayers and followers of other faiths to perform their religious activities at home for now.

Hasina said the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) has opened hotline numbers and doctors have opened 500 numbers. "If the coronavirus symptoms show up, please contact those numbers. The government is arranging all types of treatment."

She said although coronavirus has the ability to spread quickly, it is not that deadly. Most of the people infected with the virus get well within a few days, but it turns deadly for people with underlying medical conditions and the old, she added.

The PM urged everyone to pay the highest attention to those of their family members who are most sensitive.

"Don't panic. Panic destroys logical thinking. Your awareness will keep you, your family and above all the people of the country safe," she said.

Hasina described various measures taken by her government from the very beginning of coronavirus outbreak in China. She said 6,58,981 people have been screened at different ports in the country.

The government has taken up massive programmes since January to tackle the coronavirus. Committees have been formed at

the city corporation, municipality, district, upazila and unions levels, she said.

Covid-19, first reported in China in December last year, has affected 196 countries and territories and one international conveyance. Until yesterday, 435,382 cases have been confirmed globally with a death toll of 19,620, according to Worldometer. Hasina said health workers have to play an important role in providing treatment to the infected people. "Sufficient materials have been supplied for their safety and enough materials have been preserved as highest priority has been given on their safety. Don't be confused."

Urging all not to spread rumours, she warned the rumour-mongers of stern actions.

She mentioned that operation of passenger trains, water vessels and domestic flights have been suspended from last night.

The PM hoped that the world would be able to get rid of this calamity very soon due to the development of science and technology and efforts from all.

Talking about the supply of essentials, the premier said the supply chain within and outside the country is intact.

"Don't raise the prices of essentials illogically. Don't deepen the misery of the people. Steps have been taken to monitor the markets everywhere," she said.

"TIME TO HELP EACH OTHER"
Hasina said a good number of

people in the country have lost their jobs due to the coronavirus outbreak. "We have to stand beside them."

She said the low-income people would be provided assistance under the "Return-to-Home" programme for the homeless and landless people as there would be homes free of cost, six month's food and cash assistance. "The district administrations have been directed in this regard."

The PM said accommodation has been made in Bhashanchar island to provide shelter and employment for 100,000 people. "The government will take steps if anyone wants to go there."

She said VGD, VGF and rice for Tk 10 per kg programmes would be continued with free medicine and treatment. She urged the rich to come forward to help the poor.

Mentioning that it is the time for austerity, Hasina urged the people not to purchase excessive consumer goods, and not to hoard and let the fixed-income group people buy.

She said private mill owners and farmers have a huge stock of foodgrains. In the current season, the country has bumper production of potato, onion, chilli and wheat, she added.

Hasina said the test of humanity occurs during a disaster.

"This is the time to help each other and show humanity. The Bangalees are a nation of heroes. The Bangalee nation faced various disasters and crisis with united efforts," she said.

PROTECTION FROM COVID-19 Noab to provide protective gears to newspaper agents, hawkers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) will provide 3,000 hand sanitisers, 23,000 face masks and 23,000 hand gloves to newspaper agents and hawkers across the country.

The decision was made at a meeting on Tuesday so that the agents and hawkers can distribute newspapers in the capital and elsewhere by protecting themselves from coronavirus infection.

Called by Noab, the meeting of Bangladesh Newspaper Circulation Managers' Association (BNCMA) was held at the Prothom Alo office in the capital's Karwan Bazar, says a release.

At the meeting, BNCMA representatives said there were around 20,000 newspaper hawkers in the country.

They said all educational institutions and student dormitories had already been closed as part of efforts to contain the spread of the virus. Newspaper distribution to many apartments in urban areas also remained halted.

Besides, officials from different tiers of the administration have asked hawkers not to distribute newspapers, saying the virus might spread. Some hawkers have remained absent over concern over coronavirus, they said.

Despite these, different hawkers' associations said they would continue distributing and selling newspapers across the country.

Noab will take special measures to ensure safety of hawkers and agents. They will be provided with support from Noab now and in the future, according to the release.

Citing findings of a research, Noab said there has never been a documented incident where Covid-19 has transmitted from a print newspaper, print magazine, print letter, or print package.

NEWS, PHOTOS ON ARMED FORCES

Don't publish them without verification

Says ISPR

Bss, Dhaka

The Inter Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) yesterday requested all not to publish news and photos on the basis of false, misleading and hypothetical information on the members of armed forces deployed across the country to combat coronavirus.

In a press release, it also requested all to check any information with it before running any news on the armed forces.

On Tuesday, the authorities spread out troops in major cities to help the civil administration tackle the COVID-19 situation.

The personnel were moved out to divisional and district headquarters. Yesterday, they launched full scale anti-Covid-19 campaigns, finalising their modus operandi with divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners, said the press release.

'Robber' killed in 'gunfight' in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A suspected robber was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Sadar upazila of Kushtia early yesterday, after several hours of his arrest.

The dead -- Parvez Khan, 33, of Kushtia town -- was a member of a notorious robbery gang and had nine robbery cases filed against him, said police.

Golam Mostafa, officer-in-charge (OC) of Kushtia Model Police Station, said they arrested Parvez on Tuesday afternoon and got information on his firearm storage.

On information, police along with Parvez went to Shalda village in the upazila to recover the firearms. On their way, Parvez's cohorts opened fire on police around 3:30am, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate, he added.

At one point of the "gunfight", Parvez sustained bullet wounds and died on the spot, he said.

The body was sent to Kushtia General Hospital morgue for autopsy. Asked, who would take responsibility for the death in police custody, the OC said, "We will not be responsible."

Police claimed that three of their personnel were injured during the "gunfight". They also claimed to have recovered a foreign pistol, a magazine, three bullets and one Ramda from the spot.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the police claims.

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understandable reasons behind it. Man was not prepared for such a virus. The extent of the spread of the virus and the increasing number of deaths along with the fact that the movement of the virus is still under investigation make matters worse. At this sensitive moment, the Newspapers Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) is expressing heartfelt compassion and unanimity with all.

This is a terrible time, not only for Bangladesh, but for the whole world. We want to tell everybody with firm conviction and pride that we from the newspapers have been with the people in any national emergency and disaster. In the latest adversity of coronavirus, daily newspapers have been publishing items that are helpful, remedial and awareness-building. The dailies are publishing on a regular basis

news regarding ongoing research, new health rules and methods that must be followed along with stories of success in the matter.

We are noticing with agony that in such times of human frailty, the situation is being made more delicate by a section of social media feeding on unreliable information. Many readers are refraining from reading newspapers from such unfounded and conjectural ideas that newsprints may spread the virus. In fact, such ideas have no basis. The United States Journal of Medicine published from New England found in their research that the virus lives for a maximum of three hours in the air, a day on the cardboard and two to three days on plastic and stainless steel. However, Professor Caroline Makhama, a long-time researcher, has published in the website of Johns Hopkins University that on surface of objects the virus has a

minimal chance of survival even though it might seem fearful to some. From the surface of objects there is very little chance of the virus spreading, one in a thousand, she said.

Thus far no research-information is available to suggest that newsprint or paper helps in the survival of the virus. The World Health Organisation has said that commercial items have very little chance of carrying contamination. Goods being transported to different places at various temperatures have little risk of coronavirus infection. The US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention has said that there is no chance of the spread of this virus through newspapers.

Even then NOAB has started an awareness-building endeavour on behalf of all newspapers for the newspaper agents and hawkers. By now Noab has been distributing masks,

gloves and sanitisers among the agents and hawkers in Dhaka and outside. Such activity by Noab will continue in the future also.

At such a time the important thing is to know the facts and inform what is really happening. The best way to save oneself from coronavirus is to know the latest and reliable information. News publishing is professional work. Before an information is published everything is examined through experienced and knowledgeable hands with great care. For any information, newspapers are the source of reliable news all over the world. During such testing times of coronavirus, newspapers are by the side of the readers as ever awake friends to give them the real security, carefulness and correct decision.

Our goal is to ensure good health, security and wellbeing to all. We request everybody to read newspapers.



The ever-bustling Kamalapur Railway Station looked more like an abandoned place yesterday morning after train services were cancelled amid concerns over the spread of coronavirus in the country. *Left*, a man pulls a push cart along an eerily empty platform -- a scene seen never before. *Top right*, an inter-district train lies idle at the station. *Bottom right*, with no one to tend to, a railway staff spends his time reading newspaper.

CORONAVIRUS SPREAD Police headquarters, home ministry form monitoring cells

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Police Headquarters (PHQ) formed a special control and command centre yesterday to monitor the situation of Bangladesh and ensure coordinated law enforcement support during the spread of coronavirus.

The control room was set up at the ground floor of NCOM building of PHQ, Sohul Rana, assistant inspector general of PHQ, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Officials will remain on duty at the control center round the clock in three shifts, he said.

Every shift will be led by an additional superintendent of police. An inspector, a sub-inspector (SI) and a computer operator will assist the additional SP, said AIG Rana.

The PHQ already appointed 16 additional SP, 16 inspectors and SI, and five computer operators for the control centre, according to officials.

The control centre will collect full database of the virus-affected and deceased persons. Upon data collection, the centre will send information to police high officials including the inspector general of police (IGP) twice a day, said PHQ officials.

The centre will provide instruction to field level officials about their activities as per directives of the police chief and high officials, they added.

The control centre numbers are: 01769695080, 01769695081 and 01769695082.

Meanwhile, the home ministry yesterday also formed a special 'coordination cell' to provide support to law enforcers to prevent coronavirus during the ten-day general holiday.

Four senior assistant secretaries and six deputy secretaries of the ministry along with their staff will perform duty by rotation from March 26 to April 4, according to a home ministry statement signed by its deputy secretary Mohammad Habibur Rahman.

India sends masks, S'pore testing kits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India yesterday provided 30,000 surgical masks and 15,000 head covers to Bangladesh to help its efforts in combating the coronavirus pandemic.

Indian High Commissioner Riva Ganguly Das handed over the equipment to Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen at the ministry office, according to a press release of the High Commission.

On March 15, leaders of Saarc -- led by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi -- held a video conference and created the Saarc Emergency Fund to tackle the virus under a common regional strategy.

Already, India has committed its contribution of \$10 million, Sri Lanka \$5 million, Bangladesh \$1.5 million, Afghanistan and Nepal \$1 million each, Maldives \$200,000 and Bhutan \$100,000 -- to combat covid-19.

Preparations are underway to hold video conferences between medical professionals and other stakeholders in India and Bangladesh for discussing specific measures and exchanging

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An eerie calm

WASIM BIN HABIB

One of the most densely populated cities in the world has been reduced to an eerie look of emptiness.

An unusual calm reigned over the capital for the last couple of days, as novel coronavirus fears prompted thousands of city dwellers to leave for their villages homes, and many others to stay indoors.

Yesterday, the day before the government's 10-day shutdown, the otherwise crowded and chaotic city quietened down amid a thin presence of traffic in most thoroughfares.

It was a weekday yesterday, yet most people refused to venture out unless for any urgent need. There were limited activities at government and private offices, and many establishments. A large number of shops kept their shutters down.

As morning gave way to afternoon, the empty feeling in the city only seemed to increase. In the evening, the entire capital city wore a deserted look. For many, it was hard to come to terms with the stillness.

"It seems that coronavirus fear forced the city into slumber. It's a scary situation," said Anwar Hossain, who works in a bank in Dhanmondi.

He said many people did not come out of homes out of fear of getting infected by the virus.

The global coronavirus pandemic has taken a grim toll around the world -- more than 427,940 confirmed cases and 19,246 deaths in 181 countries according to an AFP tally compiled at 11:00 GMT Wednesday.

The country has confirmed 39 active cases and five deaths -- but public health experts fear that the low count is the result of limited testing. The country has only conducted about 794 tests so far, partly because of a shortage of testing kits.

However, the government has already responded with drastic measures and made repeated calls to citizens to stay home to stem the spread of the virus. It suspended passenger trains, launches and

domestic flights. Buses, minibuses, and human hauliers will be off the roads from today.

With all modes of transport coming to a halt today, thousands of people yesterday hit the bus stations to get to their village homes in crammed buses, creating traffic jams on a number of highways.

In Dhaka, the city corporations asked dwellers through loudspeakers not to come out of homes unless urgent.

And true to the instruction, a handful of people were seen out on the streets.

Other than those who are still required to work, such as shopkeepers or retail workers, and those working in health and medical care, the city looked far from its usual self yesterday.

Usually packed places like Motijheel, Gulistan, Jatrabari, Mouchak, Moghbazar, Rampura, Karwanbazar, Mirpur, Mohakhali, Gulshan, and Banani remained free from any traffic congestion. Only a handful of vehicles were seen plying the roads in the morning. Apart from a few buses, the number of private vehicles, including cars and microbuses, were also very thin.

There were also very few vehicles of app-based ride-sharing companies available, and people were seen preferring rickshaws for commuting.

"It almost resembles the look during Eid holidays. It took me only 20 minutes to come to office in Farmgate area from Shankar," said Mohammad Abedin, an employee of a private firm.

He said his office asked almost all the employees to work from home.

But not all offices have work-from-home options, and this is especially a challenge for many who work in the informal sector -- including domestic help, street vendors and daily wage workers.

"I heard about the dangers, but I have no choice. I have to pull my rickshaw, otherwise my family would go unfed," said Rafiq, a rickshaw puller, wearing a look of gloom on his face.

Fire service, police, city corporations disinfecting city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two city corporations, Dhaka Metropolitan Police and Fire Service sprayed disinfectants in different parts of Dhaka city yesterday, as a part its ongoing effort to prevent the novel coronavirus.

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) yesterday sprayed around 80 thousand litres of antiseptic in different parts of the city, including Uttara, Mirpur, Moghbazar, Banglamotor, Gulshan, Basundhara, Aminbazar, Gabtoli and Agargaon.

"We are also spraying insecticides at foot overbridges and passenger sheds," said an official of DNCC, adding that they are also spraying antiseptic in public transports and terminals.

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) also started spraying antiseptic in its areas since yesterday. "We have sprayed disinfectants at different important places like bus stoppages, Sadarghat terminal, kitchen markets and railway station through eight browsers," said an official.

Meanwhile Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) sprayed disinfectants at various places under its 50 police stations.

Eight water cannons will spray 96 liters of disinfectants each twice every day until further notice, police said.

Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence also initiated a disinfection programme yesterday.

An official said their initiative would cover Bangabhaban area, secretariat area, Prime Minister's Office, Siddiqbazar and Sadarghat of Old Dhaka with eight units in operation. Gradually, other areas of the city will also be covered.

Brac starts production of reusable masks

CITY DESK

Brac has begun manufacturing over 2 lakh pieces of reusable masks for community use as part of its extensive campaign against Covid-19.

It is also examining production process of personal protective equipment (PPE) and hopes to go into production very soon, said a press release on Tuesday.

Asif Saleh, executive director of Brac, said, "Alongside operating mass awareness campaigns, we have started production of protective wear. Once our production process is perfected, we hope to go into large-scale production [of PPE]. We then want to partner with BGMEA and other entities under the government's guidance."

Meanwhile, over 50,000 healthcare providers of Brac have started implementing its awareness campaigns to reach people in 61 districts.

Brac has also stopped collecting installments of its microcredit borrowers from March 24 to April 2.

It is also running campaigns at Rohingya camps and host communities in Cox's Bazar.



People line up to take a bus for Cumilla in front of the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday morning. As most residents of the capital started staying indoors, commerce and work opportunities have come down drastically, forcing many to go to their hometowns. Another factor is the government-declared holiday in effect from March 26 to April 4. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

HAJJ REGISTRATION

Deadline for hajj reg extended again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid lukewarm response from aspirant hajjis, the religious affairs ministry yesterday extended the deadline for registration till April 8 to perform hajj this year.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah came up with the announcement while talking to reporters at his office at the secretariat.

This was the second time the government extended the deadline for hajj registration, as only 35,000 prospective hajjis registered till the last deadline of yesterday.

The registration process, that began on March 2, was supposed to close on March 15.

Due to low response from intended hajjis, the ministry extended the deadline to March 25.

The state minister yesterday said aspiring hajjis will get their money back if they fail to perform hajj this year due to the coronavirus outbreak.

A total of 1,37,198 Bangladeshis are scheduled to perform hajj this year which is likely to be held in July 31, depending on sighting of moon.

Of the total hajjis, 17,198 are scheduled to perform hajj under government management, while the rest are scheduled to perform hajj under private management.

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, hajj aspirants are unsure whether the holy congregation of Muslims will be held this year.

Hajj flights are scheduled to start from June 23. Bangladeshis who wish to perform hajj will have to spend more for the pilgrimage this year, mainly due to the increase in airfare and visa fees.

The government on February 24 approved three draft hajj packages. Hajjis will have to pay Tk 4.25 lakh for package-1 and Tk 3.60 lakh for package-2 under government management, which are Tk 6,500 and Tk 16,000 more than the corresponding packages of the previous year.

With affordability in mind, the government has also introduced package-3 for the first time, which hajjis can avail at a cost of Tk 3.15 lakh.

Ctg police disperse public gatherings



Police in the port city have stepped into the streets to direct residents to stay indoors. Authorities are also spraying the roads with disinfectants for extra measures. This photo was taken yesterday from the city's Jamal Khan area. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police in different areas of port city have started taking action against people who are roaming around without any valid reason, as part of precautionary steps to stop the spread of coronavirus.

Part from that, Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) issued a circular to the city's mosques, asking them to raise awareness through loudspeakers before every azan.

After dividing into small teams, Kotwali police were seen dispersing public gatherings in Jamal Khan, New Market, CRB and Andarkilla areas yesterday noon.

Wearing masks, gloves and protective gear, and armed with sticks, officers admonished those who ignored the "stay home" government order and roamed around without valid reasons.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Md Mohsin of Kotwali Police Station said, "We're trying to keep everyone indoors and dispersing those who are ignoring the government order."

"If they don't listen, we'll force them to comply with the order," he added.

Earlier on Tuesday night, police locked down a flat and building in the city's Chandgaon and Bakalia areas, after a woman who recently returned from Saudi Arabia contracted Covid-19. The woman's family members resided in those areas and visited her house frequently.

Amid growing concerns, CMP Commissioner Mahbubur Rahman issued a notice, asking mosques to use their loudspeakers to make residents aware of precautionary measures.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (Public Relation) Abu Bakar Siddique confirmed the matter.

Elderly kidney patient

FROM PAGE 5

of Sylhet suggested not to arrange any gathering during the funeral, he said.

Contacted, Atiqur Rahman, manager of Kidney Foundation in Sylhet, said, "Gias Uddin was our patient since February 2019 and was undergoing dialysis three days a week."

"On March 21 night, he was given dialysis here and the next morning, he came back with some physical complexity. Not for coronavirus fear, as we didn't have any ICU facility and his condition was not good, we suggested him to go to a hospital with such facility," he claimed.

Contacted, Dr Premananda Mandal, civil surgeon of Sylhet, said, "The death of an elderly person without proper treatment is unfortunate. Everyone, even the coronavirus affected patients, has the right to get proper medical care. Home quarantine doesn't mean someone is affected, it's a precautionary step only."

"The medical history of the deceased may suggest he died of kidney complexities, but the fact of the matter is that he was denied treatment because of fear," he said.

Doctors at different hospitals and clinics are worried due to the coronavirus outbreak, but it should not be the way. We are urging all doctors to provide proper healthcare to patients," the civil surgeon said.

ICU facilities

FROM PAGE 5

send them to healthcare centres designated for isolation." Talking to The Daily Star, Civil Surgeon Sheikh Fazle Rabbi said, "We have told the CMCH authorities to facilitate at least four beds at ICU for coronavirus patients. Apart from that, we are trying to arrange some ICU beds in the 250-bed Chattogram General Hospital, but it will take at least three weeks."

Though there are separate ICU units in different private clinics including Max Hospital, Park View, CSCR, Royal Hospital, Chattogram Metropolitan Hospital, Medical Centre, Surgiscope and Treatment Centre, the number of beds with ICU facilities is not more than 50.

However, it is imperative to treat Covid-19 patients in complete isolation with ICU services.

Contacted, Prof Dr Emran Bin Yunus, former principal of Chattogram Medical College, said, "We need to rearrange our available ICU resources."

At first, an ICU unit can immediately be opened at the Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases by collecting some of the existing ICU facilities from CMCH and Combined Military Hospital, Chattogram, as well as from Dhaka, said Dr Yunus.

"Besides, the authorities need to sit with owners of private clinics to provide some facilities there," he added.

Since Covid-19 is a highly contagious disease, the private clinics having ICU units can dedicate a few of their ICU beds in isolated cabins, said Dr Yunus, also a scientific consultant for World Health Organization (WHO).

"Private healthcare centres need to come forward with a mindset to share and sacrifice in order to tackle the situation," said Prof Yunus, adding that a guideline should be formulated to prioritise patients who would need ICU facilities in the given situation.

India sends

FROM PAGE 3

best practices to address the disease.

Meanwhile, Singapore sent 10,000 coronavirus test kits to the health and family welfare ministry of Bangladesh yesterday.

Temasek Foundation -- a Singapore-based non-profit organisation -- with the coordination of SingHealth -- the largest network of healthcare institutions of Singapore -- provided the kits, said a press release.

The kits, called "Fortitude Kit 2.0", were designed by the Agency for Science, Technology and Research of Singapore. They were sent along with necessary materials, like primer probes mix and enzyme mix, said the press release.

Pneumonia

FROM PAGE 5

several times, but they couldn't send anyone to collect samples. "None at RMCH dared collect samples, as they have no training," the nurse added.

She was admitted to the isolation unit of Kurmitola General Hospital in Dhaka on Tuesday night, but was not tested till yesterday.

"RMCH has no facility for testing," she told this correspondent. "It has been almost six days... I have been kept in isolation units at home and hospitals... I don't know what will happen to me? When will test me, after my death?"

Meanwhile, doctors and officials of the coronavirus unit at RMCH said more than one patient were visiting the unit daily, but they couldn't test any of them.

Shortage of testing

FROM PAGE 5

whether any of the patients are affected by the virus without testing them," said doctor Suleiman Kabir, registrar of medicine ward of the hospital.

According to hospital protocol, a patient has to first come to the medicine ward for primary diagnosis, after which, depending on condition, they are sent to isolation. However, doctors at the medicine ward face major risk, as protective equipment are almost completely unavailable.

"Even us doctors don't have sufficient protective equipment other than simple masks," he added.

"It is the season of different types of fever including common flu, whose symptoms are similar to those of coronavirus," said SBMCH director Dr Md Bakir Hossain.

There is an urgency for testing equipment at the hospital, he said, adding that coronavirus-affected patients may otherwise be admitted to other wards. "I can't give PPE to all doctors; it's very limited in supply."

"I am in constant communication with higher authorities for establishing a lab to test coronavirus, or arranging kits to test it as soon as possible," said divisional director of health and family planning Basu Deb Das.

In Barishal division, 2,472 people are under home quarantine as of yesterday, up from 2,232 on Tuesday. Three people have been sent to isolation at SBMCH.

A patient who was in an isolation ward in Barguna has been sent home, said divisional director Dr Basu Deb.

RAK RAK Ceramics (Bangladesh) Limited
 RAK Tower (7th, 8th & 9th Floor), Plot # 1/A,
 CERAMICS Jasimuddin Avenue, Sector # 3, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka- 1230

Postponement of the 21st Annual General Meeting

This is for information of all concerned that due to unavoidable circumstances (consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the unresolved situation), the 21st Annual General Meeting of RAK Ceramics (Bangladesh) Limited, scheduled to be held on March 31, 2020 has been postponed.

The fresh date, time and venue of the meeting will be notified later.

For RAK Ceramics (Bangladesh) Limited
 Sd/-
(Muhammad Shahidul Islam FCS)
 Company Secretary

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Local Government Engineering Department
 Office of the Executive Engineer
 District: Nilphamari
 www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No: 46.02.7300.000.07.20.571;
 Dated: 25-03-2020

Tender Notice: 25/2019-20

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

| Sl No. | TID No. | Name of scheme |
|--------|---------|--|
| 1 | 408844 | Rehabilitation of Babrihar GC-Kachukata R&H via Panchapukur GC Road from Ch. 380m-9850m under Upazila-Sadar, District Nilphamari, Road ID No: 173642008; Package No: FDR/NIL/18-19-UZR/W-14 (2 nd Call) |

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

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 19-04-2020 to 17:00 hrs.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and also from E-mail: xen.nilphamari@lged.gov.bd or call to 0551-61485. Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

Sujan Kumar Kar
 Executive Engineer
 LGED, Nilphamari, Phone: 0551-61485
xen.nilphamari@lged.gov.bd

GD-614

World Health Organization
 Bangladesh

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

1. RFP/BAN/2020/004/Addendum-1: Updating Vulnerability and adaptation assessment of climate change impact on health and health system of Bangladesh.

Reference to the subject Request for Proposal (RFP/BAN/2020/004), dated 24 March 2020, please be informed that due to unavoidable circumstances submission of (RFP/BAN/2020/004) has been postponed. Fresh date will be circulated later.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
 College Education Development Project (CEDP)
 Dhaka City College
 Road 2, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205. Tel. 58610294, 9674115

Corrigendum of Inviateion for Tender

Reference No. DCC/IDG/G3/OTM1 Date : 25.03.2020

Due to unavoidable circumstances tender last selling, closing and opening dates & time of package no. DCC/IDG/G3/OTM1 (package name : Procurement of furniture for the departmental rooms, class rooms, library and labs.) are revised as follows :

| Sl. no. in published IFT | Description | Original date & time | Revised date & time |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 01 | Tender Last Selling Date | 01.04.2020 at 05:00 pm | 08.04.2020 at 05:00 pm |
| 02 | Tender Closing Date and Time | 02.04.2020 at 02:00 pm | 11.04.2020 at 02:00 pm |
| 03 | Tender Opening Date and Time | 02.04.2020 at 03:00 pm | 11.04.2020 at 03:00 pm |

All other things of published IFT (reference no. DCC/IDG/G3/OTM1, Date : 18.03.2020) will remain unchanged.

Professor Md. Anwar Hossain
 Principal
 Dhaka City College

Date Extension of NOTICE FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES (Architectural, Engineering and Supervision)

With reference to the Notice for Consultancy Services published in The Daily Star, Bangladesh Pratidin and The Daily Purbanchal on 12-03-2020, the dates for collection of TOR and submission of proposals have been extended in the following manner for unavoidable circumstances.

a. Collection of TOR: From 10 to 15 April, 2020 (During office hour)
 b. Submission of proposals: From 10 to 30 April, 2020 (During office hour)

Sd/-
 Registrar
 North Western University
 Phone: 041-722282

North Western University
 236, M. A. Bari Road, Sonadanga, Khulna. Phone (PABX): +88 041 730807-9

Bangladesh Bank
 Common Services Department-2
 Head Office
 Dhaka-1000

Corrigendum Notice

Notice No. CSD-2(EES)/2020-30 Date: 25-03-2020

Due to corona virus epidemic Bangladesh Bank shall remain closed up to 04/04/2020. The opening date of tender "Daily operation, maintenance, repairing and servicing of electrical system of 2000KVA Sub-Station, Distribution board and related Electric Line for networking system under Package [BB(G)IT-3] installed at Bangladesh Bank, Head Office buildings, Motijheel, Dhaka" has been shifted to 28/04/2020 instead of 30/03/2020 and all other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

ব্যার্থকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Md. Tafazzal Hossain
 General Manager (Engg.)
 সূত্র নং-ডিসিপি-৪৮/২০২০-১২২৮
 তারিখঃ ২৫/৩/২০২০
 Phone: 02-9530099
 Fax: 02-9530321
 GD-619

Bangladesh Bank
 (Central Bank of Bangladesh)
 Head Office
 Motijheel, Dhaka-1000
 Bangladesh

Corrigendum Notice for Senior Procurement Specialist (Individual)

Ref No: IPFF II/IPFF II/09 (Service-S16)/2020-290 Date: 24/03/2020

Due to unavoidable circumstances this is hereby inform to all concerned that the Expression of Interest (EOI) submission closing date and time is amended as follows:

| Package No. | Name of the package | Original application closing date and time | Revised application closing date and time |
|-------------|--|--|---|
| IPFF II S16 | Individual Senior Procurement Specialist for PIU | 31 March, 2020 3:00pm | 12 April, 2020 3:00pm |

All other terms and conditions of the published REOI (Ref No: IPFFII/09/Service-S16)/2020-236 Date: 08/03/2020) will remain unchanged. Moreover, in case of public holiday prevails in the revised closing date, the next available working day will be considered as closing date with same time and place.

ব্যার্থকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Dr. Abul Kalam Azad
 Executive Director & Project Director
 Investment Promotion and Financing Facility II (IPFF II)
 Project
 Phone: 9530537
 e-mail: bb.ipff@bb.org.bd

সূত্র নং-ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২০-১২২৮
 তারিখঃ ২৫/৩/২০২০
 জিডি-৬১৭

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক
 ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়
 প্রধান কার্যালয়
 ঢাকা

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বরঃ ৩৯/২০২০ তারিখঃ ১১ চৈত্র ১৪২৬
 ২৫ মার্চ ২০২০

প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ব্যাংক-এ 'এক্সিকিউটিভ অফিসার-সাধারণ (অফিসার সমমান)' পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রাথমিকভাবে নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের তালিকা

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়ের সদস্যভুক্ত প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ব্যাংক-এ 'এক্সিকিউটিভ অফিসার-সাধারণ (অফিসার সমমান)' এর ৩০টি শূন্য পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে বিগত ২৮/০৫/২০১৯ তারিখে প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর-৯৭/২০১৯ ও ৩০/০৬/২০১৯ তারিখে সংশোধিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর-৮৬/২০১৯ এর প্রেক্ষিতে লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের সমন্বয়ে প্রণীত মেধা তালিকা হতে নিম্নলিখিত রোল নম্বরধারী ৩০ জন প্রার্থীকে নিয়োগের জন্য প্রাথমিকভাবে নির্বাচন করা হয়েছেঃ

201660 203989 205293 207747 211024 211883 212048 212131 222722 232620 233518
 236279 236798 240637 241351 241468 250591 256275 257330 263296 263385 271481
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নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত পরবর্তী সকল কার্যক্রম প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ব্যাংক কর্তৃক সম্পাদিত হবে।

ব্যার্থকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

আরিফ হোসেন খান
 মহাব্যবস্থাপক ও সদস্য সচিব
 ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি
 বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

সূত্র নং-ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২০-১২২২
 তারিখঃ ২৫/৩/২০২০
 জিডি-৬১৮

Bangladesh Bank
 Financial Sector Support Project (FSSP): IDA Credit No. 5664

CORRIGENDUM NOTICE-2
 Date: 25 March 2020

This is in reference to the Invitation for Bid (IFB) Number: BB(G)IT-16 Dated 05-02-2020 and subsequent First Corrigendum Notice Dated 12.03.2020 For

Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Implementation and related services of Management Software for three (03) Data Centers

Single-Stage Bidding
IFB Number: BB(G)IT-16, Credit Number: 56640

This is general information to all concerned that the following amendments have been made in the Bid Data Sheet (BDS) of BB(G)IT-16 Package under Financial Sector Support Project (FSSP):

| Particulars | As per First Corrigendum Notice on 12.03.2020 | As per latest corrigendum |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| ITB 21.1: Bid submission date and time | 1 April 2020 03:00pm BST | 13 April 2020 03:00pm BST |
| ITB 24.1: Bid opening date and time | 1 April 2020 03:10pm BST | 13 April 2020 03:10pm BST |
| ITB 18.1: Bid validity period | 29 July 2020 | 11 August 2020 |
| ITB 18.1: Bid Security expiration | 26 August 2020 | 22 September 2020 |

ব্যার্থকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Manoj Kumar Biswas
 Executive Director, BB & Project Director, FSSP
 3rd Floor, Main Building, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office,
 Motijheel, Dhaka
 Telephone: +880-2-9530705, Email: manoj.biswas@bb.org.bd

সূত্র নং-ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২০-১২২৬
 তারিখঃ ২৫/৩/২০২০
 GD-616

Revisiting the ethos of equality on this Independence Day

Let us pledge to protect the poor and vulnerable

IN the 49 years since independence, Bangladesh has lived through and tackled many natural and man-made disasters—from famines to floods, from industrial disasters to autocratic dictatorships—but this is the first time in our history that we are facing a crisis of such disastrous proportions. The threat posed by the coronavirus is particularly acute for the poor and marginalised populations of this country, who can neither afford the luxury of “social isolation” and “self-quarantine” nor have access to healthcare facilities if and when they fall ill. As the country moves towards a lockdown, what will happen to the day labourers and workers who live from hand to mouth and who, in the absence of their daily wages, may simply starve to death? What of the factory workers who are looking at an uncertain future because some of their owners are claiming they cannot pay wages on time because of cancelled orders from foreign buyers? When even upper- and middle-income groups are struggling to access healthcare and dying from lack of treatment, what hope is there for low-income groups who are denied basic services to which they are constitutionally entitled, even under ordinary circumstances?

This Independence Day, as we pay respect to our martyrs and freedom fighters, we must also remember that this country was built on the ethos of equity and equality and that socialism was one of its foundational pillars. Today, more than ever, we must pledge to protect the weak and the vulnerable, and both the public and private sectors must come together and prioritise the health, food security and well-being of the masses. In a welcoming move, the government has announced it will roll out a massive rescue package for the low-income group, businesses and industries. However, we urge them to act urgently and ensure that the funds reach those most in need of government safety nets. We must guarantee that no citizen in Bangladesh will starve to death because of the impending lockdown on our country. We must ensure that government healthcare facilities in each upazila have designated and adequate services to treat the poor.

The impending crisis has laid bare our economic and social vulnerabilities and reminded us how far we still are from our independence leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's vision of a just and equal Bangladesh. We must all rise to the occasion now, as we did in 1971, in our collective fight against the pandemic.

Declaration of a general holiday gave people the wrong message

The govt must take stringent measures to prevent Covid-19 spread

WE are worried at the way hundreds of people left the capital after the government announced a ten-day general holiday starting from today till April 4. Although the government announced closure of all public and private offices for the same period as part of its efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19, and also asked people to stay home, the declaration of a “holiday” could be self-defeating. As hundreds of city-dwellers boarded buses, trains and launches to go to their village homes, we fear that this could further help spread the virus throughout the country. The rush of home-bound people was so much on Tuesday that the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation was forced to carry only passengers, instead of vehicles, on ferries on the Shimulia-Kathalbari route in the Padma river. And all this happened due to a lack of foresight and proper planning on the part of the government to handle the spread of the pandemic.

What the government should have done instead was declare a medical emergency, raise awareness among the public about the importance of staying in their homes, and publicise the WHO directives about travelling and personal hygiene, including washing hands properly and frequently, as much as possible.

The lack of proper planning was evident from the very beginning of the crisis when the government failed to quarantine the returnees from foreign countries, at the beginning of this month. And even after some Covid-19 cases were confirmed by the IEDCR, necessary steps to contain the virus were not taken. There has always been a lack of coordination among different government bodies and experts in dealing with the situation. Declaring a general holiday without clear-cut directives regarding social distancing and staying home was not a wise move. We think a medical emergency, not a general holiday, should have been announced to contain the spread of this highly contagious and deadly virus.

However, there is still so much the government can do in this regard. From now on, it should take every step by consulting and coordinating with the health experts and all the agencies concerned. It should also make all the committees formed at the district and upazila levels effective so that they can raise awareness even among the most vulnerable section of the society. And if people do not take “social distancing” seriously, the government should also consider imposing more stringent measures in the country.

Healthcare in the time of Covid-19

What can Bangladesh do?

FAHMIDA KHATUN and SYED YUSUF SAADAT

THROUGHOUT the world, governments of various countries are taking extraordinary measures to deal with the crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Cross-country evidence shows that governments that adopted the most extreme measures most promptly were the ones most successful in reducing the number of new cases and deaths. The scale and speed of the pandemic has proved that there is no way to contain the spread of the coronavirus without strict social distancing. The experience of Italy shows that the self-quarantine method cannot be operationalised effectively and thus does not work.

The Communicable Diseases Prevention, Control and Eradication Law, 2018 of Bangladesh was signed before the discovery of COVID-19. So there is no mention of the disease in the law. But in view of the present situation, the government needs to immediately issue an official gazette recognising COVID-19 as a communicable disease. Once such a declaration is made, there will be a legal ground for regional or countrywide lockdowns under Section 11 of the law which states that access to and movement within infected areas may be restricted or prohibited.

The COVID-19 wave showed how unprepared the world is in terms of managing its health and economic implications. Worse, no country has enough medical preparation and support for tackling COVID-19. As of March 25 evening, the coronavirus has affected 196 countries and territories around the world with at least 435,374 confirmed cases, 19,618 deaths and 111,878 recovery cases, according to the website Worldometers. The number of affected countries is increasing every day and the number of cases is multiplying.

Bangladesh is no better than other affected countries in preventing the coronavirus pandemic. The existing healthcare infrastructure and the available medical equipment are not adequate even in ordinary situations, let alone in facing the coronavirus. The COVID-19 pandemic has put our health sector to the ultimate test. Medicare facilities for the common citizens are extremely limited. According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), as of 2017, there was one hospital bed for every 1,196 individuals in the country (BBS, 2019). The Bangladesh Health Facility Survey 2017—conducted by National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT), Associates for Community and Population Research (ACPR), and Improved Coordination for

International Climate Finance (ICICF)—shows that among the healthcare facilities in Bangladesh, 5.1 percent had emergency transport, 21.5 percent had alcohol-based disinfectants, 27.5 percent had medical masks, 28 percent had all basic equipment, 34.5 percent had lab facilities, 43.1 percent had regular electricity, 55.1 percent had soap and water, 83.7 percent had paracetamol oral suspension, 86.3 percent had thermometer, and 90.1 percent had improved water source, as of 2017.

Apart from the lack of infrastructure and equipment, healthcare facilities in Bangladesh are also not staffed with adequate numbers of healthcare service providers. As of 2018, there was one registered physician for every 1,581 individuals in the country (BBS, 2019).



A woman taking advice from physicians, in hazmat suits, at the ticket counter of the capital's Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, on March 23, 2020.

The report by NIPORT, ACPR, and ICICF (2018) also shows that among the healthcare facilities in Bangladesh, 28 percent had specialists, 59.1 percent had general practitioners or medical officers, and 79.7 percent had nurses, as of 2017.

The level of healthcare awareness among the general population was also found to be very low in Bangladesh. For example, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends washing hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water in order to kill viruses such as the coronavirus that may be on people's hands. According to Bangladesh's National Hygiene Survey 2018, only 15 percent people were aware of the need for washing hands using soap and water before feeding a baby, 36 percent people were aware of the need for washing hands

before preparing or serving food, 40 percent people were aware of the need for washing hands before eating, and 55 percent people were aware of the need for washing hands after defecation.

In order to address the health emergency posed by COVID-19, a range of short and longer term measures are required in the healthcare sector.

In the short term, public health awareness messages must be communicated more clearly and frequently. Wide dissemination of information on the nature of the disease and its health impacts has to be ensured. People are yet to comprehend the full horrors of COVID-19. There has been initial neglect from the relevant policymakers in taking this seriously and taking immediate action. People were not

informed about the importance of good hygiene and sanitisation practices, living in self-isolation after returning from abroad or having cold, fever and cough symptoms, and above all, maintaining social distance since the outbreak of the virus. Unfortunately, many policymakers seemed to be in a state of denial at the initial phase. However, we have now observed far more seriousness on the part of the government. Drastic steps have been taken for movement of people and moving towards a wider lockdown.

Second, the current situation demands more allocation for addressing the pandemic immediately. Resource allocation should be increased in a focused and targeted way. New financial channels from foreign sources to support health-related actions should be

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Second, the current situation demands more allocation for addressing the pandemic immediately. Resource allocation should be increased in a focused and targeted way. New financial channels from foreign sources to support health-related actions should be

mobilised. These should include a flexible procurement system for medical supplies. The government's move to extend tax rebate on imports of all essential medical supplies required for confronting the COVID-19 challenge is commendable.

Third, given the limited number of hospitals, necessary make-shift healthcare facilities should be arranged at district and upazila levels. Of course, these should be adequately equipped for treatment and health support.

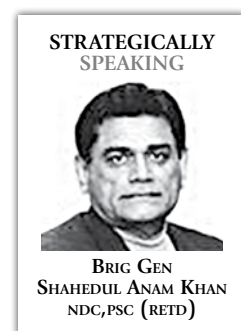
Fourth, all medical colleges, nursing institutions and other health establishments and voluntary organisations should be mobilised to extend their support towards addressing the COVID-19 emergency. However, they should be adequately provided with personal protective equipment (PPE). It may be emphasised here that health professionals are equally vulnerable to COVID-19. Italy is a case in point, where the highest number of doctors died compared to other countries due to the shortage of essential medical supplies and equipment.

In the longer term, sufficient investment in the healthcare sector is critical. Unfortunately, years of neglect of this sector by the policymakers has left it in a poor state. The healthcare system faces multifaceted challenges including lack of public health facilities, scarcity of skilled workforce and inadequate financial resource allocation. The WHO estimates that as of 2015, out-of-pocket expenditure on healthcare in Bangladesh was 71.8 percent of the total personal expenditure, which is the highest in South Asia.

While we observe a huge investment in physical infrastructure, soft infrastructure has always been neglected in the country. Thus, allocation for health as a share of total budget has fallen from 5.1 percent in the budget of FY2019 to 4.9 percent in the budget of FY20. Since 2017, the share of health budget as percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has remained at 0.9 percent level. This is much lower than the WHO's benchmark of 5 percent of GDP. Finally, global cooperation is essential for public health. In poor countries with high population density, a pandemic can have unprecedented impacts on the people's health and livelihood. It can worsen the poverty situation and lower the human development situation. The COVID-19 experience shows that no country can fight such a crisis alone. Therefore, all countries should come forward to collaborate to overcome this deadly disease.

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We have enough to destroy but not enough to save lives



BRIG GEN SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN, NDC, PSC (RETD)

THE COVID-19 pandemic has once again exposed our soft underbelly, particularly of the richest and the most militarily powerful countries in the world. The outbreak has revealed how ill-prepared the world is to fight a disease whose onset was entirely unexpected. However, it is not so much the inability to produce an effective antidote for the virus but the failure to provide the necessary healthcare service to those afflicted by it—the most susceptible and vulnerable among them being the elderly and those with compromised immune systems—that has put in sharp contrast expenditures of governments for military preparedness compared to appropriate expenditures on the preparedness for a health emergency, such as the one we are facing now.

It's a war, a new kind of it—a world war of sorts, one may say—since the entire international system is at the point of a breakdown. But the frontline fighters—doctors, nurses and other medical workers—do not have the proper equipment or, if at all, not in adequate quantity, to ward off the virus and prevent its propagation. The basic medical supplies in countries most affected by it are under tremendous strain, e.g. Italy and Germany and even the US.

As COVID-19 wreaks havoc on its healthcare system, people's normal lives and on its economy, the US—possessing the biggest economy and the largest military apparatus in the world, with its mighty presence in hundreds of military bases for the sake of US national security and national interest—has shown how ill-equipped and ill-armed it is to thwart this new enemy. In the face of the pandemic, its entire system has fallen short.

The US case and indeed that of the European countries demonstrate that while trillions of dollars are being spent in the name of national security and national interest, it all turns out to be a big cipher when it comes to the question of actual security of the people vulnerable to a situation like the one they are facing today. In the US, the hospitals are already strained and some of them are

at the tipping point. Reportedly, in the US, the coronavirus could result in 10 to 34 million hospital visits, according to the Harvard Global Health Institute. About one-fifth of those patients will require intensive care. The following data is equally interesting, not to say discouraging. According to the NYT, with 2.8 hospital beds per 1,000 people, the United States has fewer than Italy's 3.2 beds per 1,000, China's 4.3 and South Korea's 12.3. The estimated 45,000 intensive care unit beds in the country would be swamped by even a moderate outbreak of about 200,000 in need of ICU admission.

The situation is so serious that the US

with news about the deadliest disease to visit the planet in the last hundred years, a significant news report about the world production and trade in arms has gone totally unnoticed. It shows the trillions of dollars in legal arms trade—the largest exporters during 2015-19 being the United States, Russia, France, Germany and China, taking credit for the 5.5 percent jump in arms sales over the preceding half-decade. The US not only leads in arms exports, it is also the world's leading arms manufacturer with the largest defence budget. The approved 2019 Department of Defense discretionary budget is USD 686.1 billion. It has a USD 617 billion for the base budget; the remaining USD 69 billion

in others' lands, and in keeping local conflicts alive so that the arms industry can rake in billions of dollars yearly, with countries setting aside billions of dollars for war funding, of all things. And no one talks about the biological arsenal held by some countries (16 of them are known to have BW). Shockingly but not surprisingly, most of it becomes irrelevant, totally useless, in the face of an enemy of a different kind. It seems ironic that hospitals in the US are facing the prospect of shortage not only of respirators and ventilators; fast-moving items like testing reagents, swabs and masks are also running out. And that is the picture in the countries most affected by it.

Time has come to recast our minds to who our actual enemy is. It seems like a cruel joke when the US offers to help Iran fight the pandemic at a time when Iran is facing the most stringent US sanctions. In fact, not only not those sanctions have been revoked, a more stringent sanction has been imposed last week in the midst of the pandemic, thus stunting Iran's efforts to import the lifesaving medicines and equipment it needs to fight the pandemic and save lives.

One could ask if it is feasible to prepare for an unanticipated health emergency. What is the datum level of adequacy? Can one prepare a hundred thousand ventilators and keep it ready for some unknown future health crisis? There may be some merit in these observations, but surely there can be little excuse for the basic medical supplies running out so quickly without any arrangement for prompt replacement. The question is, if tons of accoutrements of war can be stockpiled for a war that might never occur in even the distant future, why can't the fast-moving medical supplies be stored as strategic reserves, not only in the US but all other countries?

COVID-19 has come as a catastrophe but it has carried some important lessons with it for all of us—for all countries large and small, powerful and not-so-powerful. One of them is to prioritise our budget expenditures. Catering for medical contingencies of such a large scale will carry a retrospective cost, but that is an investment we must make so as not to pay dearly in future costs—particularly in human lives. People's health and wellbeing is the best guarantee for national interest and national security.

Brig Gen Shahedul Anam Khan, ndc, psc (Retd), is a former Associate Editor of The Daily Star.



World leaders have invested heavily in arms sales and production, whereas they should have invested in healthcare and the wellbeing of their citizens.

government is literally scouring the globe looking for medical supplies, according to the New York governor. We are also informed that healthcare workers from Oklahoma City to Minneapolis have sought donations of protective equipment. And the staff at a Detroit hospital have begun creating homemade face masks for workers. The United States has appealed for donations of respirator masks to combat a shortage of the lifesaving equipment. European countries, which have better healthcare than most of the world, are also suffering from the acute shortage of medical equipment, specially ventilators.

But while the media is being swamped

has been set aside for “war funding”.

The reference to arms trade is to situate in perspective the problem that the world is grappling with in terms of human security at the moment. The rich and the powerful states are trying to outdo their adversaries and prospective enemies by spending trillions of dollars in perfecting the killing machines and investing in human resources to operate those, in conducting wars thousands of miles away from their own shores for decades, threatening often to blow the enemy to smithereens, in maintaining huge nuclear arsenal as deterrent, thereby encouraging the proliferation of conventional weapons, in maintaining hundreds of military bases

36 HOURS, 80 KM

Long walk home for Indian labourers amid coronavirus lockdown

The afternoon sun is blazing in Uttar Pradesh's capital Lucknow. The city police have enforced a strict lockdown and only essential services are allowed. The police made announcements all night after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi last evening ordered citizens to stay at home for 21 days, in a special televised address to the nation.

But extremely compelling and worrying circumstances have forced 20-year-old Awadhesh Kumar to abandon caution, risk police anger and be on the streets.

Awadhesh started walking from his factory in Unnao to his village in Barabanki, 80 km away, on Tuesday evening. He will reach only by early Thursday, only if he is not stopped by cops as he cuts through sealed state borders.

This nearly 36-hour journey will be almost non-stop, with few breaks. Keeping Awadhesh company are at least 20 other men, young and old, all workers at the same factory.

"I don't want to do this but I have no option," says Awadhesh, asked about Modi's appeal to migrant labourers to stay put instead of heading home, with the assurance that states will take care of their needs.

"But how could I have stayed? I work at a steel fabrication company in Unnao. I stay wherever they put us up. Last night the management asked me to vacate. They said we could not stay here. So what option do I have but head home. There is no transport. So some of us from the same village decided to walk it," Awadhesh tells NDTV.

The unprecedented shutdown to check the spread of coronavirus has left lakhs in the unorganized sector without any shelter, transport or means to earn. The government has promised that no one will go hungry, but these migrant workers have been left without



Stranded Labourers Walk For 80 kms

even a place to stay, overnight.

Rajmal, in his 50s, is also in the group. "There is some food back at our village but my earnings are what keep my family going. I have heard of the UP government's Rs 1,000 monthly payout plan for people like me but I am not registered anywhere. No one has come to me. It looks bleak for people like us," says Rajmal.

The group trudges on, carrying a bag with clothes, water and some biscuits. Towels are wrapped around their heads as protection from the sun. There is no protection from the virus that has infected over 560 in India and left nine dead. Worldwide, coronavirus or COVID-19 has caused over 17,000 deaths.

The next three weeks could only get worse as these labourers continue on their long walk home.

India is likely to agree an economic stimulus package of more than 1.5 trillion rupees (\$19.6 billion) to fight a downturn in the country, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters. The plan has not yet been finalised. The package, which could be announced by the end of the week, will be used to put money directly into the accounts of more than 100 million poor and to support businesses hit the hardest by the lockdown, the sources said.

SOURCE: NDTV ONLINE



A migrant worker holding her baby cries after she missed to receive free food outside Howrah railway station after India ordered a 21-day nationwide lockdown to limit the spreading of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Kolkata, India, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Doctors are 'incarnations of God': Indian PM Modi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday described doctors and other health staff at the frontlines of the fight against coronavirus as "incarnations of God" and said those harassing them would face police action. "In this hour of crisis, those in white coats are the incarnation of God. Today they are saving lives, putting their own lives in danger," the Prime Minister said, interacting via video link with the people of his constituency Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh on the coronavirus crisis. To a question on the harassment of doctors, nurses and other staff handling coronavirus patients, the PM said he ordered all state police chiefs to take the most strict action against those harassing them.

Alarm as US, UK teen die of coronavirus

Two healthy teens in US and UK died of coronavirus raising doubts on the narrative that the virus is not deadly for youths. A British 21-year-old woman with no pre-existing conditions has died from coronavirus, The Sun newspaper reported yesterday. In California, officials on Tuesday pleaded for young people to heed safety warnings over the virus after a teen tested positive and died. Multiple studies have found the virus disproportionately affects older patients and those with underlying conditions. A recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found juveniles "appear to have milder" illness, with no intensive care admissions or deaths in the US as of March 16. Only two known cases of minors dying from the disease in China, where the virus emerged late last year, have been recorded.

Quarantine dodgers may get 7-year-jail in Russia

Russian lawmakers have proposed imposing severe punishments -- including up to seven years in prison -- for people breaking coronavirus quarantine rules. Legislation due to be discussed yesterday foresees fines of between 500,000 rubles (\$6,400) and two million rubles (\$25,700) for violating a quarantine. If a quarantine dodger were found guilty of causing a person's death or intentionally infecting many people, they would face up to five years in prison, and up to seven years if two or more people died. The Duma will consider the proposed legislation next Tuesday. Russia, which has a population of 144 million people, reported 658 cases of the coronavirus as of Wednesday. Yesterday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said the public vote on his constitutional reforms must be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic and declared next week a public holiday.

SOURCE: AFP

Whole of humanity at risk

Warns UN as pandemic puts one third of world's population in lockdown

AGENCIES

The coronavirus pandemic is threatening the entire human race, the United Nations warned yesterday as it launched a humanitarian response plan featuring a \$2 billion appeal for the world's poorest people.

"COVID-19 is threatening the whole of humanity -- and the whole of humanity must fight back. Global action and solidarity are crucial. Individual country responses are not going to be enough," Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in announcing the initiative.

The UN plan is designed to last from April to December -- suggesting the UN does not see the crisis ending any time soon.

The appeal came as more than 1.3 billion Indians went into lockdown yesterday, leaving a third of the planet now under orders to stay at home, as the United States vowed to spend \$2 trillion to counter the economic harm of the coronavirus.

Europe remains at the heart of the epidemic, with first Italy and now Spain's death toll overtaking that of China, while Britain's Prince Charles became the latest prominent figure to test positive for the COVID-19 disease.

Coronavirus cases are also spreading in the Middle East, where Iran's death toll topped 2,000 yesterday, and in Africa, where Mali joined

all seven of its neighbours in declaring its first cases -- two nationals who arrived home recently from France.

Government policies and the capacity for virus testing vary widely around the world, so the true extent of the pandemic is difficult to estimate, but more than 427,940 cases have been declared in 181 countries and territories since the epidemic first emerged in China in December.

What is in less doubt is the number of deaths, with at least 19,246 deaths attributed to the new

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Indians race for supplies as lockdown bites

Prince Charles tests positive

China reports no new domestic cases

US agrees on \$2 trillion rescue plan

Spain overtakes China virus toll with 3,434 deaths

coronavirus strain since the outbreak began.

The economic damage of the virus -- and associated lockdowns -- could also be devastating, with fears of a worldwide recession worse than the financial meltdown that occurred over a decade ago.

But financial markets soared as the US Senate and the White House agreed a stimulus package worth roughly 10 percent of the entire American economy, an injection Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said represented a "wartime level of investment".

India yesterday woke up to a sweeping lockdown of its 1.3 billion people, one of the world's most ambitious efforts to fight the coronavirus. India has identified 562 confirmed cases of the disease, which has so far killed nine people in the South Asian nation.

Yesterday, Indians crowded grocery stores and chemists in a struggle for essential. People in the key cities of Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru rushed to stock up after Modi decreed the shutdown in a speech televised nationwide, barely four hours before it took effect.

In China, where the new virus emerged last year, authorities loosened tough rules on the 50 million people in Hubei province yesterday after a months-long lockdown as the country reported no new domestic cases. The provincial capital Wuhan -- the ground zero of the outbreak -- will allow residents to leave from April 8.

The medical situation is still critical in Europe, where Spain joined hardest-hit Italy in surpassing even China's toll after 738 people died over the past 24 hours, bringing deaths in the country to 3,434.



IS ATTACK IN AFGHANISTAN

Gunmen in kill 25 at Sikh complex

REUTERS, Kabul

Gunmen and suicide bombers raided a Sikh religious complex in the Afghan capital of Kabul yesterday, killing 25 people before security forces killed all of the attackers, the government said.

The Islamic State militant group claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement. Sikhs have been the target of attack by Islamist militants before in South Asia. Their community in Afghanistan numbers fewer than 300 families.

Several hours after the early morning attack was launched, Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said an operation by the security forces was over and all of the attackers had been killed. He did not say how many.

The ministry said 25 people who had been in the religious compound had been killed, eight wounded and 80 rescued. Narender Singh Khalsa, a member of parliament who represents the tiny Sikh community, said he had reports that up to 200 people had been trapped in the temple during the attack.

Human rights activists and countries including the United States, India and Pakistan condemned the attack.



A homeless man feeds pigeons at the border between Italy and The Vatican (Rear) in Rome yesterday during a lockdown imposed to halt spread of new coronavirus pandemic.

PHOTO: AFP

Turkey charges 20 Saudis over Khashoggi murder

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey has charged 20 suspects including two former aides to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman over the 2018 murder of Riyadh critic Jamal Khashoggi, prosecutors said yesterday.

Prosecutors accuse Saudi Arabia's deputy intelligence chief Ahmed al-Assiri and the royal court's media czar Saud al-Qahatani of leading the operation and giving orders to a Saudi hit team.

Khashoggi, 59, a commentator who wrote for The Washington Post, was killed after he entered the Saudi consulate on October 2, 2018, to obtain paperwork for his wedding to Turkish fiancée Hatice Cengiz.

Turkey carried out its own investigation into the murder after being unhappy with Saudi explanations.

The Istanbul prosecutor's office said in a statement that Assiri and Qahatani, along with 18 others, were charged with "instigating the deliberate and monstrous killing, causing torment".

They face life in jail if convicted.

The Turkish prosecutor said a trial in absentia would be opened against the 20 suspects but did not give a date.

The CIA, UN special envoy Agnes Callamard and Turkey have directly linked Crown Prince Mohammed to the killing, a charge the kingdom vehemently denies.

WHY MALARIA PILLS BEING USED?

Older malaria drugs are being studied, and in some cases used, to treat or try to prevent infection with the new coronavirus, even though there is no firm evidence to show they are effective. Studies are underway in a number of countries, including China, France, India and the United States, to see whether the pills - chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine - may have a role to play in the rapidly spreading pandemic.

US President Donald Trump has touted the malaria drugs as "a game changer." But the Food and Drug Administration and other health experts said trials must first ensure the medicines are effective and safe for use in this patient population.

WHY ARE MALARIA DRUGS UNDER CONSIDERATION?

Because of lack of proven treatment, the Covid-19 patients are largely receiving only supportive care such as breathing assistance. On its website, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says some US clinicians have reported anecdotal use of hydroxychloroquine at different doses. Chloroquine is a synthetic form of quinine, which is found on the bark of the cinchona plant.

Both drugs, which have serious side effects if used incorrectly, are used to combat malaria, which is caused by a parasite spread through mosquito bites, because they interrupt its ability to digest a host's blood cells. Scientists have detailed biochemical properties of chloroquine that indicate it could be used against some viral infections. These include direct antiviral effects, such as blocking steps needed by certain viruses to replicate, and its ability to suppress production and release of proteins involved in inflammatory complications of several viral diseases. In addition to malaria, hydroxychloroquine is also used to treat lupus and rheumatoid arthritis.

WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY?

Data has begun to emerge from some coronavirus trials, but most

information so far is preliminary. A French team last week said initial results from a 24-patient trial of hydroxychloroquine showed that 25% of patients given the drug still carried the coronavirus after six days, compared with 90% of patients given a placebo. But the trial is small and results on patient outcomes are still awaited. Chinese researchers last month reported trial results showing that chloroquine treatment of COVID-19 patients had clinical and virologic benefit versus a comparison group. It has been added as a recommended treatment for the illness in China, where the virus first emerged in December. This week, the Journal of Zhejiang University reported disappointing results from a 30-patient Shanghai study of hydroxychloroquine. It showed the drug worked no better than standard care for patients with COVID-19.

PRESCRIPTION ONLY!

Health officials caution that no one should be taking these drugs to treat or prevent coronavirus infection without medical supervision and a prescription. In Arizona, a man died and his wife was hospitalized after taking a nonmedical form of chloroquine used to fight parasites in aquariums.

SOURCE: REUTERS

Social media sees virus solidarity bloom in UK

More than 170,000 volunteer to help NHS

AGENCIES

Help groups on social media are connecting people with those most in need during the coronavirus lockdown, fostering a community spirit often neglected in the capital's fast-paced life.

Londoner Stephanie Cheung, 31, is one of those chipping in, leaving a bag of groceries on the doorstep of a stranger in her neighbourhood after getting the call on Facebook.

Many more people have found themselves in similar need over recent days, having been ordered to stay home if elderly, experiencing coronavirus symptoms or suffering from serious underlying health issues.

Along with more than 7,000 other people, Cheung is a member of "Hackney Covid 19 Mutual Aid", in northeast London. Many other similar groups are flourishing around the country on social networks, set up to help solve problems posed by the pandemic, primarily to the elderly or frail.

Meanwhile, more than 170,000 people have signed up to help Britain's National Health Service tackle the coronavirus outbreak just hours after a request for a quarter of a million volunteers.

Britain had called for 250,000 volunteers to deliver food and medicines, provide transport for patients and supplies, and to telephone those who are becoming lonely because of self isolation. The system aims to reach up to 1.5 million people who are "shielding" - keeping themselves at home for 12 weeks under government advice to protect those with serious health conditions.

The death toll from coronavirus in the United Kingdom jumped on Tuesday by 87 to a total of 422 - the biggest daily increase since the crisis began.

Trump seeks virus kits from S Korea

AFP, Seoul

US President Donald Trump has requested novel coronavirus test kits from South Korea, his counterpart Moon Jae-in said yesterday. The South was once the hardest-hit country outside China, where the virus first emerged, but appears to have brought its outbreak under control thanks to a huge testing and contact-tracing effort. By midnight on Tuesday more than 367,000 people in the South had been tested.

Thailand bans entry to foreigners

REUTERS, Bangkok

The Thai government banned entry for all non-resident foreigners yesterday but held off on restricting people's movement inside the country as the government prepared to roll out emergency measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus. A state of emergency will take effect from midnight local time (1700 GMT) until April 30. Thailand has recorded 107 new coronavirus cases yesterday, bringing the known total to 934. Four people have died.

Libya reports first coronavirus case

AFP, Tripoli

Libya has reported its first case of the novel coronavirus, a particular source of concern in the North African country where civil war has badly degraded the public healthcare system. Libya has been mired in chaos since the 2011 overthrow of longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi and is divided between the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNA) and forces loyal to eastern-based military strongman Khalifa Haftar.

Fakir Alamgir recalls his journey towards independence

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

Ekushey Padak awardee and Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra singer Fakir Alamgir is one of the leading exponents of Gono Sangeet -- the songs of the masses, in the country. He played an important role as a member of Kranti Shilpi Gosthi and Gono Shilpi Gosthi, during the mass upsurge in 1969. On the Independence Day of Bangladesh, he looks back on 1971.

The days of March 1971 will always be unforgettable for me. After the Language Movement of 1952 and the 1960s, we were determined for revolution, and soon enough, the mass uprising and the Liberation War followed. I am a freedom fighter. At the time of Bangabandhu's iconic speech on 7th March 1971, my peers and I were college goers.

We did something remarkable on March 23, 1971. On that day, people were throwing out Pakistani flags and putting up Bangladeshi flags in different areas and neighborhoods; so, my peers and I did the same. I put up flags of Bangladesh in my neighbourhood, Khilgaon. It was a moment of pride for us. From March 24, we began different cultural activities through Kranti Shilpi



Gosthi and Gono Shilpi Gosthi, which were well received by the public. We continued our cultural programmes till March 25.

I don't think any of us were prepared for what was coming then. Brutalities

and cowardly attacks were carried out by the Pakistani occupation forces on our people that night. We were unarmed. I was woken up by loud gunshots.

Somehow, we managed to go out to Ulon, Badda, and stayed there. Curfews

were imposed on March 26 and 27. After those were lifted, I set out for hometown, Faridpur, from Maora, on foot. I contacted many of my friends in Faridpur once I got there after my tiring journey. Soon, we started training for the war, which was a momentous step for us.

In July, I set out for Kolkata. On the way, we witnessed thousands of deaths. Kolkata had already established Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra by this time. I stayed at Kankurgachi in northeast Kolkata.

As I started working in Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, I grew close to Kamal Lohani, Abdul Jabber, Apel Mahmud, Kaderi Kibria and many other noted artists. My songs, which aired live on the wartime radio station, were a huge source of inspiration for those at the battle grounds. We began travelling to different places around Kolkata with our music. We were clear in our intentions to work for an independent Bangladesh.

I remember we were performing a chorus rendition of the song, *Bijoy Nishan Urche Oi*, when we received the news of Bangladesh's independence. Needless to say, it was an emotional moment for us, and we were all weeping out of sheer joy.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Renowned film director Motiur Rahman Panu passes away

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Renowned film director and producer Motiur Rahman Panu breathed his last on March 24, at his house in Uttara. He was suffering from old age complications. Bangladesh Cholochitro Porichalok Samiti and Bangladesh Cholochitro Projojok Samiti expressed their condolences regarding the director's demise.

Born on December 31, 1939, at Bogra, the director's film career started in 1964. His directorial debut film, *Harano Manik*, was released in 1979.

Panu worked as an assistant director with several film directors such as Akbar Kabir Pintu, Syed Awal and Babul Chowdhury among others at the start of his career.

His directorial career started in the eighties though he started producing films from an early stage. Panu produced *Beder Meye Josna*, the most commercially successful film of the country.

Critically acclaimed film *Moner Majhe Tumi*, featuring Reaz and Shabnur was directed and produced by Panu. Directed by Salahuddin Lavlu and produced by Motiur Rahman Panu, *Molla Barir Bou* was another commercially successful film. *Apon Bhai*, *Nag Mahal*, *Shahosh*, *Man Morjada* and *Tiger Number One*, among others, are films directed and produced by the veteran.

Poverty never derails 'Dotara Pagol' Suklal Roy

S DILIP ROY, FROM LALMONIRHAT

Suklal Roy, 37, is known as *Dotara Pagol* in his village, where the residents are in awe of his skills with the instrument. The artiste lives in the village Kalishan of Kamlabari union, at Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat.

At the age of seven, Suklal fell in love with the mellifluous tone of the dotara. A motorcycle mechanic by profession, he often forgets about his job, moving from village to village with his instrument, singing his heart out with various folk songs. He is especially adept at Bhawaiya.

Often struggling to make a living because of his erratic lifestyle, his wife and two school-going children often have to struggle to feed themselves. Yet, it does not bother Suklal, who considers music to be all that matters.

He teaches the instrument to the children of the village, free of charge. "I have no money and maybe never will, but I will never give up my Dotara. I want to play it till my last breath," said an emotional Suklal.



PHOTO: STAR

Udichi's precautionary measures to help fight Coronavirus



PHOTO: COURTESY

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigosthi produced hand sanitisers in their office premises, and distributed them among the labourers in Dhaka city recently in the Press Club and Paltan areas. General Secretary Jamshed Anwar Topon, members of the Editorial Board, Arif Noor and Mizanur Rahman Sumon among others were present at the time.

Districts branches of Udichi have started various activities across the country, such as distributing hand sanitisers, awareness campaigns and relief distribution among the working labourers.

Members of the Udichi have made hand sanitisers at their offices on Topkhana Road

since the start of the coronavirus outbreak. According to Udichi, they will continue hand sanitiser delivery and awareness activities as long as these poor and helpless people are working to earn their daily bread. Udichi is distributing food and other necessary items to the poor and underprivileged workers across the country.

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigosthi was established by Satyen Sen and Ranesh Das Gupta on October 29 in 1968, in the wake of the mass uprising against autocracy. The cultural organisation aims to raise awareness through activities comprised of music, theatre, dance, fine arts and literature. The organisation has branches across the country and foreign branches in the USA, England, Australia, Canada and France.

Artistes' music video instills hope amidst quarantine

The whole world is going through a crisis, as the novel coronavirus disrupts our day-to-day lives. The only way to prevent this contagious virus from spreading is to stay indoors. With 'Stay Home, Stay Safe', people all around the world has quarantined themselves in order to save humanity.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Music has the power to bring together people to fight for a common cause in times of crisis and music artistes are doing so in the confinements of their home. Several Bangladeshi artistes lend their voices to create awareness in these troubling times. Gaan Bangla

Television's Managing director and Music Director Kaushik Hossain Taposh played the piano to the tune of Rabindra Sangeet *Anondoloke Mongolaloke Satya Sundoro*, while Akhi Alamgir, Oishee, Shamim Hasan, Shan Malik, Priyo and other artistes participated.

"Music expresses the infinite power of true love. In any situation,

music can be reached easily at any distance. Stay home, stay safe," the video was recently released on Gaan Bangla TV's official Facebook page along with this concluding message.

Bappa Mazumder, Hridoy Khan and Khayam Sanu Sandhi, among others, are singing to create awareness on social media from their home.



Saudi reports first coronavirus death as infections spike

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia on Tuesday reported its first death from the new coronavirus as the total number of infections spiked to 767, according to the health ministry.

An Afghan resident in the western city of Medina died from the virus, the ministry said, while reporting 205 new infections -- the biggest jump in the kingdom in a single day.

Saudi Arabia, which has reported the highest number of infections in the Gulf, began implementing a nationwide dusk-to-dawn curfew on Monday to limit the spread of the deadly COVID-19 illness.

The Arab world's biggest economy has also closed down cinemas, malls and restaurants, halted flights and suspended the year-round umrah pilgrimage as it steps up efforts to contain the virus.

King Salman warned on Thursday of a "more difficult" fight ahead against the virus, as the kingdom faces the double blow of virus-led shutdowns and crashing oil prices.

Last week, the kingdom unveiled stimulus measures amounting to 120 billion riyals (\$32 billion) to support businesses and said it plans to raise borrowing to 50 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).

Similar restrictions and stimulus measures have been reported by other countries in the Gulf, where more than 2,100 coronavirus infections have been reported so far.

In the neighbouring United Arab Emirates, authorities said that a two-week suspension of all passenger flights and transits announced a day earlier would begin at 11:59 pm (1959 GMT) on Tuesday.

Dubai's international airport is the busiest in the world for international passengers, with 86.4 million travellers passing through last year.

Prices

FROM PAGE 1
novel coronavirus.

Operations of all passenger trains, launches, buses, minibuses, CNC-run auto-rickshaws, and domestic flights have been suspended since Tuesday.

While visiting Mohammadpur Town Hall market, a correspondent saw long queues of cars and huge crowds of people buying daily essentials.

"It seemed people rushed to the market, like it was an Eid holiday," said a vendor at the market.

"Taking advantage of the huge demand, prices of many items were increased many times," said Mohammad Ajam, a resident of Tajmahal Road in Mohammadpur, while talking to The Daily Star.

"The crowd in the market is huge today [yesterday], even more than any occasion, like Eid. However, it is less than what it was the last few days. Vendors have taken this opportunity to sell all products at higher prices," he added.

In different kitchen markets, it was seen that people were defying healthcare professionals' advice of maintaining social distancing.

Although many of them were seen wearing facemasks, vendors didn't bother to wear any protective gear, posing health risks to themselves and their customers.

While keeping several bags full of kitchen and other essential items in his car, Anisur Rahman said he would not come out of his house in the next 10 days, unless there was an emergency.

"There is no guarantee when the situation will get back to normal," he said.

People were seen thronging other markets as well, including Jigatola, Karwan Bazar, and Mohammadpur Krishi Market, to buy daily essentials ahead of the 10-day holiday. However, they did not bother to maintain social or physical distancing.

While talking to a correspondent, Shariful Alam, a private company official, said he went to the market wearing a facemask.

"But so many people are roaming around in the market, which poses health risks as we don't know whether any of us are a carrier of coronavirus."

While visiting different markets, it was seen that price of different kinds of rice, including Nazirshah, Miniket and Paijam, had increased by Tk 8-10 a kg within a week.

Price of Miniket rice was Tk 58-60 a kg, which was Tk 50 last week.

Price of each kg of potatoes has increased by Tk 6, price of ginger by Tk 15-20, and garlic by Tk 10-15.

Prices of a few items including onion, however, decreased by Tk 10 to Tk 15 per kg.

Prices of most vegetables, however, doubled.

"I came to Karwan Bazar hoping that prices will be cheaper here than other markets. But prices of vegetables is costly here as well," said Tania Ahmed, a resident of the capital's Tejaon area.

People were also seen buying different household items and toiletries, including soap, bleaching powder and hand sanitizer at high prices.



Afghan security forces keep watch near the site of an attack in Sikh religious complex in Kabul yesterday. At least 25 people were killed in the attack on the complex where worshippers were offering morning prayers, the latest brutal assault claimed by the Islamic State group.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Zero incidents of virus transmission

FROM PAGE 1

A study from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), UCLA, and Princeton University scientists published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine showed the varying stability of the coronavirus on different surfaces. Across aerosols, plastic, stainless steel, copper, and cardboard, the lowest levels of coronavirus transmission possibilities were via copper because of its atomic makeup and cardboard — presumably because of its porous nature.

Emphasising that the virus spreads when transmitted by aerosols, researchers duplicated these droplets and measured how long they stayed infectious on surfaces.

The coronavirus lasts longest on smooth, non-porous surfaces. Researchers found the virus was still viable after three days on plastic and stainless steel.

The virus was not viable after 24 hours on cardboard — and the good news here, like plastic and stainless steel, is lower and lower potency when exposed to air.

For newsprint, which is much more porous than cardboard, virus viability is presumably even shorter.

Cornell University infectious disease expert Gary Whitaker told The Washington Post it typically takes "an army of viruses going in" to break through the natural defenses of a human being -- meaning surface

transmission is a low likelihood of transmission.

A virologist at John Innes Centre George Lomonosoff, who uses molecular biology to understand the assembly and properties of viruses in the United Kingdom, debunked the idea of transmission through newsprint: "Newspapers are pretty sterile because of the way they are printed and the process they've been through. Traditionally, people have eaten fish and chips out of them for that very reason. So all of the ink and the print makes them actually quite sterile. The chances of that are infinitesimal."

HOW PUBLISHERS ARE REACTING AND COMMUNICATING
News publishers (internationally) are reacting in different ways to concerns about newsprint.

Home delivery: On a basic level, they are providing hand sanitisers and wipes to home delivery staff and leaving newspapers outside buildings.

Single-copy distributors: I'm hearing stories of publishers providing gloves, masks, and sanitisers to newsstands, distributors, and street sellers ostensibly for the protection of its workers -- yet I suspect equally to reassure the public when buying print newspapers and magazines.

Notices about print processes: The Wall Street Journal put a fixture in its print edition starting this week referencing its paper production

process is mostly automated and the risk is low.

Don't forget our replica: Out of an abundance of caution, publishers are emphasising their digital replica services for those still worried about newsprint -- something already being promoted to hotels.

In other words, in addition to the scientific research about porous surfaces and the particular sterility of newsprint, publishers are taking extra steps to ensure print newspapers are touched by no unprotected hands by the time the product reaches the customer.

What's not clear to me is whether it's best to proactively communicate to customers this "non-transmission via print" news. There are a few incidents of publishers sending reassuring communications to readers -- only to see cancelled print subscriptions as a result. I can only assume that readers had never thought about transmission until the publisher brought it up. Instead, I'm hearing publishers developing talking points for when readers ask about print transmission.

(This is a concise version of the original article that was published on The Earl Blog.)

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A mad scramble to get home

FROM PAGE 16

to collect food, medicine or receive treatment.

Besides, the health ministry on many occasions asked people to maintain social distance.

But soon after the announcement of the public holiday on Monday, a huge number of city dwellers started leaving the capital using buses, trains, and launches, forcing the government to change its earlier decision not to shut down public transport completely.

Experts fear the government decision to close down offices, without adequate measures to make people stay indoors, could further help spread the virus throughout the country.

"The objective with which the government closed offices was not successful. The virus could spread across the country, as so many people, who left for homes, crammed in buses, trains and launches," Prof Nazrul Islam, virologist and former vice chancellor at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

SITUATION WORSENS
Pressure of passengers mounted on roads yesterday due to the suspension of operations of train and launch services, said Khondaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association.

Thousands of people left Dhaka, ignoring the risk of being infected with the coronavirus, Enayet, also the owner of ENA Transport Ltd, told this correspondent yesterday.

He added that they would suspend bus operations from today as per the government directive.

Apart from long-route buses, people travelled in local buses and even in pickups and trucks, turning the situation similar to Eid rush, transport operators said.

An acute traffic jam was created on the Dhaka-Tangail highway at Mirzapur and Kalihati upazilas of Tangail for 16 hours from Tuesday evening, causing immense sufferings of the home-bound people as well as transport workers.

The gridlock on the highway that connects Dhaka with northern districts started to ease after 11:00am yesterday, police said.

On the other hand, most of the passengers were travelling without wearing adequate protective gears to keep themselves safe from coronavirus infection.

Except the huge pressure of vehicles, poor condition of the highway at several points and construction work of an underpass at Kodim Dhalla made the gridlock acute, said Mohammad Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Gorai Highway Police Station.

8 killed in road crashes

FROM PAGE 16

All of them were sitting on top of the salt sacks, he said, adding that many of them jumped off the truck immediately before the collision and landed in a roadside paddy field.

But the truck also veered off the road after crash and ended up in the same field, killing four people on the spot, Najir said.

The injured are currently receiving treatment at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, one man was killed and four others injured in Sherpur upazila.

The dead, Mridul Hossain, 22, was

the son of Rafiqul Islam from Kechra village in Joypurhat's Panchbibi upazila.

The accident took place when a bus and truck coming from opposite directions collided around 5:30pm in Mohipur Jantala area on Dhaka-Rangpur highway, police said.

In a separate accident in the upazila, a man was killed in crash between a lorry and microbus in Betgaru area on Dhaka-Rangpur highway.

The microbus driver, Nahid Hasan, 35, died on the spot, police said, adding that he was from Narsingdi's Shibpur upazila.

Free Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 16

establishing socialism in Bangladesh and presents his nationalisation scheme. The prime minister solemnly pledges to rebuild and reconstruct free Bangladesh and assures that fruits of independence will be reaped and enjoyed by 75 million people of Bangladesh and not merely by a handful of opportunists.

Explaining the salient features of his nationalisation plan, Bangabandhu names the following sectors of economy to be nationalised immediately: Banking (excluding branches of foreign banks), insurance (both life and general), jute manufacturing industry, sugar industry, major portion of coastal transport sector, all abandoned and absentee enterprises with fixed assets above Tk 15 lakh, Bangladesh Biman and Bangladesh Shipping Corporation. It is proposed to eventually nationalise the entire foreign trade.

Bangabandhu declares that the government is working on policy measures giving workers the scope of participation in the management of these enterprises. About the private sector, the prime minister says that they will be encouraged to stay and operate their enterprises efficiently and profitably within the framework of the government policy.

GREETINGS FROM WORLD LEADERS

The president and prime minister have received messages of good wishes on the occasion of the celebration of the first Independence

Day anniversary of Bangladesh from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, V. Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR, Sir Jaul Hasluck, Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, President VV Giri of India, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, General Ne Win, Chairman of the Revolutionary Council of Burma and other world leaders.

WOMEN WILL ENJOY EQUAL RIGHTS

Bangabandhu appeals to women of the country today to participate in the task of building a society free from exploitation. He says that women will enjoy equal rights and privileges in Bangladesh.

Speaking as the chief guest at a sports function at Azimpur Girls School, Bangabandhu regrets that in the past, half of the nation had been confined within the four walls of their houses owing to social prejudices. "Religion had been exploited for enslaving our mothers and sisters," he says. He hopes that in free Bangladesh men and women will work shoulder to shoulder in the coming years.

SUBDIVISIONS RAISED TO DISTRICT STATUS

Bangabandhu announces today the raising of all subdivisions of Bangladesh to the status of districts. At present, there are 19 districts and 51 subdivisions in Bangladesh.

SOURCES: March 27, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, Azad, Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer and Purbodesh.

Love in the days of war

FROM PAGE 1

"I used to attend meetings and processions on the university campus during the early weeks of March as I was waiting for the Master's final viva exam," she said.

She described how those political activities later inspired her to join the war.

However, her father brought her home to Jhalakathi when the exam date became uncertain after March 7.

Following the crackdown on March 25, Jhalakathi too became unsafe. Roma's family then took shelter at her uncle's house in Swarupkathi (now Nesarabad).

"In Swarupkathi, we used to spend most of the time of the day hiding in the dense guava grove, where one had to reach by boat," she said.

During that time, Rama received arms training from Captain (ret'd) Mahafuz Alam Beg at a camp he had set up at Kuriana Arya Sommilini School in Pirojpur district.

"About seven to eight women took training there along with men," she recalled. But soon the refuge of the grove was lost.

Local razzakars, on the Pakistani army's order, started to burn parts of the grove, making it difficult for people to hide there.

Rama, along with her family, then escaped to West Bengal crossing the border through Bagdha and took shelter at her uncle's house in Tollygunge.

However, she could not stand her life as a refugee at someone else's mercy.

"I did not like when they [people of West Bengal] would sometimes make fun of us. They named an eye infection 'Joy Bangla' because many of the refugees contracted the disease," said Rama, recalling how offended she felt.

"I started thinking that it is better to join the war rather than living like this [as a refugee]." She said the programmes aired on the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro also inspired her.

As Rama shared her thoughts with an aunt, she took her near the border area in Hasnabad, West Bengal.

"When we got off a bus, I saw Captain Beg. He was on a motorbike running some errands there," she reminisced.

"He was surprised to see me and informed me that Parthasarathi was there too at the headquarters of sector nine," Rama said. The ecstasy in her voice could still be heard after 49 years.

"At that time, I did not know that Parthasarathi had joined the war because we did not have any communication with each other since leaving the country," she explained.

Rama told Captain Beg that she too wished to join the war. He took her to sector commander Major MA Jalil, who was looking to form a women's unit in sector-9 Taki camp.

"Major Jalil made me the leader of the unit. Initially, there were only six to seven women in the group and we used to live on a two-storied well-guarded building, away from the men's camp. Only the Major and trainers could visit us," she said.

In addition to receiving training on guerrilla warfare, including espionage, she and the other female freedom fighters had to visit the refugee camps to recruit more members, talk to journalists, and broadcast speeches about the camp's activities on Swadhin Bangla Betar.

"Major Jalil eventually wanted to turn the female unit into a suicide squad," she claimed.

Soon the number of the group

members increased to 47, she said, adding how they would convince parents and encourage young women to fight for the country.

"Parthasarathi, who had a close relationship with Major Jalil, would sometimes obtain permission to visit me at the camp for only an hour," she remembered.

During his first visit, he requested Rama to go back. "He was against it [Rama's decision to join the war]," she said.

He tried to persuade her to go back to her relative's house and marry someone else, noting that he had vowed to sacrifice his life for the country.

But Rama argued that she too has taken the same vow. "Driven by the passion of youth, I refused to heed his advice," she said.

Asked if she was worried about her fiancé, who fought at the frontiers, she said Parthasarathi never shared any information of his activities with her.

"But once he went on an operation and there was no news from his group for about three days. When I heard about it, I started crying," she narrated.

Rama broke down so much that when Parthasarathi returned, Major Jalil decided to keep him at the sector headquarters instead of sending him to the war frontiers.

Although being worried about her fiancé's life, Rama did risk hers to enter occupied Bangladesh in disguise to reconnoitre the area occupied by the Pakistan army.

"I would put on a burkha and go out on the street pretending to shop for essentials. Meanwhile, I would take note on the whereabouts of the Pakistan army," she reminisced.

Porimal Chandra Ghosh, a freedom fighter at Sector-9, had accompanied Rama's unit during a number of such missions.

"Disguised as a beggar, I went to Satkhira with Rama and others several times to reconnoitre," he remembered.

Sub-sector commander Captain (ret'd) Mahafuz Alam Beg said, "The main responsibility of the female unit was to collect information from inside Bangladesh. They travelled all the way to Jashore and Satkhira at least four to five times and brought information."

Freedom fighter Bithika Rani was in this group. She was also a hero and participated in a number of operations, he added.

Rama and Parthasarathi's love story took a positive turn as the country, they fought for, became liberated on December 16, 1971. They tied the knot two days later by exchanging garlands at Kolkata's Kalighat.

Rama retired from a girls' high school at Jhalakati and the couple now lives with their son in Old Dhaka.

Wash your hands after stroking your pet, say French experts

AFP, Paris

A French medical body urged pet owners on Wednesday to take precautions like washing hands after stroking dogs or cats, saying the risk of catching COVID-19 from animals "cannot be ruled out".

Even though there is no evidence yet that domestic animals can transmit the virus to humans or get sick from it, there could be a potential risk, said the French Academy of Medicine, which advises the government on epidemics and has set up a dedicated COVID-19 monitoring group.

Of honour and Biranganas

An expatriate Bangladeshi in the UK fills hearts of post-Liberation War generation with tales of atrocities that the Pakistani occupation forces unleashed on women during the Liberation War in 1971

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

The atrocities unfolded on women by Pakistani occupation forces during the War of Liberation in 1971 have left an indelible scar in the psyche of the nation. While the nation moves on leaving behind the trauma, it holds dear the glorious sacrifices the heroines and heroes of the country made during the nine-month-long struggle.

In a foreign land thousands of miles away, Munira Parvin, a news presenter at a television channel in the United Kingdom, has taken on the task of telling the harrowing tales of Biranganas, the war heroines of Bangladesh, to the post-Liberation War generation living in that country and elsewhere.

Originally from Sylhet city, Munira recites various forms of literature including stories and poems written about the 1971 war heroines and victims of genocide in Bangladesh.

She recites from Nilima Ibrahim's 'Ami Birangana Bolchhi', interviews of Ferdousi Priyabhashini-Rama Chowdhury, Jahanara Imam's 'Ekattorer Dinguli', Anisul Hoque's 'Maa', Apurba Sharma's 'Birangana Katha' and 'Cha Baganey Gonohotya', Arafat Tanim's 'Ramjan Mashey Gonohotya' and many other books, research publications and interviews.

Besides in the UK, Munira performed recitals in Bangladesh's Dhaka and Sylhet, and in India's Kolkata.

On how it all started, Munira said, "During [my] maternity leave in 2014, I suddenly realised that I am reciting from many poets only to promote myself. But to spread the Bangalee culture, I have to spread the glories of our Liberation War... I started reciting the stories from home."

She said she decided to recite from literatures on Biranganas at different programmes as "this generation has no time to read books, not even those about the Biranganas."

"I started with Nilima Ibrahim's. Every story in her book is long. So I created shorter versions, keeping the original language intact. And when I heard the audience sobbing during the programme, I realised that everyone was feeling it within themselves."

It is that sort of a feeling that sends shivers down your spine, she said, explaining, "Maybe it's because I'm a woman; I can relate to the torture they endured. And that

gives me the strength to carry on and recite the tales of the war heroines."

In December 2008, Munira formed a recital organisation named 'Chhandashik', which is based in the UK.

In London city, Chhandashik organised the first 'International Bangla Recitation Festival' in September of 2019 and in 2018, the organisation staged a play depicting life stories of eight Biranganas.

"But the journey wasn't easy. Many people issued threats on me after my second show as they didn't want me to continue such recitations. But I was resolute and I told them that I will recite at least one tale of a Birangana in every programme that I get a chance to perform," Munira said.

"There lives a Birangana by the name Prova Rani, whom the locals call 'Punjabir Bou [wife of the Punjabis]' - just to insult her. What are we doing for them [the Biranganas]? I felt the stigma they faced all their lives and that drives me to do my work," Munira said in a firm voice.

Munira started learning recitation from her mother at an early age. In 1984, when she was only five, she was admitted to Shishu Academy in a recitation course.

By the time she passed secondary school exams, in 1995, she took recitation lessons from Guru Hemchandra Bhattacharjee and she later on joined the Shishu Academy as a junior instructor.

After studying Bangla Literature in Bangladesh, Munira moved to the UK in 2003 to study Media Culture and Technology at University of Bedfordshire. She married in 2004 and she is mother of two children.

Munira currently works as care coordinator at Apasen, a provider of social and community services in the UK. She also works as a senior news presenter at Channel-S, a television channel there. Besides presenting news, she also anchors a programme on art and culture at the TV channel.

Till date, Munira performed about a hundred recitals on the Liberation War and the Biranganas. She also conducts live recitals on Facebook.

"My vision is to ignite the light of the Liberation War of 1971 in every heart of the post-Liberation War generation in Britain and all around the world. Embodying that spirit, I will do my part till the end," Munira said.



Munira Parvin



Two fishermen at Majhipara village in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila are seen upset after they failed to get expected catches in the Brahmaputra river. Inset, another fisher from the Teesta river basin Harati village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila repairs his fishing net. The photos were taken recently. PHOTO: STAR

Livelihood of fishermen under threat

Nearly 10,000 families in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat depend on the Brahmaputra and Teesta rivers

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Hundreds of fishermen in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat are going through hard times as fish stocks in the Brahmaputra and Teesta rivers have drastically decreased over the years.

With their traditional livelihood failing to provide for their families, many fishermen have taken loans at high interest from local moneylenders.

"Usually, a group of four or five of us fishermen goes together to the river. After trying for hours, we get around five kilograms of fish," said 46-year-old Sadhan Chandra Das of Majhipara village in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila.

"The situation worsens from December to June as the water level falls. We have no work during this period," said Sadhan, who fishes in the Brahmaputra.

Bishnu Chandra Das, a 56-year-old fisherman from the same village, said, "We are unable to provide for our families with the money we earn from fishing. So, we have to

take loans from the Mohajon (moneylender) with high interest."

"We have to repair our fishing boats and nets at our own expense. So you can easily understand our misery," he added.

Hit hard by poverty, many have already left their ancestral profession and others are planning to leave.

"Many fishermen in our village have already left and are now working as day labourers, some pull rickshaws, and others work in garment factories," said 55-year-old Surendra Nath Das, a fisherman from Daspara village under Kurigram's Rowmari upazila.

"We are deprived of our rights even if the policy is 'Jal Jar Khal Tar' [those who have the net have the canal]. It is only on paper. We are not allowed to catch fish in the government canals as politically influential people have occupied those," said Surendra.

"We are instead forced to work as labourers for them."

"Following in my grandfather and father's

footsteps, I used to catch fish in the Teesta. But it became difficult for me to maintain my family with the little income from fishing. So, I left the profession," said 38-year-old Nikhil Chandra Das of Daspara village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. He now pulls rickshaw.

"Around 10,000 families depend on the Brahmaputra and Teesta rivers in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat. Many are frustrated with their ancestral profession," said 70-year-old Narayan Chandra Das of Majhipara under Kurigram's Ulipur upazila.

"The fishermen spend most of their income on repairing and buying fishing nets. That is why they cannot repair their houses while many don't even have their own house," he added.

Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila Fisheries Officer Hasmat Ali told The Daily Star that the canals are not under the control of fishermen. These have gone into the possession of non-fishermen with political influence.

"In this case, we can do nothing for the fishermen. But we are trying," Hasmat added.

5 critical measles affected children flown to CMCH

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Five seriously ill measles affected children of Tripura community were yesterday flown to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) from remote Lungtjan Para under Sajek union of Rangamati by helicopter.

"Our medical team went to the measles affected area yesterday. Finding five of the affected children in serious conditions, we decided to bring them to CMCH by aircraft," said Brigadier General Md Faizur Rahman of Khagrachhari Brigade.

"Our team is also giving proper treatment to the other measles affected children of the remote area," he said.

"Earlier a 16-member medical team of Bangladesh Army along with two of our MBBS doctors went to the affected spot on Tuesday evening," said Dr Istekhar Ahmed, upazila health and family planning officer of Baghaichhari.

"A total of seven children died of measles in remote Arun Para and Lungthian Para since February 26 while around 130 children were affected," he said, adding that the affected



PHOTO: COLLECTED

A helicopter carrying five seriously ailing measles affected children prepares to fly for Chattogram to arrange their better treatment.

children are badly suffering from malnutrition. Hiranondo Tripura, a ward member of the area who visited the spot said the affected children didn't get proper treatment before arrival of the medical team.

Several karbaris (village chiefs) of the affected areas alleged that doctors or community health service providers never visit there, showing the excuse of difficulty in reaching the remote place.

A health assistant, who was on the spot for weeks before the medical team arrived yesterday, said, "Following order from the high authorities, I was giving medical service although I am not a doctor. Doctors gave me medical advice over phone, which was not enough to deal with the measles affected children."

Meanwhile, people in Bandarban claimed that a child died of measles and around 40 others, including 33 children, were infected with the virus in a remote area of the hill district.

Health officials, however, said the child died of an unknown disease.

The campaign to vaccinate 34 million children, aged between 9 months and 10 years, against measles and rubella was scheduled to begin on March 18. But the programme was postponed over the ongoing outbreak of coronavirus.

Bridge over Madhumati to ease link between capital, SW region

BSS, Gopalganj

The people of south-western region are eagerly waiting for enjoying faster communication with different parts of the country including the capital Dhaka as the construction of the country's first ever six-lane bridge is scheduled to be complete in September next year.

The 690-metre-long bridge, being constructed with the financial assistance of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), will reduce 100 kilometres of distance from Jashore to the capital, Syed Gias Uddin, executive engineer of the Roads and Highways Division, also project director (PD) of Kalna Bridge, told BSS.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 24 in 2015 laid the foundation stone of the Kalna Bridge over the Madhumati River flowing between Kashiani upazila under Gopalganj district and Lohagara upazila under Narail district, the PD said.

The estimated cost of bridge is Tk 960 crore, he said, adding that over 30 percent of the construction work is already complete.

After opening, the bridge will directly benefit the people of the region including Jashore, Narail, Magura, Jhenidah, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Satkhira and part of Khulna district, project officials said, adding that the benefit will significantly rise after the opening of the Padma Bridge.

The people of the region now use the Jashore-Dhaka Highway via Paturia-Daulatdia ferry route, which requires covering a long way to reach Dhaka from Jashore.

The bridge, which will also ease communication between the capital and the country's biggest Land Port at Benapole, will be a part of Asian Highway, the PD said.

The 27.1-metre-wide bridge will have six lanes including four lanes for high speed vehicles and two service

lanes and there will be a total of 4.30-kilometre approach roads on both sides.

Md Shahidul Islam Milon, former president of Jashore Chamber of Commerce and

Industries, said after completion of the bridge and re-construction work of the road, the people of the area will enjoy economic advantage, which will be even better after opening of the expressway leading to the under-construction Padma Bridge.

The economic activities of Benapole Land Port, Mongla Sea Port and Noapara

River Port will see a boost while the residents of a vast area will be able to travel to and from the capital for various purposes in much shorter time, he added.

Talking to the BSS, several commuters of the region expressed happiness over the rapid progress of the construction work of the bridge where nearly 300 people are working.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Education
Secondary and Higher Education Division
Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
Secondary Education Sector Investment Program
www.sesip.gov.bd
Memo No. DSHE/SESIP/SPSU/1-438/PVIP(GD-50/a)/2019/938 Date: 25.03.2020

ADDENDUM No. 1
to
Procurement Package: GD-50a PVIP Equipment for (Lot 2: General Electrical Works; Lot 3: General Electronics; Lot 4: General Mechanics) and GD-50b PVIP Equipment for (Lot 1: Civil Construction; Lot 4: Refrigeration and Air Conditioning; Lot 5: Plumbing and Pipe Fittings).
This Addendum is being issued pursuant to ITB Sub Clause-8 of the Bidding Document:

| Sl | Subject | Current requirements (Existing contents) | Amendments (Contents to be read as) |
|----|--------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Pre Tender Meeting | Pre Bid Meeting for GD-50a is 30.03.2020. Pre Bid Meeting for GD-50a is 31.03.2020. | Pre Bid Meeting for both GD-50a & GD-50b is 06.04.2020. Time and place is same as before. |

NOTE: All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged. This ADDENDUM No. 1 shall form an integral part of the bidding document.

25/03/2020
Professor Dr. Shamsun Naher
Joint Program Director (R.C.)
GD-613 Secondary Education Sector Investment Program

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
College Education Development Project (CEDP)
Bhawal Badre Alam Govt. College
Chandona, Gazipur

Corrigendum of Invitation for Tender

Reference No. BhaKa/2020/CEDP/11/241 Date: 25.03.2020

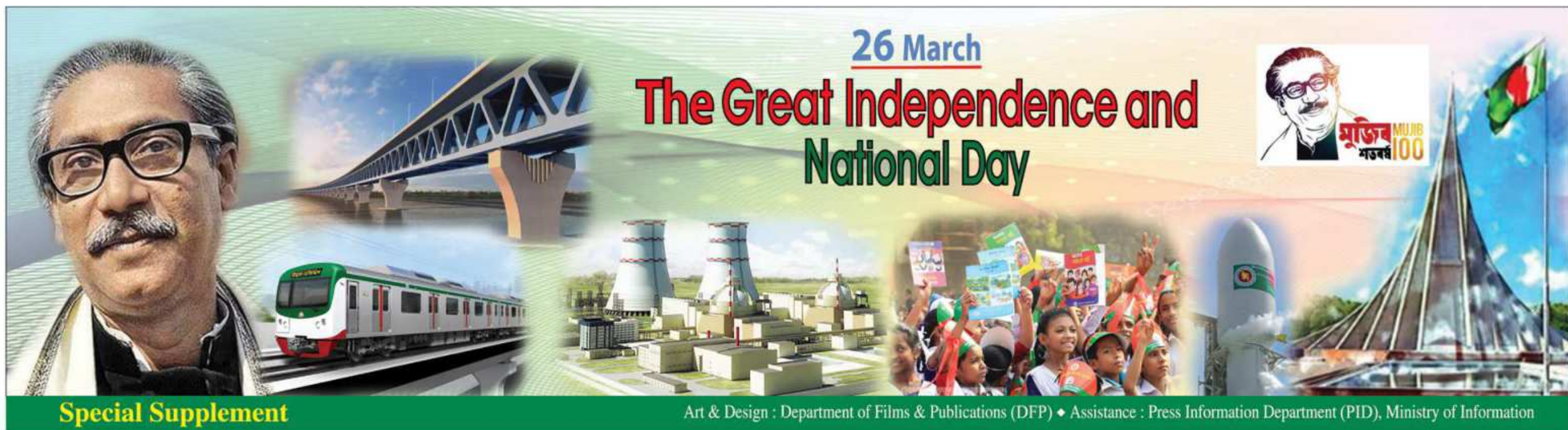
The undersigned has to inform that due to unavoidable circumstances tender last selling, closing and opening dates & time of Package No. W-1 (package name: Renovation and refurbishment of ICT Lab, Classroom, Washroom, Lab & Medical Centre) are revised as follows:

| Sl No. in published IFT | Description | Original date & time | Revised date & time |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 17 | Tender last selling date | 30/03/2020 at 5:00pm | April 13, 2020 at 5:00pm |
| 18 | Tender closing date and time | 31/03/2020 at 1:00pm | April 14, 2020 at 1:00pm |
| 19 | Tender opening date and time | 31/03/2020 at 3:00pm | April 14, 2020 at 3:00pm |

Note: It is mentioned that if the tender closing and opening date is holiday in that case tenders will be closed and opened in next available working day at same place and same time.

All other things of published IFT (reference No. BhaKa/2020/CEDP/135, date: 15/03/2020) will remain unchanged.

Prof. Masuda Sikder
Principal
Bhawal Badre Alam Govt. College, Gazipur
Mobile: 01712116985
GD-610



Special Supplement

Art & Design : Department of Films & Publications (DFP) • Assistance : Press Information Department (PID), Ministry of Information



Message

Today is 26 March, the Independence Day of Bangladesh. On the occasion of our great Independence and National Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings and warm felicitations to my fellow countrymen living at home and abroad.

On this historic day, I remember with profound respect the architect of our independent Bangladesh, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I pay my deep homage to the millions of martyrs who made supreme sacrifice in the war of liberation. I also recall with deep reverence our four National Leaders, valiant freedom-fighters, organizers, supporters, our foreign friends and people from all walks of life who made immense contributions to attain our right to self-determination and the war of liberation. Their contributions to the history of our independence would be written in golden letters forever.

We have achieved our hard-earned independence through huge sacrifices. Bangabandhu always cherished a dream of building a happy and prosperous country along with attaining political emancipation. Keeping that in mind, the present Government has been rendering untiring efforts in materializing the dream of Bangabandhu. Today, Bangladesh is moving towards the highway of development at a tremendous pace. We have achieved enormous success in various areas of socio-economic development including poverty alleviation, education, health, human resources development, women empowerment, reduction of child and maternal mortality rates, elimination of gender discrimination and increase in average life expectancy. Rate of poverty has been dropped. High growth of GDP is continuing. Per capita income has tripled over the past decade. The construction of the Padma Bridge is also going on in full swing by our own resources. The Ruppur Nuclear Power Plant is underway. Bangladesh has been able to surpass herself not only the neighbouring countries of South Asia but also many developed countries in terms of various indicators of socio-economic development. We are dreaming of a developed Bangladesh by the year 2041. Initiative has been taken up to frame the 'Second Perspective Plan' spanning from 2021 to 2041 in this regard. The Delta Plan 2100 has been formulated in order to achieve the status of a prosperous and developed country combating the long-term challenges for sustainable water, climate, environment and land system. With the continuation of development process, Bangladesh will raise its position high in the world as a prosperous country by 2041, insha Allah.

In pursuing our diplomatic objectives, the government has been consistent in upholding the principle of "Friendship to all, malice towards none" as enunciated by Father of the Nation. Our achievement in the international arena, including the establishment of world peace, is also commendable. Our expatriate Bangladeshis have also been making significant contributions to our national economy by sending their hard-earned remittances. Nevertheless, we have to go a long way towards achieving the desired goal of independence. We must ensure good governance, social justice, transparency and accountability to make the development people-oriented and sustainable. Forbearance, human rights and rule of law have to be consolidated for institutionalizing democracy. National Parliament will have to make as the centre of hopes and aspirations of the people. For this, the ruling party as well as the opposition would have to play a constructive role in the parliament.

Bangabandhu is the source of eternal inspiration for the Bangali nation. This year, the government has declared 'Mujib Year' to celebrate the birth centenary of Bangabandhu in a befitting manner. Being imbued with the spirit of the liberation war let it be the pledge in 'Mujib Year' to turn our country into 'Sonar Bangla' by completing the unfinished tasks of Bangabandhu. The golden jubilee of our independence will be observed in 2021 with great enthusiasm. Bangladesh will enter into a new chapter-a new horizon. With the concerted efforts of all, let our beloved motherland be a poverty-free developed one; it is my expectation on Independence Day.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid
Md. Abdul Hamid



প্ৰজাতান্ত্ৰিক গণৰাজ্য

PRIME MINISTER
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

The Legacy of Bangladesh's Struggle for Economic Freedom

Dr. Atiur Rahman


Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave a clarion call for economic freedom in his historic speech of 7 March 1971. This call embraced social, economic and political freedom. The whole nation started a non-cooperation movement at his call. After nine months of bloody struggle during which he was in jail in West Pakistan, Bangabandhu finally took the reins of the newly independent Bangladesh in January 1972. He immediately assured his countrymen that he would take every step necessary to achieve his dream of "Sonar Bangla," or "Golden Bengal," with his people's support.

He pulled a newborn country from ashes to the path of prosperity, relying on the fighting spirit and big dreams of his people. This was an unprecedented journey of transformation that overcame many challenges. Many international observers said that Bangladesh was going through a Malthusian paradigm with so many people and so little resources. The US State Department trashed Bangladesh as an 'International Basket Case' in late 1971 and others thought that Bangladesh was an ideal 'Test Case of Development'. Defying all odds, Bangladesh moved on, keeping its head high under the strong leadership of Bangabandhu. He presented a rights-based constitution within only eight months of liberation. This was followed by the First Five Year Plan, which was prepared within a year and half to "provide a sense of direction and determine the order of priorities within the framework of which coherent and consistent policies and programs could be formulated" (Bangabandhu, 'Foreword' to the First Five Year Plan). "Social transformation consistent with our political objectives has been foremost in our mind," said Professor Nurul Islam, the then Deputy Chair of the Planning commission, in the 'Preface' to the Plan document.

Indeed, this was a socio-economic transformational plan. Bangabandhu's visionary economic development strategy had three elements. Firstly, it pursued self-reliance utilizing national resources as efficiently as possible. Secondly, it welcomed foreign aid conditionally in priority sectors initially and pledged to reduce its share subsequently. Thirdly, as Pakistani entrepreneurs left Bangladesh, it implemented a mixed economy initially state-led for obvious reasons to ensure social justice, but quickly complemented it with the potential private sector investment. The 1974-75 budget raised the private investment ceiling from Taka 2.5 million to Taka 30 million to promote small and medium enterprises. The budget also allowed deregulation of 133 earlier nationalized enterprises. Despite a number of challenges, the economy of Bangladesh was making speedy progress under the leadership of Bangabandhu. This became clear from the rise of per capita income from USD 93 in 1972 to USD 272 in 1975. On the contrary, in the absence of Bangabandhu the per capita income plummeted to USD 138 in 1976 and even lower at USD 128 in the following year. As evidenced during the Asian Financial crisis in the 1990s, his emphasis on small and medium enterprises and agriculture proved to be a successful strategy of macro-economic stability and social cohesion.

Bangladesh certainly lost its way in the absence of Bangabandhu. Thanks to his able daughter Sheikh Hasina who took charge of Bangladesh after twenty-one years of our

(Continued to the next page)



Message

I extend my heartiest greetings to the countrymen and expatriate Bangladeshis on the occasion of the great Independence and National Day of Bangladesh.

The 26 March is the day of establishing self-identity of our nation. It's the day of breaking the shackles of subjugation. On this Independence Day, I recall with deep gratitude the Greatest Bangalee of all times. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, under whose undisputed leadership we have earned our coveted independence. I pay my tributes to four national leaders who steered the War of Liberation in the absence of Bangabandhu. I also pay my deep homage to the three million martyrs and two lakhs dishonored women of the War of Liberation. My homage goes to all the valiant freedom fighters including the wounded ones. I extend my sympathies to those who had lost their near and dear ones, and were subjected to brutal torture during the Liberation War. I recall with gratitude our foreign friends who had extended their whole-hearted support and cooperation for the cause of our liberation.

Marking the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation 'Mujib Year' is being celebrated from March 2020 to March 2021. Bangabandhu's birth centenary celebration has been started on 17 March. Along with Bangladesh, Mujib Year is being celebrated globally with the initiative of the UNESCO.

The Bangalee nation had fought against oppression and deprivation of Pakistani rulers' for long 23 years under the leadership of Bangabandhu. They were compelled to hold General Elections in 1970. Bangladesh Awami League led by Bangabandhu won absolute majority in the elections. But the Pakistani rulers adopted repressive measures instead of handing over power to the majority party in a democratic way. Calling for independence at the then RecceCourse Ground on 7 March 1971 Bangabandhu declared: "The struggle this time is the struggle for our emancipation; the struggle this time is the struggle for independence, Joi Bangla." He instructed the Bangalee Nation to resist the enemies.

The Pakistani occupation forces unleashed a sudden attack and started killing innocent and unarmed Bangalees on the fateful night of 25 March 1971. They killed thousands of people in cities and towns including Dhaka. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman formally proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh at the first hour of 26 March 1971. Bangabandhu's proclamation was spread all over the country through telegrams, tele-printers and EPR wireless. The international media also had circulated Bangabandhu's proclamation of Independence. Under the brave and dauntless leadership of Bangabandhu, the ultimate victory was attained on 16 December 1971 after a 9-month of bloody war.

The independence earned through supreme sacrifices of millions of people is the greatest achievement of Bangalee Nation. To ensure that this achievement remains meaningful, all have to know the true history of our great Liberation War and retain the spirit of independence. The spirit of the Liberation War has to be passed on from generation to generations.

Being imbued with the spirit of the freedom struggle, the Awami League government has relentlessly been working to develop the country since 2009. We have been accomplishing the unfinished tasks of the Father of the Nation. Bangladesh had achieved outstanding socio-economic progress in the last 11 years. It has fulfilled the requirements for graduating from least developed country to developing one. Our government is maintaining 'zero tolerance' policy to tackle militancy, terrorism and drug-menaces. For the first time in the world, we have formulated a 100-year plan named 'Delta Plan 2100'. Bangladesh is one of the five top countries in the world in economic development. Ninety percent of development works are financed from our own resources. By establishing the rule of law, we have executed the verdicts of the trail of the killers of Bangabandhu. As per our pledges to the people the trials of war criminals are going on and verdicts are being executed. People are now getting benefits of development as Awami League has continuously been in power for third consecutive time. Bangladesh is moving forward and it will go on. Today we have become a self-respecting country in the world holding our heads high.

By implementing our 'Vision-2021', 'Vision-2041' and 'Delta Plan-2100', we have been working relentlessly to build a hunger-poverty-free developed-prosperous Bangladesh as envisioned by the Father of the Nation. Let us unite in the spirit of the Great War of Liberation and maintain the continuation of development and democracy by facing any sort of conspiracy. Let us transform Bangladesh into a safe and peaceful home for our next generation-this should be our firm commitment on the Independence Day.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Sheikh Hasina
Sheikh Hasina



প্ৰজাতান্ত্ৰিক গণৰাজ্য

PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

The Legacy of Bangladesh's Struggle for Economic Freedom

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(Continued to the next page)

26 March: The Day of Bangali's Freedom from Bondage

Anupam Sen

Some days in the thousand year-old annals of the Bangla-speaking people shall remain forever luminous and a source of inspiration for all Bangalis. These days are 21 February, 7 March, 26 March and 16 December. The declaration of independence made by the greatest hero of the Bangalis for all ages Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 26 March assumed a complete shape on 16 December 1971.

The nationality of the Bangalis has coalesced over a few thousand years from races like the Austric, Mongoloid and Caucasoid. At one time, this nation-entirety became known as the Bangali race. Their habitat also came to be known as the land of Vanga. Bangla is the colloquial language of this nation-entirety. The Bangla language got its preliminary shape from the Buddhist 'Charya' and 'Donha' dialects one thousand years ago. During the thousand year history of the Bangla-speaking Badshahs, Sultans and Nawabs ruled this land, sometimes as independent, sometimes as subordinates. The always remained as those rules. They became free citizens. The became free citizens independent country first time following the victory of 16 December 1971.

Although there was freedom from the bondage of colonial rule in 1947, the Bangalis found that they were tied to a crueler colonial exploitation through the creation of Pakistan. This realization dawned on some people when they observed that the capital, central administration, and the centre of everything were located in West Pakistan despite the Bangalis making up 55 percent of Pakistan's population. The Bangalis viewed the attempt to take away their right of language as an even ruder slap. The Bangali professors and pundits like Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, Dr. Qazi Motahar Husain and Dr. Md. Enamul Haque protested against this move. Vocal protests were also raised on behalf of the student community of Dhaka University. Then a youth leader, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman played a leading role in these protests. This dissent was floated when the then East Pakistan Muslim Chhatra League formed the 'Language Action Council' and called for a strike in Dhaka on 11 March 1948. Around 70-75 students were arrested during this student-strike. As the East Bengal Provincial Assembly was in session at that juncture, the Prime Minister Khwaja Nazimuddin released from jail the top leader of the 'Language Action Council' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with his



compatriots on 15 March through a kind of compromise. Later, the language movement achieved fruition through the shedding of blood by martyrs on 21 February 1952.

This political subjugation of the Bangalis became intensely apparent when the cabinet formed by the Jukto-Front could not last even two months after achieving a landslide victory against the Muslim League in the provincial assembly election of 1954. The first constitution of Pakistan was framed in 1956 following 9 long years of its existence. But before any election could be held based on that constitution, Iskandar Mirza declared martial law all over the country on 8 October 1958. Then the army-chief Ayub Khan seized power from him three weeks later. Through this military rule, planned subjection and exploitation of East Pakistan assumed an even crueler shape. Almost all political leaders of East Pakistan were put behind bars. Among them, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the first to be arrested.

The rule of Ayub Khan lasted for over one decade (October 1958 - March 1969). However, with the exception of some opportunistic individuals, the Bangali people of East Pakistan started to get organized much earlier against this colonial exploitation imposed by the military-civil oligarchy and bureaucracy of Pakistan through the establishment of Awami Muslim League on 23 June 1949.

The people of East Pakistan not only faced cultural and political oppression during the period 1947 to 1968, but also their economic exploitation reached an alarming level. About 60 percent of Pakistan's annual export receipts, sometimes even 70 percent came from East Pakistan. But the province did not get any benefit from this income. Rather, those were passed on to West Pakistan. The average annual imports of East Pakistan on the other hand remained confined within 30 percent of Pakistan. The huge deficits in foreign trade that piled up over these two decades were met through the trade surplus of East Pakistan. This trade surplus was used in turn for massive industrialisation of West Pakistan. Besides, it was utilised for generating power, building roads and other physical infrastructures there.

It may be recalled that after the creation of the Pakistan state, annual output (GDP) of East Pakistan was 1237 crore rupee, whereas that of West Pakistan was 1209.10 crore rupee during 1949-50. These figures for the two provinces rose to 2271.30 crore rupee and 3156.30 crore rupee respectively in 1969-70. Their per capita income became 321 rupee and 546 rupee respectively at that juncture. Although the amounts may appear to be small in terms of present value of currencies, in reality they were quite big. This disparity between the two regions was created through transfer of incomes and assets of East Pakistan to West Pakistan by various ways and means. There was also a huge disparity in public cum private investments. Although the population of East Pakistan was much higher than West Pakistan, an amount of only 4,340 crore rupee was spent for East Pakistan in different sectors of Pakistan during the period 1950-70 covering the preliminary plan and three 5-year plans, whereas the amount spent in West Pakistan was 11,534 crore rupee during the period.

When the deprivations imposed on the people of East Pakistan became clearer, we saw the presence of Bangalis or East Pakistanis to be quite negligible in the massive defence forces structure built during the first 23 years of Pakistan's existence. The headquarters of all the forces of Pakistan were in West Pakistan. About 95 percent of the Generals, Lt. Generals, Major Generals, Brigadiers, Colonels, Lt. Colonels, Majors, Captains etc. hailed from West Pakistan. There were only one Brigadier, one Colonel, one Lt. Colonel and a few Majors from among the Bangalis. Similar discriminations were also observed in the Navy and Air Force. Not only in the military bureaucracy, the civil bureaucracy at the centre was also tainted by this discrimination.

(Continued to the next page)

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Initiative on Humanitarian Service in International Arena Leading to Future Journey of Bangladesh in This Field

Lt. Col. (Retd.) Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir Bir Protik, Independence Award Recipient



I recall with reverence the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the auspicious occasion of his birth centenary. Deprived of their rights, the repressed Bangalis could emerge victorious against the powerful Pakistani military force because of the foresight, love for his people, intellect and mindset of this great leader. He had tremendous sympathy and affection for the suffering masses in different regions of the globe. Consequently, he took such a timely humanitarian decision in October 1973 for human welfare by means of which the door to the infinite potentials of Bangladesh was opened up on the global stage.

The joining and contributions of Bangladesh to the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions have been a matter of pride for us. The armed forces of Bangladesh have been running this program for many years. The Bangladesh Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police have remained actively involved in UN Peacekeeping Operations since 1988. The armed forces of Bangladesh have helped in creating a bright image for Bangladesh in the international arena by accomplishing their tasks during disasters both at home and abroad through demonstrating humanism, efficiency and untiring efforts. Notable among the peacekeeping missions were: Reconstruction of Kuwait (OKP or Operation Kuwait Punargathan) in 1990; Operation SAARC Bandhan following Tsunami in Sri Lanka and Maldives in 2004; the mission following the cyclone 'Nargis' in Myanmar in 2008; and the earthquake in Haiti in 2010. Besides, the armed forces, the police and civilian staffs have made significant contributions by participating in numerous UN Peacekeeping Missions, such as: UNIMOG, UNGOMAP, UNTAG, MINARSO, UNIKOM, UNGCI, UNAMIC, UNPROFOR, UNTAC, UNOSOM, UNIMOG etc.

The Arab-Israeli War had commenced on Saturday, 6 October 1973 at 2 pm immediately after mid-day. This war is also known as the 1973 Arab-Israel War, the Ramadan War, etc. The war lasted until 25 October. Bangabandhu was always concerned about the repressed people of the world. As he was keen about helping them, he promptly extended support to the Arab countries in their just war. It was not confined to mere moral support; a decision was taken to send a team of military

(Continued to the next page)

Special Supplement

The Great Independence and National Day

Thursday 26 March 2020

The Legacy of Bangladesh's...

(Continued from previous page)

greatest national loss, and brought back on track Bangabandhu's inclusive development strategy which focused on benefiting the disadvantaged. But unfortunately there was another setback in 2001 when Bangladesh lost the continuity of the government. It took eight more years for Sheikh Hasina to return to the helm of the government. Since 2009, Bangladesh has been moving (prominent economists like Kaushik Basu terming it to be 'booming') at an accelerated pace. The growth rate has jumped to 8.1% from 5.7% since then. The per capita income increased to USD 2000 in 2019 from USD 900 in 2009. If this trend continues, then the economy could double in the next decade or so and it will be on its way towards developed country in 2041. Besides spectacular growth performance, the country has witnessed a dramatic fall in poverty to about 20.5% and extreme poverty to about 10.5% in 2018-19 fiscal year against 31.5% and 17.6% in 2009-10 respectively. The total national consumption tripled and investment quadrupled in this period. Thanks to a number of mega projects, the public investment has picked up significantly along with the private sector investment which tripled to six trillion Taka during the last decade. The total export earnings was USD 15.5 billion in 2008-09, which rose to nearly USD 40 billion in ten years. FDI has also been flowing into Bangladesh at a significant pace. The remittance has been a strong pillar, more than doubling to USD 16.4 billion in 2019-20 from USD 7.9 billion in 2007-08. The foreign exchange reserve increased more than five times from USD 6.1 billion in 2007-08 to USD 32.2 billion in 2019-20. And the government undoubtedly had guts to implement the mega Padma project with its own resources.

The progress in social development indicators has been equally impressive. The maternal mortality dropped from 3.48 per thousand in 2008 to 1.69 in 2018. The drop in infant mortality from 41 per thousand live births to 22 during the same period is equally stunning. The life expectancy went up to 73 years from 66.6 years in this period. Women empowerment bolstered through the processes of enhanced incentivized girls education and greater participation of female labourforce in the formal sector including



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Inaugurated Dhaka-Maowa-Vanga Expressway on 12 March 2020 over Video Conference From The Ganabhaban

export-led manufacturing industries was key to this macroeconomic transmission. In other words, Bangabandhu's daughter has been rising up to the people's expectations despite many challenges. Like Bangabandhu she has pursued a balanced economy, providing enough space for the private sector without

26 March: The Day...

(Continued from previous page)

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman raised the 6-points demand in Lahore on 6 February 1966 against these inhuman colonial exploitations of East Pakistan. The silhouette of two states and an outline for two economies were depicted through these 6-points. It also called for separate currencies for East and West Pakistan and maintenance of two separate accounts in the central bank, so that the transfer of assets from East to West Pakistan could be stopped. The provincial governments were also to be accorded autonomy in the area of trade and commerce. Arrangements were kept for raising the provincial militia forces. The rule by the centre was to be limited to the areas of defence and foreign policy.

As the 6-points contained the vision for two states, this proposal could not be condoned by the West Pakistani ruling coterie. They ultimately did not accept it. Following the placement of 6-points, Ayub Khan commented that Sheikh Mujib did not understand the language of logic; that is, the language of weapons would be applied for making him understand if he did not withdraw the demands.

As Bangabandhu did not agree to sacrifice the right of freedom from bondage of the Bangalis at any stage, not even in exchange for the post of prime minister, the Pakistani civil-military bureaucracy and politicians applied the language of arms on the night of 25 March 1971 precisely for that reason. The Bangalis had to sacrifice 3 million lives at the altar of independence during the nine month-long liberation war. They snatched victory through a struggle that triumphed over deaths. For the first time in the thousand year history of Bangalis, it was announced that 'the people were the owners of the state'. Through this constitutional declaration on 16 December 1972, Bangabandhu endowed the Bangla-speaking Bangalis with real political independence for the first time in their thousand year-old annals.



Bangabandhu therefore attached maximum priority to agriculture in the First Five Year Plan, so that the country could be made self-reliant in food. After that, he put emphasis on industrial production and education. The growth that Bangladesh witnessed in the area of industrialisation during his rule of three and a half years could not be attained even after seven years following the termination of his rule. The huge economic activities initiated by Bangabandhu would have amazed any knowledgeable person. He even made progress in demarcating the maritime boundary with India, the agreement for exchange of enclaves and the land boundary pact. It becomes clear when an analysis is made of his rule that it was he who laid the



It was after a lapse of two and a half decades that Bangabandhu's daughter Desh-Ratna Sheikh Hasina assumed the charge of running the statecraft. She strove to make the country free from poverty, ensure food and shelter for all, and develop the country's health, education and culture. This has opened up the doors of extraordinary possibilities for the Bangladesh economy during the previous decade. Bangabandhu had spoken about this economic emancipation while addressing one million people on 7 March 1971. He uttered in the last line of that speech, which is considered to be the greatest speech for independence in world history - 'The struggle this time is for our freedom, the struggle this time is for independence'.

Author: Educationist
Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed



losing sight of the need for human resource development with public investment support. Her development strategy promotes high growth with inclusivity and remains faithful to heritage. At the same time it embraces technology (including leading a 'Digital Bangladesh' campaign), believes in collaboration, and promotes self-reliance. Her government is boldly facing the challenges of how to quickly generate more employment, strengthen institutions to raise Tax-GDP ratio and improve overall governance including that in the financial sector, ensure food and nutrition for all, provide electricity to all, diversify exports, manage growing urbanization and above all address climate change challenges. And now it faces the menacing coronavirus pandemic. In addition to being a human disaster, it also has a huge economic and financial implications including the danger of a meltdown which is already on globally.

However, Bangladesh is a resilient country. It has been doing quite well in facing climate change and other disasters. The central bank and the government implemented 'out of box' innovative inclusive policies in 2009 and weathered the global financial crisis well. The incentives provided to agriculture, SMEs and export sector helped bolster both demand supply side responses to that crisis. As a result Bangladesh maintained its continuous accelerated growth process with seamless reduction in poverty. I am sure the government and the central bank will come forward to provide incentives and stimuli to the private sector, with adequate social security support for the extreme poor. We got to remain focused on the SMEs and small units to keep the bottom of the social pyramid economically engaged at any cost. Let us not panic and be prepared to address both the human and economic dimensions of this crisis. Let us move fast to protect and equip our healthcare providers who are indeed the 'frontline soldiers' and bolster social distancing strategies. The government alone cannot comprehensively face this disaster. Society at large must wake up and help reduce the further spread of this menace. We must stand together to fight this war as well. We have won many such wars in the past. Let us do it again. Let's remain connected.

Author: Dr. Atiur Rahman, Bangabandhu Chair Professor at the University of Dhaka and Former Governor of Bangladesh Bank.

Bangabandhu's ...

(Continued from previous page)

doctors for actively participating in the war. It may be noted that many Arab countries had not accorded formal recognition to Bangladesh till then. Above everything else, Bangabandhu sent the assistance out of humanitarian consideration despite the uncertainties and risks inherent in the situation.

That historic decision taken by Bangabandhu was very courageous one that wielded a far-reaching impact. It may be mentioned that only a few Muslim countries outside the Middle-East had taken such a brave decision against powerful America, Europe and Israel. Bangabandhu summoned the Director and Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Muhammad Zamir and directed him to accompany the medical team after completing all administrative formalities. He also called the Army Chief Brigadier Shafiqullah and the Director of Army Medical Services Colonel Khurshid Uddin Ahmed, and told them that the Middle-Eastern Arab and Muslim countries were in grave danger; it was therefore our humanitarian obligation to stand beside them at this critical juncture. Although our capacity was limited, standing beside the suffering brethren was our duty.

Colonel Khurshid became very emotional on hearing Bangabandhu's words. It may be mentioned that Colonel Khurshid Uddin Ahmed was one of the principal accused in the Agartala Case. He was then a captain and was the accused number 34. The Pakistani intelligence agency ISI had brutally tortured him during interrogations while the case was in progress. Bangabandhu had great affection for Khurshid Uddin from that time onwards. Glancing at Khurshid Uddin he said affectionately: Khurshid, I am sending you on this tough mission. After saluting Bangabandhu, Khurshid Uddin said: Sir, I shall accomplish this mission successfully even at the peril of my life. Later on, Bangabandhu instructed 7 officers from the Army Headquarters and 21 soldiers were assigned for this task and directed them to take preparations swiftly. Before the mission's departure, Bangabandhu invited the 28-member contingent to his office and issued necessary directives. While concluding, he said: The welfare of the repressed people and the prestige of Bangladesh our future depend on your successful performance. This prediction by the Father of the Nation proved to be accurate. Later Bangladesh also sent 4 tons of tea-leaves with the medical team that went to Egypt and Syria.

The team of Bangladesh Army that participated in a foreign mission for the first time left Bangladesh on 19 October 1973. The group included Colonel Khurshid Uddin Ahmed, the Director and Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Muhammad Zamir, Major Amir Ali, Major Shafiq Islam, Captain Shahjahan, Captain Noor Hossain, Captain Rezaul Islam, Captain Mafidul Islam and others. The Bangladesh contingent took off from Tejgaon Airport aboard a Boeing 707 aircraft at 10 am in the morning.

In accordance to their plan, the team was supposed to land in Baghdad first. But the Israeli planes were attacking the place. Therefore, the Bangladeshi aircraft flew towards Syria after refueling from Dubai. But the plane could not land in Damascus and Beirut as well due to persistent Israeli air attacks there. The British pilot of the plane Captain Macintosh then overflew the Caucasus Mountain, the Island of Malta and Syria and then landed at night at Benghazi of Libya after sending SOS signal, although the plane did not have permission to land in Libya. This was done as the plane had only 30 minutes of fuel left. The landing of the plane carrying the Bangladesh contingent inside Libya was an unexpected event. But the Libyan authorities extended all-out assistance to the Bangladesh team after learning about its importance.

With the help of the Libyan authorities, the contingent moved towards Beirut the next day i. e. on 20 October noon aboard a Middle-East Airlines flight. The ambassador of Bangladesh welcomed them at the airport after the plane reached Beirut. The team then set off for Damascus on a bus at 10:00 p.m. after crossing the Lebanon-Syria border checkpoint. They arrived near the city of Damascus at dawn. There was war-like situation all around. The siren started to blare immediately after they entered the city as 5-6 fighter jets of Israel attacked the area. The Health Minister of Syria Dr. Madani Al Khyami formally welcomed the Bangladesh contingent on that day 21 October.



The Bangladesh contingent was deployed at Dares Salam behind the 9 Division of Syrian Army, about 4 kilometres west of Damascus. The team set up a field hospital there with facilities for operations at a 2-storeyed girls' school building. The Bangladesh team stayed there until 22 November. A few thousand army-men, Mujahids and wounded villagers were provided with treatment at this hospital over a period of 30 days. The members of the medical team untiringly took care of the war-wounded patients. The Bangladesh contingent became well-known in Syria as it earned a good reputation while discharging its responsibilities. A number of newspapers in the Arab world commended the activities of Bangladesh team.

At the end of the war, the Grand Mufti of the Great Mosque of Damascus highlighted the contributions of Bangladesh contingent in one of his sermons and showered praises on them profusely. The significance of this mission was huge and far-reaching. The Bangladesh contingent moved to the Lebanese capital Beirut from the battle-field on 22 November. On 24 November, high officials of Syria gave a hearty send-off to the Bangladesh team at Beirut airport. This support and firm stand in favour of the Arabs played a special role in eliciting recognition from them. In fact, Bangladesh was able to earn the confidence of the Arabs by the end of 1973 and relations with them improved notably. Ultimately, 15 Middle-eastern countries accorded recognition to Bangladesh at the end of 1973. As a token of recognition for Bangladesh's support and contribution, the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat presented a regiment of tanks to Bangladesh.

Today, Bangladesh occupies a place of honour in the international arena because of the foresight, diplomatic positioning, timely and courageous decisions, and competent leadership of the greatest Bangali of all times, the most auspicious leader and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Until now, Bangladesh has successfully completed 54 peacekeeping missions under the United Nations, with participation of 175,089 personnel. At present, a total of 6,413 personnel are discharging their duties in peacekeeping missions. Significantly, this journey of peacekeeping had started in 1973 under Bangabandhu's directives with the participation of only 28 members of a medical teams.

Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

Genesis of Independence
Mahadev Saha

Let me tell that old tale once again
Our freedom born on March Seven,
Thunderous tenor of Sheikh Mujib
Declared and decreed independence.

Lest I should fail to order you all,
Remember it's my liberty war call,
Victory roaring around Ramna ground,
Above stood high the sky stunned.

Millions sacrificed their precious lives,
Motherland freed, not in a caprice;
Then end of Pakistan in Bangla, my land
Victorious heroes woke up in garland

That's how we got back Bangla, our land
That's how we fought our war of liberation
That's how we sang Sonar Bangla, our song

In Ramna ground birds resonated Joi Bangla
The day we had renamed Bangla as Bangla
Independence first uttered in Mujib's voice
That's the immortal tale of our independence.

Translated by Mohammad Nurul Huda

The Sun of Freedom Rises
Muhammad Samad

Bangabandhu's thunderous voice on the racecourse of Seventy-one
Made Bangladesh roar out -
"The struggle this time is for our freedom
The struggle this time is for independence".
The heroic Bangali then took oath
Built up fortresses in all houses.

Under the Banyan tree, on Thirty-two, at Paltan, on rooftop
In factories, the boundaries of crop-fields
Atop the sticks held by hands -
The flags of freedom flew.

On the dark night of Twenty-fifth
The convoys descended in hordes
The sleeping people trembled!
It was as if in a murderous spree
The Yama's emissary knocked on the door.
By the cries of the new-born
Ah, the neighbourhood was silenced!
The city's slums were in flames
The campus-hostels were burnt.

Oh, my country of greenery
Holocaust and Vietnam are today
Smiles of genocide! But no fear -
Through the struggles of peasants, workers, masses
Resistance sprang up - Resistance all over the land.

On the wings of birds and riding on winds
At villages, markets, on land and hills
On the banks of Padma, Meghna, Jamuna
On tumultuous waves in the first hours of
Twenty-sixth March all over the country
Came the call of Sheikh Mujib:
My freedom-seeking brothers
My freedom-loving sisters
Get united, form alliances
Raise your voice with the slogan 'Joi Bangla'
Take up in your hands whatever you have -
The valiant Bangali take up arms
Make Bangla victorious and free.

The falling leaves of that spring
In sun, water, day and night
Arms on the shoulder and hands
The freedom fight rushed in.

On roads, jetties, woods and forests
On river-banks in storms and rains
The daring boys of Mother Bangla
The fiery girls of Bangla Mother
In exchange for their lives and honour
They fired from guns, threw grenades
They fought ... they fought...
The liberation war of brave Bangalis.

After the war in a free land
The eastern sky was daubed in blood
The dreams blossomed in light
On grasses, trees and flowers
The sun of freedom ascends
The sun of independence rises.

Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed



PHOTO: STAR FILE

First-class cricketers in dire financial straits

RAMIN TALUKDER

The coronavirus outbreak has taken a huge toll on human lives and impacted the economy worldwide. Major sporting events were halted around the globe a week ago, with clubs even around Europe facing bankruptcy and struggling to pay staff.

Even practice sessions and camps have been halted to prevent the spread of the virus.

When postponed events will continue is still shrouded in uncertainty and even events scheduled for months in the future are being reconsidered, especially after the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Euro 2020 were postponed until next year.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan mentioned that the Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier League, which was postponed after the first round, may not resume before April 15. He said resuming after that date was more likely.

This uncertainty regarding the domestic league has already started to make a number of cricketers anxious during this perilous time as their livelihoods depend on such remuneration.

contract players like him.

"I hope the BCB makes arrangements for players who are now out of the national side. If they could include us at least in the first-class contract list," sighed Jubair.

Thinking along the same line as Jubair are national discards Dhiman Ghosh and Tushar Imran. Both of them urged the BCB to come forward during this crisis. Dhiman mentioned: "I am in the first-class contract list. But there are a number of cricketers who aren't. In this crisis situation, the BCB should come forward at least considering the current scenario."

Tushar, a domestic colossus and Alauddin's teammate for the season in the DPL, is also concerned about players who are not under contract with the BCB.

"I am in the first-class contract list and there are around 80-90 players in the list. But there are at least 60-70 players outside this list who make their livelihood by playing this premier league every year. Can you think of their plight if the DPL does not resume?," Tushar wondered.

The 36-year-old also demanded the BCB to increase the number of players in the first-class contract list.

Cricketers come forward in fight against coronavirus

SPORTS REPORTER

The threat of the coronavirus is looming large over the general populace and people have become more aware of its threat as the pandemic takes shape in Bangladesh with five deaths reported so far.

As always, what opinion leaders say has a big impact on how our society comes to grips with the new reality of the threat. Yesterday, while grocery shopping, one buyer was heard saying to another: "Don't you understand? The war is fought by staying home as Mashrafe [Bin Mortaza] had said. Not by going out."

The words Mashrafe had posted on Facebook were clinging to people's minds and it showed that celebrities do have a role to play in helping the country. Mashrafe, who had only just stepped down from the ODI captaincy, is a beloved figure and even though all sporting activity is currently at a standstill, sports still have value because of the attention

that celebrities, especially sports stars, can draw. With cricket currently the most popular sports in the country, it does not come as a surprise that the general populace listens to cricketers a lot more than policymakers or politicians.

To that end, the likes of Shakib Al Hasan, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Mushfiqur Rahim have been coming up with social media posts to call people to exercise self-isolation, quarantine and stay inside their own homes and practise social distancing.

The cricketers have also tried to financially contribute, each from their own position, just as the likes of Lionel Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo, who have helped out with efforts to treat patients in their part of the world. 27 of the Bangladesh national team players have decided to put in a concerted effort to raise money towards helping the movement against coronavirus by paying 50 percent of their monthly salary. Tamim Iqbal, the new ODI captain, who had said that he was going to

focus on the team culture of the Tigers, was the instigator and gave the others the direction and impetus to donate.

The 17 players who are under the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) central contract were joined by 10 others who played the recent series at home against Zimbabwe to gather Tk 25 lakh, after taxes, to donate to a government fund.

Tamim hoped their contribution, however small, would act as a catalyst in others stepping up from their own positions. "The sum we have gathered is small compared to the magnitude of our fight against coronavirus. But little droplets can create an ocean. Instead of focusing on criticism from all corners, we must take responsibility and do our bit and then we can win this fight," Tamim wrote on a Facebook post yesterday.

Tamim's idea and the cricketers' willingness to help out in this crisis, can galvanise the side and they in turn will be hoping that it can galvanise society in these tough times.

Junior Asia Cup hockey postponed

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangabandhu Al Arafah Islami Bank Junior Asia Cup Hockey, scheduled for June 4 to 12 in Dhaka, has been postponed in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

The postponement was announced by the Asian Hockey Federation yesterday.

The continental governing body of the game also postponed the Women's Asian Champions Trophy, which was scheduled to be held in June in South Korea.

"The events suspended due to unavoidable circumstances will be held at a convenient time later. The AHF will work in this regard with the host countries, FIH and other world sporting associations," a statement by the AHF said.

'Have more time to prepare for deferred Olympics'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's top archer Ruman Sana is apparently pleased with the postponement of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics because the 24-year-old archer will get more time to prepare for the Games, now set to be held in 2021.

"For me, the postponement of Tokyo Olympics is good news because I could not take part in some international archery tournaments, which were also canceled due to the coronavirus outbreak. Now, I will get more time to prepare by taking part in those tournaments and can take part in the Tokyo Olympics with better preparation," said Ruman, who became only Bangladesh's second athlete to qualify for the Olympics directly after reaching the semifinals in the World Archery Championships in the Netherlands in 2019.

"We may not have faced a big problem yet, but the situation in



RUMAN SANA

Europe is not good, so how would the archers have come to take part in Olympics? I think it is a good decision to postpone Tokyo Olympics," said Ruman.

Ruman, along with other archers, had been in the training camp at the Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master Stadium in Tongi till Monday as part

of his Olympic preparations, but the camp has been suspended for nearly two weeks to accommodate army personnel, who were deployed by the government to assist the local administration in the battle against coronavirus.

"The suspension of the training camp is a bit of a problem but it is a problem for all. Because, we can't expect everything will go to plan in such a situation and we have to adjust in this situation as well as keep ourselves ready," said Ruman.

"Before leaving the stadium yesterday afternoon [Tuesday], I heard the postponement news from my German coach Peter Fredrick, who also gave me some tips to practise at home," said Ruman, adding that he would now follow the instructions to maintain his physical fitness by doing exercises at home and wait for the next directive from Bangladesh Archery Federation on whether training will resume after April 4.

Shane Warne slams Morrison's 'shocker'

AGENCIES

Cricketing great Shane Warne has lashed Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison over his confusing Covid-19 address.

Morrison, in a live TV address on Tuesday evening, confirmed schools would remain open despite businesses such as beauty salons, tanning and nail studios being forced to shut in a bid by the government to contain the Coronavirus pandemic.

Those businesses were added to the list of non-essential businesses forced to shut after pubs, clubs and gyms were forced to shut their doors on Monday.

Many Australians raised immediate concerns about the contradictions, including the country's

greatest ever spin bowler.

"Listening to the PM like everyone here in Australia and what I understood was, 'It's essential unless it's not. Then it's essentially not essential. I can't be clearer'.

"Plus people can buy a new shirt at a shopping centre? PM just had a shocker. Surely should be in lockdown now," Warne wrote.

Warne then doubled down in as criticism as he called for a countrywide lockdown.

"Ps I know it's impossible to please everyone as PM at the moment, but surely clear rules and lockdown for Australia as of NOW is the only decision - end of (sic)," Warne wrote.

"Let's learn from the mistakes other countries have made.

"Health has to be the most important thing for everyone!"



Even amid the fears of the spread of coronavirus, which has seen most people stay home and practise social distancing, this young cricketer in Dupkhula is practising distancing of another sort -- getting the ball as far away from his bat.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

I TAUGHT RONALDO A LOT, SAYS NANI

Former Lazio winger Luis Nani has claimed Cristiano Ronaldo "learned a lot from me", as he picked two Serie A players in his five-a-side line-up of former teammates. "In goal, I pick David De Gea; for me, he's one of the best in the world," Nani said in a video released by MLS. "He's a good friend of mine, but he must bring his glasses because he doesn't see anything without them. It's true." The other four players; Deco, one of my idols. I learned a lot from him, and his technique fits very well in the five vs five. I would put a defender, Bruno Alves, who is very technical for a defender. If you need to play, he can play, if you need to destroy, he's there. Cristiano Ronaldo, with all these skills, fast feet. . . All I taught him in the youth, you know. He learned a lot from me. He knows, he knows," laughed Nani. And since he couldn't play himself, he picked former Manchester United hero Paul Scholes to complete his five-a-side with former teammates.

— AGENCIES



People take pictures of an Omega clock, previously used as a countdown clock for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games but currently displaying current time and date, after the announcement of the games' postponement in Tokyo on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Japan awakes to reality of Olympics postponement

REUTERS, Tokyo

Japan awoke on Wednesday to the deflating reality that the Olympics they had hoped to host in Tokyo this summer were now probably 16 months away after the coronavirus crisis forced organisers into an unprecedented postponement.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Japanese government finally succumbed to intense pressure from athletes and sporting bodies around the world on Tuesday when they agreed to put back the Games until 2021.

It was a huge blow to Japan, which has invested \$12 billion in preparations, but also for the prestige of the Olympic movement and its leader, Thomas Bach, who had come under fire for not reacting sooner in the face of the global health crisis.

Japan Olympic Committee (IOC) President Yasuhiro Yamashita said that the decision had come earlier than he thought it would, but that he was determined the host nation's athletes would be ready to compete in 2021.

"Now that the decisions have been made, let's take this positively, reset our mindset," he told a news conference.

"With a fresh mind, not giving up, I want to go through this challenge heading into next year."

Japanese government officials said Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had phoned U.S. President Donald Trump to explain the postponement as they sought to further cushion the economy

from the twin blows of the coronavirus and the delayed Games.

Tuesday's decision came 122 days before the planned opening ceremony at Japan's newly built National Stadium, which was to usher in the 16-day event featuring 11,000 athletes from 206 nations and territories.

The clock in front of Tokyo Station, which had been displaying the number of days until the Games, ceased its countdown and reverted to Wednesday's date and time.

Although 14 major corporations have indicated they would remain in the IOC's global partnership programme despite the delay, local organisers might have some negotiating to do to retain their own Games-specific sponsors.

Tokyo Gas Co Ltd said it would decide whether to continue sponsorship for another year depending on conditions, including cost.

"We don't have an answer to whether or not we will continue our sponsorship as we have just heard about the postponement," Tokyo Gas President Takashi Uchida told a news conference on the company's new business plans.

"We will make a decision after we learn about details."

Athletes around the world, many struggling to train because of restrictions put in place to contain a virus that has killed more than 17,200 people, have expressed disappointment but largely welcomed the decision.

Many other questions remain about the re-arranged Games, not least when they will happen after the IOC announcement stated only that they would take place "not before the

end of summer 2021".

Somewhere around the original 2020 dates of July 24-Aug. 9 looks most likely, especially after organisers confirmed the marathon and race-walks would remain in Hokkaido where they were moved because of the sweltering Tokyo summer heat.

Those dates would require the shifting of other major events scheduled next year, in particular the athletics world championships in the United States and the swimming equivalent in the Japanese city of Fukuoka.

World Athletics chief Sebastian Coe has suggested its championships in Eugene, Oregon, could be moved to 2022, while swimming's FINA said they would discuss a rescheduling of their event with Tokyo organisers and the IOC.

The Olympic flame, already lit at Olympia in Greece and taken to Japan for a now-cancelled torch relay, will stay in the host nation and the Games will retain the title Tokyo 2020.

"This Olympic flame will be the light at the end of this tunnel," IOC chief Bach said on Tuesday.

U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) chief Travis Tygart raised the prospect that postponement might open the door for convicted drug cheats to compete for medals, an issue he told Reuters would need to be tackled.

The 57 percent of athletes who had already booked spots in Tokyo face a wait to discover whether they will have to qualify again, although Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) chief executive Matt Carroll said they would not.

'Tokyo Games may come before summer 2021'

REUTERS, Athens

The head of the global Olympic movement said on Wednesday that the rescheduled Tokyo Games faced "thousands" of logistical and financial problems and could go ahead before summer 2021.

Though most people have assumed the Games will be held around roughly the same July-August timetable as they were planned for this year, International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach said earlier dates in 2021 were possible.

"The agreement is that we want to organise these Games at the latest in the summer 2021," he told a conference call.

"This is not restricted just to the summer months. All the options are on the table including the summer 2021."

The IOC agreed with Japan on Tuesday to the first postponement in the Olympics' 124-year history due to risks from the coronavirus impact.

It was the last major international sporting event of 2020 to be cancelled, with many questioning why a seemingly inevitable decision took so long to make as the coronavirus epidemic raged around the world.

Athletes were sad but largely relieved, given disruption to their training. The decision was a huge blow to Japan, which has invested \$12 billion in the run-up, and presents a massive headache to reorganise logistics, funding and sponsorship.

Bach said he could not guarantee all elements of the Games would remain as initially planned. For example, he did not know what would happen with the athletes' village, where apartments were set



IOC president Thomas Bach speaks during an interview in Lausanne on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

to be sold after the Games this year.

"This is one of the many thousands of questions this task force will have to address. We hope and we will do whatever we can so that there is an Olympic village, the village is where the heart of the Games beat," he said.

"Our mission is to organise Games and make dreams of athletes come true," he added. "We have no blueprint but we are confident we can put a beautiful jigsaw puzzle together and in the end have wonderful Olympic Games."

Bach, a 66-year-old German lawyer and former Olympic fencing champion, also said that outright cancellation was discussed, even though the IOC had long insisted that was not an option.

"Of course cancellation was discussed and considered like all options on the table, but it was very clear from the beginning that cancellation should not be something the IOC would in any way favour," Bach said.

The IOC is due to start talks from Thursday with other global sporting bodies as moving the gigantic Olympics event has a knock-on effect for many other competitions.

Van Niekerk looks for positives

REUTERS, Cape Town

Olympic 400m champion Wayde van Niekerk says that while the postponement of the 2020 Tokyo Games due to the coronavirus outbreak was a "downer" the delay will give him time to regain full fitness after a long period on the sidelines due to injury.

The 27-year-old was one of the stand-out performers of the 2016 Rio Games where he stormed to gold in a world record time of 43.03, smashing the previous mark of 43.18 set by Michael Johnson in 1999.

But a serious knee injury sustained in a charity touch rugby game in October 2017 has meant Van Niekerk has seen very little of the track since.

He had just started his competitive comeback in the last few months, giving him little time to prepare for Tokyo.

"I'm trying to see the positive in it," Van Niekerk was quoted by South Africa's Daily Maverick on Wednesday.

"I view it as more time to prepare, more time to work and more time to invest in my career. Tokyo is just another stepping stone to the entire legacy that I want to leave behind."

Had the Games gone ahead as scheduled in July, Van Niekerk would have had few opportunities to test his knee and build up speed but he can now be more cautious in his return.

"This gives me more time to work and strengthen myself to be in even better shape for the Olympic Games."



Ronaldo, Messi make donations

REUTERS, undated

Cristiano Ronaldo and football agent Jorge Mendes joined forces on Tuesday to donate lifesaving equipment to Portuguese hospitals struggling to treat patients with coronavirus.

The two will donate equipment for two wards at Lisbon's Santa Maria hospital, providing the wards with 10 beds each, ventilators, heart monitors, infusion pumps and syringes, the hospital said in a statement.

In Porto, the country's second biggest city, the Portuguese pair will equip one ward at the Santo Antonio hospital with 15 intensive care beds, much-needed ventilators, monitors and other equipment. The three wards will be named after the men.

Earlier, Barcelona forward Lionel Messi and Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola each donated one million euros (\$1.08 million) towards the fight against coronavirus.

Argentina international Messi's donation will be split between Hospital Clinic in Barcelona and another medical centre in his home country, according to a report in Marca.

Small clubs struggling to pay foreign players

SPORTS REPORTER

Big clubs in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) may not have much trouble clearing payments to foreign players as per their contracts, but smaller clubs appear to be in trouble relating to those payments after the professional football league was suspended indefinitely on Tuesday.

Most of the small clubs are hoping to reach a mutual understanding regarding the contracts with the foreign players, who have been stuck in Bangladesh after the government suspended flights to all but four countries to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

"We are in deep trouble in the case of the foreign players, who are concerned with the situation because they are away from their family and also need money. The foreign players are eagerly waiting to return home but all international flights except a few have been suspended," Rahmatganj general secretary Imtiaz Hamid Sabuj told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

"We can't talk to them until international flights resume. If the league is not played, then it is not possible to bear all their salaries. There is a clause in the agreements that we can talk to them about a mutual understanding and we will do that," Sabuj said, adding that they pay at least US\$ 15,000 to five

foreign players per month but it was impossible to get donors in such a situation.

Brothers Union manager Amer Khan said that they had been running around with their foreign players after the league was postponed indefinitely.

"Their family members are scared by the situation in Bangladesh. Everyone wants to stay with their family during such bad situations. But their families are alright," Amer said, adding that they had been trying to reach an amicable settlement with the players by clearing this month's salary.

"The players and our German coach Reza Parkas have also been in touch with their respective embassies in Dhaka to see if there is any scope to return home," said the former national footballer.

Uttar Baridhara Club general secretary Jahangir Alam said: "Of five foreign players, we cleared two players' salary up to April 15 and cleared this month's salary to three others before their departure."

"According to our agreement, the club will clear the payments of the running month if any player is terminated or departs from the country. The choice is open for players, who can come back to play for Uttar Baridhara if the league resume in the near future. Or if they want a clearance certificate from us, we are ready to give it to them," Jahangir said.

He added that they would continue to provide accommodation and food to the foreign players until international flights resume.

Saif SC managing director Nasiruddin Ahmed Chowdhury said they were not thinking about any payments because they were more concerned with the players' safe departure from Bangladesh.

"We don't want to talk to them regarding contracts or salaries because we started the season with a budget. However, we are thinking about their return to their countries because they are eager to meet their family," Chowdhury said.

He believes foreign players wouldn't face such if the league committee decided to postpone the league on March 17 because all the foreigners had bought tickets home anyway as there was to be a break in the league due to World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers.

Chowdhury also informed that Bangladesh captain Jamal Bhuiyan left the country on Tuesday for Denmark but three foreign players and one foreign coach remained in the country.

Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu said they would sit with foreign players and coaches to discuss the matter while Arambagh general secretary Yaqub Ali urged the BFF to pay them the participation money so that they could clear payment to foreign players and release them immediately.

"এবারের সংগ্রাম আমাদের মুক্তির সংগ্রাম
এবারের সংগ্রাম স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম
জয় বাংলা"

১৬ মার্চ মহান স্বাধীনতা দিবসে
আমরা শুদ্ধান্তে আভিবাধন জানাই
জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান সহ
স্বাধীনতার সকল বীর সেনানীকে।

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SHAH CEMENT

A mad scramble to get home

Thousands ignore govt advice to stay indoors, leave capital posing serious risk of spreading coronavirus

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Ignoring the government advice to stay home, people in droves continued to leave Dhaka for their village homes yesterday.

This increased the risk that the coronavirus might spread across the country, say experts.

As the operations of launch, domestic flight, and passenger train were suspended from Tuesday until further notice, people yesterday took road transport to reach homes as the government is going to place all public transport services on roads on "lockdown" from today until April 4.

The pressure of people and vehicles was so intense that around 30km stretch of the Dhaka-Tangail highway in Tangail witnessed gridlock for hours, while 300 to 500 vehicles got stuck at ferry terminals on the Shimulia-Kathalbari and Paturia-Daulatdia routes that linked Dhaka with 21 southern districts.

During March 26 to April 4, freight trains, cargo vessels, trucks, and lorries carrying goods, medicine, fuel and perishable items will, however, operate as usual, according to directives from different ministries.

The government on Monday announced closure of all public and private offices from March 26 to April 4 as part of its efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19.

Announcing a series of measures at a press conference on that day, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam advised people not to go outside homes unless they need

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



People cram into a ferry at Paturia Ferry Terminal in Manikganj yesterday ahead of a 10-day public holiday beginning today. Over 300 vehicles, including buses and trucks, were stranded at the terminal for hours as the BIWTC ferries could not carry them due to a huge rush of passengers from Dhaka. A countrywide ban on the movement of public transport on roads and highways comes into force today. The ban would remain in force until April 4 to slow down the spread of novel coronavirus. However, movement of goods-laden trucks would remain out of the purview of the ban.

PHOTO: JAHANGIR SHAH

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Free Bangladesh celebrates first Independence Day



Bangabandhu addressing the nation over radio on March 26, 1972.

MARCH 26, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

STEPS TOWARDS SOCIALISM

In a historic address to the nation broadcast and telecast today from his office, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declares his commitment towards

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



করোনা ভাইরাস প্রতিরোধে ঐক্য গড়ি

- জীবনের অধিকার সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ মানবাধিকার।
- প্রাণধাতী করোনা ভাইরাসের আক্রমণে গোটা বিশ্বের জনজীবন বিপর্যস্ত। এ দুর্যোগ সরকারের একার পক্ষে মোকাবেলা করা সম্ভব নয়।
- এই জনদুর্যোগে অসহায় ও বিপন্ন মানবতার পাশে স্বাস্থ্যসেবা, সুরক্ষা উপাদান, খাদ্যসামগ্রী নিয়ে সরকারের পাশাপাশি দাঁড়াচ্ছে বিভিন্ন স্বেচ্ছাসেবক সংগঠন, স্কুল-কলেজের শিক্ষার্থীসহ অনেকেই। কমিশন এ উদ্যোগকে স্বাগত জানায়।
- করোনা আক্রান্ত রোগীদের সুচিকিৎসা নিশ্চিত করা সহ চিকিৎসক ও স্বাস্থ্যকর্মীদের ব্যক্তিগত নিরাপত্তা সুরক্ষা বিষয়ে সরকারের গৃহীত উদ্যোগ আরো জোরদার করার আহ্বান জানায় কমিশন।
- করোনা ভাইরাসের সংক্রমণ রোধে সরকার সারা দেশে ১০ দিনের সাধারণ ছুটি ঘোষণাসহ বেশ কিছু নির্দেশনা প্রদান করেছে। ছুটির মূল উদ্দেশ্য ছিল জনগণ যেন ঘরে থাকে। কিন্তু, গণমাধ্যমের সচিত্র প্রতিবেদনে দেখা যায়, ছুটি ঘোষণার সাথে সাথে বাড়ি ফেরার আমেজ নিয়ে দূরপাল্লার গণপরিবহনে অসংখ্য মানুষের ভিড়।
- এভাবে চলাচলের ফলে অনেকেই করোনা ভাইরাসে আক্রান্ত হওয়ার ঝুঁকিতে রয়েছেন। সংক্রমণ রোধে কমিশন তাদেরকে স্বেচ্ছা কোয়ারেন্টাইনে থাকার অনুরোধ জানায়।
- আসুন আমরা সকলে নিজের ও অন্যের জীবনের সুরক্ষায় নিজ ঘরে অবস্থান করি, সরকার ও বিশ্ব স্বাস্থ্য সংস্থার নির্দেশনা মেনে চলি।
- জরুরি চিকিৎসাসেবা বা খাবার সামগ্রী ক্রয়ের জন্য ঘরের বাহিরে যেতে হলে মাস্ক ব্যবহার করি, সামাজিক দূরত্ব নিশ্চিত করি এবং সম্মিলিতভাবে করোনা ভাইরাসের সংক্রমণ প্রতিরোধ করি।
- আসুন, অযথা আতঙ্কিত না হয়ে স্বাস্থ্যবিধি মেনে চলে নিজেকে নিরাপদ রাখার পাশাপাশি পরিবার, সমাজ এবং দেশকে নিরাপদ রাখি।
- যার যার সামর্থ্য অনুযায়ী নিজ নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিত রেখে বিপন্ন মানবতার পাশে দাঁড়াই।

জনস্বার্থে- জাতীয় মানবাধিকার কমিশন
(স্বাধীন রাষ্ট্রীয় প্রতিষ্ঠান)

GD-611

বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল
BANGLADESH MEDICAL & DENTAL COUNCIL

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সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১। বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল কর্তৃক স্বীকৃত নয় এমন কোন নাম বা ডাক নাম, শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, ডিগ্রী, প্রশিক্ষণ বিবরণ ইত্যাদি বিএমএডভিসি হইতে নিবন্ধন প্রাপ্ত কোন চিকিৎসক/ দস্তচিকিৎসক ব্যবহার করিতে পারিবেন না। লক্ষ্য করা যাইতেছে যে, কোন কোন নিবন্ধিত চিকিৎসক/ দস্তচিকিৎসক তাহাদের সাইন বোর্ড প্রেসক্রিপশনপ্যাড, ভিজিটিং কার্ড ইত্যাদিতে PGT; BHS; FCPS- (Part-I), (Part-II); MD/ MS (in course), (Part-I), (Part-II), (বিসিস পর্ব), (Last part), Course Completed (cc); ইত্যাদি এবং দেশ বিদেশের বিভিন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে প্রদত্ত ফেলোশিপ এবং ট্রেনিং সমূহ যথা -FRCP, FRHS, FICA, FICS, FAMS, FIAGP ইত্যাদি উল্লেখ করিতেছেন যাহা বিএমএডভিসি কর্তৃক স্বীকৃত নয়। ইহা ছাড়াও স্বীকৃত পোষ্ট গ্রাজুয়েশন ডিগ্রী না থাকা সত্ত্বেও কেহ কেহ মেডিসিন বিশেষজ্ঞ, সার্জারী বিশেষজ্ঞ, শিশুরোগ বিশেষজ্ঞ, চর্ম ও বৌন রোগ বিশেষজ্ঞ, চক্ষু বিশেষজ্ঞ, নাক-কান-গলা বিশেষজ্ঞ, পাইনী ও প্রসূতি বিশেষজ্ঞ ইত্যাদি বিভিন্ন বিষয়ের বিশেষজ্ঞ হিসাবে তাহাদের পরিচিতি প্রদান করিয়া তাহা প্রেসক্রিপশন প্যাড, সাইন বোর্ড, ভিজিটিং কার্ড ইত্যাদিতে ব্যবহার করিতেছেন যাহা জনসাধারণের সঙ্গে প্রতারণা মূলক কাজ হিসাবে গণ্য। ইহা স্পষ্টতই বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল আইনের পরিপন্থী এবং শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ। মাননীয় আদালতের নির্দেশনা অনুযায়ী অর্ধ দন্ড অথবা কারাদন্ড বা উভয় দন্ডে দণ্ডনীয় হইতে পারেন।

২। সকল নিবন্ধিত চিকিৎসক/ দস্তচিকিৎসককে তাহাদের প্রেসক্রিপশন প্যাড, সাইনবোর্ড, ভিজিটিং কার্ড ইত্যাদিতে আবশ্যিকভাবে তাহাদের বিএমএডভিসি হইতে প্রাপ্ত রেজিস্ট্রেশন নম্বর উল্লেখ করার জন্য অবহিত করা যাইতেছে।

25.03.2020
ডেপুটি সেক্রেটারি (আরমাত্ত)
বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল

8 killed in road crashes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

At least eight people were killed and 12 others injured in three road accidents in Bogura yesterday.

Of them, six people were killed when Dhaka-bound bus lost control and collided head-on with a salt-laden truck in Sherpur's Ghogabottola area on Dhaka-Rangpur highway around 11:30am, said Ratan Hossain, in-charge of Fire Service And Civil Defence in Sherpur.

Three of the deceased were identified as Belal Hossain, 17, son of Abdur Rashid from Anontorampur village

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PRAYER TIMING MARCH 26

| | | | | |
|------------|------|------|---------|------|
| Fazr | Zohr | Asr | Maghrib | Esha |
| JAMAT 5:20 | 1:15 | 5:00 | 6:25 | 8:15 |

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

সন্ত্রাসবাদকে 'না' বলুন

বাসা ভাড়া দেওয়ার ক্ষেত্রে করণীয়

- বাসা ভাড়া দেওয়ার পূর্বে ভাড়াটিয়ার পরিচয় নিশ্চিত করুন।
- ভাড়াটিয়ার জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র ও মোবাইল নাম্বার সংগ্রহে রাখুন।
- সমন্বয়িতভাবে বাসার পরিচয়পত্র বা মোবাইল নাম্বার সঠিক কিনা যাচাই করুন।
- প্রয়োজনে পুলিশের সহযোগিতা নিন।
- সম্ভব হলে ভাড়াটিয়ার চাকুরী বা ব্যবসার বিষয়ে খোঁজ খবর নিন।

শিক্ষা

- বাল্য ও সন্তানের পরিবারিক শিক্ষা নিশ্চিত করুন।
- বাঙালি সংস্কৃতি, ইতিহাস ও ঐতিহ্যকে ধারণ করা।
- মুক্তিযুদ্ধের চেতনা ও অসাম্প্রদায়িক মূল্যবোধ লালন করা।
- দেশপ্রেম ও দেশাত্মবোধ জন্ম দান করা।
- পাঠ বহির্ভূত শিক্ষা যেমন: বই পড়া, গান, আবৃত্তি, বিতর্ক কিংবা খেলাধুলায় উৎসাহিত করা।
- সঠিক ও প্রায়োগিক ধর্মীয় শিক্ষা দেওয়া ও অন্য ধর্মকে শ্রদ্ধা করা।
- নৈতিকতা, মানবিকতা, সহনশীলতা ও সহাবস্থানের চর্চা করা।
- পরিবার থেকে সন্তানদের নৈতিকতা, মানবিকতা, সহনশীলতা ও সহাবস্থানের চর্চা শেখানো।
- দেশপ্রেম, বাঙালি সংস্কৃতি ও মুক্তিযুদ্ধের চেতনায় তরুণদের উদ্বুদ্ধ করা।
- প্রাপ্ত বয়স্ক না হলে সন্তানদেরকে ব্যক্তিগতভাবে ইন্টারনেট ব্যবহারে নিরুৎসাহিত করা।

সচেতনতা

- উন্নয়নে জড়িত হওয়ার কারণ, উপায় ও লক্ষণ বিষয়ে জানুন।
- উন্নয়নের কুফল সম্পর্কে পরিবার, প্রতিবেশী ও বন্ধুদের সচেতন করা।
- উন্নয়নে জড়িত হওয়ার কারণ, উপায় ও লক্ষণ বিষয়ে জানুন।
- ইন্টারনেট ও সামাজিক যোগাযোগ মাধ্যম ব্যবহারে সতর্ক হওয়া এবং অপ্রাপ্ত বয়স্কদের তা ব্যবহারে নিরুৎসাহিত করা।
- আন্তর্জাতিক সম্প্রীতি, সহাবস্থান ও ভালবাসার দৃষ্টিতে স্থাপন করা।
- ইসলামের অপব্যবহার রোধে আলেম-ওলামাদের সম্পৃক্ত করা।
- ইমাম ও খতিবদের উন্নয়নের বিপক্ষে বক্তব্য প্রদানে উদ্বুদ্ধকরণ।
- আন্তর্জাতিক মানুসের পারম্পরিক সম্প্রীতি বৃদ্ধি ও অভিজ্ঞতা বিনিময়।

দায়িত্ববোধ

- আপোষাণের বা ইন্টারনেটে লুকিয়ে থাকা রিক্রুটরের বিষয়ে সজাগ থাকা।
- ধর্মের অপব্যবহার ও সাম্প্রদায়িক বিদ্বেষ ছড়ানো ব্যক্তি বা গোষ্ঠীকে চিহ্নিত করা।
- শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের আচরণগত পরিবর্তনের প্রতি লক্ষ রাখা ও অভিভাবকের সাথে মতবিনিময় করা।
- সহকর্মী, ভাড়াটিয়া, প্রতিবেশী বা বন্ধুদের আচরণ ও তাদের হঠাৎ পরিবর্তনের দিকে খেয়াল রাখা।
- বাড়ি ভাড়া দেয়ার সময় ভাড়াটিয়ার সঠিক পরিচয় নিশ্চিত করা।
- সদেহজনক যে কোনো বিষয় 'সিটিটিসি' (CTTC) কে অবহিত করা।

আপনার সচেতনতাই পারে উন্নয়ন রূপান্তরে

উন্নয়ন সজাগ বিষয়ে কাউন্সিল টেরোরিজম এন্ড ট্রান্সন্যাশনাল ক্রাইম ইউনিটকে (CTTC) প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য দিতে Hello CT Mobile Apps ব্যবহার করুন। এই Apps এর মাধ্যমে নিজের পরিচয় গোপন রেখে তথ্য প্রদান করা সম্ভব।

কাউন্সিল টেরোরিজম এন্ড ট্রান্সন্যাশনাল ক্রাইম ইউনিট, ডিএমপি। অর্ধায়ে ৪ বাংলাদেশ পুলিশের সন্ত্রাস দমন ও আন্তর্জাতিক অপরাধ প্রতিরোধ কেন্দ্র নির্মাণ প্রকল্প

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