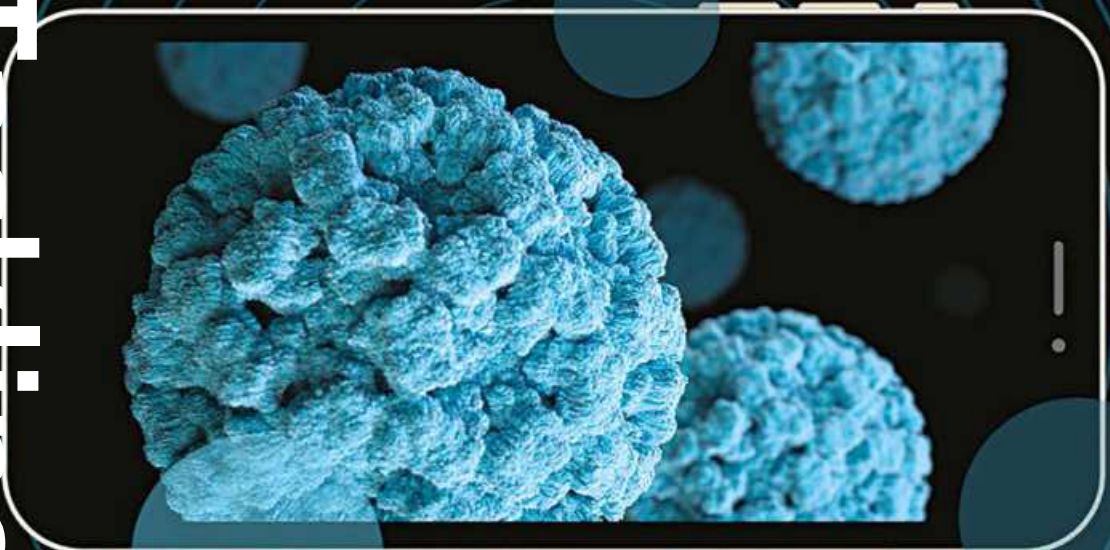


# TOGGLE

WEEKEND LIVING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

A publication of *The Daily Star*

## Tackling coronavirus with technology



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# Watermark Group providing monthly rations as support for employees

Watermark Group Limited was started by two people as an advertising company 10 years ago. Over time, it expanded to over a hundred people working from remote areas all over the country.

During this Covid-19 outbreak Watermark has started providing monthly food rations to its work family. This is to further ensure people stay home for safety and reduce exposure to social gatherings by going to shops. The food rations include

organically sourced items from its own food product line-up. Aside from that, the regular welfare funds, retirement allowance, health insurance for the employees' families continue unabated under the company HR policy.

Co-founder of the company, Jakaria Md. Palash started the company when he was in university. His basic principle following an 'Employee Ownership' model is to invest in people so as to ensure outstanding results.

The Watermark Group's initiative is a small one from a small company hoping to bring a much-needed change in these trying times. It may not be easy to give many of the needed opportunities to employees, however, a small percentage of the annual income can go a long way in ensuring wellbeing of their people while developing life-long strong connections.

It is high time to start a campaign called #SupportYourEmployee.



## Realme's new C2 is an online favourite

Through an online event, Chinese smartphone brand realme has launched their new C2 phone in Bangladesh on last Thursday, 2020.

Dubbed as the 'best looking entry-level smartphone' by realme, the phone is equipped with a 19.5:9 HD+ display, dual-rear camera, a 4,000 mAh battery, 2 GB RAM and 32 GB internal storage. Before its launch, the phone was made available Evaly, a local e-commerce site, on 29 March 2020 for a price of BDT 8,990. It has since become the highest-selling smartphone on the site.

## NEW CAR THIS WEEK

Remember Elva, McLaren's newest multi-million-dollar limited production hypercar? Well it got a new appearance package. McLaren Special Operations just announced the McLaren Elva M1A Theme, a homage to the original Elva, the McLaren M1A. Does it make the car cooler? Yes. Does it make it any more drivable? Not so much. For reasons



unknown, the engineers working on Elva chose to replace the traditional windscreen with something called "Active Air Management System". What that is an automatic wind deflector that pops up during driving protect its occupants. Unlike a windscreen though, it does not deflect rock chips, bugs or water and works only up to 112 Km/h, less than



1/3 of the car's top speed. Meaning unless you like feeling miserable every time you go out for a drive, this car is for track only. Something it will possibly never see thanks to its \$1.69 million sticker price. Which is really sad because this quad exhaust, lighter than Senna, 804 hp hypercar would have dominated any track it let loose in.

## Viber and WHO launches chatbot to fight COVID-19 misinformation

Rakuten Viber and the World Health Organization (WHO) are collaborating to fight the misinformation around the topic of COVID-19 with an interactive multi-language chatbot, which aims to combat the rapidly circulating fake and false information about the virus.

The chatbot contains a 'Latest News' section, which is updated in real-time from the WHO's website. Other sections include - Protect Yourself, Mask Usage, Travel Recommendations, and Myth. Myth is an interactive quiz designed to test the user's knowledge regarding COVID-19. There is also a 'Donate Now' button that allow users to support WHO's fight against the pandemic through donating to the



COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund. The chatbot is free for all Viber user and is currently available in English, Arabic and Russian. It is soon to be translated into 20 more languages, including Bangla

## EDITOR'S NOTE

### It's tough being home doing nothing.

At least, that's what social media would have us believe. Look at all the sad posts of people having difficulty making Dalgona coffee. But that is privilege we shouldn't really be complaining about. Those of us who can stay home are the lucky ones. Compared to the garments workers who had to walk many kilometers because they were needed back at work, only to be asked to go back.

Use your privilege and pay it forward. You can do your bit sitting at home. There are many organizations and groups doing fantastic work to make sure the poor can survive. Donate so they can do more. All that in page 3. In the meantime, the secret to drinkable Dalgona coffee is to avoid the milk and add creamer and water instead.

Ehsanur Raza Ronny, Editor

## TOGGLE

**Editor and Publisher**  
Mahfuz Anam

**Editor (TOGGLE)**  
Ehsanur Raza Ronny

**Team**  
Shaer Reaz  
Syeda Adiba Arif  
Asif Ayon  
Zarif Faiaz  
Rahbar Al Haq

**Graphics**  
DS Creative Graphics

**Production**  
Shamim Chowdhury

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**TechBits**

HBO NOW and HBO GO offers free streaming of some their top shows

Apple's support video accidentally confirms upcoming AirTags tracking device

Estimote launches contact tracing wearables to help workplace social distancing

Zoom freezes feature development to fix security and privacy issues

Google to shut down its India-focused Q&A app Neighbourly

# Organizations helping in COVID-19 relief efforts with crowd funding

ORABI BAKHTIAR

## Bidyanondo Foundation

Bidyanondo Foundation is a non-profit social welfare organization that has been helping the unfortunate even before the coronavirus pandemic. However, owing to the current situation, Bidyanondo Foundation has been working round the clock to make sure the deprived have a source of food and other necessities.

"We are providing food for the families in slums, cooked in our kitchen. About four to five thousand packets get distributed each day," said Jakir Hossain, Secretary of the organization. They are also distributing dry nutrients such as rice, lentils and flour. With the help of donations, they have reached 1 lakh items in stock already. These meals are being delivered to underprivileged families both inside and outside of Dhaka such as Chittagong, Rangpur and Rajshahi. With the help of a supportive company supplying free healthcare items, Bidyanondo Foundation has been successful in distributing them in hospitals and to doctors in the Upazilas. To cover such a vast network, volunteers have been appointed for execution. Jakir said, "We screen the volunteers to make sure there is no misuse of resources. Whenever we have fallen short of volunteers, we go and ask the Bangladesh Police Force for help and they have been more than happy to assist us"

## Bangladesh Students' Union

Bangladesh Students' Union helps distribute 150 litres of hand sanitizer every day, produced in-house and free of cost. After Shyamjit Paul, a student of the Department of Pharmacy and a core member of the Dhaka University committee of the organisation came up with this idea, they decided to reach out to social media for financial support. Around 20 people toil day and night at TSC to meet with the demand for their hand sanitizers. "We realized that production was the most important aspect of the plan. We were preparing the sanitizer bottles outside of the Munir Chowdhury Auditorium in TSC initially, but then we managed to get permission from the authority and turned the auditorium into a make-shift lab", said Meghmallar Bose, the Acting GS of the Dhaka University Committee of Bangladesh Students' Union.

They are also expanding into the food distribution sector and successfully delivered food in Dhaka, Sylhet and Barisal. Bangladesh Students' Union is prioritizing the workers, journalists and medical staffers during their product distribution

since these people are at the highest risk. Recently, a transgender group had reached out to them for help and they delivered 200 units of sanitizer bottles in the area. The organization has also arranged an awareness programme regarding COVID-19 in a red light area in Daulatdiya, Khulna. So far 85000 units of hand sanitizers have been produced in Dhaka, Chattogram, Shariatpur, Sylhet, Mouloubazar, Gopalganj, Rangpur, Naugaon and Kishorgonj. "We keep a certain amount stocked for emergencies, such as for hospitals. The rest have been distributed", Meghmallar assured.

## Pashe Achhi Foundation

Pashe Achhi Foundation was an initiative taken by a group of Economics majors

expanding the activities outside of Dhaka and have already covered Gongachor, Rangpur. Other than that, they are also helping the transgender and sex worker communities in Savar and Jurain. Besides food, the organization is also spraying disinfectants in different slums around Dhaka and supplying PPEs to hospitals through a local importer. "All these activities have been made possible due to crowd funding. We just wanted to inspire people to do the same in the beginning but people wanted to help us financially and that's what started this initiative," shared Tahmid.

## Mission Save Bangladesh

During these hard times, underprivileged people are at the most at risk. Keeping that

numerous organizations, they were able to raise around BDT 60 lakhs. Thanks to Shakib Al Hasan and his initiative, The Shakib Al Hasan Foundation, Mission Save Bangladesh received an enormous amount of support and donations.

Mission Save Bangladesh focuses on supporting the private sectors more and will contribute to the SME sector soon. "Companies such as IDLC Finance, Shwapno, Pathao, Arla and many more have supported us in ways we could never imagine", shared Tajdin. Mission Save Bangladesh believes in transparency and showcases each of their transactions on their Facebook page.

## Shishuder Jonno Foundation

Shishuder Jonno Foundation has been supporting children from underprivileged families and in this coronavirus outbreak, they have taken the initiative to deliver grocery items to those working families with no source of income. "In this situation, we just want to help! We want everyone to help each other according to their capability," stated Mueed Hasan, founding member and director of the organization.

Shishuder Jonno Foundation has raised awareness of Corona Virus infection among people whilst donating hand sanitizers to them. Furthermore, 500 filter masks have been donated among helpless people and day labourers. Groups of the foundation from Dhaka, Tangail, Rajbari, Rangpur have sprayed germicide in different areas, drains, roads and vehicles. The group operating in Dhaka is working for the day labourers, especially those who are not out of work by managing their meals for 10 days. Rajbari group is arranging balanced meals every day for more than a hundred uprooted people. The Tangail group is working on a plan to help 300 underprivileged families by arranging their food. 10 kg of rice, 3 kg of potato, 1 kg of red gram, 1 litre of soybean oil, 500 grams of salt, soaps, detergent powders have been distributed to helpless families. Shishuder Jonno Foundation has also emphasized on the importance of stray animals lives and providing meals to them regularly. "Volunteers of this foundation are working alongside the government to make sure no one is left hungry", said Mueed.

Many other organizations are working for this cause with crowd founding apart from the ones mentioned in this piece.

Watch this space for more updates. You can visit the Facebook page of each group to access activity info and details on how to donate.



studying at Dhaka University to help the helpless people of the country. In the beginning, Tahmid Hasan, one of the founding members, along with his friends distributed meals to the rickshaw pullers and CNG drivers, funded by their own money. Having met with numerous mouths to feed, they decided to go to social media to ask for donations. They had met with a huge response and successfully distributed meals to those deserving families with the funds.

Till now, Pashe Achhi has covered Dhanmondi, Shankar, Mohammadpur, Tarpur Jurain, Shyampur, Goran, Mugda, Merul Badda, Rayerbazar and Shaheenbagh inside Dhaka. They are now focusing on

in mind, Sheba.xyz had partnered with The Daily Star and The Daily Samakal to launch the social initiative, "Mission Save Bangladesh". Their main goal is to provide grocery items to the underprivileged such as the rickshaw pullers of the city. Tajdin Hassan, Head of Marketing, The Daily Star, said, "Along with Adnan Imtiaz, we had decided to come up with a way to keep these families at home for 10 days". Adnan Imtiaz is the Co-founder of Sheba.xyz. Now they had set a budget for allocating BDT 1000 worth groceries for 1300 rickshaw pullers each. This meant they needed at least BDT 13 lakhs to get started. With the help of corporate donations from



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# Spirited away

## in a 2012 Mazda RX8 Spirit R S2

AHBAAR MILKY

I remember my brief (and first) encounter with a rx8 and recall being bewildered by its suicide doors.

The car in question, a black first generation (S1 for petrolhead nomenclature) was a bit mundane compared to its portrayal in NFS most wanted and the blue veilsided kitted rx8 from Fast and Furious Tokyo Drift. The bubbly proportions and design language did not immediately make sense, almost as if each nook and cranny of the car contrasted each other, and the car certainly did not make sense if it was parked next to an rx7. Die-hard rotary fans were quick to disown the happy go lucky, rear wheel drive, new age sports car bearing Mazda and Dr. Felix Wankel's legacy (no, not the legacy with the German dictator with a knack for painting) and understandably so, as the party piece for any Mazda, the new 13B Renesis rotary engine parted ways with the twin scroll turbochargers that made the previous generation RX7 so intoxicating all the way to redline (recommended on rotary cars to keep the carbon build up away). To be fair, Rotaries are rev happy, and it's peppy nature makes it just as joyful without the need for forced induction.

Enter, the second generation (S2) RX8. The entire car went on a high calorie



diet, comprised of protein shakes and bench presses. Subtle changes redefined the entire car both inside and out. The front bumper, now more elongated and buffed up to match the fenders. Every nook and cranny complimented each other. Headlights and tail lights took a crash course on "zoom-zoom" (Mazda's then design language) as did every other crevices on the car. The "facelift" RX8 (if you will) suddenly didn't look like the confused teenager with no aim in life that the pre facelift RX8 manifestly was on the surface, albeit, everything wrong with the exterior of the previous gen was instantly exfoliated with the Mazdaspeed kit. Just look at img\_8098, like an animated Batmobile with its flared arches and menacing stance. It's like that friend you

have who's an entirely different person the instant they take their glasses off, and in turn transforms into a Japanese geisha. With a katana. One fun easter egg I play every time I see an rx8 on the road is to count the number of triangles that loosely resemble the structure of a rotary engine, and they're camouflaged both on the exterior and interior.

Farasat Waez struck gold (more on that later) when a trip to car house in search of a manual GT86 made him leave the dealership with keys to a 2012 Sparkling Black Mica RX8 "Spirit R", a badge crowned by the rotary gods to the most coveted, buffed up Mazda's to leave the factory. four out of a thousand Japan only Spirit R units made their way to our port, as did a myriad of base model units since importers realized the 1300 cc displacement loopholed its way out of our rigid import tax structures. If you google RX8 right now, you're bound to see one with Bangladeshi rego plates. That's how much the local scene love it. Although they're the butt of "7K" swapped jokes more often than it should get credit for.

The RX8 Spirit R is therefore a plaque, to celebrate the gamble Mazda took in 1967 and the demise of the RX8's production. It is therefore, a lightened,

souped up Torch to carry Mazda's legacy. The ultimate rotary swansong came with a 6 speed manual transmission, 4 piston Brembos all around, a reworked engine with an output of 238 hp, the highest for any RX8 to leave the factory. In addition to a torque vectoring LSD, bespoke track ready Bilstein suspension made the forged exclusive to the spirit R 19" BBS bronze aluminum alloys even more special. Farasat really struck gold and he loves Rotary ownership thus far. He's an advocate for the unmistakable sound of the Rotary. Quiet as a mouse at low revs, while packing firepower (read 'decibels') to raise the dead high in the rev range. The handling is amazing thanks to the host of performance upgrades from factory. While Rotary maintenance is a sore topic, the owner tells me Rotary maintenance is all about patience. The crucial warming up after a cold start, letting it sit idle following a spirited drive, changing the oil every 1000 km makes all the difference while keeping rotary woes at bay. The same way a baby needs a mother. Just like with any car really. While Farasat enjoys his Spirit R the way it was meant to be from factory; Bone stock, he wishes to upgrade the brakes and itches for an exhaust.

Words and photos: Ahbar Milky



# Tech vs COVID-19: How the coronavirus is bringing out the best tech has to offer

SAIM AHMED SHIFAT

The spread and devastating impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) are unprecedented. Hospitals and health systems around the world are struggling to care for the people getting infected with the virus every day. However, some noteworthy initiatives in the tech industry have been taken as responses to the pandemic. As coronavirus spreads, so do tech innovations to combat it. Data to understand the genetic history of the virus

The right information about the genetic tree of the virus can help epidemiologists understand how it evolves in different countries and possible mutations that can change its nature. **Nextstrain** is an open-sourced project that shows the evolution of pathogens like coronavirus by utilizing necessary data along with sequencing and visualizations for it. By sharing the genetic sequencing of 700 cases of the virus with the scientific community, the project has contributed to corroborating that the virulence of the virus has not changed while spreading to other countries. Machine learning to find a therapy

**AbCellera** is a Canada-based biotech company who are using a machine learning model to develop therapies based on antibodies from patients who have defeated the COVID-19. By means of AI, they have analyzed more than five million immune cells looking for cells that can produce antibodies with the potential to help patients recover. 500 antibodies have already been identified by AbCellera as possible candidates for use in future COVID-19 therapies. App to bring doctors around the world together

**MedShr** is a professional network for doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals that is currently used by over one million members in 190 countries. It is an app used by a million doctors around the world to aid one another in different diagnostic processes. The same developers introduced **LetsBeatCOVID.net**, a tech platform that asks people to complete a short survey about their health and exposure to COVID-19. The responses can be updated if someone's medical situation changes. The individual will have to log back in using a randomly generated password. By verifying their location, users of the platform can play a role in generating more accurate data about the spread of symptoms without disclosing identity. Moreover, personalized guidelines are sent to users who decide to share their email. LetsBeatCOVID.net could make it easier for members of the community to provide the information urgently needed by hospitals and governments. Furthermore, it can allow hospitals to understand the number of people who have come in contact with someone with COVID-19, shown symptoms, or believe that they have already had the coronavirus and recovered. Platforms to

bring telemedicine to the rescue

Communities are increasingly turning to telemedicine in order to avoid the hospitals with a never-seen-before influx of patients. Hospitals like Xuhui public hospital of Shanghai in China have consulted with patients from as far away as Tibet and France. A Spain-based company named **Open Salud** (Open Health) has launched a tele-consulting platform that allows any doctor or clinic to tend to their patients who need medical attention. These platforms are streamlining diagnostic and treatment processes where patients have to open the application, describe their symptoms and wait for a doctor to get back to them via virtual consultation. Initiatives to manage tech talent

A coalition of initiatives named **COVID 19 Tech Response** (CTR) has come forward in the UK with the aim

and access the resources on the CoronavirusTechHandbook

Besides managing talent, the group will also be encouraging the tech community to talk to healthcare workers/public service workers and share tools to build teams who can be equipped to solve problems pertaining to the pandemic. Apps joining forces with the hotlines

The regional government in Madrid, Spain has launched an initiative named **Corona Madrid**. It is available both as an app or a web page. Individuals who suspect that they might have the virus can have a physical self-assessment conducted with help from the platform. Based on the symptoms and generated results, the users receive instructions about steps to be taken for treatment and isolation. Similar initiatives were also taken by South Korea to mitigate the crisis. The initiatives aim to reduce call congestion

**Team** were able to find an open-source respirator prototype that was later tested at the Central University Hospital of Asturias in Spain. If everything goes as expected, the respirators will soon go for human testing. Chatbots to answer queries

The **WHO chatbot** was launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) to provide information about the coronavirus and to answer the FAQs. The chatbot can provide updates like current rates of infected people and protection measures to keep the virus from spreading exponentially. The chatbot is available on Whatsapp, which is owned by Facebook. Besides the chatbot, Facebook also has the Coronavirus Information Center that removes the spread of fake news and provides only verified and official sources of information. Apps to keep up with work and social life



to coordinate the existing tech talent and direct them to solve the problems surrounding the pandemic. So far, around 400 tech volunteers have joined the group. CTR will also aim to coordinate the volunteers to coach and support the UK citizens who are in need of these services. The group is working closely with the Coronavirus Tech Handbook, an initiative by political technology college **Newspeak House** which has quickly become a global resource.

The four main "call-to-actions" of the group are: Join the **Code4COVID** Slack as a volunteer or to source volunteers, or work on **projects**Add your tech skills to the COVID-19 Tech Response **Airtable** formSubmit mainstream UK tech problems to COVID Tech SupportContribute to

for the coronavirus hotlines and provide health authorities with a concise local overview of the pandemic. 3D printers to make ventilators

Ventilators have become essential equipment for providing treatment to the most severe cases of COVID-19. But the health systems around the world are facing a shortage of supplies. To solve this, developers around the world have developed communication platforms and channels using different collaboration software and platforms like Telegram. They share an open-source design that directly helps in manufacturing ventilators with 3D printers. Anyone with a 3D printer can play his/her role by printing the necessary components of a ventilator. In just a few days, members of a Spain-based group named **Resistencia**

Besides platforms for medical help, there are apps bringing peoples' need to going out to a minimum. Now that everyone is quarantined in their homes, applications enabling video conferencing and online work collaboration have become more necessary than ever. There has been a huge increase in the number of downloads of apps like **Zoom**, **Skype** and **Google Hangouts Meet** and collaboration software like **Microsoft Teams**, **Monday.com**, **Slack** etc over the last few months. Apart from using the apps to stay in touch and work remotely, some users are going out of their way to realising the truly creative potential of the apps by organizing concerts, workshops, virtual get-togethers, birthday parties and even weddings.



MITSUBISHI MOTORS

NOW YOU KNOW

## No car ever remain stock

Car owners and enthusiasts are known for modifying their cars away from its stock configurations. Some of these modifications improve performance, others better comfort, and some just make the car stand out. But at the end of the day these modifications serve the same goal. They make the car more personal to their owners, turning it from an appliance to an object of affection. Some car companies such as Mitsubishi encourage such practices, with cars like their Xpander MPV built to be modification friendly. From leather seats to fog lamps, extensive changes on this car is possible, and are being done in Indonesia and Thailand. We might see the same in BD soon, so keep an eye out.





# Is Zoom doomed?

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Corona pandemic has battered all economic activities globally. The crisis that triggered a worldwide economic meltdown has been a reason for the stagnation of everyday lives in more than 180 countries of the world. In an unprecedented turn of events, people are now resorting to conducting any and every non-essential work from home. This has given the rise to remote workforce interaction tools including video conferencing service. Zoom, a videoconferencing app, is probably that has made the most out of this crisis. Its popularity has skyrocketed in just a few months resulting in doubling its stock price. But its new-found popularity was marred recently as the service came under scrutiny for security and privacy issues.

Several incidences of 'Zoom-bombing', as many IT researchers coined it, has been reported globally where attackers hijacked the video-feed of their target. According to The Intercept, Zoom doesn't have any end-to-end encryption in their call conferencing system as they claimed before which might live the user's PC in a vulnerable state. Moreover, the researcher found that the videoconferencing app never mentioned to their users that it clandestinely installed webservers on Apple devices. To make things even worse, Zoom failed to remove these web-servers even after the

end-user uninstalled the app.

Interestingly, according to researches carried out by the University of Toronto, Zoom has three subsidiaries in China from where it sometimes issues its encryption keys even if the participants are from the west. Generally, the server closest to participants is the one that issues the encryption key, so it is certainly baffling why Zoom issued encryption keys from servers halfway across the world when it had more servers nearby. These revelations have prompted the FBI to issue a warning of possible privacy and security breach if a user is opting for Zoom when they are working from home during the Corona Crisis. Apple, SpaceX, NASA and several other organisations have already issued ban on using Zoom from their work PC or any other work-related activities.

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

So, what are those exploits? From an analysis done by Citizen Lab, there are three exploits that are worth mentioning:

Firstly, the encryption key conundrum. Whenever a call is initiated, the device running the call will fetch for an encryption key. Each of the participants actually shares the same key to encrypt their incoming and outgoing data. These keys are generated and managed by servers known as the 'Key management system'. Zoom has 73 of these servers globally including 5 in China. Usually, a near-by

server generates the key of the origination of the call. But there are some instances, where the key was generated from Chinese servers even though the participants were not from China. So, what's wrong with the key generated from a Chinese server? Well, due to the stringent Chinese internet laws, any server in China needs to share every encryption code generated within China needs to be shared with the government rendering that Zoom calls virtually insecure.

Secondly, the AES issue. Advanced Encryption Standard or AES is an encryption standard that is used everywhere to create encryption. Zoom right now uses 128-bit encryption. Don't get me wrong, 128-bit is still pretty secure. It would take a hacker ages even with a supercomputer. But it's not the best encryption out there. Most services now use 256-bit encryption is exponentially harder to crack. Even NSA recommends using 256-bit encryption for sensitive services. Sadly, despite claiming it uses 256-bit encryption, Zoom in reality uses 128-bit encryption.

Lastly, the usage of legacy Electronic Code Book (ECB). ECB is the algorithm that encrypts and decrypts the AES in zoom which has been discarded by most services because of its flaws. During the input, ECB retains the pattern of the message which gives out some details

of the packaged data. It's sort of like if you leave a heavy object on a soft carpet. Even after removing the object from the carpet, one can easily assume the size of the object that was kept. This is exactly what happens in case of ECB. It leaves a ghostly shadow of the input data revealing sensitive information to hackers.

## WHAT'S ZOOM DOING ABOUT THESE?

In the wake of these allegations, Zoom's Chief Executive Officer Eric Yuan and Chief Product Officer Oded Gal issued a public apology on social media for having fallen short on the security and privacy concerns and misleading everyone about having full-proof end to end security. They even pleaded for 90 days of time to fix all these issues and delivery a full-proof product.

## WHAT CAN WE DO NOW?

For the time being, the sensible thing to do is avoid Zoom. There are tonnes of alternative available in the market that you can use for free. So far, Google Hangout and Skype Meet Now is probably the most popular alternative. Google is making its premium features available for now, so you certainly can make the most out of it. If you are into opensource stuff, then you can give 'Jitsi Meet' a try. Cisco Webex and FaceTime are also worth trying. For informal and limited use, you can try Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp web.

# Fake health tips that claim to fight against coronavirus

JINAT JAHAN KHAN

But really, they don't work. At all. When any disaster occurs, misinformation and rumors pop up in far greater numbers than the truth. Since the outbreak of coronavirus, people all around the world are making strange claims to solutions to the virus. While all have been ineffective and largely harmless, others have caused death. Social media is a breeding ground for such misinformation. Here's the worst of the bunch you need to avoid.

## Drinking Hand Sanitizer

Hand sanitizer is actually a good disinfectant that minimizes the chance of getting infected with coronavirus. In Iran, some people thought if alcohol-based hand sanitizer killed the virus living on the surface, then it could surely wipe out the virus from the body in case you drank the main ingredient of it and that is alcohol. It didn't work and more than 300 people died because of the excess consumption of methanol. Around 3000 people are still sick.

## Garlic

Garlic keeps away vampires. Not so good against Covid-19. In Tunisia rumour spread that garlic can prevent COVID-19. The World Health Organization has denied this claim and tried to calm Tunisian people. Price of garlic has risen to around 20-25 dinars (\$7-\$8.85) per kilo in Tunisia where people's average monthly salary is around 600 dinars (\$208). One woman went through a severely inflamed throat after consuming 1.5kg of raw garlic.

## Cow urine and dung

Many Indians believe cow urine and dung to have healing powers instead of being waste products. Dozens of Hindu activists even held a cow urine party in March to protect themselves from coronavirus. But the Indian Vitrological Society has already denied this claim and cleared that cow urine has no anti-viral characteristics. Moreover, there is a doubt that cow dung can be proved as counterproductive in case of coronavirus because bovine faecal matter can contain this virus and spread in human bodies. A volunteer fell ill after drinking cow urine at that party and the activist who organized that party was arrested by the local police.

## Colloidal silver

The use of colloidal silver was promoted on an episode of US televangelist Jim Bakker's show. The guest of that episode claimed that the silver solution can kill some strains of coronavirus within 12 hours though it hadn't been tested yet! For broadcasting a non-evidence based information, the show along with other 6 companies having the similar claims were warned by the FDA and FTC. Silver has nothing to do with the functions of the human body. It can harm skin and damage kidneys. **Asiatic pennywort or Thankuni pata** Bangladesh saw a spike in sale of Asiatic pennywort (locally known as

Thankuni pata). One fine morning people went nuts looking for it because rumours suggested it really did. It has medicinal properties against certain skin diseases, diarrhea and a few others. Nothing has been tested to be effective against Covid-19.

## Tea

An article in February claimed that researchers from the Zhenjiang Provincial Center for Disease Control and Prevention found that tea may help prevent coronavirus infections. It was claimed that tea has methylxanthines and it decreases the impact of the virus. Methylxanthines are found in tea, as

well as in coffee and chocolate. But these substances have nothing to do with the virus. So drink tea if you want but it is not the cure for coronavirus.

## Drinking water every 15 minutes

People must keep in mind that 'stay hydrated' does not mean that you have to drink water as much as you can. Drinking too much water or overhydration can lead to water intoxication which can disrupt your brain functions. Water will not wash away this fatal virus from your mouth. If it manages to enter your stomach, the acids will kill it all. Let your kidneys have some peace.

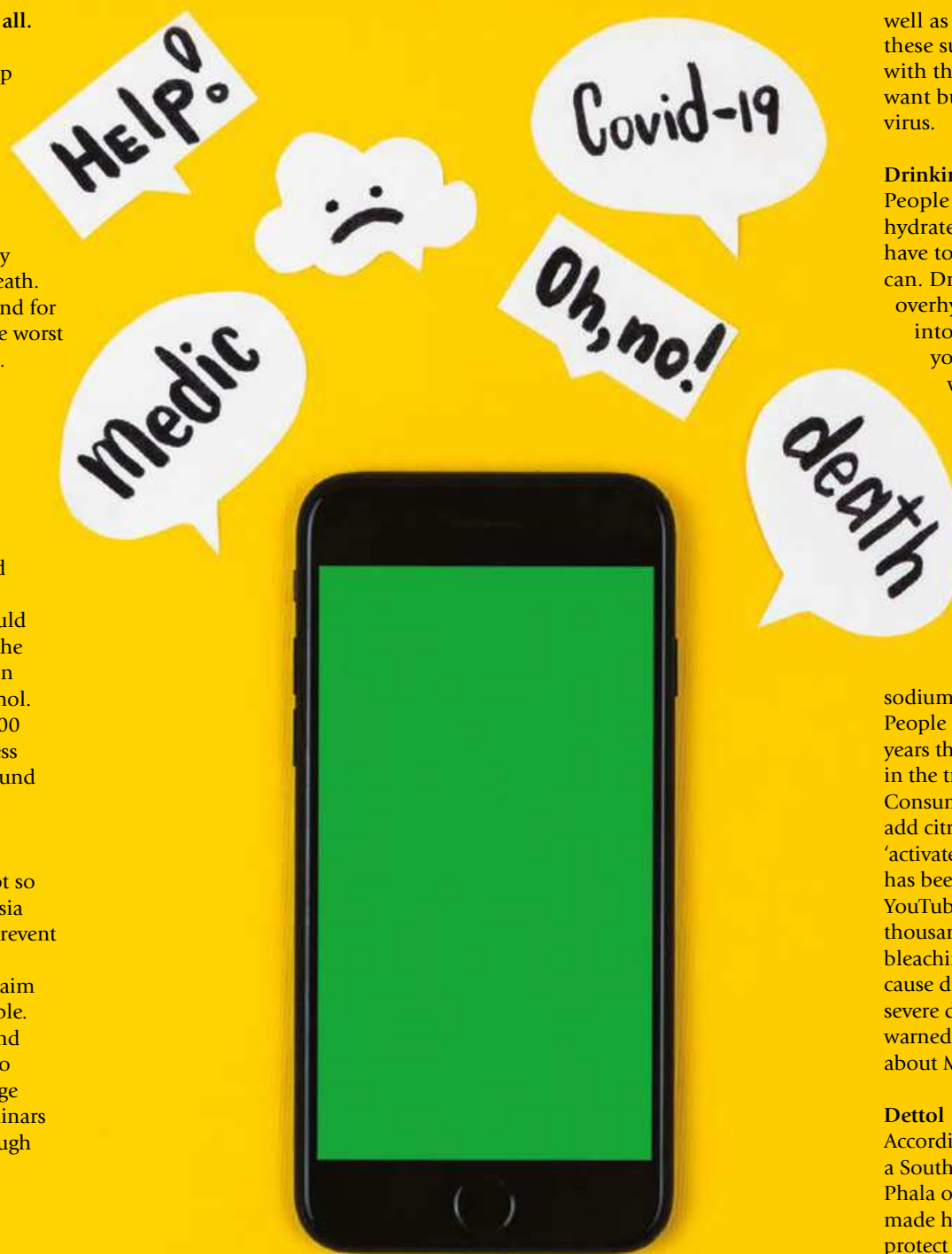
## Miracle Mineral Solution (MMS)

Miracle Mineral Solution (MMS) is a kind of bleach solution containing 28% sodium chlorite and distilled water. People have been claiming for some years that it can be a helpful solution in the treatment of various diseases. Consumers are even instructed to add citric acid like lime juice to 'activate' it. Currently, this myth has been promoted by a famous YouTuber Jordan Sather who has thousands of the followers. The bleaching agent of the solution can cause diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting and severe dehydration. Last year, the FDA warned other countries' authorities about MMS's negative effects.

## Dettol

According to a report in Kenya Today, a South African pastor named Rufus Phala of AK Spiritual Christian Church made his followers drink Dettol to protect them from this outbreak of coronavirus. It was reported that 59 were dead and four were in critical. But there is a lack of the coverage of other reputed publications and that report is already taken down from the website leaving us in a confusion whether it was true or not. In both cases, the concern of fake news is valid.

Don't believe all the solutions you find on the internet. Follow authentic information portals like WHO and UNICEF along with reputed international news websites.. Always recheck the information you get. It won't take much time. Just google it. If it's true, authentic and responsible news portals are always there to cover and explain that thoroughly for us.



# A tale of two countries and how they are beating back Covid-19

EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

Vietnam is not a rich country. Being a developing nation it is a dot compared to a financially capable behemoth like America. Vietnam does not have the latest medical equipment nor can they manufacture at a moment's notice the way China can. Yet they have managed to avoid deaths from this pandemic (at the time of this writing) while those two rich nations suffer in the thousands. America's death count stands at 8489 while China is at 3329.

## Track and isolate

How though? The Vietnam government did not waste time. They quickly stopped flights and quarantined all new arrivals. Schools were closed quickly followed by work institutions.

At 240 confirmed cases, Vietnam couldn't go for mass testing activities either but they focused on activities within their control. It suspended flights to and from China since February 1. This was followed by a 21-day quarantine in a province largely populated by migrant workers returning from Wuhan, China, where the virus originated. They went on strict measures to quarantine anyone arriving in Vietnam. Further measures include mandatory 14-day quarantines for anyone arriving in Vietnam. While anyone



infected were tracked down to find other contacts.

## Inform and educate

Singapore on the other hand has the resources to fight back but they responded even earlier. It was one of the first countries to ban travellers from China in late January the moment news reports cropped up about the COvid-19 respiratory virus. This was done even when World Health Organization suggested there was no need

to ban travellers.

Singapore followed this up with developing facilities to test over 2,000 people a day. Strict quarantines backed up with criminal charges if violated have been imposed to contain further spread. In a country where chewing gum is banned and can be a punishable offense if spat out, people accepted all this rather easily.

All of this was followed by massive dissemination of information on how to conduct oneself and how to avoid

transmission. Schools and workplaces were provided with all kinds of easy to absorb information, some in the form of comics, cartoons and infographs, to educate the people on the severity. Testing is free in Singapore and locals receive free medical treatment. As a result, they did not have to go into lockdown and people could continue to lead almost normal lives. As of writing this, Singapore has had 1189 cases with 297 recovered and 6 deaths. It could have been worse.

What's the take for Bangladesh?

Is it too late? We made a few grave errors. Schools were closed near middle of March. Offices a little later. Flights in an out continued for weeks after they should have been stopped. RMG factories brought workers back into the city en masse and then turned them away the next day. Many people walk around still under the illusion that things are not as bad as they appear to be. 1.2 million positive cases and 64,784 deaths worldwide. That is not a small number for something that kills you with a cold and a fever, symptoms people here think goes away with a little paracetamol.

What Singapore and Vietnam had in common despite their financial differences is they prevented the spread by preventing contact. They tracked down cases and isolated them.

It works better in smaller countries because of scale, something the US is having difficulty managing. Hong Kong and Taiwan followed similar practices to keep the spread contained. It seems distance and isolation are the primary activities keeping the contagion from scattering.

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ঠিক যেমন রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য মানেই

**স্যান্ডালিনা**  
সোপ

রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য...

KOHINOOR CHEMICAL