



THE DAILY

Star

ON FRIDAY



www.thedailystar.net

REGD. NO. DA 781 | Vol. XXX No. 107 | BAISHAKH 18, 1427 BS | Your Right to Know | RAMADAN 7, 1441 HIJRI | 12 PAGES PLUS TOGGLE PRICE: Tk 12.00

BANGLADESH UPDATE

564 New cases in 24hrs

7,667 Total cases

168 Deaths

160 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

229,833 Deaths

3,251,660 Total cases

URBAN POOR HIT BY OUTBREAK Tk 2k to each of 50 lakh families

Govt to disburse cash this month

STAR REPORT

The government will provide Tk 2,000 this month to each of 50 lakh urban families clobbered by the shutdown of the economy.

The families engaged in the informal labour sector -- mostly manual labourers, mechanics, construction workers, rickshaw and cart pullers, newspaper delivery persons, street vendors and restaurant employees -- will be eligible for the fund, said Shah Kamal, senior secretary at the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.

"Our ministry has prepared a list of the people based on information collected by the DC, UNO offices and city corporations across the country. We will submit the list to the Prime Minister's Office on May 4," he added.

The PMO will then take the next steps, he told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that Tk 1,000 crore has been allocated for the programme.

The initiative is part of an effort to help the most vulnerable people stay home during the coronavirus outbreak.

Families in which the breadwinner has become unemployed due to the shutdown will be the beneficiaries, he added.

The government also has plans to provide food assistance to a total of 1.25 crore families under various programmes, Kamal said. Officials hope that over five crore people will be fed under the programmes.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Without maintaining social distancing, people crowd in front of a Covid-19 testing facility of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) in the capital's Shahbagh area around 11:00am yesterday. This photojournalist of The Daily Star, who visits the area frequently, also reported that the number of those seeking to get tested at the facility was increasing every day.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Test seekers swamping BSMMU

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Twenty-five-year old Farzana Aktar has been suffering from fever, cough, sore throat, and muscle pain for the last five days.

Suspecting that she was infected with the novel coronavirus, Farzana called IEDCR hotline several times for collecting her samples. She described her problems in details, but the IEDCR did not collect her samples.

Frustrated, she then went to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University's fever unit for test.

"With fever and cough, I came here on Wednesday but failed to get tested as the authorities said they could not collect samples anymore that day. Then I came again at 7:00am today [yesterday]," Farzana told this correspondent standing in a queue.

When Farzana was sharing her experience, it was 11:00am and she was yet to get the ticket for testing Covid-19.

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RMG units reopening haphazardly

Many owners violate schedule agreed upon at high-profile meet 5 days ago

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Nearly a thousand garment factories outside the capital, which resumed operation haphazardly since April 26, didn't follow the reopening schedule agreed upon at a high-profile meeting five days ago, spurring a huge influx of workers to Dhaka and elsewhere amid coronavirus risks.

The factories were supposed to reopen in phases and zone-wise in line with the schedule, prepared by Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, as decided by government high-ups, leaders of trade bodies of the garment sector, experts and economists at a meeting on April 25.

As per the decision, all the apparel factories that were closed in the second week of this month would follow the reopening schedule and ensure health safety measures for workers.

According to the BGMEA schedule, only the garment factories in Dhaka metropolitan area would reopen on April 26 and those outside in phases.

But many factories in the industrial belts in Savar, Manikganj, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Narsingdi, Mymensingh and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

It has spread to all districts but one

On 53rd day since first detection, five more people die, 564 fresh cases reported

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The deadly coronavirus has wormed its way into every part of the country, except Rangamati, on the 53rd day since the first case was reported, claiming 168 lives until yesterday.

Five deaths were reported yesterday with 564 infections, taking the number of positive cases to 7,667, Prof Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said during yesterday's briefing.

Of the deceased, three were male and two were female, Prof Nasima informed, mentioning that two were above 60 years old and three between 41 and 50.

Four of the deceased were from Dhaka, she said.

In the last 24 hours until 2:30pm yesterday, samples of 4,965 people were tested in 29 laboratories across the country.

Dhaka continued to be the worst affected region with 83.3 percent of total positive cases belong to this division.

According to Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) website, 3,751 cases were detected in Dhaka city while 1,992 in the 12 other districts in the division.

Narayanganj has the second-highest rate of infection with 923 cases reported as of yesterday.

The two districts have also witnessed the highest number of deaths due to coronavirus -- Dhaka 89 and Narayanganj 39.

"We see the cases are becoming double in every three days. Thanks to the weak healthcare system, we will not be able to resist bigger number of deaths in the days to come," Prof Saif Ullah Munshi, chairman of virology department at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Many Covid-19 deaths will remain unknown due to the inadequate number of tests," he added.

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RAPID TEST KIT Gonosshasthaya finally gets nod for validation

PORIMAL PALMA

In a dramatic development, the Directorate General of Drug Administration has allowed Gonosshasthaya Kendra to submit its home-grown rapid test kits for Covid-19 to BSMMU or icddr,b for validation.

"The drug administration has written to us saying we can either submit our kits to icddr,b or Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University [BSMMU]," said Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, founder and trustee of Gonosshasthaya Kendra.

"This is a very welcome development," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The DGDA has also written to BSMMU and icddr,b, requesting them to cooperate in the validation process of the kit -- Rapid Dot Blot -- that can test for both antibody and antigen in human blood.

He said Gonosshasthaya also contacted BSMMU, where it wants to submit the kits developed by a team of its scientists -- Bijon Kumar Sil, Nihad

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Are these right masks?

As supply of US-made N95 stops, giving proper respirators to health professionals now big challenge

MOHAMMAD AL MASUM MOLLA

The authorities were only able to provide an insignificant number of American N95 masks to healthcare professionals fighting Covid-19 in the country. Now they have supplies of imported masks "equivalent" to N95 respirators, mostly from China.

Besides, counterfeit and low-quality masks are also entering Bangladesh, creating potential health risks for those using it, especially healthcare professionals.

The N95 mask is considered a protective equipment of the gold standard, filtering out airborne particles of 0.3 micron by up to 95 percent.

Across the globe, this is one of the key personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare professionals treating Covid-19 patients in hospitals and collecting or testing samples.

On the other hand, health experts and professionals question the quality of other masks available in the market. In March, the Dutch government sent back a shipment of KN95 masks from a Chinese manufacturer after determining that those did not meet quality standards.

"We got some N95 masks [made in US] from the WHO but after that we did not get any N95 masks. We are now providing health professionals with masks equivalent to the N95," Abul Kalam Azad, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star.

The government has been importing respiratory masks equivalent to the N95, through listed vendors, mostly from China, he added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

MAY DAY TODAY

Large number of children work in tea estates

Unicef study finds almost 30pc in Habiganj are kids

MINTU DESHWARA

After her mother passed away, her father remarried and moved elsewhere, and so attending school became a luxury for 12-year-old Sheuly Munda.

Along with her grandmother Belmoni, a registered tea-garden worker, Sheuly now plucks leaves at a tea garden in Moulvibazar district's Srimongol upazila.

"I wanted to continue my study, but my grandmother said she could not bear my

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HOLIDAY

The Daily Star offices will remain closed today on the occasion of May Day. Therefore, the newspaper will not come out tomorrow.

CONDOLENCES



Amanullah Chowdhury

02 January, 1947- 30 April, 2020

It is with a heavy heart and great sorrow, we are informing you of the passing of **Mr. Amanullah Chowdhury, Vice Chairman and founding director of Rangs Group.** (Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un)

Mr. Aman was a proficient business professional and has been with this organization through thick and thin. His contribution in the development of this company crosses all boundaries and as a result he has left us an enduring legacy to behold. He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

During this tragic period we, the RANCON family, would like to stand together and convey our deepest condolences to the members of the bereaved family and pray to Allah for the salvation of the departed soul.

May Allah grant his family the strength to bear this irreplaceable loss.

RANCON

OBITUARY



AMANULLAH CHOWDHURY

Born: 02 January 1947

Death: 30 April 2020

Mr. Amanullah Chowdhury, Vice Chairman of Rangs Group, Joint Managing Director of Sea Resources Group Ltd., has passed away on April 30, 2020, Thursday due to aging. He was under treatment at a hospital in Dhaka and breathed his last at around 2:00 pm. (Inna Lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un) He was the Managing Director of Deep Sea Fishers Group Ltd., Director of Rangs Pharmaceuticals Ltd. and Reliance Insurance Ltd. He was founding Chairman of ASAP Healthy Food Ltd. He was one of the sponsor Director of Bank Asia Ltd. He was Director of Bank Asia Foundation and he was also a Heroic freedom fighter. He was the younger brother of Mr. A Rouf Chowdhury, Chairman of Rangs Group & Bank Asia Ltd.

The Namaz-e-Janaza of Mr. Amanullah Chowdhury, will be held today (May 01, 2020) after Jumah Prayers at Malikhanagar Jame Mosque, Sirajdikhan, Munshiganj. He will be buried next to his mother in the family graveyard. His family members, relatives and well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul. He has left behind two daughters, a host of relatives, friends and well-wishers.

Country's youngest coronavirus patient recovering in Ctg

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

A 10-month-old-baby, who was tested Covid-19 positive on April 21, is getting better at Chattogram General Hospital (CGH).

Doctors said the first sample of the country's youngest coronavirus positive patient tested negative yesterday and they would release the boy from the hospital if the second sample showed a similar result.

If the baby gets discharged from the hospital, it will be a milestone for the hospital where Covid-19 patients of all ages have received treatment and recovered; the child will be the youngest survivor in the country.

Earlier, a 67-year-old man, the first Covid-19 positive patient in Chattogram, was discharged from this hospital. He was followed by a number of patients of different ages, said hospital sources.

Till yesterday, 15 patients have been discharged from CGH while 36 have been undergoing treatment at the hospital's isolation ward, said Dr Abdur Rab, a senior consultant of medicine at CGH. He said three patients have so far died.

"We'll send the second sample of the child for testing within a few days," said Dr Rab. "If the test is also negative, we will release the child, who is the youngest Covid-19 patient in the country," he said. Dr Rab said the condition of all the patients undergoing treatment is now stable.

CGH is one of the two hospitals in Chattogram dedicated by the government for treating Covid-19 patients. The

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



PHOTO: RASHED SHUJON

The May Day comes at a strange time this year. As a shutdown continues across the country and many parts of the world, debates on labour rights and essential work are raging across the world. Amid such circumstances, sewage workers in Dhaka were seen at work yesterday clearing up Mohammadpur's Ramchandrapur canal of waste, with no safety gear on -- to fend against the polluted water or stave off the coronavirus.

Railway to operate three parcel trains

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway has decided to operate three special parcel trains to transport food, daily essentials and perishable goods to Dhaka from different districts amid the nationwide shutdown.

The three trains will operate from today on Dhaka-Chattogram-Dhaka, Dhaka-Dewanganj-Dhaka and Dhaka-Khulna-Dhaka, the railway said through a press release yesterday. Two trains will operate every day on first two routes while three days on Dhaka-Khulna-Dhaka route.

Bangladesh Railway suspended all its passenger services on March 24 to contain the spread of Covid-19. It however, continued operation of freight trains.

BR usually transport luggage vans with passenger trains, but as passenger train services are suspended, authorities decided to operate three parcel trains, officials said.

BR Director General Md Shamsuzzaman said they had operated such special trains during political unrest in 2014 and 2015 when operations of most of the goods-laden vehicles were halted.

He, however, said the service would depend on demand. Traders would be benefited if they avail the service for carrying vegetables, foods and perishable items, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Health safety of the railway staff would be ensured, he said, adding that the special service would be stopped once normalcy resumes. Asked about resuming passenger services, he said they did not get any directive in this regard.

Although all public transports remained suspended, operation of goods-laden vehicles continues. But farmers in many areas are counting losses as sale of the products had fallen during this shutdown.

Fishers ready to set sail for hilsa

60-day ban on fishing ends in the south



Fishermen prepare their nets to sail out to sea. The photo was taken from Barishal's Tungbaria village on Wednesday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

A two-month government ban on catching hilsa at six estuaries in the country's southern region ended last night, paving the way for fishermen to catch the national fish.

However, many fishermen -- especially those who returned from sea due to shutdown -- said they will not be able to go back out soon.

However, many others are getting ready to set sail, considering their difficulties.

Estuaries of the rivers Meghna, Padma, Elisha, Tetulia, Kalabadar and Andharmanik in Barishal, Bhola, Patuakhali, Chandpur, Laxmipur and Shariatpur were under the purview of the ban, said sources at the Department of Fisheries (DoF).

The government imposes the prohibition from March to April to facilitate safe spawning and increase national fishing wealth by saving fish fry, said Syed Azizul Haque, deputy director of DoF, Barishal division.

Since 2006, the spots -- stretching 392km in total -- have been declared sanctuaries for fishes during the period, said the official.

"With the help of law enforcing agencies and local administration, we enforced the ban," said the deputy director.

Kalam, a fisherman from Ulania in Mehendiganj upazila, said, "Although the ban period is over, we need to wait to go to sea until the shutdown is withdrawn or relaxed."

Similar comments came from Md

Israfil, president of Jatiya Khudro Matsyajibi Samity. Motahar Majhi, from Patharghata upazila of Barguna, expressed frustration at the situation. "How will I survive if I do not fish? I need to go to sea."

FISHERS SAY VGF FOOD HAS BEEN MISAPPROPRIATED

Meanwhile, many fishermen alleged that they did not get any compensation or food support during the ban period.

Anis Chaprasi, a fisherman from Tungbaria in Barishal, said if they do not get assistance from the government, they have to struggle to cope with the situation.

Also, the food assistance they get under vulnerable group feeding (VGF) programme is not adequate, said many fishers.

Fishermen allege that local public representatives embezzle the food items allocated for them. Israfil, a leader of a group of fishermen, said in Barishal division half of the fishermen did not get VGF food support. "Some UP chairmen and members misappropriated that," he alleged.

Zakir, another fisherman, said he was included in the priority list but was yet to receive VGF food.

Md Bahauddin Ahmed, chairman of Tungbaria Union Parishad, said the allocated food is not enough to meet everyone's demand. "Only 566 fishermen out of 1,200 in the union got VGF food."

"We sent letters to upazila nirbahi officers (UNO) concerned to take action against those involved in VGF food misappropriation," said Syed Azizul Haque, the DoF deputy director.

Ensure wage, bonus for workers before Eid: speakers

THE DAILY STAR-BILS ROUNDTABLE

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Trade union and labour leaders yesterday demanded that the government ensure that factory owners provide workers their due wages and bonuses ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Besides, the government has to take specific, sector-wise measures for both formal and informal sector workers to support them in fighting the pandemic's economic consequences and for their health safety, they said at a virtual roundtable discussion.

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) and The Daily Star arranged the roundtable on "Covid-19: Situation of Working People, Challenges and Way Forward to the Future of Work". BILS Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan moderated it.

The event was held prior to May

Day, to be observed globally today.

Speakers claimed that the government's relief effort has not reached many workers in rural areas, with no income opportunities. These workers and their family have been spending days starving, they added.

Addressing the roundtable, Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra General Secretary Wajedul Islam Khan said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has declared some specific directives to fight the current situation, which should be followed accordingly.

Authorities concerned have to ensure that workers are being paid three months' wages, he said. "Workers should be given dues and bonuses, and they cannot be fired ahead of Eid due to the shutdown," he added.

Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments Chief Inspector Shihbath Roy said they have asked inspectors to monitor that factory owners ensure hygiene, and

provide face masks at the entrance following standard health guideline.

These measures were taken alongside regular activities, he said. Samajtantrik Shramik Front President Razequzzaman Ratan said many migrant workers are at risk of losing jobs, and the government should arrange special training for them.

Noted rights activist and Shramik Nirapotta Forum Convener Hameeda Hossain said it is imperative that trade unions and workers fight the situation hand in hand.

Chairing the programme, BILS Chairman Habibur Rahman Shiraz spoke on the significance of May Day and urged all to follow its core values.

Among others, Jatiya Shramik League General Secretary Azam Khasru, Jatiyatabadi Shramik Dal President Anwar Hossain and Dhaka University's Prof Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir spoke at the roundtable.



Amanullah Chowdhury passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amanullah Chowdhury, vice chairman and founding director of Rangs Group, passed away yesterday at 73.

He had been suffering from pneumonia and various health complications.

He left behind his wife and two daughters to mourn his death.

Amanullah Chowdhury graduated in pharmacy from Dhaka University, and later completed his MS in the USA. He worked

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Appoint 2,000 doctors, 5,000 nurses: PSC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Public Service Commission yesterday recommended to recruit 2,000 doctors and 5,054 nurses to meet the emergency demand of state to tackle the coronavirus crisis.

The doctors will be recruited from the waiting list of 8,107 doctors who passed 39th BCS, while the nurses will be recruited from the waiting list of senior staff nurse recruitment examinations held recently, said a statement of Public Service Commission.

It said the recommendations were made based on demand of public administration ministry on emergency need to provide treatment to Covid-19 patients.

So far, more than 300 doctors have been infected with coronavirus, while many others have had to go to quarantine. Besides, some new hospitals are also being set up for coronavirus patients.

As a result, demand letters were sent to the PSC for the recruitment of 2,000 doctors and 6,000 nurses to address the manpower crisis.

MISSION SAVE BANGLADESH

The power of passion, people and partnerships

MD TAJDIN HASSAN

A month of relentless efforts have turned out to be efficacious, as Mission Save Bangladesh has completed a milestone of collecting funds amounting to more than Tk 1 crore. Moreover, more than a hundred brands have come on board the initiative so far.

Perhaps with these numbers reflecting the achievements, the journey of Mission Save Bangladesh so far can be highlighted but these are not just numbers as the story behind these numbers has never been easier.

"One month" does not refer to a significant measure of time. A dream to save Bangladesh from a difficult time we have been in over the last month, is a reflection of the realisation of that



dream. Thanks to the tireless work of everyone involved with this initiative, Mission Save Bangladesh has been able to help more than five thousand families and more than twenty thousand people.

"One crore taka" does not just mean some amount of money. This "one crore" is evidence that the sense of humanity is still alive in the world.

"One hundred" alone does not indicate the number of partners of Mission Save

Bangladesh. This "one hundred" is a reflection of the fact that the impossible can be achieved if everyone stands with each other during times of crisis.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Discrimination galore in relief distribution

Observes monitoring committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly-launched monitoring committee on relief distribution during coronavirus situation yesterday alleged that there is rampant discrimination in providing assistance.

The committee, from an online press conference, alleged that most poverty-prone areas are getting smaller assistance than comparatively less-vulnerable prone area.

In a statement, it said according to the government's household survey, Kurigram is the most poverty-prone area. For the district, per person rice allocation was only 874g, and per person cash allocation was Tk 3.85.

Naryanganj is a much better-off area, but for the district, per person rice allocation was 22.5kg and per person cash allocation was Tk 88.17.

If relief distributions at grassroots level is not done properly, a catastrophic situation is waiting for all, said the statement. The government should reach necessary help to doorsteps of people, but so far there are reports that indiscriminate corruption, irregularities and partiality are taking place in the name of relief distribution.

Against this backdrop, the monitoring committee demanded that all allocations should take place in the light of marginal people's needs. All poor and jobless families should be provided 30kg rice and Tk 10,000 through mobile financial services each month, until the crisis is over, it added.

"The government should buy 50 lakh tonnes of paddy and 25 lakh tonnes of rice from farmers, and should use all schools as silo. It should stop funding of less-important projects under Annual Development Project," the monitoring committee recommended.



Fruit traders in Sylhet are incurring huge losses due to the lack of retail buyers, consumers, and even load workers. Even though harvest was great this year, the volume of trade has come down astronomically. For example, daily banana trade of around Tk 7 to 8 crore has come down to Tk 2 to 3 crore only. The photo was taken at Sylhet's Kadamtali fruit market.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

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3 cops closed after man dies in custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three police officers, including an assistant sub-inspector (ASI), were closed after a 65-year-old shop employee died while being in custody at Chattogram city's Bakshirhat Police Outpost.

The deceased is Giridhari Chowdhury of Chattogram's Paitya upazila, said police. He was a staffer of a shop at Teri Bazar's Mohiuddin Market.

The closed police officers are ASI Kamrul Islam and his two constables.

Colleagues of the victim alleged that police beat him up and that lead to his death. Police denied the allegation.

Officials formed a three-member probe committee -- headed by Shah Md Abdur Rauf, additional deputy commissioner (ADC, south) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) -- to investigate the matter.

CMP Deputy Commissioner (DC, South) Md Mehedi Hasan said Giridhari and a colleague of his were loading clothes from their shop onto a rickshaw after iftar, despite the market being closed. A security guard of Teri Bazar confronted them and asked why they were there amid the lockdown.

CORONAVIRUS TESTING

DMCH gets sample collection booths from Pran-RFL

City Desk

Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) on Wednesday received three sample collection booths (WISK Cabin) from PRAN-RFL Group for Covid-19 testing, said a press release.

Kamruzzaman Kamal, marketing director at PRAN-RFL Group, handed over the booths to DMCH Director Brig Gen AKM Nasir Uddin. Associate Professor Monira Pervin of DMCH's virology department was also present on the occasion.

Since Covid-19 is contagious, sample collectors are at risk of getting infected, and that is why PRAN-RFL Group made the donation, said Kamruzzaman.

Earlier, the group also donated booths to Sir Salimullah Medical College and Mitford Hospital.

Getwell Ltd, a sister concern of PRAN-RFL Group, recently introduced the WISK Cabin to its product line to contain the spread of coronavirus.

There is no need to change personal protective equipment after taking every sample using the cabin.

The cabin ensures social distancing, reduces required workforce, and can be transported easily from one place to another.

One can collect the WISK Cabin by contacting PRAN-RFL Group's customer-care centre (0961373777) or placing an order through Othoba.com.

Country's youngest

FROM PAGE 3
hospital has a 100-bed isolation ward and a 10-bed ICU.

EXCELLING IN SPITE OF LIMITED RESOURCES
Doctors at the hospital said although they have limited resources, they're doing their best to treat Covid-19 patients.

Patients and their attendees seem to agree. Md Rumon (25) of Satkania upazila was discharged from CGH on Tuesday. Thanking the healthcare providers at the hospital, he wrote on his Facebook page, "The doctors and nurses did their best... I'm grateful to them."

Rumon and five other members of his family were tested positive for Covid-19. Of them, three were discharged on Tuesday and two are undergoing treatment.

On April 14, Asiful Haque, a medical officer of Banskhalia Upazila Health Complex, was tested positive and undergoing treatment in CGH. He was discharged on Friday. He also thanked the doctors and health staffers.

Contacted, Chattogram Civil surgeon Sheikh Fazle Rabbi said, "Chattogram General Hospital has been playing a vital role in treating coronavirus patients in Chattogram. I hope this trend will continue."

However, the hospital lacks some logistical facilities. "We do not have a portable X-ray machine and so patients are taken to another building from the isolation ward for X-ray, which puts them and others at risk," said Dr HM Hamidullah Mehedi, a junior consultant at CGH.

Besides, the hospital does not have facilities such as C-reactive protein testing and arterial blood gas analysis, he said. "We also don't have a D-dimer machine."

Asked, Abdur Rab said many Covid-19 patients die due to internal blood clotting.

Through D-dimer tests doctors can have a clear idea whether a patient is at risk of internal blood clotting and can take early measures to thwart it, he said. "It is an expensive test and most patients cannot afford it; even most diagnostic centres do not have this facility."

Through arterial blood gas Analysis, the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide in arteries can be known, he said. "Patients will be benefited if the government provides us with those equipment," he said.

Dr Asim Kumar Nath, superintendent of CGH, said they have already written to the Ministry of Health for an X-ray machine and other necessary equipment.

The power of

FROM PAGE 3

The combined efforts of the young team is notable. By maintaining social distance and hygiene, they ensured that more than 5,000 families are served with food for 10 days. For Ramadan, they ensured that more than 200 families get necessary iftar and sehri items.

Hundreds of public places were disinfected and hand-washing basins were set up in several places. By constantly managing queries through social media, the team ensured that the support reaches to the ones in need. Furthermore, the passionate people who reached out silently to Mission Save Bangladesh and informed about the ones who are really suffering in these tough times deserve a shout-out. Lastly, the partners made this initiative even stronger. The accumulation of empathy, hard work and passion is what led the Mission Save Bangladesh initiative this far.

Mission Save Bangladesh -- a joint initiative of The Daily Star, Samakal and Sheba.xyz -- is grateful to all donors, the Shakib Al Hasan Foundation, partners, volunteers, and everyone who helped us achieve this milestone. PFDA, Mirpur DOHS Parishad, IPDC Finance, Dano, Guardian Life Lithosphere, The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, Club Notredamians, Fantamiam, Apon, Shahajjo Foundation, Salma Adil Foundation, Asif Fashion Industries, Epilogue, Wander Woman. 1% Foundation M/S Ashim Enterprise, Pathao, Dabur, Torun, DevoTech, Daktarbhai, Windmill Advertising Ltd., Roar Bangla, CNI, SHASHA denims, Olympic, MASTHEAD PR, JCI Dhaka South, United, High Voltage Ltd., sManager, Arrowlink Soft., Aqua Paints, Tulans Bio Academy, BCSEA Bangladesh, WebAble, Himalaya, PENSTON, TRY Foundation, Dhaka Translation, Unimart, JCI Dhaka North, Omicon Group, Juststors, Charity Right, VROOM, Robi 10 Minute School, Chologhuri, C Three Sixty, Sailor, Mentors, Summit Communications Ltd, EY, ShopUp, IUT Alumni Association, Daraz, HungryNaki, Gulshan Society, Safe Hands, Ecourier, Angel chef, Smartifier, Truck Kothay, Mumtaz, Nonda-dulal, Lightcastle Partners, Sbusiness.xyz, NRB connect, Step, Market Express, Spark It, Shwapno, SSL Commerz, Kormo, ADA Nijer Bolar Moto Ekta Golpo, Eduhive, Lecture Publications Limited, Spikestory, Paperfly, Bongo, Adon, Pop of color, Earthmoving Solution Limited, Horlicks, Techno Drugs limited, Grow n Excel, Renata Limited, Mastul Foundation, BYLC, Bangladesh MBA Association, Farmers market, Unifox, Grameenphone Employees Union, Guardian Life Insurance Ltd -- these are the brands who stepped forward to support the initiative.

The responsibilities are not over. Instead, now it's a bigger challenge to bring smiles to more faces

[The writer is Head of Marketing at The Daily Star and a US State Department Alumnus.]

Amanullah

FROM PAGE 3

for several multinational companies in the US before coming back to Bangladesh in the 1980s. He was the prime mover of Rangs Pharmaceuticals.

A proficient business professional, Amanullah played a key role in the company till his last breath.

The RANCON family conveys deepest condolences to his bereaved family members and prays for the salvation of his departed soul.

The body of Amanullah Chowdhury, younger brother of noted industrialist Abdur Rouf Chowdhury, will be taken to Bikrampur this morning for burial at his family graveyard.

3 cops

FROM PAGE 3

The two staffers acted suspiciously during questioning, and the guard informed a police patrol team that was passing by. Police then took the duo to the outpost, the DC said.

DC Mehedi said that at the outpost, officers asked Girdhari to call his shop owner, but he suddenly fell sick. Police rushed him to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH), where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Officer-in-Charge Md Mohsin of Kotwali Police Station said the deceased had suffered from three strokes.

He fell sick in an open place near the outpost, and police rushed him to the hospital by ambulance, the OC said.

The OC claimed witnesses at Teri Bazar told police that he was not beaten after police confronted him there.

Abdul Mannan, general secretary of Teri Bazar Traders' Association, told journalists that the whole market area has remained closed since March 25.

"No one can enter or exit the market, but Girdhari was present there, so our guard grilled him," he added.

His autopsy was performed at CMCH morgue yesterday, and a magistrate prepared an inquest report, said police.

ADC Abdur told The Daily Star that the committee was asked to submit its report within one day, and they are waiting for the autopsy report.

CAAB mulls limited flights

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on a limited scale. For example, the local airlines would be asked to operate one or two flights daily to and from Dhaka.

"We are also working on how to ensure health safety for all concerned, including passengers, employees and officials of airports and airlines," Mafidul said.

The CAAB chief said they have already asked all airlines operating from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to provide masks and gloves to passengers while entering airports, no matter whether they have their own safety gear or not.

He said the CAAB has asked the officials of all domestic airports to carry out disinfection activities on a regular basis.

"We have asked the airlines authorities to ensure social distancing of passengers inside aircrafts. In that case, the number of passengers will have to be limited in each flight," Mafidul said.

Sources at domestic airlines said passengers can now buy tickets for any date after May 8. In case of further extension of the suspension on flight operations by the CAAB,

the passengers will be refunded the tickets.

The CAAB on April 27 extended the ongoing ban on scheduled passenger flight operations with 16 countries until May 7 to slow the spread of Covid-19 in the country.

The countries are Bahrain, Bhutan, Hong Kong, India, Kuwait, Malaysia, the Maldives, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, the UAE and the UK. China, however, remained out of the purview of the ban.

Flight operations on domestic routes will also remain suspended until May 7, according to a CAAB release.

However, cargo flights, air ambulance, emergency landing, special flights, and flights carrying relief materials will remain out of the purview of the restriction.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines on April 29 extended the suspension on flight operations on all its 17 international and seven domestic routes till May 15 amid the global Covid-19 pandemic.

The government earlier extended the countrywide shutdown till May 5. The shutdown was enforced on March 26.

Pay rise

FROM PAGE 12

Bangabandhu urges the workers and peasants to devote themselves to building a socialist economy in Bangladesh. He speaks in detail about various initiatives that his government has taken so far to achieve socialism. He highlights the nationalisation of industries and termination of the repressive lease system. The government has also given loan waivers extensively to farmers, and they are also enjoying waivers of land tax up to 25 bighas, says Bangabandhu.

The prime minister says that his government is aware of the poor economic condition of the people. The government is trying its best to improve the situation within the earliest possible time, he assures. Bangabandhu solemnly pledges to rebuild and reconstruct a 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. He further says that anybody trying to sabotage his government's socialist programme will be firmly dealt with.

FULL RATIONING WILL BE INTRODUCED

Food Minister Phanibhushan Majumdar today declares that the government will implement full rationing system to address shortages of food and other basic necessities. He expresses his satisfaction over the current stock of food items in the country. The government has also increased surveillance at the border to stop smuggling of food items into India, the minister informs.

IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH MIDDLE EAST
Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad today says that the attitude of the Middle Eastern countries towards Bangladesh has improved significantly. He refers to the recent decision taken by several Middle Eastern nations to allow around 20,000 Bangladeshis to leave for their home country or to continue to work in those countries. It is reported that a large number of Bangladeshis have been stranded and confined in various countries of the Middle East at the insistence of the Pakistan government. The Bangladeshis who had gone to the Middle East before the liberation of Bangladesh on Pakistani passports have been put under confinement.

SOURCES: May 2, 1972 issues of *Ittefaq*, *The Bangladesh Observer*, *Azad*, *Morning News*, *Dainik Bangla and Purbodesh*.

Mental health in the time

FROM PAGE 12

Over the past few months, the number of patients with Covid-19 and the number of associated deaths have been increasing. As a result, the whole world has come to a standstill and there are enough reasons to feel sad and depressed. "Lockdown" and "quarantine" are now words familiar to everyone and have made each of us feel and experience countless different emotions and anxieties, like loneliness in isolation, falling behind at work, stressed about friends and family. Many of us, meanwhile, are feeling nothing but hopelessness. A mental health survey in Wuhan after the Covid-19 outbreak has already shown that isolation due to quarantine can affect our mental health.

How can isolation affect your mental health?

Isolation can develop the following emotions: Depression, heightened stress, decreased memory, anxiety, paranoia and risk of drug abuse.

There are a few other things that you may be experiencing -- feeling burned out, angry or frustrated at the people who are not taking this seriously, uncertainty about the future, mourning over cancelled events, struggling with working from home, and feeling inadequate about your productivity. A lot of parents are struggling to keep their children locked down at home all

day. The list will go on.

According to therapists, these feelings are reasonable, and you are not alone. It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused and scared during a crisis. Whatever you are feeling right now, it is valid, and all these emotions are essential. Therefore, it is crucial to take care of our mental health as well as physical health.

To that end, there are some ways to boost your mental health in this trying period.

It is important to stick to existing routines or make new ones, but it is as important to remember to follow them consistently.

Staying connected with the people you value and trust helps. Talking to one of them can help reduce stress or anxiety.

Taking care of yourself physically can improve your mental health. Eat a nutritious meal, drink plenty of water, exercise, and get enough sleep.

It is also crucial to set boundaries while checking news. Do not check out every piece of new information on the pandemic. Do not refresh all websites every hour of the day. It is time to put the filter on the news because researchers at the University of California, Irvine, suggested that repeated media exposure to the crisis can cause psychological distress.

Value yourself, treat yourself with kindness and respect, and avoid self-

critics.

Make time for your hobbies and favourite projects or broaden your horizons. Do a daily crossword puzzle, plant a garden, learn to play an instrument or become fluent in another language.

Start your day with gratitude as it is the healthiest of all emotions. Write down or share with your friends a few things that you are grateful for.

Do meditation or practice activities that promote mindfulness.

While it is important to stay in touch with friends and family on social media, we should try not to sensationalise things. Are there particular accounts or people that are increasing your worry or anxiety? If so, consider muting and unfollowing those accounts that cause to feel anxious.

Show love and kindness to people with no stable income. A bit of thoughtfulness and generosity from you can go a long way for others.

Most importantly, if you do not come out of this quarantine with a new skill or more knowledge, you are doing just fine. We are all going through this collective trauma together; not everyone has the privilege of turning a pandemic into a productive experience. Stay healthy.

The author is an occupational therapist at CRP, Savar and MPhil Candidate, Monash University, Australia

Hopes rise in virus

FROM PAGE 12

about 30 percent faster than those on a placebo.

"The data shows that remdesivir has a clear-cut, significant, positive effect in diminishing the time to recovery," said Anthony Fauci, the top US epidemiologist.

HOPE IN ASIA

South Korea's virus death toll is around 250 -- vastly lower than that of Italy, Britain, Spain and France, which have each recorded more than 24,000 fatalities, and the United States, topping the table with a third of global deaths.

Other parts of the region have seen similar success in their fight against the virus.

Infections have dwindled in China after it imposed extremely strict lockdown measures on millions of people earlier this year. Its official toll is around 4,600, although doubt has been cast on the figures' accuracy.

Rishi Kapoor

FROM PAGE 12

today after a two-year battle with leukemia," his family said in a statement.

Fellow actor Amitabh Bachchan was among the first to mourn his death, tweeting: "I am destroyed."

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also paid tribute, calling him "a powerhouse of talent".

Born September 4, 1952, into the prolific Kapoor dynasty -- which has produced four generations of actors including his son, Ranbir -- he made his debut in the 1970's epic "Mera Naam Joker" ("My Name is Joker").

He received India's National Award for best child actor for his performance in the film, which his father Raj produced, directed and starred in.

But it was his later persona as a romantic lead that won him legions of fans.

They flocked to cinemas to see him sing, dance and charm his way into their hearts in films such as the 1973 superhit "Bobby" and the 1975 thriller "Kheh Kheh Mein" ("While Playing").

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Railway
Office of the Assistant Executive Engineer/I.C
Saidpur, Nilphamari

No. Notice/AEN/IC/05/2019-20 Date: 29/04/2020

Invitation for Tender

e-Tender is invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocurement.gov.bd>) by Assistant Executive Engineer/Incharge, Bangladesh Railway, Saidpur for the procurement of:

Sl No.	Tender ID	Name of work	Tender/proposal document last selling/downloading date and time	Last date and time for tender/proposal security submission
1.	454810	Thorough repairs to Quarter No. T/42 & E/61 total four units including other ancillary works at Hawaldarpara in Saidpur.	14-May-2020 13:00	17-May-2020 10:30
2.	454807	Repairs to Schedule office Medical dispensary and Yard office including other ancillary works at Saidpur Workshop.	14-May-2020 13:00	17-May-2020 10:30
3.	454799	Thorough repairs to Quarter No.116Y L/45 & E/476 total five units including other ancillary works at Sahelpara in Saidpur.	14-May-2020 13:00	17-May-2020 10:30
4.	454496	Repairs to Loco Machine shop Wheel fitting section work order section & godown including other ancillary work at Saidpur workshop.	14-May-2020 13:00	17-May-2020 10:30
5.	405304	In SSAE/Works/SDP Section Repairs to Millwright shop and staff office with other ancillary works at Workshop.	14-May-2020 13:00	17-May-2020 10:30

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocurement.gov.bd>). Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocurement.gov.bd).

Md. Ahasan Uddin
Assistant Executive Engineer/I.C
Bangladesh Railway, Saidpur, Nilphamari

GD-784

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Pabna Sadar Upazila
District Pabna
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.7655.0000.07.001.20/228 Date: 28/04/2020

e-Tender Notice: 02/2019-20

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of work	Procurement method	Last selling date & time	Opening date & time
1.	456062	Const. of Classroom of 75 No. Monidah RPS Primary School under (PEDP4) (3H+IV+F4+WB)	OTM	20/05/2020 12.00pm	20/05/2020 13.00pm
2.	455988	Const. of Additional at classroom on Char Bangabaria RPS under PEDP4	OTM	20/05/2020 12.00pm	20/05/2020 13.00pm
3.	455776	Const. of Additional at classroom on Bhowdanga Kalurpara RPS under PEDP4	OTM	20/05/2020 12.00pm	20/05/2020 13.00pm

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and online hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-GP 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 12.00 Noon date 20/05/2020. Future information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Bachchu Miah
Upazila Engineer
Pabna Sadar, Pabna
ue.pabna-s@lged.gov.bd
Tel: 6731-66267

GD-780

China wants me to lose 2020 polls

Claims Trump as election nears

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he believes China's handling of the coronavirus is proof that Beijing "will do anything they can" to make him lose his re-election bid in November.

"China will do anything they can to have me lose this race," Trump said in an exclusive interview with Reuters news agency at the White House.

"I can do a lot," he said. The Republican president, often accused of not acting early enough to prepare the United States for the outbreak, said he believed China should have been more active in letting the world know about the coronavirus much sooner.

Asked whether he was considering the use of tariffs or even debt write-offs for China, Trump would not offer specifics.

"There are many things I can do," he said. "We're looking for what happened."

Before the coronavirus pandemic began, the US and China were already engaged in a trade war that has resulted in billions of dollars in tariffs.

For weeks, Trump has been heaping blame on China for a global pandemic that has killed people more than 61,000 people in the US according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University and thrown the economy into a deep recession undermining his campaign for a second four-year term.

On Tuesday, he had said he wants to conduct "serious investigations" into China's handling of the pandemic.

Trump had previously referred to COVID-19 as "Chinese virus", igniting a war of words with Beijing, which accused the US military of bringing the disease to Wuhan.



Teacher Marie Kaas-Larsen speaks with her pupils of the Norrebro Park primary school outside in a nearby park in Copenhagen, Denmark, on Wednesday. Denmark was the first country in Europe to reopen its schools for the youngest pupils on April 15. In addition to practicing social distancing and regular handwashing, classes in Denmark must be held outdoors as much as possible to limit the spread of the virus.

PHOTO: AFP

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC LATEST UPDATES

DEATH TOLL NEARS 230,000

The new coronavirus has killed at least 227,482 people since the outbreak first emerged in China in December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT yesterday. More than 3,180,800 cases were registered in 193 countries and territories.

Of these cases, at least 908,500 are now considered recovered. The United States has the highest number of total deaths with 60,999 out of 1,040,488 cases. Italy has the second highest toll with 27,682 deaths, followed by Britain (26,097 deaths), Spain (24,543 deaths) and France (24,087 deaths).

JAPAN TO EXTEND EMERGENCY

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is likely to extend a nationwide state of emergency imposed over the coronavirus, possibly by another month, local media reported. Japan has so far seen a relatively limited outbreak compared to parts of Europe and the United States, with around 14,000 infections recorded and 415 deaths.

RUSSIA CASES CROSS 100,000

Coronavirus cases in Russia surged past 100,000 yesterday, the government said, with an increase of 7,099 confirmed infections in the last 24 hours. Russia has so far recorded 106,498 cases and 1,073 deaths from the virus, the government's coronavirus information site said in a daily update.

THUNBERG DONATES \$100,000

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has donated a \$100,000 prize she won from a Danish foundation to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for use against the COVID-19 pandemic. "Like the climate crisis, the coronavirus pandemic is a child rights crisis," Thunberg, 17, was quoted as saying in the UNICEF statement.

VACCINATIONS WARNING

WHO's European office warned that to keep other infectious diseases in check, vaccination programmes must remain a priority even during the coronavirus pandemic. WHO's European branch was particularly concerned about a resurgence of measles, which affected 6,000 people on the continent in the first two months of this year.

MALDIVES REPORTS FIRST DEATH

The Maldives reported its first coronavirus fatality with the death of an 83-year-old woman, as the Indian Ocean holiday hotspot extended a nationwide lockdown. There have now been 280 confirmed cases since the virus was first detected on March 7.

AUSTRALIA'S CAPITAL 'VIRUS-FREE'

Health officials declared Australia's capital free of the virus while the country's Northern Territory announced the most comprehensive easing of restrictions in the nation. Canberra and its surrounding areas were said to be rid of the disease after two patients recovered overnight.

'Perhaps world didn't really know who she was'

Outgoing UN envoy to Myanmar says about Suu Kyi

AL JAZEERA, CNN

The United Nations' outgoing human rights envoy for Myanmar has told Al Jazeera that the country's civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, failed to live up to her reputation as a humanitarian.

Yanghee Lee's time in the role was dominated by Myanmar's bloody crackdown in western Rakhine state in 2017, when at least 750,000 people, mostly ethnic Rohingya, fled across the border to Bangladesh.

Aung San Suu Kyi has been widely criticised for remaining mostly silent on accusations of anti-Rohingya violence, and Lee told Al Jazeera on Wednesday she believed the Myanmar leader's inaction was "utterly disappointing".

"We all knew that she was put on a pedestal or portrayed as the icon of democracy and human rights, but ever



since [her party] has taken office [after the 2015 election] and ever since she took the office of the state councillor, all of her actions and her words, statements point otherwise," said Lee, whose requests to enter Myanmar were repeatedly denied by the government.

"I would still like to believe that she can change how she's been doing, but perhaps the world didn't really know

who she was," she added.

Aung San Suu Kyi became an icon of democracy during the 15 years she spent under house arrest during Myanmar's military dictatorship.

In December last year, the Nobel Peace Prize winner defended Myanmar's military against allegations of genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Lee also said that the Myanmar military was carrying out "war crimes" against ethnic minorities, emboldened by special extended powers intended to help control the spread of the coronavirus.

"I am calling the situation crimes against humanity and war crimes. These are the highest, the most heinous and gravest crimes of international law," she added.

Cut oil supply or lose US military support

Trump told Saudi Crown Prince Salman

REUTERS, Washington/London/Dubai

As the United States pressed Saudi Arabia to end its oil price war with Russia, President Donald Trump gave Saudi leaders an ultimatum.

In an April 2 phone call, Trump told Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that unless the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) started cutting oil production, he would be powerless to stop lawmakers from passing legislation to withdraw US troops from the kingdom, four sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The threat to upend a 75-year strategic alliance, which has not been previously reported, was central to the US pressure campaign that led to a landmark global deal to slash oil supply as demand collapsed in the coronavirus pandemic - scoring a diplomatic victory for the White House. Trump delivered the message to the crown prince 10 days before the announcement of production cuts. The kingdom's de facto leader was so taken aback by the threat that he ordered his aides out of the room so he could continue the discussion in private, according to a US source who was briefed on the discussion by senior administration officials.

The week before Trump's phone call with Crown Prince Mohammed, US Republican Senators Kevin Cramer and Dan Sullivan had introduced legislation to remove all US troops, Patriot missiles and anti-missile defense systems from the kingdom unless Saudi Arabia cut oil output. Support for the measure was gaining momentum amid Congressional anger over the ill-timed Saudi-Russia oil price war.

COVID-19 to cause record emissions fall in 2020

IEA says global energy demand to fall 6pc

AFP, Paris

COVID-19 is expected to cause global energy emissions to fall a record eight percent this year due to an unprecedented drop in demand for coal, oil and gas, the International Energy Agency said yesterday.

The IEA's Global Energy Review was based on an analysis of electricity demand over

more than 100 days, during which much of the world has entered lockdown in a bid to control the pandemic.

It predicted that global energy demand would fall six percent in 2020 -- seven times more than during the 2008 financial crisis and the biggest year-on-year drop since World War II.

Biden to keep US embassy in Jerusalem if elected

AFP, Washington

Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden said Wednesday that he would keep the US embassy in Israel in Jerusalem if elected -- even though he disagrees with Donald Trump's controversial 2017 decision to move it out of Tel Aviv.

The former vice president said the embassy should never have been moved without that decision being part of a wider Middle East peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians.

"But now that it's done, I would not move the embassy back to Tel Aviv," Biden told a virtual fundraising event.

Israel seized control of the east of the city in 1967 and later annexed it in moves never recognized by the international community. Israel considers the city its undivided capital, but Palestinians believe the east is illegally occupied and see it as the capital of their future state.

Trump shattered the status quo when he recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and announced his decision to shift the US embassy to the holy city in December 2017.

Meanwhile, Biden Wednesday said he has a proud history of campaigning against sexual violence, as he faces mounting pressure to respond to an assault allegation made by a former aide.

The presumptive Democratic nominee has been accused by Tara Reade of assaulting her in 1993, when she was a 29-year-old staff assistant in the office of Biden, then a US senator from Delaware. Biden's campaign has denied the claims, but he himself has not responded directly to the allegations by Reade, now 56.

Obstacles they scale to serve

FROM PAGE 12

and his family away from the building was that Rasel was involved in student politics and now has a strong base in his locality.

"But my ambulance drivers are suffering a lot. They have to sneak in and out of their homes. On many occasions, they cannot even take the ambulance out," he said.

Like Rasel and his drivers, many ambulance operators, their assistants, drivers and owners, who have been providing services for patients while risking their lives, are facing similar harassment at their homes and even public places like restaurants and petrol stations.

They said that their landlords have been asking them to leave their homes or their jobs fearing they might spread Covid-19. In many cases, they have been denied food at restaurants and fuel at petrol stations.

Law enforcers also been harassing such drivers and their assistants when they are returning to Dhaka or going to other places with empty ambulances after dropping off patients, they alleged.

Besides, several thousand drivers and their assistants, who work at different private ambulance services, run the risk of getting infected as they don't have adequate safety gear.

The ambulance owners' association has requested the authorities to provide them with enough protective equipment and necessary training amid the looming crisis. But it has not received any response yet, association leaders said.

There are more than 7,500 private ambulances across the country, according to Dhaka Mohanagar Ambulance Malik Sombay Samity Ltd.

So, around 15,000 people -- at least one driver and an assistant for each ambulance -- are providing services to the people even in this tough time, it said.

Apart from the privately-run ambulance services, the country has nearly 1,000 ambulances at different public hospitals.

HARASSMENT

Azizur Rahman, an ambulance driver, on Tuesday called this correspondent over phone and said, "Brother, we [ambulance

drivers and assistants] are now in big trouble, please do something for us."

This correspondent spoke to Azizur, an employee of a private ambulance provider, a few days ago and learnt about their safety measures while carrying patients.

Azizur began with a situation he faced. "When I was taking a patient to Bhola, I went to the canteen at a ferry on Mawa Ghat [now known as Shimulia ghat] for some food. But they declined to give me any when they came to know that I am an ambulance driver. What could I do? I just took a packet of biscuits."

He said many of his colleagues are facing similar discriminations and they even face problems while parking their vehicles.

"We are giving services to the patients knowing that we may get infected anytime. But what we are facing now is harassment."

Alamgir Hossain, president of Dhaka Mohanagar Ambulance Malik Sombay Samity Ltd, told The Daily Star on Tuesday that they have received around 50 complaints from ambulance owners and drivers that their landlords asked them to choose between their homes or their jobs.

"Law enforcers ask them why they come out without patients, ignoring the shutdown. Even after our drivers say that they just left the patients at the destination and are now going back, they [law enforcers] keep them waiting for hours," he said.

Sarifur Alam Mehdi, an adviser to the Samity, said the authorities in many districts do not provide the owners and drivers with the facilities to run the requisitioned ambulances, resulting in further problems.

About the safety of their staffers, he said they had written a letter to the director general of the Directorate General of Health Services on March 22, seeking training, awareness campaigns and safety equipment for drivers and their assistants.

"But we did not get any response yet. Initially, they assured us but now they are not receiving our phone calls," he alleged.

Mehdi, however, said Grameen Fabrics and Fashion Ltd has provided them with 500 Personal Protective Equipment while Manusher Jonno Foundation provided 100.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার		
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়		
গোয়াইনঘাট, সিলেট		
gowainghat@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd		
স্মারক নং: উখা/গোয়াইনঘাট/এমএসআর/দরপত্র/২০১৯-২০২০/৩৮১		তারিখ: ২৮/০৪/২০২০ইং
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উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, গোয়াইনঘাট, সিলেট সহ এর আওতাধীন একটি উপ-স্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রসমূহের জন্য ২০১৯-২০২০ইং অর্থ বছরের গ্রন্থ ভিত্তিক এমএসআর সামগ্রী (মেডিক্যাল এন্ড সার্জিক্যাল রিকুইজিটস) ক্রয়/সেবারের নিমিত্তে পন্যবাহে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন ২০০৬ ও তৎপরবর্তী সংশোধনী এবং সংগ্রহ বিধিমালা ২০০৮ ও পরবর্তী সংশোধনী মতে নিম্নোক্ত চক মোতাবেক প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী/সরবরাহকারী/প্রস্তুতকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/টিকাদারগণের নিকট হইতে নিম্নে ও শর্তাবলী সম্বলিত দরপত্র পূরণ সাপেক্ষে নির্ধারিত সিডিউলে গ্রন্থ ভিত্তিক সিলগালাকৃতভাবে দরপত্র আহ্বানকরা যাইতেছে।		
১	মন্ত্রালয়/বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগ, স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রালয়।
২	সংস্থার নাম	স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর।
৩	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর পদবী ও মোবাইল নাম্বার	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তা, গোয়াইনঘাট, সিলেট, ০১৭১৭৬৬৯২১৭।
৪	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহ্বানের মাধ্যমে।
৫	অর্থের উৎস	রাজস্ব বরাদ্দ (প্লিগেবি)।
৬	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং ও তারিখ	স্মারক নং: উখা/গোয়াইনঘাট/এমএসআর/দরপত্র/২০১৯-২০২০/৩৮১, তাং- ২৮/০৪/২০২০ইং।
৭	দরপত্রের নাম/কাজের বিবরণ	২০১৯-২০২০ইং অর্থ বছরে গোয়াইনঘাট উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্স ও এর অধীন একটি উপ-স্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রের জন্য মোট ০৬টি গ্রন্থে এমএসআর সামগ্রী সরবরাহ। গ্রন্থনং- (ক) ঔষধপত্র (খ) মেডিকেল যন্ত্রপাতি (গ) পঃ, বেডেজ ও তুলা (ঘ) আসবাবপত্র ও কিসেন সামগ্রী (ঙ) সিলেন সামগ্রী (চ) মেমিকেল এন্ড রিয়েজেন্ট।
৮	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী দপ্তরের নাম	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, গোয়াইনঘাট, সিলেট।
৯	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, গোয়াইনঘাট, সিলেট।
১০	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিস্তারের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশ সাপেক্ষে ১০/০৫/২০২০ইং হইতে ১৭/০৫/২০২০ইং অফিস চলাকালীন (২.৩০) ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (সরকারি ও সার্জিক্যাল ডুটির দিন ব্যতিত)।
১১	দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ, সময়	১৮/০৫/২০২০ইং দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১২	দরপত্র গ্রহণের স্থান	০১. উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, গোয়াইনঘাট, সিলেট। ০২. নির্ধারিত অফিসার এর কার্যালয়, গোয়াইনঘাট, সিলেট। ০৩. অফিসার ইনচার্জ এর কার্যালয়, গোয়াইনঘাট থানা, সিলেট।
১৩	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১৮/০৫/২০২০ইং দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা (দরপত্রাদা টাকা কিংবা প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা হইলে কেহ থাকেন)।
১৪	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিস্তারের স্থান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, গোয়াইনঘাট, সিলেট।
১৫	দরপত্রাদাদের যোগ্যতা	এমএসআর সামগ্রী সরবরাহের প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী/প্রতিষ্ঠান/টিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী/প্রস্তুতকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান।
১৬	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	গ্রন্থ নং- ক/খ/গ প্রতিগ্রন্থে ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা এবং ঘ/ঙ/চ প্রতি গ্রন্থে ৫২২/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) চালানের মাধ্যমে কোড নং- ১-২৭১১-০০০০-২৩৬৬ এ সোনালী ব্যাংক, গোয়াইনঘাট শাখায় জমাদান করিয়া চালানের মূল্যকপি অগ্রাফিসে ক্যাশিয়ারের নিকট জমা প্রদান সাপেক্ষে শর্তসম্বলিত ঘ-ঘ গ্রন্থের দরপত্র সিডিউল ও শর্তাবলি দলিল গ্রহণ ক্রিতে পারিবেন।
১৭	দরপত্র দলিলের নিরাপত্তা জামানত	গ্রন্থ ও কাজের বিবরণী জামানতের পরিমাণ
	ক- ঔষধপত্র (ইউসিএল বহির্ভূত)	=৭০০০০/- (সত্তর হাজার) টাকা মাত্র
	খ- সার্জিক্যাল যন্ত্রপাতি	=৪০০০০/- (চল্লিশ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র
	গ- পঃ, বেডেজ ও তুলা	=৪০০০০/- (চল্লিশ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র
	ঘ- আসবাবপত্র ও কিসেন সামগ্রী	= ২৫০০০/- (পঁচিশ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র
	ঙ- সিলেন সামগ্রী	= ২৫০০০/- (পঁচিশ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র
	চ- মেমিক্যাল এন্ড রিয়েজেন্ট	= ২০০০০/- (বিশ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র
১৮	সরবরাহকাল	কার্যদেশ (নোটিফিকেশন অব এওয়ার্ড) মোতাবেক।
*** অত্র কার্যালয়ের স্মারক নং: উখা/গোয়াইনঘাট/এমএসআর/দরপত্র/২০১৯-২০২০/৩৮০, তারিখ: ১৩/০৪/২০২০ইং মূলে আহ্বানকৃত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশ না হওয়ার কারণে উক্ত সংশোধনী দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি আহ্বান করা হইল।		
* কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।		
* অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলে সংরক্ষিত আছে।		
ডায় মোঃ রেহান উদ্দিন		
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তা		
গোয়াইনঘাট, সিলেট		
সিডি-৭৮২		

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
Closed	Closed	\$1,704.00 (per ounce)	\$25.23 (per barrel)	3,05%	2,14%	1,92%	1,33%	BUY TK 83.95	90.14	103.66	11.74
				33,717.62	20,193.69	2,624.23	2,860.08	SELL TK 84.95	93.94	107.46	12.35



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DHAKA FRIDAY MAY 1, 2020, BAISHAKH 18, 1427 BS • starbusiness@thedailystar.net

TAMING CORONAVIRUS RAMPAGE

More than a crore with no job and hope

Govt has no data on the number unemployed

SOHEL PARVEZ

Perhaps Bangladesh has the highest number of people out of jobs thanks to the protracted shutdown that has taken away income opportunities for tens of thousands of people, particularly in the informal sector. Or, perhaps not.

We would never know given the apathy in the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE).

This does not end here.

There is no database of workers in government labour offices although the Labour Policy 2012 says that the government will take steps to maintain detailed information on employed workers based on each firm and sector.

The policy also says that the government will maintain data of job seekers and job opportunities to attain the government's top priority goal of creating employment opportunities for the working population.

The Daily Star inquired officials of three departments, Department of Labour (DOL), Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishment (DIFE) and Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation (BLWF), to know whether they have taken any steps to enrol the jobless workers, particularly those who were working in the informal sector, and to support them overcome these tough days.

"No, no. It is not possible to do any list of unemployed at this situation of lockdown. But if they want to operate their activities, we can provide them guidance on how to do that by ensuring safety and social distance," said DIFE Inspector General Shib Nath Roy.

No initiative has also been taken to create a database of workers, he said.

"This cannot be done without a project. We have not been able to take any project," he said.

And replying to a question of why no steps have been taken so far, he said: "It is difficult to answer so many questions during this period of general holiday. Let the offices open. This can be seen then."

The DOL, another agency under the MOLE, also does nothing to create a



SK ENAMUL HAQ

A garment worker sits dejectedly on the DIT Road in Dhaka waiting to buy subsidised food from a truck run by the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh recently.

database of workers and the number of jobless people in the country.

Despite repeated attempts, DOL Director General AKM Mizanur Rahman did not receive calls for comment last week.

However, Mohammad Aminul Haque, director of Divisional Labour Office Dhaka and also the convener of Crisis Management Committee on Labour issues related to the coronavirus crisis, could be reached.

Haque said they have taken an initiative to collect a list of workers in the informal sector through labour leaders.

Until the middle of last week, it got a list of 42,000 construction workers and rickshaw-van pullers.

"We will make a database after collecting all the names," he said on April 27.

The number of people without work claimed by several workers' rights organisation vary from 1.5 crore to upwards of 5 crore, while two economists said the number would be between 1.30 crore and 1.50 crore.

This is five times the official number of unemployed population of 27 lakh as per the latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2017.

When the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 were announced on March 8, Bangladesh had 6.08 crore people in employment.

It is the duty and role of the government to collect and make available such data or for that matter data on employment and labour force of

the country on an up-to-date basis, said Rizwanul Islam, a former special adviser of employment sector at the International Labour Office, Geneva.

The number of people who have gone out of work for the pandemic would be 1.5 crore, said Wazul Islam Khan, general secretary of Bangladesh Trade Union Centre.

The labour ministry had a plan to prepare a database but no specific initiative has been taken yet.

"There is no alternative to preparing a list of workers to provide food assistance for the unemployed workers. We have demanded steps to bring all unorganised sectors under a mechanism and a stimulus package for the informal sector," he added.

Everyone in the unorganised sector has been sitting idle for the one month for lockdown, said Quamrul Ahsan, president of the Jatiya Sramik Federation.

"The number of people without jobs would be five crore plus," he added.

The government should be happy that these 1.5 crore workers have created their own income-earning opportunities, said ATM Nurul Amin, professor of Department of Economics and Social Sciences at BRAC University.

"All they need is protection from calamity time, as it is now when they cannot remain engaged in income-earning opportunities."

If the government were to create 1.5 crore jobs, directly or indirectly, the cost would have been huge and certainly unaffordable.

"Thus, some support schemes during

disruptions of their economic activities as they are now ought to be the minimum that the government needs to do."

City Ward authorities can be given the responsibility for listing. Respective community schools and students can be counted upon to assist in this task, added Amin.

"The distress of people should be an eyeopener for all. Let us do something for them. It is never too late. Still, we can take initiative to list people in the informal sector."

In all likelihood, most of the urban informal sector workers have gone to their villages.

"This offers an opportunity for engaging them immediately to the agricultural sector."

At this harvesting time, this can be a good opportunity to ease seasonal labour scarcity in the rural area. The other opportunity is to keep them permanently in their respective villages, he added.

Razequzzaman Ratan, president of Socialist Labour Front, said a portion of the workforce in the agriculture sector are engaged in the harvesting of Boro paddy. A section of people from the informal sectors has joined farm work.

Taking this into consideration, it can be said that nearly 3 crore of the total accounted formally employed population have been without work since March, he said.

"There is no way to systematically protect workers in the unorganised sector without a proper database," said Kohinoor Mahmood, director of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS).

In India, there is a database, and the neighbouring country has the arrangement to support workers in the informal sector such as those working in the construction and transport sectors.

"Here, on one hand, there is no database of workers. And on the other, there is also no system or government office to report joblessness if anyone is unemployed," Mahmood added.

And preparing a database should not be too difficult.

For instance, there is already a database of farmers and fishermen prepared by the agriculture and fisheries ministries, said Jafrul Hasan, a labour law expert.

Something similar could be done here had there been a desire to do so and these data would have been very useful during this time of crisis, he added.

"If anyone becomes jobless here, the person not only becomes helpless and hopeless, he/she loses his/her identity as there is no place for documentation," Ratan added.

Overlooked by state and law, informal workers on the verge of starvation

SOHEL PARVEZ

People employed in the informal sector get little attention from the policymakers although they account for 85 per cent of the country's total employed population of 6.08 crore and keep the wheel of the economy humming.

In Bangladesh, the existing labour law is formal or organised sector-centric and the issues of workers in the unorganised sector don't get reflected in the law despite undergoing several revisions since framed in 2006.

The informal workforce has been ignored in the labour law as there is little scope to organise workers in unions.

"The whole informal sector has remained out of the purview of the legal process," said Razequzzaman Ratan, president of the Socialist Labour Front.

Now, almost all the informal economy workers -- jobs that generally lack basic social or legal protections or employment benefits -- have been significantly impacted by the lockdown measures in the world, according to the International Labour Organisation.

What will happen to them is anyone's guess.

Take the case of Abul Kalam. The 55-year old had been earning a living for his six-member family by selling used files, card-holders and old diaries on the footpath of Purana Paltan in Dhaka city.

The job brought him Tk 500 daily before the government enforced the shutdown on March 26 to flatten the curve on coronavirus in the country.

Initially, he managed to buy food through his savings and later on handouts from generous people and organisations.

"Our condition is so bad that I cannot even buy an antacid tablet. Neither can I buy food, medicine nor can I pay house rent."

The elderly knew that the government is providing food aid to the vulnerable and he visited the ward councillor's office two weeks ago.

"We only hear that the government is supporting more than a crore people but we have not got anything yet," said the despondent Kalam.

The labour ministry has formed crisis management committees at the district level and the panels are tasked with making lists of affected workers and submitting the lists to local administration for food aid.

There are, however, provisions to support the informal sector workers under the Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation Act 2006 and a Tk 400 crore-fund has been formed to support workers, particularly for treatment and education of children.

"Workers are the owners of the fund. A portion of the fund could be utilised during this coronavirus crisis. But we have not seen any initiative in this regard," Ratan said.

The government could have done something for the workers through the foundation if it were proactive, said Jafrul Hasan Sharif, a labour law expert.

There is no coverage for the informal sector workers in the Labour Act 2006. Workers in the informal sector have been defined only in the Labour Welfare Foundation Law, he added.

"A huge number of people are now unemployed and they are struggling to make ends meet. At this moment, the Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation should come forward," said Kohinoor Mahmood, director of the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies.

Murshiquil Islam, executive president of the Bangladesh Hawkers Union, termed the state's response inhuman.

"The state has failed to carry out its responsibility." Nearly 10 lakh street vendors and their employees have been hit hard by the lockdown measures.

"There are in serious trouble," he added.

Do we know how many lost livelihoods during shutdown?



RIZWANUL ISLAM

All over the world, jobs are being lost on a massive scale for measures adopted to fight the health crisis caused by coronavirus, and Bangladesh is no exception.

But do we know how many people have lost their livelihoods during the period of shutdown that the country is going through?

In the absence of any official data on this, how can policymakers do something about it -- even if there is willingness?

When a journalist asked me if I have an estimate, it made me think, and the following is the outcome.

In making my guesstimate of the numbers who have lost their jobs during the shutdown, I start from the observation that much of the urban (including the peri-urban) economic activities have come to a standstill.

I then look at numbers engaged as day labourers, e.g., in construction, informal service, transport, food, etc. as well as the numbers in petty self-employment in retail trade, food service, repairs, etc. I assume that those people have lost their source of livelihoods during the shutdown.

I also assume that those engaged in organised manufacturing will be able to go back to their existing jobs and lay-offs will be limited to about 10 per cent of their workforce.

I use data from the government's labour force survey (LFS) of 2016-17 and make projections of people engaged as day labourers outside agriculture and in urban petty self-employment.

Based on the above assumptions and projections, my estimate is that about one crore people may have been without jobs during the period of shutdown. This is in addition to the nearly 30 lakh who were already unemployed.

So, we are talking about 1.3 crore who are without jobs at the moment. That is nearly one in five of Bangladesh's total labour force.

With the source of livelihood gone, how does one help them stave off hunger during this critical period? The government has announced, in several instalments, measures for coping with the adverse effects of the shutdown on the economy.

Those measures seem to be quite comprehensive and, at least, include measures to help the poor.

But are the needy getting help right away? Not sure. Why do I say so?

Take the formal sector first. A large part of the package for this segment is in the form of credit, albeit at low interest rates.

And the key questions here are the efficiency and speed with which the money will be disbursed. One example is the component for export-oriented industries to cover workers' wages for three months.

Given the conditions for the release of funds from this pot (for example, workers need to have bank accounts), it is difficult to say how long it might take for money to reach the hands of the workers.

In the meantime, there are reports of a lay-off of workers. I wonder whether there is any way of knowing when the first taka from this fund has reached any worker.

In a situation where there is no hard data on the number of workers employed by an industry, fulfilling other conditions for the

release of funds to meet their wages may not be easy.

A similar comment can be made about the funds allocated for loans to the micro and small enterprise segment.

How many such enterprises, especially those at the very small end of the spectrum (e.g., the self-employed or the tiny units with a few salaried workers), will even be able to submit an application meeting all the stipulated conditions is anybody's guess.

As for free food distribution and open market sales, the problems of implementation are no less serious.

On one hand, there is the issue of making the food grains available to the poor without compromising on the health requirements.

Although there were suggestions (including by myself) for arranging delivery of the relief to the doorsteps of the needy, media reports and images show either violation of the basic standards or people having to wait long hours for a bit of handout.

Also, there is the issue of the coverage of such schemes and whether all the needy are being covered.

While the standard approach in anti-poverty programmes is to use poverty mapping for targeting, one needs to understand that the present situation has created a large number of "new poor" who may not be confined to the so-called poverty-prone upazilas.

A much wider and more inclusive approach is needed.

We also hear that "committees" have been formed to prepare "lists" of possible beneficiaries, and "cards" are going to be given. But one wonders when some actual help will reach the hands of the needy.

It seems that the authorities were caught unprepared. And much time is being lost in getting necessary preparatory work done.

One suggestion that came from outside the government (including from myself) was to

provide cash transfer to at least that segment who may not be reachable through food assistance.

This group consists of not only the poor but also those who may have been just above the poverty line but may have fallen off the cliff because of the current crisis.

With a little innovation (e.g., the use of mobile finance) and effort, such a transfer could be made to get money quickly in the hands of those who are facing a precarious situation.

A back of the envelope calculation shows the following: (i) Taking into account the daily labourers and a part of those in the formal and informal sectors who are employed on a precarious basis, I estimated 2 crores to be in desperate need of cash at the moment.

If we assume that half the garment workers may have returned to work already, the above number would be 1.8 crores.

(ii) Using the 2016 poverty line (Tk 2,268 per person) and that each worker has to support a family of 4.06 (2016 survey), the total amount needed for a month would be Tk 9,208.

If one adjusts it for price increases during 2016-19, one would get an amount of more than Tk 10,000.

So, I would suggest a one-time cash transfer of Tk 10,000 per family. (iii) Depending on whether the number of target beneficiaries is taken to be 1.8 or 2 crores, the total amount needed to provide such one-time cash transfer would be between Tk 18,000 and Tk 20,000 crore, which is less than 0.80 per cent of Bangladesh's GDP.

This should be in the realm of feasibility of the government's budget.

Coming to the credit line, especially the one meant for the micro and small enterprises, the paperwork and conditions required should be kept as simple as possible.

There could be massive publicity (e.g.,

through electronic and print media) on how the necessary paperwork could be completed.

Furthermore, support could be provided by setting up cells in public sector banks and encouraging private banks to help micro-enterprises in this respect.

A mechanism could be developed to involve educated young people for assisting prospective applicants. The government's Youth National Service Programme could be mobilised for such support.

Before concluding this article, let me get back to the data issue. The last year for which LFS was conducted is 2016-17. And I don't know when the next survey will be carried out.

Whenever it is done, the results will reflect the situation at the time of the survey -- not what is prevailing now.

On the other hand, if there was a system of carrying out LFS every quarter every year, we could have had a picture of the situation in 2020 and compared it with that of the earlier years.

That would have enabled us to have a more accurate picture of the real impact of the present crisis on people's livelihoods.

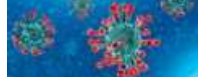
My suggestion, therefore, would be to have a plan for carrying out LFS every year -- and preferably, quarterly every year.

That will enable our policymakers to monitor what is happening in the labour market on a more regular basis and adopt policies accordingly.

Likewise, other surveys, e.g., the one on manufacturing industries should also be carried out more frequently and results published quickly after the surveys are carried out.

With good and up-to-date data, policymaking is bound to remain imperfect.

The author is a former special adviser to the Employment Sector of the International Labour Office, Geneva



TAMING CORONAVIRUS RAMPAGE

Tuomo Poutiainen, country director at the International Labour Organisation, speaks about May Day, measures aimed at tackling the coronavirus pandemic and the importance of protecting workers, by Refayet Ullah Mirdha and Md Fazlur Rahman

'Sustainability of businesses depends on how we protect our workers from COVID-19'

How do you look at this May Day in the context of the pandemic?

This May Day came during difficult global and local health and socioeconomic crises. The pandemic has disproportionately affected some sectors of the population who are already vulnerable and lack little or no social protection coverage. These groups include women, youth, older workers, indigenous people, migrants, those with disabilities and self-employed persons.

The crisis has highlighted that some professionals who are usually undervalued or even ignored are the working heroes of this pandemic -- care workers, cleaners, grocery sellers, supermarket cashiers, delivery and transport staff -- are often among the ranks of the working poor.

Our current and future policy choices should address these inequalities exposed by the pandemic. On this May Day, let us reflect on our past shortcomings in the world of work and adjust priorities to ensure decent work and future for all working women and men.

The priorities should be adequate social protection to protect the vulnerable; improved working conditions to safeguard workers in their workplaces; and a strong social dialogue between government, employers and workers to find sustainable and equitable solutions to labour market issues.

What are the ILO's recommendations for protecting workers once factories start reopening?

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder said, "In the face of an infectious disease outbreak, how we protect our workers now clearly dictates how safe our communities are, and how resilient our businesses will be, as this pandemic evolves."

which not only puts them at risk but also others they come in contact with.

Preventive and protective measures are the most effective ways to keep it at bay. Hence, ensuring decent working conditions and rights for workers is as important as ever, and to the benefit of society and the

approach to slowing down the virus.

The government is providing food and financial support. As the crisis evolves, this type of support needs to be continued. The current crisis highlights the need for social protection measures that can help countries weather economic shocks.

What are your suggestions so that the workers don't lose jobs because of coronavirus?

The ILO is calling for urgent and significant policy responses to protect enterprises and workers operating in both the formal and informal economies.

We are recommending employment retention through work-sharing and reskilling, and extending social protection to ensure income security, access to subsistence allowance and basic healthcare for all workers.

The Bangladesh government has commendably announced several stimulus packages to support industries and enterprises to continue their businesses. What is important is also reaching the workers and enterprises who need it the most.

Change in workplace safety since Rana Plaza building collapse?

Bangladesh has come a long way since the 2013 Rana Plaza tragedy. Thousands of factories have been inspected on electrical, fire and structural safety.

A wide range of safety remediation and improvement measures have been taken and many tens of thousands of employers and workers educated and trained on occupational safety and health.

Yet not all factories are up to the agreed standards and more still needs to be done to mitigate safety and health risks at workplaces.

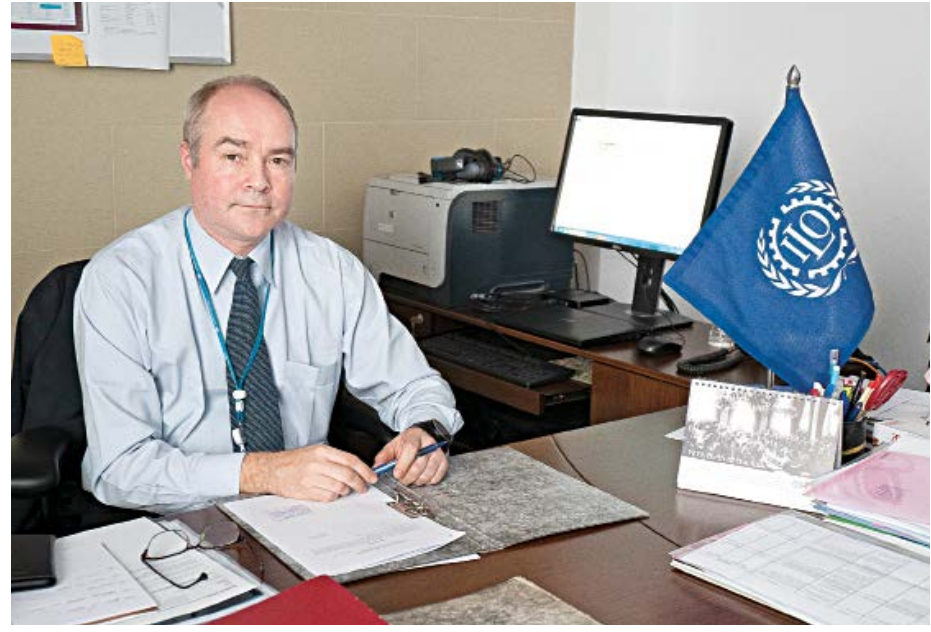
What are your recommendations for skills development for the workers?

The ILO has projected that nearly half of the global workforce -- around 1.6 billion people -- are at risk of losing their livelihoods. The need to reskill and/or upskill these laid-off workers will be critical.

Moreover, hundreds of thousands of migrant workers are also coming home and many may not have jobs to go back to.

The ILO is working with the Ministry of Expatriates to provide essential entrepreneurship and skills development training to returnee migrants to help them to better reintegrate into the domestic labour market.

We will also be exploring means to formalise their existing skills and experiences via recognition of prior learning certification process. This will help boost their future job prospects in Bangladesh and overseas.



Strong safety and health measures for workers are the first requirements when considering a return to workplaces. Protective workplace-specific measures must be adopted based on common dialogue between employers and workers, and a shared understanding of coronavirus risks.

Do you think the factories are following the health and safety rules properly?

The sustainability of businesses depends on how we protect our workers from COVID-19. To safeguard workers and prevent the transmission of the virus in workplaces, the ILO has developed COVID-19 specific Occupational Safety and Health guidelines, together with the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments of Bangladesh.

Once endorsed and officially out there, businesses must ensure that they are applied and that management and workers understand them and are equipped to follow them.

In the first week of April, hundreds of thousands of workers desperately tried to return to Dhaka and other industrial belts defying lockdown to keep jobs?

In the absence of protection such as sick leave or unemployment benefits, millions of workers may need to make a cruel choice between their health and their livelihoods,

economy at large.

What challenges do you see for the factory owners and workers as they resume production?

As garment factories start to reopen in Bangladesh, every factory will have to face its own unique set of challenges. However, collectively, the most pressing challenge will be to ensure proper health and safety conditions in factories to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Although there is no doubt about the commitment of most factory owners to keep the workers safe, there is a real risk of coronavirus infection in factories as the number of COVID-19 cases is still on the rise in Bangladesh, particularly in densely populated industrial belts, where most of the factories are located.

The Better Work Bangladesh has already released a COVID-19 Management Guidance to help the industry ensure that workplaces are safe and healthy while being able to maintain operations.

Has Bangladesh done enough to protect workers during lockdown?

The government of Bangladesh was quick to respond to the threat of COVID-19 and had very little choice but to announce a general holiday. This was the same measure taken by every other country and is a proven

'The risks are grave. We don't want to go back to work right away.'

NAZMA AKHTER

On the previous occasions of May Day, we were demanding our rights, safety for our workers, freedom of association, gender equality, living wages and many other issues.

But this May Day we have a bigger fight than we ever imagined: we are also fighting COVID-19, which has led to hundreds of thousands of workers losing their jobs, losing their pay and fighting with police and factory owners.

Now we are demanding job security and social protection, the payment of wages and proper social distancing. Many have still not been paid for March. The situation is so serious -- hundreds of thousands of people are now facing immediate risks to their lives and livelihoods.

Under the present circumstances, I think it is much too soon to open factories, but the pressure on us is immense and the government has instructed us to reopen.

Brands are also pushing as some stores in America and Europe are starting to reopen and they want us to go back to work as well.

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association has asked for our support to open the factories.

We said we would like all the ministries to sit together with the labour representatives and talk about how to open the factories. But they did not do this. They decided just to open the factories.

Now, the government, unions, related ministries and brands should all monitor the situation in all the factories. We must ensure this is being done correctly.

There is nothing more important in this world than the lives and safety of the people making these clothes. Many other countries are putting the health of their citizens first. Bangladesh must do this also.

The consequences of putting competitiveness and profit before workers' health are too grave. If their health and safety are not protected, there will be no industry left to speak of.

Some brands have behaved well and respected orders, but many others -- in fact, the majority -- have not. And these are not small companies. They are not respecting the rights of workers -- our rights are not properly protected in the supply chain.

There is no respect, there is no dignity and there is no legal protection.

If workers are affected and die of coronavirus infections, suppliers and brands should be held responsible.

We all know there has never been enough responsibility or liability for workers' sufferings and deaths.

Workers have died for these companies who promised accidents like the Rana Plaza collapse will never happen again and still, they are asking us to reopen factories and risk our lives.

Workers are saying the risks are grave and they do not want to go back to work at this moment like they had said just before the Rana Plaza disaster when the building's owners ignored warnings to avoid using the building after cracks had appeared the day before.

The writer is the president of Sammilito Garment Sramik Federation, a platform of garment workers

In the face of an infectious disease outbreak, how we protect our workers now clearly dictates how safe our communities are, and how resilient our businesses will be, as this pandemic evolves.

Opening factories would do more harm than good

KHONDAKER GOLAM MOAZZEM

The recent events in the garment sector regarding the workers' unpaid wages, layoffs, retrenchment and opening of factories without proper safety measures portray that the May Day does not bear any more significance than a normal day.

I think there is no strong reason for opening garment factories at a time of high incidence of coronavirus infection in the country. In case of emergency, factories should negotiate with their buyers about revised schedules for shipment of orders.

Since most of the shops and businesses are closed in major apparel importing countries, factory owners could easily pursue a rescheduled timeline.

Opening the factories with a high risk of infection in the workplace would make the factories more vulnerable and thus reduce the scope for getting orders in future.

Such a hurried move for short-term benefits may push the factories as well as the sector in long-term risks of occupational safety and health.

We have noticed that the decision on opening the factories is not giving priority to the directives of the health ministry.

Since social distancing is being promoted everywhere, how could factories be opened when maintaining social distancing is almost impossible in case of movement to and from the factories?

Since the country is going through a period of health emergency, the directives of the health ministry should have taken precedence over other ministries.

In a few cases, we have noticed the participation of trade union representatives in the discussion, but the role and influence of workers in such a decision-making process were found to be minimal.

Garment manufacturers often

say that if they do not reopen their factories now, they would lose competitiveness in the international market, but we do not think so.

The whole world is closed: a few countries have opened their factories (such as Vietnam) because they were able to contain the spread of the virus successfully.

This logic does not apply to Bangladesh as it seems we have a long way to go in this battle.

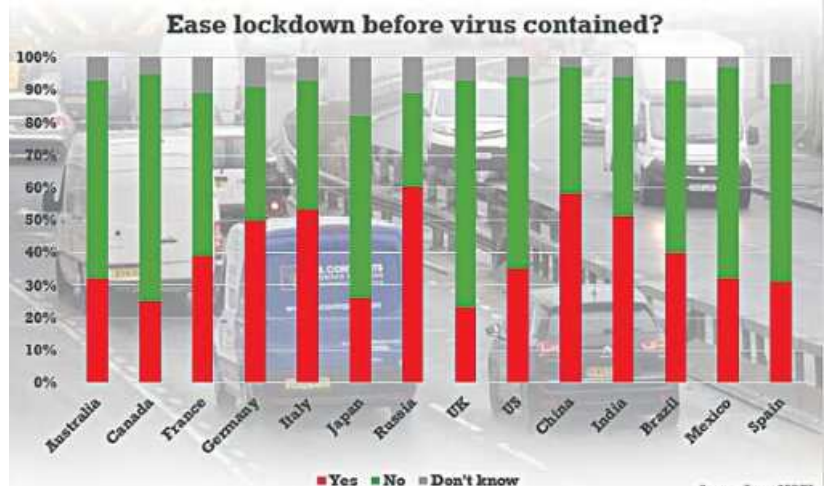
Given the limited awareness and understanding about personal safety

their economic concerns.

We know that the government is working closely with the International Labour Organisation in preparing emergency safety guidelines.

However, some follow-up steps are associated with the formation of committees at the factory level, awareness-raising and identification of vulnerable areas in the factories.

All the stakeholders, particularly the government and workers, trade unions, local and international organisations, should work closely



as well as the limited institutional capacity for the factories to ensure health safety at the workplace, the decision to open factories needs to be taken cautiously.

If we hurry to go back to production and thereby coronavirus spreads across the worker community and other regions, the benefit of the month-long holidays will go in vain.

The health-related concerns should get priority over other economic emergencies.

We think that the government measures for the industries, particularly for the export-oriented sectors, should adequately address

on social dialogue to ensure workers' rights at this crucial moment.

We have a plan to monitor the safety situation if we could collaborate with international organisations.

We think that the challenges in the world of work -- particularly business, employment, working conditions, workers' rights and the role of brands and buyers -- will persist for more than a year, which would have different impact and implications for the overall working conditions in the country.

The writer is the research director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue

NEXT STEP

Making a DIFFERENCE

The Psychological Price of Entrepreneurship

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

How many times have you heard entrepreneurs say "Fake it till you make it"? This is what the social psychiatrists call impression management, which has been practised by business leaders for years. We idolise successful entrepreneurs like Steve Jobs and Elon Musk but forget the fact that many of them had to struggle through despair times before they made it big.

LEARNING STAGE
As much as this phase may be considered the most enjoyable parts of entrepreneurship, the business leaders may be driven by a range of emotions. From curiosity about the new aspects of the business to anger towards the education system for not preparing them for real-life experiences, to fear of not being successful. Their vision of a business turns out to be far from what they originally thought going into college.

TRIAL AND ERROR STAGE
Entrepreneurs and people in business have gone through this stage. More than ever, it is an intelligent strategy, trial and error, extreme and uncanny passion, and a die-hard work ethic that gets them through it. They go through feelings of uncertainty, panic and the urge to prove themselves. Leadership requires perseverance when their initial plan fails, and they have to start from scratch again.

GOING FULL-TIME STAGE
Once the business is up and running, leaders start to bite more than they can chew. Entrepreneurs often juggle between roles and face countless setbacks such as lost customers, disputes with partners, increased competition, staffing problems, all while struggling to make payroll.

OROBI BAKHTIAR

Why are RMG workers coming back from the villages?

Non-compliant factories should be held accountable

IN a shocking development amidst the countrywide lockdown, thousands of garment workers have returned to work in Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and other districts in the last few days as the factories they work in have reopened. Reportedly, 2,356 of the estimated 7,602 garment factories across the country resumed operations last Wednesday. According to the BGMEA vice-president, around two lakh workers may have returned to work from outside Dhaka by this time. The implications in terms of how this sudden influx of workers will spread the novel coronavirus are ominous.

Although the factories were instructed by the authorities to call only workers who are staying within the vicinity of the factories and the owners also assured the government that they would not call workers from outside Dhaka, it seems some workers from outside were called to join work by the factory management, according to news reports. Therefore, it is obvious that the message was not given clearly enough by the government.

What is important to ask here is: were the workers given any assurance that even if they did not return to work during the lockdown, they would still have their jobs and be given salaries? Unless they are assured of their job security and given due salaries to pull through during this period, how can we expect them to stay in the villages and go hungry with their families? Questions should also be asked about whether these workers actually got any support from the government's stimulus packages.

It is most unfortunate that many garment owners have disregarded the advice of the health experts and reopened their factories without formulating a safety guideline for the workers. Now that these factories have resumed operations, there is a risk of wider transmission of the virus unless proper safety and social distancing measures are ensured at workplaces and on their way to and from homes.

The factories who have called in workers from outside Dhaka violating the government instructions should be held to account, and action should also be taken against the factories that are not ensuring social distancing and health safety measures in line with the government directives. And if the government is really serious about enforcing the lockdown measures, it should make sure that no more garment workers leave their village homes to join work. That will only be possible if they are given financial assistance to survive during this period and also assured that they will not lose their jobs.

Stop the toxic ship from docking at our shores

It poses grave threat to workers and the environment

WE are alarmed to learn that a highly toxic ship named J Nat, once used for storing oil by offshore oil and gas companies, is headed towards Bangladesh from Indonesia carrying toxic waste and may reach our coast in a week's time. A local shipbreaking company is illegally importing the ship for scrapping purposes, potentially posing great risks to workers' health and polluting the environment.

With around 1,500 tonnes of mercury-contaminated waste, 60 tonnes of sludge oil, 1,000 tonnes of slop oil, and 500 tonnes of oily water on board, J Nat has toxins such as Polychlorinated Biphenyls, asbestos and other different heavy metals within its structures, making it a ticking time bomb. Samples of the sludge have revealed mercury levels of 395mg/kg, whereas the Hazardous Waste and Ship-breaking Waste Management Rules list mercury and mercury compounds as harmful if their concentration exceeds 50 mg/kg. Regular exposure to such toxins is a severe health hazard and can even lead to death.

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform issued a briefing paper stating that Indonesian authorities appear not to have informed Bangladesh about the presence of hazardous wastes and materials in the vessel, in violation of article VI of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal. On the other hand, the Department of Environment, which issues clearance certificates for scrap vessels in Bangladesh, is not aware of J Nat's import. How is it possible that without any clearance, the vessel is destined for our coast?

Much has been reported in this daily about the plight of workers at the shipbreaking yards as well as the pollution of aquatic resources caused by toxic dumping. Only last month, two workers died and another required medical attention after being exposed to toxic gases. Studies have shown that the biodiversity of Sitakunda is poorer than that of the surrounding areas due to the mismanagement of toxic wastes. Total disregard for human and environment safety seems to be rampant in the field of shipbreaking and the workers do not enjoy any legal protection whatsoever.

Given the situation, the authorities must implement relevant laws to ensure workers' safety and impose proper precautionary measures. Our coastal belt governance demands to be strengthened. The government also needs to immediately investigate the matter and stop J Nat before it reaches our shores and return the vessel so it can follow the decontamination protocol. Bangladesh must be stringent about not allowing ships carrying such toxic waste to come to its shores in the future.

PHILIP GAIN

THE tea plantation workers (TPWs) in some 60 tea gardens in Sylhet stopped work for a day or two in the beginning of the countrywide lockdown. They ignored the owners' decision to not stop the operation of tea gardens. The planters afforded to be complacent, secure in the knowledge that the tea workers live and work in safe enclaves and there is no risk for them to contract the coronavirus.

The revolting workers did not agree with the owners. They questioned, if the garment workers could afford lockdown holidays, why wouldn't they be given a break as well? Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union (BCSU), the lone union of 130,000 TPWs, started writing to the owners and the government demanding that the tea gardens be brought under lockdown and the workers be given holidays with full pay.

It was at this time when the TPWs were getting confused and restless that the prime minister cleared things up at a video conference with the Deputy Commissioners (DCs) on March 31 that tea workers stay scattered when they pick leaves... and because they stay with nature, there is no chance of contraction so tea gardens can stay operational. If distance is maintained when the leaves are deposited, there should not be problems. And because no one has been infected, there is nothing to worry about. The prime minister said this in response to similar observations made by the DC of Sylhet. The observations of the DC and prime minister are similar to those of Bangladesh Tea Association (BTA) that represents the tea planters.

The tea workers and their union have respect for the prime minister. So from April 1, they went back to work and kept working six days a week ever since.

Now that the garment factories and government offices are reopening, it is unlikely that the planters will pay any heed to BCSU which filed its latest appeal to the owners on April 20 requesting shutdown of the tea gardens with pay.

The coronavirus pandemic has indeed caused unprecedented upheaval around the world including in Bangladesh. It is at this time that the TPWs, more than 90 percent of them non-Bengali, have succumbed to the wish of the planters. From 1939, when commercial tea plantation started in India, the overwhelming majority of TPWs have been non-locals. During the British time, these workers, known as *coolies*, had lived a life of slavery. Many had been trapped in the hands of coolie-catchers known as *arkattis*, *sirdar* and *Maistri* in India and *Kangany* in Sri Lanka.

The TPWs and their ancestors have gone through numerous upheavals and shocks during the two World Wars, numerous epidemics, and the independence war. They have always been the silent victims—because they are rootless and dependent on their employers. In independent Bangladesh, they are citizens of the country and free to live anywhere, but the conditions they are entrapped in keep them tied to the tea gardens where they have no land or houses of their own. As survivors living on the fringe, they always submit to the desires of the planters and the state.

Helpless tea workers, hapless trade union

The coronavirus epidemic shows that little has changed for tea workers over time. We no longer call them *coolie*, but they are not much better off than during the time of the British-India days. They are



GUY RYDER

pandemic without doing irreversible damage to the economy in the process.

With over three million confirmed cases and over 230,000 victims of the virus to date globally, and the expected loss of the equivalent of 305 million jobs worldwide by mid-year, the stakes have never been higher. Governments continue to "follow the science" in the search for the best solutions while foregoing the obvious benefits of much greater international cooperation in building the needed global response to the global challenge.

But with the war against Covid-19 still to be won, it has become commonplace that what awaits us after victory is a "new normal" in the way society is organised and the way we will work.

This is hardly reassuring. Because no one seems able to say what the new normal will be. Because the message is that it will be dictated by the constraints imposed by the pandemic rather than our choices and preferences. And because we've heard it before. The

not to enjoy what other citizens do. They must live in isolation, so they are safe! The planters can do what they want to do with them and the lawmakers and the state guarantee their interest. Is there any evidence to support such allegations? Yes, there are plenty.

The foremost among them is the discrimination in the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 with regard to their union. The labour law allows trade union only at the national level for a group of establishments. All tea gardens are considered a group of establishments, so the TPWs can form union only at the national level, and to form a union at least 20 percent of the total workers and 20 percent of the workers from each garden must register! The intricacies of BCSU under the strong influence of the planters and the government make formation of a second union in the tea industry almost impossible. And the consequences are understandably far-reaching.

One area of grave concern is non-payment of gratuity. Imagine a TPW working all their life in a tea garden who gets no gratuity at the end of their service. The planters allegedly blackmail the workers with regard to gratuity. Article 32 of Bangladesh Labour Law stipulates: "A worker occupying a residential accommodation provided by his employer, whose service has been ceased by any means, shall vacate such residential accommodation within a period of sixty days from the date of cessation of employment." The tea workers are tied to the tea gardens. Almost 100 percent of the non-Bengali TPWs have no land and property of their own inside or outside the tea gardens. Where shall they go upon retirement or at the end of service if they have to vacate their residence? Generally, a family member replaces the one who has retired. If one claims gratuity, it may land them in great trouble.

"The last agreement signed between

and even now.

The labour law and the Labour Rules 2015 provide quite a few other significant facilities to workers that the planters ignore every day. For example, toilets and washing facilities at workplace. In the sections or workplaces of tealeaf pickers where more than 90 percent of the workers are women, there is no toilet or washing facility. Drinking water is also reported to be in short supply. If the planters follow the labour rules (Article 79), they are to appoint one welfare officer in a tea garden employing 500 or more workers. If the number of workers exceeds 2,000, then for every two thousand and the fragmented numbers the planters are obliged to engage one additional welfare officer. The welfare officer has a long list of responsibilities to perform for the wellbeing of both planters and workers.

"We have not seen or heard of any such welfare officer appointed yet," said Rambhajan Kairi. "It is a farce." There



If we look into the violations of the labour law and the labour rules in the tea gardens, the list is quite stupefying.

PHOTO: PHILIP GAIN

The tea workers also do not have any casual leave, which is up to 10 days in other industries. When workers in other industries are entitled to a day's earned leave for working 18 days, the tea workers have to work 22 days for earning a day's leave of this kind.

If we look into the violations of the labour law and the labour rules in the tea gardens, the list is much longer. First, the TPWs are not given appointment letter. The labour law stipulates, "No employer shall employ any worker without giving such worker a letter of appointment and every such employed worker shall be provided with an identity card with photograph." No worker in the tea garden has any letter of appointment from planters. "In tea gardens, planters consider Provident Fund papers as letter of appointment," says Tapan Datta, adviser to BCSU, "which can in no way be justified." There are widespread allegations that a worker can be kept as casual for years before she or he is made permanent. A casual worker does not get ration, treatment and holidays with pay.

the tea workers' union and the owners' association for 2018 and 2019 makes payment of gratuity obligatory according to the labour law," says Rambhajan Kairi, general secretary of BCSU. "But so far, no retiree or anyone who has lost their job has received gratuity."

Given the 150-year history of the tea gardens and tea workers, their demand that Article 32 of the labour law should not apply for the tea workers has a logic. Moreover, the tea workers demand that the government and the planters consider giving them ownership of the land and houses in their possession.

The tea workers are deprived of five percent of the profit of the companies that is guaranteed by the Labour Act, 2006 (article 234). This share of profit is supposed to be deposited to the workers' participatory fund and workers' welfare fund, which they shall be able to spend based on collective decision. The tea gardens had this provision even before the framing of the current labour act, but the TPWs have remained deprived of company's profit-sharing both in the past

are many other legal obligations of the planters towards their workers and their family members with special attention to children, which they ignore. Meanwhile, the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE)—one of the key state agencies tasked to ensure implementation of labour law in the tea gardens—helplessly witnesses all these breaches of labour law and labour standard!

The power and influence of the tea planters became evident when the TPWs were forced to work against their will during the lockdown. The helpless TPWs have done a great favour to the planters. But what about the responsibility of the government? It is high time the government obliged the planters/owners to fully implement the labour law and the labour rules in the tea gardens so that the workers are no longer discriminated against and are not compelled to live a life of perpetual hardship.

Philip Gain is a researcher and director of Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD). Email: philip.gain@gmail.com

New Normal? Better Normal!

mantra which provided the mood music of the crash of 2008-2009 was that once the vaccine to the virus of financial excess had been developed and applied, the global economy would be safer, fairer, more sustainable. But that didn't happen. The old normal was restored with a vengeance and those on the lower echelons of labour markets found themselves even further behind.

So May 1, the international day of labour, is the right occasion to look more

ignited warnings from our colleagues in the World Food Programme of the coming pandemic of hunger. It is the gaping holes in the social protection systems of even the richest countries that have left millions in situations of deprivation. It is the failure to guarantee workplace safety that condemns nearly three million to die each year, because of the work they do. And it is the unchecked dynamic of growing inequality that means that if, in medical terms, the virus does not discriminate between its

cataclysm the world faces today. But we always knew: we simply chose not to care. By and large, policy choices by commission or omission accentuated rather than alleviated the problem.

Fifty-two years ago, Martin Luther King, in a speech to striking sanitation workers on the eve of his assassination, reminded the world that there is dignity in all labour. Today, the virus has similarly highlighted the always essential and sometimes heroic role of the working heroes of this pandemic. People who are usually invisible, unconsidered, undervalued, even ignored. Health and care workers, cleaners, supermarket cashiers, transport staff—too often numbered among the ranks of the working poor and the insecure.

Today, the denial of dignity to these people, and to millions of others, stand as a symbol of past policy failures and our future responsibilities.

On May Day next year, we trust that the pressing emergency of Covid-19 will be behind us. But we will have before us the task of building a future of work which tackles the injustices that the pandemic has highlighted, together with the permanent and no longer postponable challenges of climate, digital and demographic transition.

This is what defines the better normal that has to be the lasting legacy of the global health emergency of 2020.

Guy Ryder is the Director-General of International Labour Organization (ILO).

So May 1, the international day of labour, is the right occasion to look more closely at this new normal, and start on the task of making it a better normal—not so much for those who already have much, but for those who so obviously have too little.

closely at this new normal, and start on the task of making it a better normal—not so much for those who already have much, but for those who so obviously have too little.

This pandemic has laid bare, in the cruelest way, the extraordinary precariousness and injustices of our world of work. It is the decimation of livelihoods in the informal economy—where six out of ten workers make a living—that has

victims in its social and economic impact, it discriminates brutally against the poorest and the powerless.

The only thing that should surprise us in all this is that we are surprised. Before the pandemic, the manifest deficits in decent work were mostly played out in individual episodes of quiet desperation. It has taken the calamity of Covid-19 to aggregate them into the collective social

IN MEMORIAM

JRC: A man who led by example

SALEHUDDIN AHMED

It was around 7 pm in Dallas, Texas on April 27 (6 am on April 28 in Dhaka), when I received a phone call from a colleague at BRAC University. I was shocked to hear the message that he conveyed: that our most respected, most admired Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury was no more. I was deeply saddened to hear that and could not hold back my tears. I could not help but remember the brief but wonderful time that I spent while working with him. His colleagues and students would fondly call him JRC.

JRC Sir was the first Vice-Chancellor of BRAC University. The time I spent with him during this stint of four years was a most unforgettable one for me, both professionally and personally. JRC was a gem of a person. He was a scientist, a teacher, a mentor, a fountain of knowledge and wisdom, an extremely fair person, a great patriot and a perfect gentleman. Anyone who has had an encounter with him would remember him always. He built up a strong team in building the BRACU in its initial years.

Whenever we sat with him to discuss and deliberate, we learned a lot about many different subjects. When dealing with colleagues and students, especially with regard to management issues, he was always fair and just. His management style was tough, but one with a human touch. He was an example of managing objectively at the same time being participatory and humane.

Once we introduced the practice of wearing identity cards by all during the time one would be on the campus. In our usual code of conduct in organisations, the Chief Executives do not wear IDs. But JRC Sir would diligently wear his ID card starting from his entry into, and exit from, the campus. He said, "If as the VC I don't wear it, many will not either. To create a value in any organisation, the CEO or people at the top should also practise what they preach. Leaders should set examples."

In the management and policy meetings where all senior people participated, I found JRC Sir steering the meetings very ably. His mannerisms and communication skills were noteworthy.



Jamilur Reza Choudhury (1943-2020)

He was very clear and immaculate in his deliberations. His command over Bangla and English was impeccable. He talked less and listened more. Once there was a discussion on the issue of reciting from the holy books in BRACU's first convocation. The discussion was on whether verses from only the Quran or all four scriptures would be read out in the inauguration. After hearing all, JRC Sir gave the decision that verses from all

four scriptures would be read out, the logic being that Bangladesh is a People's Republic and a secular state.

JRC Sir was a perfect gentleman. Whenever decisions were sought from him regarding teacher, student or staff issues, the decisions he would provide were very fair and acceptable to all parties. He considered the effect of those decisions on the affected people and took the right ones. He was analytical, thoughtful, reasonable and farsighted in his decision making.

Regarding the issue of working hours in BRACU, he said that the teachers would not have a fixed, 9 to 5 hours' time because they have to run classes at different times, have to do research and library work and also have to have flexible times for consulting with the students. Sometimes teachers need to work extra hours. In addition, teachers have to be extremely earnest in conducting their classes maintaining good practices of teaching and managing time properly. However, the timing for other staff members, including administrators, security and management people, should be fixed (say 8:30-5), but when needed, they

should not hesitate to commit added time. He said, "a university cannot be run as a corporate office or an NGO, it should have its own values and culture as an educational institution. In corporations and NGOs, the organisation pays the staff members, but in a university, the teachers and staff are paid by the students. So your responsibility to your students is enormous."

JRC Sir would never give judgement on any conflicting issue without listening to both sides. He would tell us, "never give judgement after hearing only one side of the story, you may not be just and fair."

One may think that these are usual characteristics of any CEO, but on the contrary, many do not practise these in their leadership and management styles. There is a lot to learn from JRC Sir's people management practices.

We will always remember him and miss him. Thank you very much, Sir, for your many invaluable lessons.

Dr Salehuddin Ahmed is the former Deputy Executive Director of BRAC, former Pro-Vice Chancellor of BRAC University, and former Managing Director of The Daily Star.

Think out of the box to ensure learning continuity

SYEDA TASFIA TASNEEM

ON March 23, the University Grants Commission (UGC) had urged all universities to continue academic activities online in accordance with the global response to the coronavirus. However, contradicting its previous stance of encouraging digital education, the UGC has now directed private universities to stop all evaluation and admission processes until further notice. Furthermore, the commission has termed this practice as being "unethical" since at present many families would be unable to bear the expenses of the admission fees and many students would find it difficult to sit for online examinations. The UGC has insisted that private universities should only take examinations once the situation returns to normal.

After the announcement of nationwide closure of schools and colleges came on March 17, many universities made attempts to conduct the last few weeks of the Spring semester online. Although the adjustment to virtual classes has been quite successful for most universities in the developed nations, which already had the basic technological infrastructure in place for assisting this shift, it has proven to be a challenging task in our country which did not have much prior experience in teaching courses online. Needless to say, going online also meant leaving out a huge proportion of disadvantaged students who belong to lower-income families and do not have adequate access to a technological device or internet connectivity. Consequently, this could also widen the inequalities in access to learning that are already prevalent in our tertiary education level.

Another major reason that compelled most private universities to stop conducting further online classes was a concern over the mental health of students. Complaints had been rising among students over increased academic pressure and workload and an inability to focus on their studies amidst the stressful environment. The uncertainty and fear surrounding the current pandemic has given rise to anxiety, stress and various mental health issues among many people, and students were no exception. In order to relieve academic stress in these extraordinary circumstances, many universities decided to stop all further evaluations and assign grades on the basis of prior performance on

quizzes and assignments covered so far in the semester. Many teachers also went out of their way to extend support towards students by allowing them to take an additional quiz or assignment to boost their grades. However, the UGC's current directives have not only questioned the integrity of these measures, but also put students at the risk of session jams.

In response to the pandemic, educational boards across the globe have also been forced to make various adjustments and show increased flexibility. According to several reports by *The New York Times*, some universities such as Columbia University and Yale University have adopted a new pass/fail or credit/no

top-rated institutions like Harvard and New York University have allowed their medical students to graduate early in order for them to engage in the fight against the Covid-19. In China, the Zhejiang University (ZJU), a comprehensive research university, has been able to offer 5,000 courses online within just two weeks of the transition to digital learning. Furthermore, to ensure that graduates do not face any delay in their graduation, the university has arranged for students to defend their theses online. The smooth transition has been credited to their smart classrooms, digital platforms and effective teacher training programmes in online delivery methods. Considering these, it is quite evident

planning regarding adjustment of economic and educational activities should not escape our list of priorities.

According to UNESCO, 91 percent of the world's current student population has been negatively impacted by nationwide closures of schools in attempts to contain the spread of Covid-19. This includes around 1.54 billion youth and children enrolled in schools and universities around the globe. At a time like this, the lack of agreement and effective communication between the private universities and the UGC is an indication that our education system has been unable to give a more unified direction that is currently needed to guide students towards the right path.

institutions which have responded by broadcasting lessons via TV channels. We have reasons to doubt the success of such responses since a large proportion of households do not have access to a television. However, the impact of Covid-19 on education can be more than just short-term interruptions if we fail to develop a more concrete plan to address these shortcomings.

Disagreement over admission tests and modes of evaluation has taken precedence over more important issues that can have long-term detrimental impacts on education. Lessons that are evident from the previous Ebola epidemic in Africa include the rise in school drop-out rates, child marriages, adolescent pregnancy rates and an alarming increase in physical and sexual abuse towards girls. The current pandemic has forced nearly 743 million girls out of the protective environment of schools. For a significant number of girls belonging to the world's least developed nations, which were left economically vulnerable by the current crisis, it is uncertain whether they will ever get a chance to get back to schools. This possibility does not seem very unlikely for Bangladesh since we have high rates of poverty and child marriage and a significant proportion of the population has already been economically hurt by the pandemic. Other concerns that have worried international policymakers in countries like the UK and the USA are the cancellation of free-meal programmes and childcare facilities provided by schools. Unfortunately, the need for a comprehensive approach towards these issues has not received much attention in our country yet.

Nonetheless, as students, we should also recognise our responsibilities as the world's future generation. Certainly, education and learning should not be limited to either physical or virtual classrooms. Now is the time for us to forget national boundaries and think as citizens of the world and learn from the world's leaders, their successes and failures in addressing this global crisis. It is also the time to revisit old hobbies, adopt new skills, engage in research and learning beyond centuries-old textbooks and to gain deeper insights about the global policies that have resulted in a world that is currently torn by human negligence and exploitation.

Syeda Tasfia Tasneem is a student of economics at BRAC University. Email: tasfia.tasneem89@gmail.com



credit system which intends to allow all students to either pass or fail a course without having to worry about their grades. However, students have demanded that the universities adopt a "universal pass" policy for the current semester so that no student would fail irrespective of their academic performance. On the other hand, several Ivy League colleges such as Harvard, Dartmouth and the University of Pennsylvania have increased their acceptance rates for the next session of classes. Furthermore, the world's

that despite Bangladesh's repeated claims of embracing digitalisation as part of its Vision 2021, we have been unsuccessful in reaching the global standards of digital education.

In the United States, some universities including Boston University have considered cancelling all in-person classes until January 2021, while continuing to conduct classes online. It is naturally difficult to predict when it will be feasible to reopen schools and universities. While public health concerns must always come first, proper

We should also be concerned about why even the top private universities of the country, despite charging a hefty amount of money as admission and tuition fees, have been struggling to effectively adopt distanced learning through the use of technology. For instance, there is a lack of programmes to train faculty members in online teaching methods and very little investment in developing smart campuses. These gaps in technological adaptability are amplified manifold in the primary and secondary educational

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY



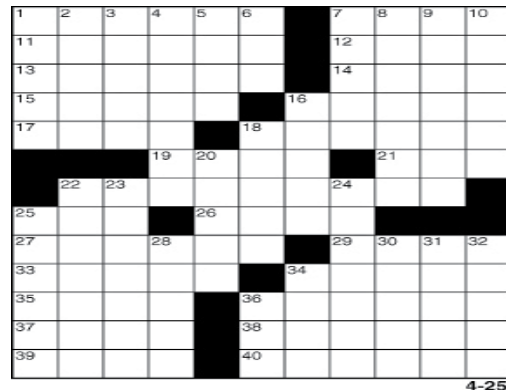
MAY DAY FOUNDED

May 1, 1889

On this day in 1889, May Day—traditionally a celebration of the return of spring, marked by dancing around a Maypole—was first observed as a labour holiday, designated as such by the International Socialist Congress.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Wandering
 - 7 Sow chow
 - 11 Pakistan city
 - 12 Glass section
 - 13 Skilled ones
 - 14 Tiny amount
 - 15 Solemn ceremonies
 - 16 Potpourri bit
 - 17 Honeyed drink
 - 18 Craving
 - 19 Bakery worker
 - 21 Help out
 - 22 In direct competition
 - 25 Brown tint
 - 26 Different
 - 27 Straightens
 - 29 Take it easy
 - 33 Half of a '60s group
 - 34 Tree-harming beetle
 - 35 Historic times
 - 36 Campaign event
 - 37 Annoy
 - 38 Prolific inventor
 - 39 Pert talk
 - 40 Climb
- DOWN**
- 1 Burglar's bane
 - 2 "Sexy" Beatles girl
 - 3 Letter before iota
 - 4 Inveigled
 - 5 Fine study
 - 6 Word of accord
 - 7 Some agents
 - 8 From Vientiane, say
 - 9 Smallest Great Lake
 - 10 Rang out
 - 16 Salon jobs
 - 18 Gives out hands
 - 20 Brothers behind "Fargo"
 - 22 Quinine's target
 - 23 Zoo residents
 - 24 Like some exercise
 - 25 Circus stars
 - 28 Nebula makeup
 - 30 Make blank
 - 31 Attack
 - 32 Leaning
 - 34 Garden sections
 - 36 Narc's org.



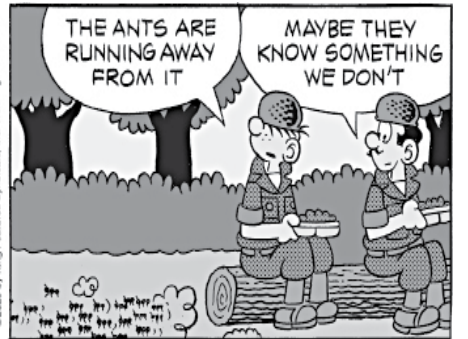
YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

LOPES ALPHABET
 ECLAT PALER
 STARE OHARA
 SAY ERR YAM
 EVE LET ELI
 REDSEA ADDS
 TORMENT
 JOHN ANTHELO
 ONE ESCHELO
 REO ASH FAT
 DIDDOS ADOPT
 ADDLE NOOSE
 NASAL TILED

BETLE BAILEY



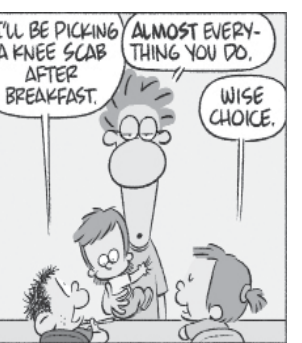
BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES



BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



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

Remembering IRRFAN KHAN

Renowned Indian film star Irrfan Khan, who had a string of successes under his belt, passed away at 53 in Mumbai's Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani hospital on April 29.



PHOTO: AFP

ZAHANGIR ALOM

He was suffering from a rare colon cancer, called Colitis. He is survived by his wife, Sutapa Sikdar, and two sons, Babil and Ayan.

In a statement released after the actor's death, his family said that Khan spent his final hours surrounded by his family, for whom he most cared about. The statement further said that Irrfan was a strong soul, someone who fought until the very end, and always inspired everyone who came close to him. His last rites took place in Mumbai.

"Irrfan was buried at the Versova Kabrastan in Mumbai," said yet another statement released by his family. "In March 2018, he was diagnosed with a neuroendocrine tumour. After extensive treatment in London, he recovered well enough to shoot *Angezi Medium*, the film which would turn out to be his last." The film's theatrical release in March was cut short because of the coronavirus pandemic.

In a film career spanning almost thirty years and featuring in around 100 films, Khan has received numerous awards, including a National Film Award and Filmfare Awards in four categories. Film critics, contemporaries and other experts consider him to be one of the finest actors in Indian cinema for his versatile and natural acting. In 2011, he was awarded the Padma Shri, India's fourth highest civilian honour

He was "a rare talent and a brilliant actor," tweeted Indian President Ram Nath Kovind. Prime Minister Narendra Modi described Irrfan Khan's death as "a loss to the world of cinema and theatre", in his condolence tweet.

Bangladeshi filmmaker Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, who had directed Irrfan in the Bengali film *Doob* (No Bed of Roses), was in a state of disbelief when the news of the actor's demise broke out. In an interview with *The Times of India*, Farooki shared that memories of meeting Irrfan in London some six months back are still fresh in his mind. "For me, Irrfan was more than an actor. He was like a poet, a friend and philosopher with whom I could talk for hours," he said.

Khan's breakthrough role came from an unlikely source – the feature debut of the then-unknown British director Asif Kapadia, whose low budget samurai-esque tale *The Warrior* was shot in India. Released in 2002, *The Warrior* was selected for the prestigious San Sebastián film festival and won the BAFTA award for Best British film. Khan subsequently broke into mainstream Indian films, often playing cops or villains, including the titular role of Maqbool, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* set in the Mumbai underworld. More orthodox Bollywood productions followed, such as *Rog* and the slice-of-life musical *Life in a... Metro*. Meanwhile, Khan found box-office success with the Indian-produced



The actor won the Asian Film Award for 'The Lunchbox'.

Farooki also recalled the shooting of a poignant scene from his film, where Irrfan had dialogues that spoke about how people die only when they become irrelevant to the world or the world becomes irrelevant to them. "Before shooting the scene, we had a three-hour-long journey by car through Chattogram when we talked about life, death and the mystery behind the force that keeps us alive for the entire period of time," he shared with *The Times of India*.

Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi, in his tweet, called Irrfan a versatile and talented actor, who was a popular Indian brand ambassador on the global film and TV stage. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted, "I am shocked at the demise of Irrfan Khan, one of the most exceptional actors of our time."

Khan was born as Saahabzaade Irfan Ali Khan in Jaipur in 1967. The son of a tyre seller, he went to the famous National School of Drama after failing as a cricketer. He struggled to make headway in the film industry, despite being cast in a small role as a letter writer in Mira Nair's *Salaam Bombay!* in 1988.

film *The Lunchbox*, in which he played an accountant who strikes up a letter-writing romance with an unhappy housewife, played by Nimrat Kaur.

Danny Boyle described his performance in *Slumdog Millionaire* as "beautiful to watch", and the late Roger Ebert commended him for his subtle, engrossing work in Mira Nair's *The Namesake*. Khan truly transformed himself for the characters he played on the silver screen.

Irrfan Khan's mother Saeeda Begum died at the age of 95 on April 25 in Jaipur. According to news agency ANI, Irrfan, who couldn't travel from Mumbai due to the coronavirus lockdown, paid his last respects to his late mother through video conferencing.

"I suppose in the end, the whole of life becomes an act of letting go, but what always hurts the most is not taking a moment to say goodbye." – were one of Irrfan Khan's most notable lines in *Life of Pi*, which tragically rings true in the case of the man who made his mark as a true international superstar.



Dev Patel with Irrfan Khan in Danny Boyle's *'Slumdog Millionaire'*. For his contribution to the field of arts. He was lauded for his roles in internationally acclaimed films, including *Slumdog Millionaire*, *Life of Pi*, *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *Jurassic World*.

Irrfan Khan's death has left a void in the world of cinema. Amitabh Bachchan, who co-starred with Khan in *Piku*, tweeted, "An incredible talent, a gracious colleague, a prolific contributor to the world of cinema left us too soon, creating a huge vacuum." Shah Rukh Khan, who worked with Irrfan Khan in *Billu*, described him as "the greatest actor of our times."



PHOTO: THE STATESMAN/ANN

Looking back at RISHI KAPOOR'S LEGACY

SHABABA IQBAL

Eminent Indian film star Rishi Kapoor breathed his last at 67, after a two-year battle with leukemia. He was admitted to the Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital in Mumbai a few days ago after complaining about breathing difficulties, and ultimately passed away on April 30. His last rites took place at Chandanwadi Crematorium in Kalbadevi, Mumbai.

In 2018, Rishi Kapoor was diagnosed with the bone marrow cancer, following which the actor was in New York for more than a year to receive treatment. While he returned to India this year, he had again been hospitalised in New Delhi in early February, while on a visit to New Delhi.

He is survived by his wife Neetu Kapoor, son Ranbir and daughter Riddhima. In a statement released after the actor's death, his family said he remained jovial and determined to live to the fullest right through two years of treatment across two continents. The statement further said that family, friends, food and films

late 1920s. Rishi Kapoor's father, Raj Kapoor directed, produced and starred in his own films, and had already rolled out one of his finest works, *Awara*, the year before he was born.

His brothers, Randhir Kapoor and Rajiv Kapoor, are actors as well. Rishi married his co-star, Neetu Singh, and his son Ranbir followed in his parents' footsteps, alongside some of his nieces and nephews, notably Kareena Kapoor who is a stalwart in the industry.

His death has robbed the world of a seasoned entertainer. Kapoor first appeared before the camera as a child in Raj Kapoor's *Shree 420* (1955), in the song, *Pyar Hua Iqar Hua*. Rishi Kapoor understood the pleasures, peculiarities and pitfalls of show business very early. His first full-scale role was in his father's *Mera Naam Joker*, in 1970. When filming began in 1968, Rishi Kapoor was 16, and was recruited to play the younger version of Raj Kapoor's character Raju, a circus clown. He also appeared in a few plays as a child.

After he started his career in earnest as an adult in Raj Kapoor's *Bobby* (1973) opposite Dimple Kapadia, his

Lifetime Achievement Award.

He was a part of hit films such as *Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Laila Majnu*, *Rafoo Chakkar*, *Sargam*, *Karz*, *Bol Radha Bol* and others. He also directed the 1999 film, *Aa Ab Laut Chalen*, starring Akshay Khanna, Aishwarya Rai and Rajesh Khanna among others.

Kapoor played character roles and showed his mettle in films like *Hum Tum*, *Fanaa*, *Delhi-6* and *Do Dooni Chaar*, where he appeared with wife Neetu Singh, after more than 25 years. He also appeared in a rare, critically acclaimed negative role in



Rishi Kapoor during his prime.

Agneepath in 2012. In the later stage of his career, he was seen in films such as *Kapoor and Sons*, *D-Day*, *Mulk* and *102 Not Out*, in which he starred alongside Amitabh Bachchan after more than 20 years.

His loss has left his fans, friends and colleagues shocked. Many took to social media to express their condolences to the family.

Among countless tweets, Amitabh Bachchan was one of the firsts to take to the platform to mourn the death of his co-star in multiple films. He wrote, "Rishi Kapoor... gone... passed away. I am destroyed!"

Rishi Kapoor had shot some portions of the comedy film, *Sharmaji Namkeen*, in Delhi in February. He was last seen in Emraan Hashmi's *The Body*, and had recently announced his next project, a remake of Hollywood film *The Intern*, also featuring Deepika Padukone.

This has been a tragic week for the entertainment industry as the news of Rishi Kapoor's death came a day after another brilliant actor, Irrfan Khan, passed away due to colon infection and a rare form of neuroendocrine cancer.



Rishi and Neetu Kapoor in 'Do Dooni Chaar'.

remained his focus and everyone who met him during this time was amazed at how he did not let his illness get the better of him.

Rishi Kapoor was born on September 4, 1952, in Mumbai, the second of the five children of Raj and Krishna Kapoor. His family heaves of film legends. His grandfather, Prithviraj Kapoor, was a renowned stage and film performer since the

range of roles spanned romances, comedies, socially themed dramas, thrillers, historicals and melodramas.

In a career spanning over five decades, the actor played the romantic lead in over 90 films between 1973 and 2000. He won numerous awards throughout his illustrious career, including the National Film Award for his role in *Mera Naam Joker* and the Filmfare

Missing the sets



Chanchal Chowdhury



Mehazabien Chowdhury



Nusraat Faria



Tahsan Khan

PHOTOS: STAR

SHARMIN JOYA

With the world at a standstill because of the coronavirus pandemic, Bangladesh's entertainment industry is witnessing abandoned sets, closed cinema theatres and actors with empty diaries. From managing busy weeks and tight schedules, stars are now confined to their homes.

Noted actor Chanchal Chowdhury last shot for a television show, helmed by Golam Sohrab Dodul, in Manikganj. "I was concerned about the circumstances and stopped shooting as soon as possible," the actor told *The Daily Star* over the phone. "I am trying to raise awareness on the coronavirus through active participation on social media." Chanchal shares that he misses getting good scripts and working on quality projects. "Apart from missing my work, I am concerned about the livelihood of our daily wage earners," he adds.

Nusraat Faria returned from Mumbai after shooting for a film. Her last working day was March 10. "I was supposed to start a film with Shihab Shaheen on March 11. However, due to

concerns over the coronavirus pandemic, we did not go ahead with it," she shares. "I miss the entire process of shooting, from waking up for work to packing up to leave the sets." Nusraat completed five years in the film industry on April 19.

On the other hand, celebrated singer turned actor Tahsan Khan, noted that unlike previous years, there were no Pohela Boishakh programmes and there will be no new Eid productions this year. "On March 14, I announced on Facebook that I will be cancelling all my shoots. My last shoot was with Mabruur Rashid Bannah," he says. Tahsan misses his colleagues and the ambience of shooting sets. "In these difficult times, I have come to realise just how much we take the little things in life for granted."

Moreover, popular actor Mehazabien Chowdhury last went to work on March 17, to film a project helmed by Mizanur Rahman Aryan. "We had to pack up early without finishing our work, since we were worried about the situation," she says. "I usually spend twenty to twenty-five days in a month with my co-artists and everyone else on the sets during shoots. They are like family to me. I miss them the most at the moment."

Prito Reza's highlight reel

From charging BDT 20 per photo to Fujifilm ambassador

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

One of the most commercially successful Bangladeshi photographers, Prito Reza had to scratch and claw his way to the top, through hard work and dedication. For his endeavours, the artiste was the recipient of the Photofee Photographer of the Year 2014 award, and the ICE Today Special Award for Outstanding Contribution in Wedding Photography Industry. *The Daily Star* talks to Prito about his humble beginnings, love for photography, and more.

With everything now at a standstill, do you reminisce your beginning as a photographer?

I always remember my humble roots! When I was a student in City College, I used to see a banner of a Chanchal Mahmood photography course, which I was interested in. However, it was impossible for me to enroll there, as the course fee was too steep, and I did not have a camera of my own. One day, I stumbled across an advertisement – "Learn Photography for BDT 500!" I promptly enrolled, and my teacher was Shahiduzzaman Badal from Dhaka Photographic Institute. I did not learn photography from this course, but importantly, I discovered my inner passion for the craft. I knew that this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. In honour of my first teacher, I take a photography course for BDT 500, once

a year.

How did you turn this overwhelming passion into your profession?

I believe that the most important part was always staying in practice. I managed to buy a fourth-hand camera with my savings, and immediately started to find opportunities to take photos wherever I could. I set up booths in university functions and took photos in exchange of BDT 20 each! With time, I would go on



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSEHD

to take photos for newspapers, and start my own wedding photography outlet, *Wedding Diary*. However, the most important part of my endeavor was to constantly improve myself, in whichever way possible. I always wondered, why do photography companies always hire celebrities, who are barely

related to photography, as their brand ambassadors. After that, I constantly made my presence felt, talked to the right people, and worked towards a goal. Today, I stand before you as a Brand Ambassador of Fujifilm and a Photo Ambassador of Huawei – the first Bangladeshi photographer to do so. **You have been involved in Auction 4 Action, a unique and commendable initiative to provide Covid-19 relief. Talk us through the idea, and its inception.** During these trying times, I was constantly pondering over what we can do for the society, especially the less fortunate ones. When the idea of auctioning came to me, I called co-founder Arif R Hossain and asked him, "How much would you be willing to pay for Shakib Al Hasan's gloves, the one with which he made World Cup centuries?" This was when Auction 4 Action was born, as we got the likes of Shakib Al Hasan, Asaduzzaman Noor, Suborna Mustafa, Nirmalendu Goon, James, Shafin Ahmed, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah, among many others, to join our cause. These stars will essentially put up their storied possessions for auction, and the funds will directly go to the voluntary organisations which are providing directly by working in the field to help the less fortunate during these times. I am grateful to Chisti Iqbal bhai for joining our initiative and helping our cause.



Isolated booters working to stay fit

ANISUR RAHMAN

National booter Bishwanath Ghosh may think himself lucky, especially when compared to his other national teammates, as unlike them the promising right-back is regularly availing gym facilities in the midst of the national shutdown caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

With uncertainty looming over when footballing action will resume, top footballers have been trying to maintain their fitness by doing prescribed exercise routines at home with national coach Jamie Day overseeing their home workouts over video messages and calls from England.

"They are all fine, staying fit and healthy," Jamie Day told The Daily Star, adding that the players have been sending videos of their individual workouts on their Whatsapp group, which was created last month to keep up virtual communication while physically isolating.

The likes of Bishwanath, Rahmat Mia, Yeasin Khan, Bipul Ahmed, Mohammad Ibrahim, Sohel Rana, Mahbubur Rahman Sufil, and Ashrafal Islam Rana are ahead of their teammates as far as sending video footage to the British coach, who is in touch with each and every player.

"I am getting instructions from



Bangladesh and Bashundhara Kings player Bishwanath Ghosh (R) can consider himself one of the lucky few as he still has access to his club gym, which is just a 10-minute walk away from his home. National teammates have no such luxury and Tapu Barman had to rely on honing his skills in an open space in front of his home in Narayanganj.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

two sides -- Bashundhara Kings' trainer and Jamie Day. I have been regularly training for nearly two hours at the club gym, which is just a 10-minute walk from my house," Bishwanath told The Daily Star. "I have sent footage twice or thrice so far to the group from where I can also see the home workouts of other players."

"On Tuesday, I had a chat with Jamie. I let him know what I was doing and he told me to keep it up," said national centre-back Tapu Barman from Narayanganj,

the city hit hardest by the virus after Dhaka. The severity in Narayanganj has forced him to limit running exercises to an open space beside his house.

"I used to run six days a week, but I go outside only three days a week now," he said.

Tapu added that BFF president Kazi Salahuddin called him to enquire about family members and provided some tips on how to hone his skills and fitness while social distancing.

Striker Nabib Newaj Jibon has

been away at his home district of Bogura for nearly a month.

"There is equipment at my Dhaka house but there is nothing here. So, I try to do free-hand core strengthening and weight training with the help of five-litre bottles of water," said Jibon.

All of them were disappointed as most clubs want the BFF to cancel the rest of the season, including the incomplete BPL. The booters believe cancellation would have a negative impact on players' performance ahead of

the World Cup Qualifiers and the AFC Cup.

However, Jamie was looking forward to the training sessions of the national team if the rest of the season is cancelled.

"I am hoping we will get to play some football towards the end of this year and if there is no league, we may have to look at doing a training camp to get their fitness to where it needs to be," said the 40-year-old coach, who is discussing a renewal of his two-year contract with the BFF.

Lazio cling to Serie A dream

AFP, Rome



Italy's sports minister has cast doubt on the resumption of Serie A leaving title-chasing Lazio fearing that history could repeat itself and deny them the Scudetto for the second time.

But with its president Claudio Lotito as the main driving force, the Roman club are determined that the Italian football league will resume despite the pandemic of the new coronavirus.

At stake, a Scudetto that Lazio see as being at their fingertips and the fear of reliving a nightmare going back 105 years.

Lazio missed out on the title the only previous time that football was suspended in Italy after the country's entry into the First World War in May 1915. Genoa were controversially awarded the title. Lazio still claim it should have been shared.

This season Lazio were second in Serie A, just one point behind Juventus when the games were suspended on March 10. The club are chasing a third league crown in their 120-year history after 2000 and 1974, the latter a season which had been threatened by a cholera epidemic.

No wonder Lazio are hell bent on resuming this season's championship despite the coronavirus crisis which has killed over 27,000 in Italy. Lotito insists it's in the interests of football, to avoid "the irreparable damage" and risk of bankruptcy to clubs in all leagues.

"If we stop, it suits me. I'm in the Champions League and I'm saving four months' salary," the 62-year-old said ahead of Friday's Lega Serie A emergency general assembly where the fate of the championship could be decided.

Simone Inzaghi's side had been on an unbeaten run in the league since September. They twice beat Juventus 3-1 in December, including the Italian Super Cup final. And Lazio take little solace in the fact that they are certain to go to the Champions League whether the season resumes or not.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, DPHE
Bagerhat District, Bagerhat

Memo No. 46.03.0100.061.07.032.15-427
Dated: 27/04/2020

e-GP Tender Notice No. 18 (2019-20)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following works. Details are given below:

Sl No.	Package No.	Tender ID & Ref. No.	Description of works	Tender closing date & time	Tender opening date & time
1	1786	456023 46.03.0100.061.07.032.16 MEMO-380, DATED-19/04/2020	Installation of 50 Nos. DTW With 6 No. Hand Pump under Village Water Supply Project of Department of Public Health Engineering. (FY: 2019-2020)	12/05/2020 14:00pm	12/05/2020 14:00pm

The interested persons/firm may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd to get the details of the tender.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal is required.

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

F. M. Ismail Hossain
Executive Engineer

GD-783

I deserve to be at Barca: Braithwaite

AFP, Madrid



Martin Braithwaite was Barcelona's emergency signing in February, a quick-fix to replace the injured Ousmane Dembele, but for him the move goes back 10 years to a broken leg and a notebook.

In his first meeting with the club's president Josep Maria Bartomeu and technical secretary Eric Abidal, Braithwaite was told one of the main reasons Barca were buying him was his mentality.

"I felt like they really knew me," Braithwaite says in an interview with AFP. "They knew how strong I am mentally and they said that was one of the things that made them go for me. They thought I was up for the test."

The toughness they saw owes much to when Braithwaite was 18 and playing for Esbjerg FB in Denmark. A broken leg prompted him to transform his attitude and start writing objectives down.

"I was a professional footballer but I wasn't respecting the job and I wasn't respecting the boy that had a dream to be here," Braithwaite says. "I took it for granted."

A year later, Braithwaite was in a hotel after joining Toulouse when he took out his notebook again.

"I came to a page of some objectives, maybe three or four years earlier, and I saw I had written Toulouse," Braithwaite says. "When I saw that, I thought, 'Wow, the power of the mind is really strong.'"

"And when I was 27 or 28, I wrote I would play for one of the biggest clubs. Now I'm here."



Braithwaite draws upon his childhood too, when a hip condition called Legg-Calve-Perthes left him in a wheelchair between the age of five and seven.

"I remember I felt sad. I felt embarrassed," he says. "I was just a kid who wanted to play. I remember the look people would give me, like I was different. Of course, I came through that and look where I am today but at the same time it makes me humble and grateful for the things I have."

For some, Barcelona buying Braithwaite was a result of

opportunism, through the use of an obscure rule, and caused by bad planning, after a chaotic transfer window left the squad short.

But Braithwaite sees it as hard work paying off. Even during lockdown, he adds extra training to the club programme and watches videos of his teammates, to speed up his adaptation.

"People see me as the emergency signing because that was how I got here," he says. "What people don't know is that for so many years I've put in my mind that I want to be here. It's not a coincidence."

"I'm at Barca, I signed for four years and I see my future here."

But his departure from Leganes left a bitter taste, even if few blamed Braithwaite for completing a dream move, not even Leganes, who were "fantastic, they understood".

Braithwaite played three games for his new team before the coronavirus caused La Liga to be suspended and his strike combinations with Lionel Messi quickly earning him praise.

"It's not difficult when you play with Messi. You just have to run and the ball is at your feet," he says.

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e-Tender Notice

e-Tender has been invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the following packages under Road Division, Chandpur during the fiscal year 2019-2020 (Budget Head: Revenue):

Name of the works	Package No.	Tender ID	Tender document last selling / downloading date and time	Last date and time for tender security submission	Tender closing date and time
Supplying of 1st class brick stone chips 25mm LAA 25 12mm LAA 12 sand FM 2.50 & 0.80 & fire wood at Hajigonj Stackyard for maintenance works in different Roads of Chandpur Road Division during the year 2019-2020	egp/CRD/EE/23/2019-2020	456397	17-May-2020 11.30am	17-May-2020 11.50am	17-May-2020 12.00 Noon

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.

For further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and also from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) or eechan@rhd.gov.bd.

Md. Monowarul Islam
ID No. 602245
Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD
Road Division, Chandpur

GD-781



From scoring crucial runs for Bangladesh to baking pizza for his family, Mahmudullah Riyad is always dependable. With cricket in the country being postponed for a while now, Mahmudullah removed his helmet and put on a chef's hat as the all-rounder enjoys some family time during this nationwide lockdown.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Khawaja and Marsh out of contract list

AFP, Sydney

All-rounder Mitchell Marsh returned to Cricket Australia's list of 20 nationally contracted players Thursday, but there was no room for his brother Shaun or struggling batsman Usman Khawaja.

The duo were among six players axed from a group that selectors loaded with limited-overs talent to reflect Australia's upcoming schedule, particularly the T20 World Cup in October-November.

Others dropped from the list -- were Peter Handscomb, Marcus Stoinis, Nathan Coulter-Nile and Marcus Harris.

"As is always the case there are unlucky omissions but, because you are not on the list does not mean you cannot be selected to represent Australia," chief selector Trevor Hohns said.

Swimming with turtles to stay fit

AFP, New Delhi

From swimming in a makeshift farm pool with turtles and fish to fencing with a dummy on a terrace, India's locked down athletes are finding novel ways to stay fit.

The postponement of the 2020 Olympics by a year has given SP Likith, India's top breaststroke swimmer, extra time to make the 59.93sec qualifying time for the 100 metres. He has been stuck at his coach's farm in Karnataka since February and now swims in a tank already inhabited by wildlife that normally supplies the water for crops.

The 21-year-old, who still has to shave two seconds off his personal best to qualify, told AFP he was "lucky" to have the 20-metre long tank where coach Partha Varanashi drills 15 swimmers in all.

"The only difference (from a pool) is .. the water is not clear at all, there are fish and turtles and we don't have lanes," Likith said with a laugh. "It is not boring, it is fun."

Fencer Bhavani Devi has been in quarantine and training alone at home in Chennai since returning from Italy on March 15. The 26-year-old trains with a dummy on the terrace of her house.

"This is not a new idea for me, when I started fencing we used to play with sticks and do target training by placing a mask or target pad on the wall," said Devi, who in 2017 became the first Indian to win a fencing World Cup event.

Devi, who is more used to the plush facilities of leading Italian coach Nicola Zanotti in Livorno, said it was imperative to keep a positive mind through the crisis.



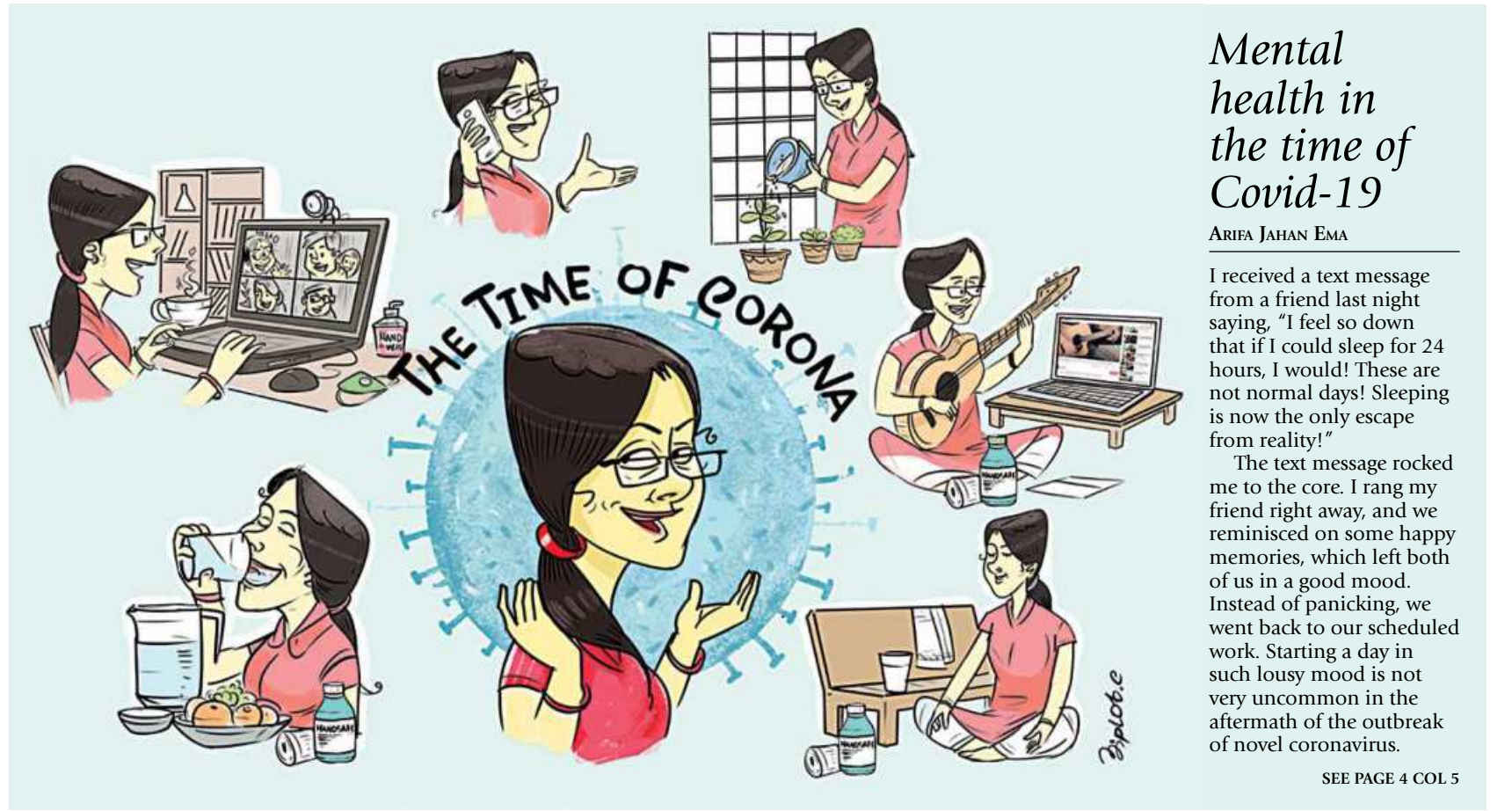
Obstacles they scale to serve

Ambulance drivers, owners asked to vacate rented homes, denied food at eateries

TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

It all changed after his father passed away. Mehedi Hasan Rasel, after graduating from a leading public university, had joined a private job and earned a handsome salary. But in 2016, when his father had a heart attack, he was unable to take his father from Savar to a better hospital in Dhaka due to a lack of ambulances. His father ultimately died. "I then started an ambulance business. No one should lose their loved ones for the want of an ambulance. However, I am now having to face harassment for running this business," said Rasel. After the Covid-19 outbreak, his landlord has been putting pressure on him to leave the house only because he runs the business and has to drive or carry patients during emergencies. "My wife is a doctor. We have four children. We are very aware of safety and take precaution accordingly, yet we are being continuously harassed. Most days, he [the landlord] locks the gate before I come home and I have to sneak into the building," he said. Rasel, proprietor Raha Ambulance Service, owns two ambulances; he provides one to Savar Upazila Health Complex to carry Covid-19 patients at a nominal charge, and operates the other ambulance with a partner. According to Rasel, the only reason his landlord could not drive him

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Mental health in the time of Covid-19

ARIFA JAHAN EMA

I received a text message from a friend last night saying, "I feel so down that if I could sleep for 24 hours, I would! These are not normal days! Sleeping is now the only escape from reality!" The text message rocked me to the core. I rang my friend right away, and we reminisced on some happy memories, which left both of us in a good mood. Instead of panicking, we went back to our scheduled work. Starting a day in such lousy mood is not very uncommon in the aftermath of the outbreak of novel coronavirus.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Rishi Kapoor passes away

AFP, Mumbai

Bollywood mourned a second loss in as many days as celebrated actor Rishi Kapoor, whose career spanned half a century, died yesterday aged 67 after a prolonged struggle with cancer.

His death came as a severe blow to the Hindi movie industry and film lovers, who were already reeling from the passing Wednesday of Irrfan Khan, one of the country's most feted actors, aged 53. "Our dear Rishi Kapoor passed away peacefully..."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Pay rise for low-income employees and workers



Bangabandhu addressing the nation over radio on May 1, 1972.

May 1, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU'S MAY DAY SPEECH Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today speaks to the nation on the occasion of the historic May Day. He declares that the salaries of low-income employees and workers will be raised. Under this new scheme, all employees and workers of government, semi-government and statutory institutions and industries whose income is below Tk 349 will receive economic aid. The government will reform the payment structure to reduce income inequality, he informs.



SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Noab wants stimulus for newspaper industry

BSS, Dhaka

Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) yesterday demanded a stimulus package from the government for newspapers, hawkers, workers and agents to offset the coronavirus impact. It also demanded bank loans for newspapers and requested the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

CAAB mulls limited flights from next week

RASHIDUL HASAN

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) is working to resume operations of domestic and international flights on a limited scale after May 8 if the coronavirus situation improves or remains steady by then.

It was also preparing a set of guidelines for air operators, airports authorities and passengers to ensure health safety of travelers and others concerned, CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We are preparing to resume flight operations after May 8 if the coronavirus situation improves by then. But we will open airport operations partially."

He said they would permit local and foreign airlines to operate flights

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Hopes rise in virus battle

US scientists hail remdesivir drug trial as S Korea reports no new cases for the first time

AFP, Seoul

South Korea, once one of the hardest-hit countries in the coronavirus pandemic, reported no new cases yesterday, boosting hopes of an eventual return to normality as US scientists hailed the results of a major drug trial.

The good medical news caused equities to rally, despite mounting deaths worldwide and abysmal economic figures caused by the Covid-19 crisis.

Data showed the pandemic, which has killed more than 227,000 people, has plunged the United States into its worst economic slump in a decade, and has left Germany expecting its biggest recession since the aftermath of World War II.

But for the first time since the new disease was detected there in mid-February, South Korea reported zero new infections.

The East Asian nation had the world's second-largest coronavirus outbreak for a period after the virus emerged in China late last year.

But with an aggressive test-and-trace strategy and widespread social distancing, it has managed to bring the spread of the pathogen under control.

"This is the strength of South Korea and its people," said President Moon Jae-in as he announced the milestone.

Meanwhile in the first proof of successful treatment, a clinical trial of the drug remdesivir showed that patients recovered

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING MAY 1

Fajr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 3:59	12:30	4:45	6:31	8:00
JAMAAT 4:09	1:15	5:00	6:41	8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



SEHRI, IF TAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MAY	SEHRI	IF TAR
7	1	6:31	
8	2	3:58	6:31
9	3	3:57	6:32



An Indian paradise flycatcher (male) perched on a twig in Bogura's Gandagram village on April 24. The passerine bird with its distinctive elongated tail feathers feasts on insects.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

কোভিড-১৯ থেকে বাঁচতে হলে ঘরেই থাকি, সুস্থ থাকি

- করোনায় সারা বিশ্ব আজ বিপর্যস্ত।
- মানুষ বাসা-বাড়ি থেকে বের না হলে সংক্রমণের ঝুঁকি বহুলাংশে কমে যায়।
- মনে রাখবেন, অসাধারণতায় যে কেউ যে কোন সময় করোনা ভাইরাসে আক্রান্ত হতে পারে।

কাজেই ঘরেই থাকুন সুস্থ থাকুন

- একান্ত প্রয়োজনে বাইরে গেলে অবশ্যই মাস্ক পড়ুন।
- স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সব স্বাস্থ্যবিধি অবশ্যই মেনে চলুন।
- বারবার সাবান পানি দিয়ে কমপক্ষে ২০ সেকেন্ড হাত ধোবেন। অপরিচ্ছন্ন হাত দিয়ে মুখ, নাক ও চোখ ছোবেন না।
- নিয়মিত কুসুম গরম পানি, আদা চা এবং গরম স্যুপ পান করুন। সবণ মিশ্রিত কুসুম গরম পানি দিয়ে দিনে ৩-৪ বার গড়গড়া করুন, নাকে মুখে গরম পানির জাপ নিন।
- জ্বর, সর্দি, কাশি, গলা ব্যথা হলে বাড়িতেই আলাদা থেকে চিকিৎসা নিন। প্রয়োজনে করোনা বিষয়ক হটলাইনগুলোতে ফোন করুনঃ ১৬২৬৩; ৩৩৩; ১০৬৫৫; ০১৯৪৪৩৩৩২২২ অথবা নিকটস্থ স্বাস্থ্যকর্মী বা হাসপাতালে যোগাযোগ করুন।

মনে রাখবেন আপনার সুরক্ষা আপনারই হাতে

স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর

স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়