DHAKA WEDNESDAY MAY 6, 2020

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183

The Haily

BAISHAKH 23, 1427 BS



3,680,210

Total cases

254,283

BANGLADESH UPDATE 786 New cases in 24hrs 10,929 Total cases **Rethink reopening** 

Vol. XXX No. 111

Nat'l technical advisory committee on Covid-19 recommends, as the govt move could lead to further spread

#### WASIM BIN HABIB, MOUDUD AHMMED SUJAN and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

-FEY ASH FREE-AKIJ CEMENT

IUU+ YEARS

The national technical advisory committee Covid-19 has recommended on reconsidering the government's decision of reopening shopping malls and other businesses, saying such a move could lead to further transmission of the deadly coronavirus.

It also recommended that all decisions -- be it on reopening industries or relaxing the shutdown -- should be taken on the basis of opinions from epidemiologists.

committee made the The recommendations during a meeting with Health Minister Zahid Malegue at his office in the secretariat yesterday.

"Reopening of shopping malls in any place means a kind of easing of the lockdown. Our position is that the transmission will increase if the lockdown is relaxed," Prof Mohammod Shahidullah, who is leading the committee, told The Daily Star.

"We have recommended that the decision on easing the lockdown be made based on opinions of epidemiologists," he said.

The government on Monday issued a gazette announcing its decision to reopen shopping malls, all types of shops and other businesses from May 10 on a limited

"Normally, we can assume that the number of infection will go up after the reopening of markets, garments and shops. We have to try our best to keep it under control."

HEALTH MINISTER ZAHID MALEQUE

scale ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr. The move came around a week after it allowed readymade garment factories to resume production.

The decisions came when the virus is apparently having a tight grip on the country, infecting hundreds of people everyday.

The country reached the grim milestone of 10,000-plus coronavirus cases on Monday. The health authorities recorded the highest single-day cases -- 786 -yesterday, which brought the total number of confirmed cases to 10,929.

One more Covid-19 patient died in the 24 hours till 2:30pm yesterday, taking the death toll to 183.

It is at this crucial juncture that the SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

RAMADAN 12, 1441 HIJRI

1,403

Recoveries

GLOBAL

The Mitford Road in Old Dhaka is packed with vehicles and people around 2:00pm yesterday. The country is under a shutdown to slow the spread of Covid-19 but nobody there seems to care about maintaining social distancing. Locals say traffic on the road has been almost normal in the last few days.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

### Schools, colleges to stay closed till May 30 STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hally Star

**Uhe** 

All educational institutions will remain closed until May 30 on the occasions of Ramadan, Jumatul Wida, Shab-e-Qadr, and Eid-ul-Fitr, said Mahbub Hossain, secondary and higher education division secretary

"We will issue an order to this end soon," he told The Daily Star yesterday. All educational institutions have been

osed since March 17, and the government

## UNTAPPED when needed most

With no coordination, many labs and experts still unutilised in anti-coronavirus fight

#### MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Due to a lack of coordination and support from the health ministry, a good number of laboratories and experts based in universities and government research institutions remain unutilised in the country's Covid-19 response. At present, people are being screened for coronavirus in 33 designated centres equipped with real-time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) instruments. Over 3,000 samples can be tested in the span of 24 hours at these centres.

## Govt recruits 2,000 docs to fight virus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has appointed 2,000 doctors as assistant surgeons in the BCS (Health) Cadre to fight the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

Administration issued a gazette notification on Monday night appointing the doctors in keeping with the urgent needs of the state

## **BATTLING COVID-19** Are we leaving too much to chance?

AL-AMIN

In a desperate attempt to get the economy The Ministry of Public back on track, the government has reopened factories that remained closed for around a month in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

> It has also decided to open shopping mails and markets on a limited scale from May 10 so that people can engage in economic activities centring the Eid-ul-Fitr to be celebrated later this month.

the pandemic, which has so far claimed over 2.5 lakh lives and infected over 3.5 million people worldwide, would reach its peak in Bangladesh.

With an ill-equipped healthcare set-up and very limited testing abilities, a country of 160 million people is still not sure where it stands at the moment in terms of

has now extended the closure until May 16 to stem the further spread of Covid-19.

On April 27, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said all educational institutions may stay closed until September if the situation caused by the coronavirus outbreak does not improve.

Directorate of Primary Education sources said according to their academic calendar, all primary schools will remain closed until June 6 for Ramadan and Eidul-Fitr and summer vacations.

Educational activities of about four crore students are being hampered due to coronavirus crisis. Publishing of SSC exam results and holding of HSC exams have been deferred for an indefinite period. First-term exams of primary schools also SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

In addition, there are some 26 RT-PCR instruments in 17 public institutions and 46 in 37 private ones, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

At these institutions, there are hundreds of scientists and technicians who have specialised knowledge and expertise in handling highly contagious pathogens like Covid-19 and using the RT-PCR machines.

But so far, out of the 17 public institutions equipped with RT-PCR, only three have started Covid-19 screening. They are Jashore University of Science and Technology (JUST), Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (CVASU) and Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute.

And seven non-government hospitals and institutions are conducting the coronavirus tests

Experts point out the lack of coordination and support from the health ministry in underutilising available manpower and facilities.

For instance, on March 28, the University of Dhaka formed a technical SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

upon recommendation of the Public Service Commission (PSC).

The doctors have been asked to join the workplaces

that the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) will assign them on May 12. If they do not get any instruction from the DGHS, they will have to join the directorate on May 12.

"If he or she does not join the job on the due date, s/he will be deemed as not agreeing to join the job and this temporary appointment will be

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

While reopening those key economic fronts, the government set out guidelines for social distancing and safety of workers and consumers alike.

Given that millions of workers are in economic hardship amid fears of job losses and businesses on the verge of collapse, it appears to be a pressing decision.

But is it a pragmatic decision when the virus cases are still on the rise in Bangladesh?

The country yesterday recorded 786 positive cases, the highest in a single day, as the total number of Covid-19 infections crossed the 10,000-mark on Monday.

In no certain terms do we know when

combating Covid-19 and how to flatten the curve.

Ever since the first coronavirus patient was detected on March 7, the number grew slowly for a period. But now the country is seeing an explosion of cases and a fluctuating number of deaths on a daily basis.

Five Covid-19 patients died on Monday, taking the death toll to 182.

Quoting experts and health officials, this newspaper in yesterday's issuereported that it was difficult to predict the course of the pandemic.

"The virus is on course to reach the peak slowly. However, we cannot say exactly when it will peak," the report said quoting Mushtaq Hossain, epidemiologist and consultant at the Institute of Epidemiology, SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

### CTTC wants Kajol arrested under DSA

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police has filed a petition with Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court in Dhaka seeking its permission to show photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol arrested in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Motlubur Rahman, inspector at CTTC and also the investigation officer in the case, submitted the application on Monday. In response,

Metropolitan Magistrate Baki Billah asked the jail authorities in Jashore to produce Kajol before it on June 1 when the court would decide on the appeal.

The case in question was filed by Saifuzzaman Shikhor, a ruling party lawmaker from Magura-1, with Sher-E-Bangla Nagar Police Station on March 9.

Two more cases under the same act were subsequently filed on SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Holding food packets in their hands, two underprivileged children scale an iron fence of the High Court in the capital yesterday, risking injuries. Some, including the two, received food aid from a few city residents inside the court compound.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## 'Stepping down for sake of love'

Says Kishore Kumar Das about why he resigned as head of Bidyanando that faces torrents of abuse over his religious identity

#### SHARIFUL HASAN

In a surprising development, Bidyanondo Foundation founder chairperson Kishore Kumar Das announced his resignation yesterday. The notice of his resignation appeared on the organisation's official Facebook page.



But why did he do so all of a sudden?

Kishore, who is currently living in Peru, was contacted over phone and he gave an interview to The Daily Star about why he had left his position.

He said, "If anybody asks me what my most favourite thing in the world is at this moment, I would say that it is Bidyanondo Foundation. But sometimes a person needs to make sacrifices for the sake of people, for the sake of love. That is why I am resigning as the chairperson of the organisation."

A graduate of computer science from Chattogram University of Engineering Technology, Kishore is currently working as an entrepreneur in Peru.

Kishore informed that Bidyanondo was formed in 2013 with an aim to provide education to underprivileged children. Currently, more than 2,000 children receive basic literacy and food aid through its 12 branches. They SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

### Assad warns of virus 'catastrophe' as Syria lockdown eases

#### AFP, Damascus

President Bashar al-Assad warned Monday of a "catastrophe" in war-battered Syria if the easing of lockdown measures against coronavirus is mishandled.

The government in Damascus has officially recorded 44 cases of Covid-19, including three deaths, while Kurdish authorities in the country's northeast have announced three cases in areas under their control.

The relatively low number of recorded cases does not mean Syria is "out of the danger zone", Assad told the government's coronavirus crisis body.

"Although the numbers are limited, this doesn't mean they can't explode suddenly in a matter of days or maybe weeks," he said in a video shared on the presidency's social media channels.

"This will put us in the face of a real catastrophe that would overwhelm the state's health and logistical capabilities."

### Govt recruits

FROM PAGE 1 considered void," the gazette notification read.

Health examination and police verification of these doctors will be conducted later, it added.

In order to speed up coronavirus treatment, the PSC on April 30 recommended the recruitment of 2,000 doctors from 39th Special BCS as per the demand of the Ministry of Public Administration. It also recommended 5,054 nurses to meet the emergency demand of state to tackle the coronavirus crisis.

So far, more than 550 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.

## Schools, colleges

FROM PAGE 1

have been cancelled for the crisis. The government started TV education through Sangsad TV for secondary students on March 29, for primary students on April 7, and for technical and madrassa students on April 19, so that students can make up for some of the losses due to closure of schools.

Many guardians said it was only partially fulfilling the objective, as about a half of the country's people -- many of them underprivileged -- do not have access to TV sets.

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey-2019 of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics shows that 50 percent households of the country do not have television sets.



A policeman inside a transparent booth recording information of some fellow policemen outside the Central Police Hospital in the capital's Rajarbagh yesterday. The cops would then visit doctors in the hospital to see if they need to be tested for Covid-19. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

ave biosafety hoods, she added.

Dr Nasima did not say anything

Scientists urge support and effective

Prof Dr Muhammad Manjurul

"In our universities, microbiologists

Karim of DU's microbiology

department pointed out how doctors

and academics in the field could

and biotechnologists don't get the

although they conduct extensive

research on these subjects using the

frequently interact with patients but

they have limited opportunities to

conduct fundamental research on

these subjects in the medical colleges."

receive a constant supply of samples

from the medical centres, added Dr

institutions also need logistical

support from the ministry, said Dr

Md Iqbal Kabir Jahid, a professor

of JUST's microbiology department

and associate director of the Genome

The university institutes have limited

"Some institutes may have the

The health ministry can coordinate

that researchers in universities

coordination,

these

"On the other hand, doctors

most modern technology available.

opportunity to interact with patients

benefit from collaboration.

specifically when asked about the DU

coordination from the government in

#### Untapped when needed most FROM PAGE 1

laboratories."

this regard.

Manjurul.

Centre.

Besides

committee to engage the university's Many government and nonscientists and experts in the Covid-19 government institutions that have RT-PCR machines are not eligible to The technical committee sent a conduct Covid-19 tests as they don't

proposal to the health ministry stating the university's readiness to offer its laboratories for Covid-19 diagnosis, its experts' availability to provide training technical committee's proposal. at newly developed testing facilities, and their capacity to manufacture RT-PCR test kits at an affordable cost. However, the committee is yet to

response.

receive a reply to its proposal.

"We have been waiting for a month now since sending our proposal," said Dr Mamun Ahmed, a professor of DU's department of biochemistry and molecular biology and a member of the technical committee.

He was, however, told on April 27 by the administration that the health ministry had expressed interest in using the department's laboratory as a

testing facility. "But we have not received a formal reply to our proposal yet," said the molecular virology expert.

The National Institute of Biotechnology, a leading government institute in the field, also has a RT-PCRequipped BSL-2 laboratory and a team of around 40 scientists. This facility is also left unutilised.

Till last year, the institute has trained more than 100 scientists and technicians in handling and maintenance of RT-PCR instruments and biosafety hoods, said Palash Kumer Sarker, chief scientific officer of its microbial biotechnology division.

"We can train more and we are funding and supplies of laboratory capable of conducting Covid-19 tests. equipment, he said. It is unfortunate that our resources are not being utilised in this time of crisis." Professor Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general dminietratic DCHS "We have already visited government institutions. many The laboratories of some of these institutions need to be developed for Covid-19 tests. We are taking steps to

Researchers are also concerned about the shortage of skilled manpower in the future and emphasised improving training programmes to handle the crisis now.

In JUST's Genome Centre, only handful of teachers could be deployed for conducting Covid-19 tests. Dr Iqbal said his team had to refuse many samples from suspected Covid-19 patients due to a shortage of manpower.

In CVASU, the teachers have engaged several students in conducting Covid-19 tests -- starting from April 25. "Many of our students and teachers only have short-term training on handling pathogens like Covid-19 and RT-PCR instruments," said Professor Dr AMAM Zonaed Siddiki, of CVASU's department of pathology and parasitology.

As a result, they are worried about the risks and many are reluctant to work in the laboratory, he said.

"In this situation, the authorities concerned should enhance training facilities to produce more expert hands.'

Researchers are also asking for financial security from the government as many of them are working on a voluntary basis and without health insurance, despite the risks.

"We, the faculty, have been working in the testing facility without any remuneration for weeks as we consider it a service to the nation," said Dr Zonaed.

"Since, we have to recruit more people in the near future, particularly young researchers, to manage the increasing number of cases, we should develop a remuneration plan and health insurance plan for this workforce.'

instruments but their biosafety level may need upgradation. Other Professor Dr Nasima Sultana of institutes may not have sufficient DGHS told The Daily Star there is no such plan so far due to the uncertainty of the crisis and how long it might last. "So, we have not developed any remuneration plan for these researchers yet. But, we have collected the names of those who have been working in the laboratories."

## 2 journos sued under DSA land in jail

#### STAR REPORT

Two journalists landed in jail in Sunamganj and Cox's Bazar yesterday, hours after they were picked up from their homes in connection with two cases filed under the Digital Security Act.

The arrestees are Mohammad Mahtab Uddin Talukder, 40, Sunamganj correspondent of SATV and also the editor-publisher of Daily Haorancholer Katha; and Mohammad Shahidullah, 52, a special correspondent of national daily Bangla Patrika.

Police picked up Mahtab from his home in Balakapara area of Sunamganj around 2:00am, said Delowar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Dharmapasha Police Station.

He was sued over posting a Facebook status on lawmaker Mouazzam Hossain Ratan from Sunamganj-1.

The case was filed on Monday night with Dharmapasha Police Station by Benuar Hossain Khan Pathan of Uttarbir village in the district's Dharmapasha upazila. Benuar is the general secretary of Shelbarash union Awami League in the upazila.

Citing the case statement, the report.

## Stepping down for sake

#### FROM PAGE 1

also receive clothes, books and stationary, and monthly stipends.

So why did Kishore choose to suddenly move away from all of this? "I never wanted to maintain a

grip on the post of chairperson for myself. I wanted new leadership to come forward from within the organisation...I always wanted youth leadership to take charge, and steer the organisation with their talents."

Asked, if there was any other reason behind his resignation, he said there were several other factors.

There are allegations that some religious bigots have been disparaging Kishore for his being a Hindu on Bidyananda's Facebook page.

Yesterday, the page was forced to announce, "Our founder cannot dedicate much time since he resides abroad. About 90 percent of this mammoth task is done by Muslim volunteers. Nevertheless, many resort to spreading false information, targeting our founder's religious identity. We wanted to reveal this matter after the current campaigns, but the abuses have crossed all limits in the last few days. So to extinguish the fire, we are sharing this news."

Kishore said, "I have always grown up knowing my identity as a human is bigger. The name Bidyanondo was given by a Muslim brand expert. It means 'fun through learning'. But many think that the foundation was named after some specific person."

"For the last six months, I have

OC said the accused in a Facebook status at 9:45pm on Monday said the lawmaker was arrested by the Anti-Corruption Commission, but the information was false and defamatory.

Ashek Suja Mamun, inspector (prosecution) of Sunamganj police, said a local court sent the journalist to jail after he was produced before it yesterday afternoon.

In Cox's Bazar, police arrested Shahidullah over making "derogatory remarks" against another journalist.

Shahidullah was picked up from his home in South Rumaliarchara area of Cox's Bazar around 3:00pm yesterday, said Shajahan Kabir, OC of Cox's Bazar Sadar Model Police Station.

The case was filed by Ahmed Sumon, Cox's Bazar correspondent of SATV, on Sunday night.

Quoting the case statement, the OC said the accused disseminated "objectionable and false information" regarding Sumon through Facebook on May 1. It damaged the plaintiff's reputation.

Later in the day, a local court sent Shahidullah to jail after he was produced before it, the OC added.

Our correspondents from Sylhet and Cox's Bazar contributed to this

our work. Even some donors had issues with fact that I am a Hindu," he said.

"After observing all of this, resigning the organisation's chairperson seemed a better option," Kishore said, adding, "Let people stop their abuses. Let the organisation's work flourish."

As the news of his resignation spread, volunteers of the foundation issued an amendment to the previous announcement saying that discussions were still underway regarding whether or not Kishore would continue as the chairperson.

To that, Kishore said, "I don't know what I did to deserve such a love from them. Where Bidyanondo is today is entirely because of their contributions. All of my volunteers have other professions -- some of them have full-time jobs, others are students. They are our strength. Our work is resource-intensive, and this comes from lakhs of people from within the country and abroad who believe in us. So I announced in March that I am resigning. I will continue to be with them in other capacities."

Asked, if people collectively requested him to stay on, would he reconsider his resignation? "I am proud to walk a path that is opposite to this society's mentality of holding onto the power. I never wanted to be known as a founder. Besides, why should it matter what position I hold? Now I am the chairperson, I might be in a lower position in the future

### CTTC wants

#### FROM PAGE 1

March 10 and March 11 with Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar police stations respectively.

his Fifty-three days into disappearance, Kajol was "discovered" by Border Guard Bangladesh in Benapole on Sunday. But he was arrested -- initially on charges of trespassing, and later in the evening under section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) -- and sent to Jashore Central Jail.

Section 54 of the CrPC stipulates that a person can be arrested without a warrant if there is "credible information" of his involvement with a "cognisable offence".

Jashore Kotwali Police Station's Officer-in-charge Moniruzzaman told this correspondent, "He has been arrested under section 54 because he is accused in three cases filed under the digital security act."

Monorom Polok, son of Kajol, said, "We were unable to post bail because he was arrested under section 54 in the evening when the Jashore court was closed.

19,an international Article human rights organisation which defends and promotes freedom of expression, circulated a statement yesterday demanding the release of Kajol.

"While the government is releasing prisoners to prevent the spread of coronavirus in prisons, there is no rationale for sending Kajol to jail now as he is not accused in any heinous crime like murder, rape, terrorism, militancy, or treason," said Faruq Faisel, Article 19 regional director for Bangladesh and South Asia.

The three lawsuits filed against him are identical and all of them are filed under the controversial Digital Security Act only for expressing his views on Facebook.

"At least in one of the cases, the other accused have been released on bail. So logically the question arises as to why the authorities are so enthusiastic to put Kajol behind the bars," Faruq said.

"After Kajol went missing, his family filed a case of kidnapping. Therefore, where Kajol had been for more than two months, where he was taken, by whom and why, how he came to the Benapole border - these questions must be clearly answered immediately," he further said.

If anyone found involved in Kajol's disappearance, action must be taken against them, he added.

#### Rethink reopening FROM PAGE 1 asked to take epidemiologists' opinion

government seems to be desperate to resume business and commerce activities, which remain halted or disrupted for over a month, affecting the livelihood of millions of people.

The intention, however, sparked warnings from epidemiologists as the number of infections keep rising and at least two dozen garment workers testing positive for Covid-19 so far.

When and how to reopen battered economies has been a matter of increase there. "We want this to be intense debate in many countries maintained strictly." where governments have begun sketching out plans to do so in a slow and methodical process to prevent the coronavirus from rebounding.

At the same time, they are also putting emphasis on widespread and continuing social testing distancing measures.

But for Bangladesh, the scenario seems different.

Besides, with a high population density, and the nature of economic activities, it would be difficult to ensure social distancing at the garment industries and markets in the country, said experts.

In the past several days, many people were seen crowding roads because of a thin presence of police personnel, who have been playing a vital role in ensuring social distancing, crucial to contain the spread of the virus.

With at least 1,153 of their members already infected, police have decided to deploy half their members out on the field at a time for a week. The other group will be deployed the next week. The move is aimed at avoiding coronavirus transmission

#### 'INCREASE TESTING FACILITIES'

The national committee in the three-hour meeting yesterday also recommended increasing the testing facilities and shortening the time to provide the test reports.

Asked about the reopening of with Covid-19 till noon yesterday. The businesses, Prof Shahidullah said, "For number of infected nurses is 354 and livelihood, some [sectors] will need to reopen. But we are totally against reopening everything."

Prof Shahidullah, also the president of Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC), said, "We have also

funds to purchase essential laboratory

equipment. "If the health ministry comes forward to plug these gaps, we shall be able to deploy a massive force of manpower and equipment to detect expand testing facilities to the eligible and fight Covid-19," said Dr Iqbal.

of Eid as there is still time for it."

[industries and commerce].

"If [health measures] are maintained

rightly in the already-reopened

factories, then it is okay. But in future,

we have asked to take epidemiologists'

comments before reopening anything

them during the meeting that factories

will be shut down if transmission rates

He said the health minister assured

Talking to journalists after the

meeting, Health Minister Zahid

Maleque said, "Normally, we can

assume that the number of infections

will go up after the reopening of

markets, garments and shops. We have

to try our best to keep it under control.

he said, adding that the technical

committee would provide suggestions

with regard to reopening businesses.

The ministry would then place it before

decisions taken by those authorities,

the possible number of [Covid-19]

deaths. It is true that people are dying

and we are sorry for that, but the ratio

compared to the other countries is still

committee or focal point would be

set up with officials from his ministry,

and the Directorate General of Health

Services (DGHS), which would take

steps to implement the technical

authorities to investigate the reason

behind the sharp rise in infections

According to Bangladesh Doctors'

Foundation, 574 doctors were infected

among doctors, the minister said.

other health staffers 167, it said.

Habibur Rahman Khan,

additional secretary (administration)

at the health service division, said

the technical committee also asked

authorities to ensure quality

an

of

Besides, the committee asked the

Zahid Maleque also said a sub-

His ministry would follow the

"We have no prediction about

the authorities concerned.

e said.

low here," he said.

committee's suggestions.

'Livelihood would go with life,"

been facing abuse for being a Hindu. When we started working to combat the hunger crisis after the coronavirus pandemic, the abuse intensified. It hurt me that people used religion as a ploy to harass me. This was affecting

perhaps as an organising secretary.

"... Bidyanondo is not my personal property. It belongs to the general people regardless of religion, caste or identity. I am willing to sacrifice anything for it.

## Are we leaving too much

FROM PAGE 1

Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

The epidemiologist further said, "If we do not allow people on the streets, the virus will take longer to spread...

"But any wrong decision will cause a tsunami-like situation," he warned. So far, social distancing in the form of lockdown has been the most effective weapon for a developing country like Bangladesh to combat coronavirus. But lax monitoring on that front coupled with gradual decline of civic awareness and voluntary participation, has put the collective consciousness into some sort of resignation.

We are perhaps in a state of mind of leaving the fight against Covid-19 to chance, unconsciously resorting to divine blessings more than a concerted effort to save us from what could possibly have a devastating impact.

The situation is very complex. Community transmission is going on and the numbers are rising, while the rate of detection is still low. We have to increase the number of tests by a lot to fathom the situation," Be-Nazir Ahmed, former director (disease control) of the Directorate General of Health Services, told this newspaper.

Unless many more cases are detected through widespread testing, community transmission will continue and the situation will be out of hand, he pointed out.

While testing is of paramount importance, the opening of factories especially the worker-heavy garment factories actually made things more complicated as far as social distancing is concerned.

And once businesses and shopping malls reopen on May 10, the situation may get even more complicated.

The garment industry, which contributes 80 percent of the country's forex earnings, employs around 45 lakh workers while around one crore people are involved in businesses and shopping malls.

And then add a huge number

of people coming out to buy merchandise, which could potentially create an ideal situation for Covid-19 to prosper, even if they don't go on a buying spree normally associated with festivals.

The government warned that social distancing and safety of workers in factories should be strictly maintained. It also said the same safety measures and social distancing should be enforced in businesses and shopping malls once they open.

But we have seen enough of mockery in the name of social distancing in kitchen markets every day almost everywhere in the country and we are hardly aware of the strict implementation of social distancing behind closed doors in those garment factories.

Anyone involved in the apparel business knows that social distancing in factories is quite impossible unless those units produce high-quality garments and that the buyers pay them well.

But for most garment factories that produce basic and cheap garments social distancing is simply not costeffective. Survival of those factories depend on per-hour production efficiency, and more space and more production hours for the same output are a luxury they can hardly afford.

France is one of the worst victims of Covid-19, which has hit Europe hard. The affluent European country, which recorded more than 25,000 deaths caused by the pandemic, has been able to stymie the deadly virus recently.

While announcing the plan to reopen the economy in phases last week, French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe told his countrymen that they "will have to learn to live with the virus" with no vaccine or proven treatment yet available.

It is also true for the rest of the world.

But we are probably living with the invisible enemy a wee bit dangerously and hoping the Almighty would rescue us.

Covid-19 testing. on allowing people's movement ahead "As the number of tests is increasing day by day, the committee said the

quality of the tests should not be compromised," he said. He also mentioned that the

committee said the government should not allow people to leave their current residences ahead of the upcoming Eid. He pointed out that the government has already given such directives.

Habibur Rahman, also the chief of health ministry's media cell, said the meeting also decided that the authorities must take steps so that no patient is deprived of treatment at any hospital.

"If any hospital cannot provide treatment to a particular patient, the hospital must ensure his or her treatment at another hospital," he said.

He said the safety of doctors and other health workers were also discussed at the meeting.

On April 28, the technical committee in its second meeting came up with multiple advices on improving the standard of hospital care to win the fight against coronavirus.

One of those was increasing case detection measures and selecting new hospitals for treating Covid-19 patients. It also advocated for using makeshift hospitals for patients with mild to moderate coronavirus infections.

#### COVID-19 CASES KEEP RISING

One person died of coronavirus infection in 24 hours till 2:30pm yesterday, the DGHS said in a briefing, aired online. Prof Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) at the DGHS, said the deceased was male and aged between 21 and 30.

As many as 193 Covid-19 patients recovered across the country in those 24 hours, taking the total number of recovery cases to 1,403. They include those who recovered staying at home as well as in institutionalised care, Prof Nasima said at the briefing.

A total of 5,711 samples were tested over the same period, she said, adding another 128 people were put under isolation across the country.

#### **Prof Muntasir** Mamun's condition improves STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted historian Prof Muntasir Mamun, who was hospitalised with Covid-19, has been shifted from the intensive care unit (ICU) to the cabin at Mugda Medical College Hospital in Dhaka.

Prof Monilal Aich Litu, president of the hospital's Covid-19 dedicated doctors' committee, said they have shifted Prof Mamun to the cabin as his condition is stable now.

A a six-member medical board was formed yesterday for his treatment following the prime minister's directives.

Prof Monilal said the PM has been inquiring about Prof Mamun's condition. Her office requested to form a board on Monday evening, he added.

The 69-year-old Dhaka University professor was admitted to the hospital on Sunday evening with Covid-19 symptoms.

He tested positive on Monday. After his health deteriorated, the professor was shifted to the ICU.

Family sources said test sample from Prof Mamun was collected 10 days ago, as he came in touch with his mother, who had earlier tested positive for the virus.



Social distancing protocols and the fear of being infected with Covid-19 are distant problems for countless people in the capital, who have no roof over their head, and now -- due to the nationwide shutdown -- no way to earn their bread. Men of various ages, most of them homeless and destitute, wait patiently in a congested yet disciplined queue for several hours near Doyel Chattar, knowing some samaritan will come along with food for them before iftar. The photo was taken vesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## **Primary students'** stipends increased finally, after 18yrs

Disbursement resumes; each to receive pending amount before Eid Mohiuddin Alamgir

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has approved the disbursement and increment of stipends, and extension of Primary Education Stipend Project (PESP), paving the way for financially assisting 1.37 crore elementary students, which was halted for over six months.

After PM's approval, from now on, the amount of stipend will increase by 50 per cent, and each primary student will receive a yearly amount of Tk 1,000 for buying school supplies like uniforms and bags, said PESP officials.

The government increased the stipend after 18 years, despite the erosion of real value over the period. The amount was fixed in 2002 and has not been revised since then, officials added.

"The PM approved extension of our project for 18 months and increased the stipend amount on Monday," Yusuf Ali, project director of PESP's third phase, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Officials had requested for extension of the project in December last year, but due to the pandemic, decisions were kept pending and so did disbursement of stipends.

He said authorities will disburse pending instalment of October last year within a week, according to the old stipend amount. They will disburse instalments of January and April, according to the increased amount, before Eidul-Fitr.

The government sends the money directly to students' mothers through mobile banking services four times a year -- in April, July, October and January.

To qualify for the stipend, selected students must have 85 per cent monthly attendance. They also need to take all school examinations and attain a minimum of 33 per cent marks for each subject.

According to the old stipend amount, each student SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Sale of unauthorised |17 'JMB men' Covid-19 home test kits held in capital rampant online

#### MUNTAKIM SAAD

In spite of disapproval by the drug administration, unauthorised rapid Covid-19 test kits are being sold online through e-commerce sites and social media.

According to World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, Bangladesh is only using Real Time PCR testing method, as opposed to Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) kits. WHO says the accuracy of the latter's diagnosis is questionable.

However, RDT kites are being imported illegally by these sellers without the knowledge of the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA). Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) said they are being imported through international courier services.

These kits are being advertised on Facebook pages and free classified advertising sites, seeking both wholesale and retail buyers.

Recently, police and Rab have seized

#### Rab's drive.

Called, a staffer of the company picked up. He said they had initially imported these kits but later halted sales after the law enforcers' action

No lab visits, no doctors. Just one finger prick of blood!" read another Facebook post, saying its diagnosis comes in 10 to 15 minutes, with a staggering 92 percent accuracy.

Each box contains 25 test kits. The wholesale price of each kit is around Tk 450 while the retail price is from Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,600, the post mentioned.

In a Facebook group, one Suman Saha posted, "If anyone is looking for business opportunities, contact me. I have ready stocks, including Covid-19 test kits."

Earlier, a scandal occurred as the Gazipur city corporation mayor self-financed import of 50,000 unauthorised testing kits. He even distributed some of those to a few They were planning to migrate to Saudi Arabia for 'jihad': CTTC Mohammad Jamil Khan

The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CITC) unit of police claimed to have arrested 17 members of JMB from the capital's Kakrail area, who were planning to join a so-called jihad after migrating into Saudi Arabia.

On information, police conducted a drive in front of Public Health Office, opposite Kakrail Mosque, around 7:15pm on Monday and made the arrests, Towhidul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of CTTC unit, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The arrestees are Haider Ali, Mahmudul Hasan alias Masum, Jamirul Islam, Billal Hossain, Sheikh Arafat alias Johnny, Imrul Hasan alias Emon, Saiful Islam, Mozammel Haque, Md Shahjalal, Md Akhtaruzzaman, Mahmudul Hasan alias Sabbir, Abid ul Mahmud alias Abid, Sohail Sardar, Obaidul Islam alias Sumon, Mahmud Hasan alias Sharif, Majedul Islam alias Mukul and Sohag Hasan.

CTTC unit seized 19 cell phones, Tk 2.34 lakh and \$922 from their possession.

"In primary interrogation, all the arrestees admitted that they are members of mainstream JMB," said ADC

The long wait for test reports

Slow Covid-19 diagnosis worry patients in Ctg as hospitals struggle with backlog of samples

#### ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

After a teacher of Chittagong University caught a fever with a mild cough, she was rightly concerned, and went to Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases (BITID) for Covid-19 test last Wednesday.

A staffer collected her sample and asked her to contact them after seven days for the report. When asked why it would take so long to get the report, he could not say anything. "You just have to collect the report after a week," he said.

Like this teacher, many people are worried about not getting the test results in time, while they continue to show symptoms of coronavirus infection.

"As we can't confirm whether it's Covid-19 or not, we don't know what step to take next, or prepare for self-isolation," said the worried father of another suspected Covid-19 patient.

"I have read that the PCR test requires several hours but BITID cannot deliver the report before a week passes," he added.

Citizens and heath experts have urged the authorities to increase the number of testing facilities in Chattogram for the sake of patients.

'We collect 300-350 samples a day from five districts but our lab has the capacity of carrying out around 150 tests a day," said Prof Dr Shakil Ahmed, in-charge of BITID laboratory, adding, "We are testing over 180 samples a day and we sent some 80 to 90 samples to CVASU laboratory for testing."

CVASU does not collect any sample by their own source rather they just test samples collected and prepared by us in their lab," he explained the reason behind the de.

"We have to work under tremendous pressure till midnight in lab," said Prof Shakil, "Still we have around 450 samples in stock. How will we deliver reports in a day or two?"

"But we are now delivering reports in four days on average," he said.

Asked whether the quality of samples

1,475 rapid testing kits from the capital's Banglamotor, Shahidbagh and Nikunja areas in separate drives.

"Good News! Now you can test coronavirus sitting at your home with 80 percent accuracy! It's almost the same as a diabetes test," read an advertisement on Facebook by Looks International Ltd on April 9. The advertisement cited their location at Dhaka's Karwan Bazar.

It included a contact number, and said a minimum of 1,000 test kits have to be ordered. The post was deleted right after

hospitals and upazilas.

Major Imad Uddin Laskar, company commander of Rab-3, said people who are worried about Covid-19 symptoms generally search for kits on e-commerce sites and Facebook for self-testing.

Rab said they will continue drives against the unauthorised testing kits stocked with the sellers.

Currently, WHO does not recommend the use of antigen or antibody detecting rapid diagnostic tests. Rapid diagnostic SEE PAGE 4COL 5

Towhidul

Towhidul, who led the operation, said an engineer named Syed Mostaq bin Arman, left Bangladesh for Saudi Arabia in 2017 and is still staying in the country. Mostaq released some audio speeches and videos on his YouTube channel, inviting others to join "jihad" at a place called Ghazwat-ul-Hind in Saudia Arabia as a soldier of Imam Mahdi, he added.

"Inspired by this audio and video clip, the arrestees communicated with Mostaq and tried to go to Saudi Arabia to prepare for war as Imam Mahdi's soldiers," said Towhidul, adding that they left home in mid-March. SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Testing for coronavirus began at BITID on March 25. It was the only centre for testing at Chattogram at the time, while another testing facility was launched at Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (CVASU) on April 21.

The two centres can test around 260 samples a day. For example, a total of 183 samples were tested in BITID while a total of 83 samples were tested in CVASU on Sunday. The two centres test samples collected from at least five districts of Chattogram division, said sources.

would fall if left for days, Prof Shakil said it is true that quality of samples fall gradually but those can be preserved in minus 20 degree Celsius temperature.

"We preserve the sample in standard method and there should be no doubt about the accuracy of the result," he said.

Prof Shakil also stressed on increasing the testing facilities in Chattogram. "Patients will be benefited if testing starts in Chattogram Medical College (CMC) lab," he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## Nepotism in OMS rice enlistment process protested in Barishal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, BARISHAL

Protesting mismanagement and nepotism in the enlistment process of the special open market sale (OMS) list, a citizens' platform handed over a memorandum to the district administration yesterday noon.

The "United Platform of Barishal to Resist Covid-19" alleged that enlistments are being done by considering political identity.

Manisha Chakrabarty, coordinator of the platform, said, "We have received at least 200 complaints from 10 wards across five areas of Barishal City Corporation. We demand proper investigation and fare enlistment of the ultra poor.'

"We received these complaints from Chadmari, Rupatali, Bhatikhana, Nazir Mahalla and Palashpur areas, some of the poorest neighbourhoods of the city," added Manisha, also a leader of left-leaning political party Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD).

Faruk Hossain, resident of Chadmari slum area under ward 10, alleged that his name was not included in the list as he does not have political connections with the ruling party.

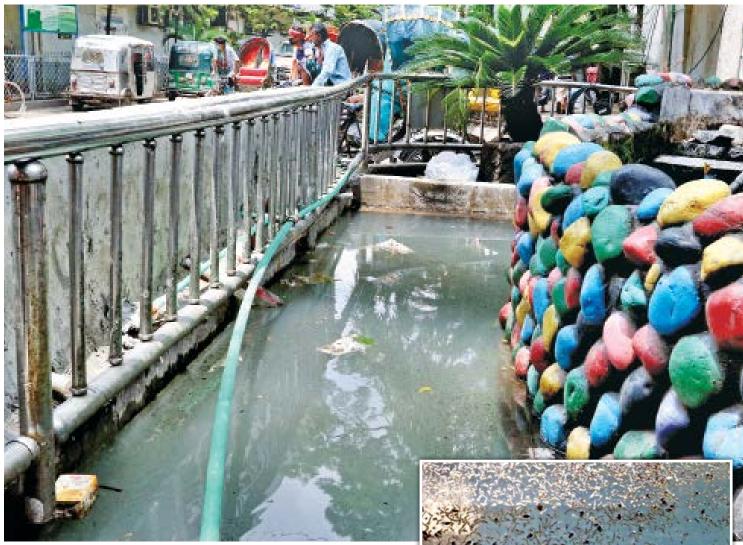
Rickshaw-puller Shahid, resident of Palashpur Slum area under ward 5, alleged the same while speaking to this correspondent.

Faruk Hossain Shikder, regional controller of food at Barishal, said there are five committees to scrutinise the lists. "We are yet to receive any such allegation," he told this newspaper.

"It's an ongoing process, If we find any fault in the enlistment, we will cancel the entrant after investigation," he added. However, he did not mention what to do regarding those who have allegedly been left out of the list.

Deputy Commissioner SM Ajiar Rahman said, "We have received the memorandum and the allegations will be investigated. We will not accept any enlistment based on political identities."

According to the regional controller, the special OMS programme will sell 20kg of rice for Tk 10 per kg to enlisted card-holders.



This fountain near Dhaka Medical College Hospital's burn unit no longer serves its original purpose of beautification. Left unattended for months, it has rather become a prime breeding ground for mosquitoes. Inset, mosquito larvae are visible under the still water. This is especially concerning amid the coronavirus outbreak, and the government has been served a legal notice to take action against mosquito menace as "dengue season" is approaching. The photos were taken recently.



#### DENGUE IN DHAKA Legal notice served on city mayors, DGHS

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A resident of Dhaka city yesterday sent legal notice to mayors of both city corporations, health secretary and director general of Directorate General of Health Services, requesting them to take necessary steps in 24 hours to kill Aedes mosquitoes.

Fahima Ferdous served the legal notice through emails, saying if the respondents do not take measures within the period, she will take appropriate legal action.

The mosquito menace in Dhaka is currently proliferating alongside the Covid-19 outbreak. A total of 80 people died and 5,600 were infected by dengue fever at this time last year, she said in the notice.

She also said the government has taken measures to tackle the pandemic but the two mayors have not taken necessary steps to tackle the mosquito menace, although they are constitutionally responsible for ensuring residents' good health.

Fahima told The Daily Star that she will move a writ petition before the High Court, seeking necessary orders if steps are not taken.

process

day here.'



#### RU teacher Mahabubur Rahman passes away **RU** CORRESPONDENT

Dr Mahabubur Rahman Rasel, an associate professor of mass communication and journalism at Rajshahi University (RU), passed away on Monday night, at the age of 36.

He died at a private hospital while undergoing treatment around 3am. On September 21 last year, he was admitted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University due to brain haemorrhage and was under treatment there for a long time.

Dr Rasel was born in Noakhali. He joined RU as a lecturer in 2009. He left behind his wife, daughter, friends and a host of students and well-wishers to mourn him.



With no safety gear on whatsoever, a middle-aged man is precariaously perched on the edge of a building, and hunches forward to connect wires on an electric pole in port city's Kadamtali area. This photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

### Primary students'

FROM PAGE 3

fulfilling these criteria got Tk 100 per month, as a single beneficiary of a family. Similarly, two children from the same family received Tk 200 per month, whereas in case of three and four children, the stipend was Tk 250 and Tk 300 per month, respectively.

Now, each will receive Tk 150. Two children from the same family will get Tk 300, and three and four children will receive Tk 400 and Tk 500, respectively.

The government will require around Tk 1,800 crore to disburse the new increased stipends and another Tk 1,000 crore for providing money for school supplies for this year and 2021.

Officials said the project aimed at increasing enrolment and attendance and reduce dropouts among primary students.

PESP was initiated in 2002. Initially, the project covered 40 per cent of total primary students and was subsequently raised to 70 per cent in 2008. Later in 2016, it was universalised, covering all students.

Md Shamsuddin Masud -- member secretary of Bangladesh Prathamik Shikkhok Oikva Parishad, an alliance of 14 organisations of primary school teachers said it is good news for all primary students, especially for those coming from poor families of rural areas.

"Each student will roughly get at least Tk 2,200 if all instalments are cleared. Amid the coronavirus crisis, this will be a great help," he said.

<sup>#</sup>Students will be overjoyed to get their uniforms and school bags, as many cannot afford them on their own," he added.

### 17 'JMB men'

FROM PAGE 3 On January 25, four Bangladesh Agricultural University students --Mizanur Rahman, Al Amin, Fahim Hasan Khan and Abdul Momen -- left the country for Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah, but never returned.

Police found communication details between the "missing" students and Mostaq. Besides, seven others -- Saad, Kawsar, Sharif, Tofazzal, Giasuddin, Ali Azam and Rashed -- also managed to leave the country and went to Saudi Arabia to join the socalled army, claimed CTTC

officials. One of the arrestees - Jamirul Islam -- is also a student of the university, they added. A case was filed against the 17 arrestees with Ramna Police Station

Saiful islam, deputy commissioner of CTTC, said there were 19 of them, and they are looking for the other two members.

"Also, we're yet to find out which group Mostaq belonged to but his activities match with that of JMB's. We are now keeping a close eye on his actions and have informed the Saudi government to get more details about him," he said.

#### The long wait FROM PAGE 3

Contacted, SM Nazer Hossain, central vice president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), said testing facilities should be increased in Chattogram immediately to reduce the sufferings of patients.

"We have heard a testing centre is opening in CMC but we do not know when it will begin its operations," Nazer Hossain said.

installed now. CMCH sources said they Prof Shamim Hasan, Contacted, expect to begin testing with this machine principal of CMC, said they expected from Thursday.

## Sale of

DM I	PAGE	3

tests take only 15-20 minutes to produce results whereas RT-PCR tests take at least four hours

WHO guidelines say RDTs do not detect the virus directly. It rather detects antigen or antibody generated in the human body in response to an infection.

However, antibodies are produced over days to weeks after the virus is contracted. So, if a person takes the test before that period, the results can show the person is not infected. Thus both false negative and false positive results can be generated.

The newly formed "media cell" of the health ministry said any kit without government approval would not be acceptable for testing coronavirus.

"No coronavirus testing kit without government's approval will be accepted," said Habibur Rahman Khan, additional secretary to the Health Services Division and also the convener of the media cell, adding that coronavirus test is being conducted under government arrangement only with approved kits following the instructions of the WHO.

to begin testing on Wednesday, but an

unexpected technical glitch in their newly

installed PCR machine delayed the whole

soon and begin testing," he said, adding,

"Around a 100 tests can be carried out per

to CMCH yesterday, which is being

"We hope to fix the technical problem

Meanwhile, CVASU sent a PCR machine

The government is working as per the WHO directives over rapid testing kits, he added.

Questions arise how these unauthorised testing kits have been imported to the country without knowledge of any government bodies and have become available on online market for sell.

DGDA said self-initiated purchase of these kits is not allowed.

"They are doing the business illegally. We didn't give them approval to import those. The government didn't allow any such rapid testing in the country," DGDA Director General Maj Gen Md Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star recently.

"When any such product is being imported into the country, they have to take our NOC (No Objection Certificate) first. Otherwise, it's illegal," he said.

The DGDA chief said their team will work alongside law enforcers to take action against these sellers.

## Ducsu honours Bangabandhu

#### FROM PAGE 12

gratitude the great help and assistance advanced by the people and the governments of India and the Soviet Union to the people of Bangladesh during the grim period of the Liberation War. Bangladesh will never forget these friends, he adds.

#### KRISHAK SAMITY LEADERS CALL ON BANGABANDHU

A delegation of Krishak Samity, headed by Comrade Moni Singh, calls on Bangabandhu today at his official residence. They inform the prime minister about various demands of the peasants and discuss how those can be addressed. Bangabandhu assures them of taking immediate action to resolve those issues

#### CABINET MEETS

The Cabinet today meets for three hours. The cabinet meeting presided over by Bangabandhu is reported to have discussed the matters relating to the food situation, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

#### LOAN FOR PUCCA HOUSE IN RURAL AREAS

National housing finance authority has taken an initiative to provide long-term loans for building pucca houses in rural areas. Previously, the organisation used to finance urban housing projects only. This new decision is a reflection of the government's commitment to reduce the existing urban-rural disparity, says a government handout. The interest rate of this new loan scheme will be lower than that for urban

#### houses.

FARM MECHANISATION SCHEME PASSED

The government has recently adopted an agriculture mechanisation scheme under which farm equipment will be provided to farmers to make activities such as land preparation, crop production, harvesting and processing more efficient. The project will start in July, 1972. Initially, 19 thanas have been selected to implement this mechanisation initiative. Farmers' cooperatives will be formed at the grassroots level to run this project.

SOURCES: May 7, 1972 issues of Ittefaq, The Bangladesh Observer, Azad, Morning News, Dainik Bangla and Purbodesh.

on revealing the trends, causes, health impacts, and the solutions to air pollution, and Bangladesh vears Poribesh Andolon -BAPA (Bangladesh Movement), Environment

Bangladeshi civil society platform. The study has found that the air pollution will worsen if Bangladesh continues with its plan to build Payra power hub, a cluster of eight large power plants with a total capacity of 9.8GW and combined with very lax emission standards.

In Bangladesh, air pollution is responsible for about 11 percent of the disease burden from diabetes, 16 percent of lung cancer, 15 percent of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, 10 percent of deaths from ischemic heart disease and 6 percent from stroke, according to data available from Global Burden of Disease Study 2017.

"The potential emission scenario should have discussed at the planning stage of setting up any such plants in Payra. We should publish more reports like this for the greater interest of the nation", said Rasheda K Choudhury, chair of the press conference, and former adviser to the caretaker government.

plants would be responsible for as waterways, increasing the mercury high as 34,000 air pollution-related deaths over an operating life of 30

Of which 4,900 due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, 11,000 to ischemic heart disease, 2,700 due to lower respiratory infections of which 300 in children, 1,800 due to lung cancer and 8,900 due to stroke. 2,400 deaths are due todeaths related to NO2 exposure.

"We can well assume from the research that the COVID-19 pandemic would be worsened in Bangladesh due to high level of air pollution as well such epidemic in future", said Dr. Mohd. Abdul Matin, executive vice president of BAPA.

Bangladesh is among the countries most affected by air pollution, with the life expectancy in the country reduced by almost 2 years due to the impacts of pollution exposure on health.

Dhaka was ranked as the second most polluted capital city in the world, after New Delhi, with average PM2.5 pollution levels more than 8 times as high as the World Health Organization guideline and 6 times the country's national standards.

The plants would also emit an estimated 600-800 kilograms of She urged the government to Mercury per year into the air, of which population for food, income and abandon all coal projects in Payra one third would be deposited into land and freshwater ecosystems in Bangladesh, according to the study. Most of the deposition will pollutant emissions from the Payra take place onto cropland and into

the French government confirmed its

the outbreak, reports Reuters.

Lindmeier encouraged other

Asked about the origins of the virus

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

in China, Lindmeier stressed that

it was "really, really important" to

first cases.

explore this.

concentrations in food. The levels of mercury deposition are potentially dangerous in an area with as many as 1.5 million inhabitants.

There are five important Hilsa fish sanctuaries including Hilsa spawning grounds, migration routes and egg and fry areas in the vicinity of Payra hub that will be impacted by direct mercury deposition.

"The most troubling aspect of the mercury emissions from the Payra hub is that they are so high they virtually guarantee that Hilsa may become too toxic to eat or sell", said Dr. Md. Anisur Rahman, the Chief Scientific Officer of Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (BFRI) and eminent Hilsa Researcher, in the press conference. "Even, mercury deposition rates as low as 125mg/ha/ year are known to accumulate unsafe evels of mercury in fish".

Dr. Md. Manzoorul Kibria, Professor of the University of Chittagong, and Coordinator of Halda River Research Laboratory added that the projected emission could disrupt Hilsa fish breeding at five river sanctuaries near Payra.

Hilsa is the highest valued fish in Bangladesh commonly used by a large

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Directorate General of Family Planning Logistics & Supply Unit (5th Floor) 6, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh e-Tender Notice (OTM, NCT, Goods) (Re-Tender)

FROM PAGE 12

The BNP leader raised a question about reopening of shopping malls, saying that whose purpose was served by this decision? "We have to keep in mind that life is more precious than money. Basically, the government has failed to tackle the situation and pushed the country into grave danger," he alleged. He said if the government was elected by people, it would have been accountable to the people. "Yes, people need their bread and butter. But as the trend of spreading the virus is upward, social distancing policy should be followed strictly a few more days," he said. The BNP leader added that factories could be opened in a systematic and planned way so that safety of all workers were ensured. The government's mismanagement and callousness in combating the virus was found in every step, Fakhrul alleged.

Govt active health sector was also politically biased.

The government has totally failed to stand by the country's people."

Air pollution raises risks FROM PAGE 12

#### Ref. No. DGFP/L&S-3/Dispensing Envelop/2019-20/50/83 Date: 05/05/2020

e-Tender is hereby invited in the National e-GP Portal for the procurement of following goods:

Tender ID No. & Package No.	Tender package name	Last selling/ downloading	Closing date & time	
Fackage No.	name	date & time	or unite	
		uate or unie		
1	2	3	4	
Tender ID No. 456845	Procurement of	27-May-2020	28-May-2020	
Re Tendered ID: 38570	6 16.02 Million Pieces	14:00	12:30	
Package N	o. Dispensing Envelop	10.10		
MCH/GD12/e5	(14 cm x 9 cm)			

This is an online tender where only e-Tender (online tender) will be accepted through the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any schedule bank of Bangladesh registered by the CPTU.

4. Further information visit National e-GP Portal & e-GP help desk (e-mail: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

#### Sukesh Kumar Sarker

Director (Logistics & Supply) and Line Director (PSSM-FP) Directorate General of Family Planning Phone: 55012349

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

উপজেলা যান্ধ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়

পটিয়া, চটগ্রাম

Email: patiya@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

(সংশোধনী)

for ensuring the food security of the nation under COVID-19 outbreak.

The analysis shows that the air

Probe early virus cases

FROM PAGE 12 was not previously believed to have spread to Europe until January.

"This gives a whole new picture on everything," WHO spokesman countries to check records for pneumonia cases of unspecified origin Christian Lindmeier told a UN in late 2019, saying this would give the briefing in Geneva, referring to the world a "new and clearer picture" of French reports.

"The findings help to better understand the potential virus circulation of Covid-19," he added, saying other possible earlier cases could emerge after retesting samples.

A French hospital which has alleges his country has "evidence" that retested old samples from pneumonia the new coronavirus emerged from a patients discovered that it treated a laboratory in Wuhan, China, although man who had Covid-19 as early as scientists have advised the WHO that December 27, nearly a month before it is of animal origin.

employment. It is the national fish of Bangladesh and has an annual value of USD 2 billion.

BAPA secretary general Sharif Jamil moderated the event.

### Buddha Purnima

FROM PAGE 12

pandemic, the Buddha Purnima is being celebrated in a different manner this year. "I urge all of the Buddhist community to celebrate their festival staying at their respective homes," he said.

In her message, Hasina said Buddhist leaders have a significant role in maintaining the communal harmony in the country.

She said the whole world is now in a crisis due to coronavirus outbreak, while the World Health Organisation declared it a pandemic.

Against the backdrop of coronavirus pandemic, Hasina urged the Buddhist community to celebrate their largest religious festival avoiding mass gatherings.

Dated: 05.05.2020

#### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director Bangladesh Railway

Outer Circular Road, Kamalapur, Dhaka-1217

No. PD/DTJDLP/TENDER/WD2-908

Package No. WD2: Design, Supply, Installation and Testing-Commissioning of Computer Based Interlocked Signaling system at 7 (Seven) stations including interlocking of selected level crossings and installation of optical fiber cable based telecommunication system for block operation and CTC interface work (turnkey works) in connection with construction of 3rd and 4th Dual Gauge Track in Dhaka-Tongi section and Doubling of Dual Gauge Track in Tongi-Joydebpur section.

IFT No. PD/DTJDLP/TENDER/WD2-831; Dated 20.02.2020

- Corrigendum 1: PD/DTJDLP/TENDER/WD2-859; Dated 08.03.2020 Corrigendum 2: PD/DTJDLP/TENDER/WD2-884; Dated 19.03.2020
- Corrigendum 3: PD/DTJDLP/TENDER/WD2-904; Dated 15.04.2020

		Corrigenc	lum No. 4 (dated: 05.05.	2020)			
SI No. of IFT		Provision as p	er Corigendum-3	Provision as per Corrigendum-4			
17.	Tender last selling date	08.06.2020 (during office hours)		05.07.2020 (during office hours)			
18.	Tender closing	ng Date Time		Date	Time		
	date and time	09-06-2020	Up to 12:00 hrs BST	06-07-2020	Up to 12:00 hrs BST		
19.	Tender opening	Date	Time	Date	Time		
	date and time	09-06-2020	At 12:30 hrs BST	06-07-2020	At 12:30 hrs BST		
21.	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting	Rail Bhaban, 16, Ab Date & time: 10.05.2	'Meghna' (5th Floor), dul Gani Road, Dhaka. 2020 at 11.00 hrs BST	Conference Room 'Meghna' (5th Floor), Rail Bhaban, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka. Date & time: 10.06.2020 at 11.00 hrs BST			
All other	r Terms and conditions	of the Tender Notice	in	Md. Shahid Project Di Instruction of 3rd and 4 Dhaka-Tongi Section a uge Line in Tongi-Joyd Cell phone: +88 0	rector th Dual Gauge Lines and Doubling of Dual ebpur Section Project		
GD-799	6			E-mail: pd.3rd4th@	railway.gov.bd		

ম্মারক নংঃ- উস্বাওপপক/পটি(এমএসআর-১৯-২০ টেডার ২০২০/১৯৭৯ তারিখঃ ০৫/০৫/২০২০ইং উপজেল যান্ত্র ও পঃ পঃ কমকর্তার কার্যালয়, পটিয়া, চট্টয়াম এর ম্মারক নং-উদ্বাওপপক/পটি(এমএসআর ১৯-২০ টেন্ডার ২০২০/১৯১৬ তার ৩০/০৪/২০২০ইং এ মূলে ২০১৯-২০২০ব্রিঃ আর্থিক সনে এমএসআর সাম্ম্রী ব্রুয়ের দরপর বিজ্ঞত্তি পরিকায় ইতিপূর্বে প্রকাশিত হয়। উক্ত প্রকাশিত

নরপত্র বিজপ্তির আংশিক নিম্নন্নপ ভাবে সংশোধন করা হইল। অন্যান্য বিষয়াবলী অপরিবর্তিত থাকিবে।

১৪ এমএসআর সাম্ম্রী ক্রন্ত্র সংক্রন্ত তথ্যাবলীঃ নিমোকঃ ছক মোতাবেক

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### INTERNATIONAL

## Antibody that can 'defeats' coronavirus AGENCIES

Scientists created a monoclonal antibody that can defeat the new coronavirus in the lab, an early but promising step in efforts to find treatments and curb the pandemic's spread.

The experimental antibody has neutralized the virus in cell cultures. While that's early in the drug development process -- before animal research and human trials the antibody may help prevent or treat Covid-19 and related diseases in the future, either alone or in a drug combination, according to a study published Monday in the journal Nature Communications.

More research is needed to see whether the findings are confirmed in a clinical setting and how precisely the antibody defeats the virus, Berend-Jan Bosch of Utrecht University in the Netherlands and colleagues wrote in the paper.

The antibody known as 47D11 targets the spike protein that gives the new coronavirus a crown-like shape and lets it enter human cells. In the Utrecht experiments, it didn't just defeat the virus responsible for Covid-19 but also a cousin equipped with similar spike proteins, which causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS.

Monoclonal antibodies are lab-created proteins that resemble naturally occurring versions the body raises to fight off bacteria and viruses. Highly potent, they target exactly one site on a virus. In this case, the scientists used genetically modified mice to produce different antibodies to the spike proteins of coronaviruses. After a subsequent screening process, 47D11 emerged as showing neutralizing activity. Researchers then reformatted that antibody to create a fully human version, according to the paper.



This picture taken on May 4, 2020 shows members of a Syrian family from the town of Ariha in the southern countryside of the Idlib province, breaking their fast together in the midst of the rubble of their destroyed home. PHOTO: AFP

## NY Times leads the way

#### AFP, New York

The New York Times picked up the most awards as the 2020 Pulitzer Prize winners were announced virtually on Monday owing to the coronavirus outbreak.

Prize board administrator Dana Canedy declared the winners from her living room via a livestream on YouTube rather than at a ceremony at New York's Columbia University.

The Times collected three awards, including for Brian M Rosenthal's investigative report into New York City's taxi industry that revealed predatory loans that

took advantage of vulnerable drivers. It also won the international reporting

prize for a series of stories on Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime.

The paper's Nikole Hannah-Jones won best commentary for a personal essay that viewed America's origins through the lens of enslaved Africans.

The Pulitzers are generally regarded as the highest honor that US-based journalists and organizations can receive.

Reuters won the breaking news photography award for pictures of the Hong Kong protests.

The explanatory reporting prize was awarded to the staff of The Washington Post for a series that showed the effects of extreme

temperatures on the planet. Ben Taub of The New Yorker 2020 PULITZERS won the feature writing award for a story on a Guantanamo

Bay guard's growing friendship with a captor

The Associated Press was awarded the

A special citation was awarded to Ida

India sees 3,900 cases, 195 deaths

#### NDTV Online

India recorded the biggest single-day jump in the number of coronavirus patients and deaths linked to the illness as 3,900 new cases were reported, 195 COVID-19 patients died in the last 24 hours.

This takes the total to 46,433 COVID-19 cases in the country, including 1,568 deaths. About 12,727 patients have recovered so far. 82,792 patients were tested on Monday. The recovery rate stood at 27.4 per cent this morning, said the Union Health Ministry.

Lockdown restrictions have eased in many parts of the country despites surge in cases.

The lockdown has been one of the strictest in the developing world. The national government is worried that easing up too quickly could accelerate the pace of infections. But some state governments want economic activity to resume as revenue. dwindles and millions struggle without income.

## 3b could live in areas too hot for humans

Study says if global warming continues at present rate, by 2070 life will be difficult CNN Online

If the planet continues to warm at current levels over the next 50 years, up to 3 billion people could be living in areas that are too hot for humans, a new study has found.

For thousands of years, humans have lived within a narrow "climate niche" where average temperatures are ideal for society to flourish, and conditions favourable to grow food and keep livestock.

In findings published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences on Monday, an international team of archaeologists, climate scientists and ecologists said that if heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions continue at the current pace, by 2070 billions of people will be living in conditions hotter than those that have allowed life to thrive for the past 6,000 years.



to cooler regions or adapt to extreme heat conditions, the study found. Tim Kohler, co-author of the study said that these findings can be viewed as a worst case or "business-as-usual" scenario of "what could happen if we don't change our ways."

The Earth is currently on track for 3°C of warming by 2100.

Regions that stand to be affected include parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, South America, India, Southeast Asia, Arabian Peninsula and Australia -- regions with fast-growing populations, said Chi Xu, another co-author of the report. "Those countries are mostly in global south, with the fastest population growing rate, such as India and Nigeria. These two countries are projected to accommodate the largest populations under extreme temperature conditions," Chi said.

## **CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC** LATEST UPDATES

#### DEATHS CROSS 250,000

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 251,512 people since the outbreak first emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT. More than 3,595,970 cases were registered in 195 countries and territories. Of these, at least 1,104,600 are now considered recovered. The United States has the highest number of total deaths with 68,934. United Kingdom has the second highest toll with 32,313 deaths, followed by Italy with 29,079 deaths, Spain 25,613 deaths and France with 25,201 deaths.

#### **INDIA'S 'MASSIVE' REPATRIATION**

India has embarked on a "massive" operation involving naval ships and aircraft to bring back some of the hundreds of thousands of nationals stuck abroad due to coronavirus restrictions, the government said. India banned all incoming international flights in late March as it imposed one of the world's strictest virus lockdowns, leaving vast numbers of workers and students stranded. A defence spokesman told AFP that two ships were steaming towards the Maldives and another to the United Arab Emirates -- home to a 3.3-million-strong Indian community.

#### **UK TOPS ITALY IN DEATHS**

Britain has overtaken Italy to report the highest official death toll from coronavirus in Europe with more than 32,000 deaths, figures released on Tuesday showed. The high death toll could increase political pressure on Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who waited longer than other European leaders to order a lockdown to curb the spread of the virus in March.

#### **10,000 CASES IN RUSSIA AGAIN**

Russia cemented its place as the European country reporting the highest number of new coronavirus infections vesterday as its total cases soared passed 155,000. Health officials reported 10,102 new infections over the last 24 hours, a decrease of 531 cases from Sunday's record surge, bringing Russia's total to 155,370. According to the government's daily coronavirus update, Russia has 1,451 total deaths, after reporting 95 new fatalities over the last 24 hours.

#### **AUSTRALIA 'LOSING \$2.5 B A WEEK'**

Australia's economy is losing Aus\$4 billion (US\$2.5 billion) every week its virus shutdown continues, with GDP forecast to plunge 10 percent in the June quarter, according to official figures. The data highlighted that the country's success in curbing the spread of COVID-19, with new daily cases slowing to single digits or zero across most regions, has come at a heavy economic cost.

#### 70% 'CORONA TAX' ON ALCOHOL

Officials in India's capital imposed a special tax of 70% on retail liquor purchases from today, to deter large gatherings at stores as authorities ease a six-week lockdown imposed to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Taxes on alcohol are a key contributor to the revenue

of many of India's 36 states and federal territories, most of which are running short of funds because of the lengthy disruption in economic activity caused by the virus. Police baton-charged hundreds of people who had flocked to liquor shops when they opened on Monday for the first time in a relaxation of the world's biggest lockdown, which is set to run until May 17.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

পরিচালক

সিলেট এম এ জি ওসমানী মেডিকেল কলেজ

হাসপাতাল, সিলেট

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Strengt	hening of Poultry Research and Bangladesh Livestock Researc Savar, Dhaka-1341	
Memo No. 33.05.2	672.109.11.011.19-203	Date: 05/05/20
	e-Tender Notic	92

### e-render Notice

Portal invited through the National e-GP e-Tender will be http://www.eprocurement.gov.bd) for procurement of following goods. Details are given below: Package Tender APP ID Description of Tender Tender ID No closing date No No aoods document last

who was tortured.

feature photography prize for images showing life in the contested Kashmir as India revoked its semi-autonomous status.

Wells, an early pioneer of investigative journalism and a civil rights icon.

Date: 05/05/2020

ID No.	No.	No. good	selling/	closing date & time			e temperature concitions, "	SOU	RCE: AFP, REUTERS
			downloading date & time		Students serving		গণপ্রথ	জাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরব	গর
457642	GD.02 1	58102 Supply		28-May-2020	FROM PAGE 12	I 1		পরিচালকের কার্যালয়	
		Chemicals F	Reagent 12:00	13:30	that began on March 26 caused a sudden drop in many	I 1	সিলেট এম এ জি	ওসমানী মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসগ	াতাল, সিলেট
		Glasswar	e and		people's income and rendered thousands unable to	I 1	1.10.10 -1-1 -1 101		
		Appara	tus		buy food. This has resulted in demonstrations and road blockade across the country by hundreds of desperate	I 1		দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি	
456831	GD.17 1	58102 Supply o		28-May-2020	people demanding food for over a week.	5	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	ছান্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়।	
		Equipm	ent 14:30	13:00	As the day breaks at DU TSC, Shaikat and his friends	3	সংগ্রহক/যুদ্ধবিকারীর নাম	সিলেট এম এ জি ওসমানী মেডিকেল	নলেজ হাসপাতাল, সিলেটি।
This is	an online tende	, where only e-Tende	r will be accepted throug	n the National e-	put out the earthen stoves that would be used again in the	8	অর্থায়নের উৎস	রাজ্য খাত হইতে।	
GP Syster	m.				afternoon for iftar.	8	আহবানকৃত দরপহের স্মারক ও	ন্মারক নং-ওমেকহাসি/দরপর শাব	া/পথ্য/২০২০-২১/২৫৮৬ তারিখ্য
Registe	ered tenderers a	re requested to depos	it require fees through an	y schedule bank	"As a DU student, we feel that it's our duty to do		তারিখ	580505/20202	사망 이 영양 이 것 같아요.
to buy the	e e-schedule on	or before 27-May-202	0 14:30 for Supply of Lat	Equipment and	something for them. There are at least five students who	6	দরণরের নাম/কান্ধের বিবরণ	২০২০-২০২১ইং অর্থ বছরে সিলেট	
28-May-20	020 12:00 Supp	ly of Chemicals Rea	gent Glassware and Ap	paratus. Further	voluntarily help us with the task every day," he said.			হাসপাতাল "পথ্য" সরবরাহ ও "ময়লা	কাপড় ধৌত করগের" সরপত্র।
informatio	in and guidelines	are available in the Na	tional e-GP Portal.		Arman Ali, 28, employee of a private company, said he managed to make ends meet with his salary before the	9	সংগ্ৰাহক মন্ত্ৰধিকাৱীর জেলা	সিলেট।	
	-		Dr. Md. Sazedul Kar	im Sarker	crisis. But he has not been paid in seven weeks and had no	٩	ক্রম প্রক্রিমা	উন্মুক্ত দরপর।	
			Project Direct	or	choice but to eat here.	p	দরপরদারদের যোগ্যতা	সংশ্লিষ্ট সরবরাহ কাজে যোগ বাজরজাতকারী/সরবরাহকারী/প্রস্তৃতব	
			Telephone No. 02-		A university student was among those who were eating		দরপর তফসিলের মৃল্য	বাজারজাতকারা/সারবরাহকারা/আরতন এইপ নাং-১, ২, ৩, ৪, ৫ এবং "ম	
GD-798			e-mail address: sazdulkari		there. "I come here from Shantinagar. My parents have not	10	পরণর তথ্যগলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	অংশ নং-১, ২, ৩, ৪, ৫ এবং  ম সিঃিউলের মূল্য বাবদ ১৫০০/- (এব	
00-100			-Indii douloss. <u>Sazoulkan</u>	ingganoo.com	been able to send me any money from the village because	I 1	(acessecting)	মাধ্যমে কোড লং- (১)	
		and the state of t		-	they are also struggling," he said.	I 1		<ul><li>(২)(৩)(৬)(৬)-4 বাংলাদেশ ব্</li></ul>	(২)(২)(২)(২)(২)(২)(২)(২)(২)(২)(২)(২)(২)(
without many	ৰ্গ বাহা মাত	গণপ্ৰজাতন্ত্ৰী বাংলা		Q	Many of them told this correspondent that they used	I 1		চালানের মূলকলি হাসপাতাল অফিন	
	ৰ ৰাহ্য নাত ব আনেক ধাপ	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ ? গোয়ালন, রাগ		1 m	to have the ability to donate something to such initiatives			इंडेरन ।	
		goalunda@uhfpo.d	ahs.gov.bd	100	before the coronavirus pandemic.	30	বায়নার টাকা	রুমিক নং-১৭ অনুযায়ী এবং দরপত্রের	া শর্তাবলী/নিয়মাবলী মোতাবেক।
নং-ইউএইচসি/	(1)1月(1)1月(1)1月(1)1月(1)1月(1)1月(1)1月(1)1			গৈয় ৫৫/৫৫/২০২০খ্রিঃ	STUDENT BODIES ASSISTING FARMERS	22	দরপত্র তফসীল বিক্রম, দর	পরিচালক, সিলেট এম এ জি ওস	
	প্ৰনঃ দ	রপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (উন্	যুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি)		Leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Chhatra Union and many other student associations have		প্রস্কাব গ্রহণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম	কার্যালয় (দরপত্র পুষ্কিকা পরিচাল্য	কর অফিস হইতে সংগ্রহ করিতে
উপজেলা ম			র নিয়ন্ত্রশাধীন ৫০ শব্যা বিশিষ্ট হাল	ণাডাল ও ২টি উপ-মাছ্য	been reaching out to help those in need.		ও রিকানা	হইবে)।	
			ভ সার্জিকাল রিকুইজিটস) স্থানীয়ভাবে		As farmers found it difficult to harvest paddy due to	25	দরপত্র তফসীল দাখিলের ছান	পরিচালক, সিলেট এম এ জি ওসম	
সঞ্জহ বিধিয়াল	া পিশিষার ২০০৮, ২০০	) (সাপোধিড), ২০১০ (সাপোধি	<li> ৪ গাবলিক প্রকিউরদেন্ট আইন-২০</li>	০৬, ২০০৬ (সংশেধিত),	shortage of labourers amid the coronavirus restrictions, BCL	1 × 1		কার্যালয়, জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়,	সিলেট ও পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়,
২০১০ (গলগা ব্যৱহায়ী/জনিব	াগত), ২০১৬ (সংশোগত দ/মতনতালী প্রচরকারী	, ২০১৯ (সংশোপত) এর আলো ৬ নিজর রোগ্যরায়ক্রম টিরামর্ট	ক উন্মুচ্চ সরপর পছতি (OTM)-এর ম 1 প্রতিষ্ঠালের নিকট থেকে প্রদন্ত শর্ক স	াধমে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত চলচ্চ প্রদান এরারী প্রমুক	men have been lending a hand to farmers across the country.			সিলেট।	
	লমোহরকৃত থামে দরপর :		II STORDER MAD CACA SHE HA A	CUCA SUL GRAN SHA	Following Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina's	20	দরপত্র তফসীল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৭/০৬/২০২০ইং তারিশ ১২.০০ ঘাঁ	ন্দা পথস্ত।
১ মন্ত্রণালয			ৱৰ্থালয় (শ্বস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগ)।		instruction, BCL President Al-Nahean Khan Joy and General	28	তার্য ও সময় দরপর যোলার সপ্তরের নাম ও	পরিচালকের কার্যালয়, সিলেট এম	a fa unrelle officeau anan
২ অগিপরা;		স্বান্থ্য অধিসগ্রৱ, মহাখালী,			Secretary Lekhak Bhattacharjee recently visited Munshiganj	28	পরণর বোলার পশুরের নাম ত ঠিকানা	গারসলকের কার্যলয়, লেলের অন হাসলাতাল, সিলেট।	জ জি ওপমাশা মোরকেশ কলেজ
ত সংগ্ৰাহক ৪ সংগ্ৰহকা	েসংছার রীর থকিষ্ঠান্দের পদবী	উপজেলা আছ্যুত পায় পায় উপজেলা আছ্যুত পায় পায়	কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, গোন্নালন্দ, রাজবাই কর্মকর্যা, পোয়ালন্দ :	[]	and urged activists to work with farmers.	202	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	০৮/০৬/২০২০ইং কেলা ১২.০০ ঘটি	বা পাইছে।
	ায়ার আক্তরদের পদের। রী প্রতিষ্ঠাদের জেলার নায		eased, clinical		BCL activists are also working in paddy fields in Narsingdi	3/6	দরপত্র বাক্স খেলার তারিখ ও	০৮/০৬/২০২০ইং বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘ	
	দরণেত্র আন্তাশ	"এম,এস,আর" মালামাল	গোমন্ত্রী অন্য।		and Cumilla districts, he said.		সময	কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।	and the management of the Card
	৫ তহনিলের উৎস	গাঙ্গৰ ৫ উন্নয়ন থাত।			"We will continue the efforts until the restrictions are	29	দরপত্র জামানত	গ্রুপের নাম	সরপর জামানচ/বায়না (পে-
৮ বলপ ভিনি	ন্তিক কাজের নিবরণ		' উষখপত্র (ইডিসিএল বহিন্ঠত), রুল নং: (পরীক্ষ নিরীক্ষা), রুল নংঃ "ঘ" নিজেন		lifted," Joy said, adding that his organisation has created a	· · ·			অর্ডার/ডিডি)
			(পরাজা লরাজা), অপ নায় যা নাওলন এবং রম্প নায় "চ" জাসবাবপত্র ও কিচে		fund to help out poor students through the tough times. Members of Bangladesh Chhatra Union, student wing			গ্রুপ নং - ১ (চাল, ডাল, মসন্নালী)	টাকাঃ ৩,৫০,০০০/- (তিন লক্ষ
b 9892.8	ধকাশের তারিখ	00/02/2020101	and a rest of a rest of a rest of		of Communist Party of Bangladesh, have developed a hand	I 1			পঞ্চাশ হাজার)
	দলিল বিক্রির কল ও		/০৫/২০২০খ্রিঃ ভারিখ অফিস চলাকালী	ৰ সময় পৰ্যন্ত (সরকারি	sanitiser and are distributing it for free among low-income	I 1		গ্রুপ নং - ২ (সজি ও ফলমূল)	টাকাঃ ৪,৫০,০০০/- (চাল লক্ষ
তারিগ	aleren an selec a s	ছুটির দিন ব্যর্তীত)। না ২০/০৫/২০২০ন্ট্রি জারিশ	cana es es alban colar :		people.	I 1			পঞ্চাশ হাজাৱ)
	নামদের পেন তারম ও স নার খোলার তারিম ও সম				General Secretary Anik Roy said they have distributed	I 1		গ্রুপ নং - ৩ (মাছ, মাংশ ও ডিম)	টাকাঃ ৯,৫০,০০০/- (নয় লক্ষ
	নলিল বিক্ৰম্বের স্থান		কর্মকর্তার কর্মালয়, গোয়ালন্দ, রাজবাড়ী	I	thousands of bottles last month.	I 1			পঞ্চাশ হাজার)
১৪ দরপর দ	নলিল জমা দেৱার ছান	উপজেলা মাছ্য ও পঃ পঃ	কর্মকর্তার কর্মালয় ও উপজেলা নির্বাহী গ		"We are distributing the hand sanitisers mostly among	I 1		গ্রুপ নং - ৪ (পাইরাটি ব বিষ্ণুট)	টাকাঃ ২,১০,০০০/- (দুই লক
		খোয়াসন্দ, রাজনাড়ী।	and and an and and an and an and the		labourers in old Dhaka, Paltan, Shahbagh, Kamrangirchar,	I 1		status a /sus a sat at 2m	দশ হাজার)
১৫ দৰপত্ৰ ন ১৬ মোট ক	বার গোলার হ্রান বান্দ	9079-9070 28 SERV	কৰ্মকৰ্তার কৰ্মালয়, গোয়ালন্দ, রাজনাড়ী । স্বাস্থ্য অধিনগ্রহের রাটন ও অভিরিক ন		and Faridpur, Moulvibazar, Shariatpur districts," he said.			রুল নং - ৫ (মুখ ও সুদ্ধ জাতীয় ময়লা কাপড ধৌত করণ	32,00,000/- (राज लक)
	যাৰ কাৰ বেগিয়তা	মিচিউলে বৰ্ণিত সকল শা			Many journalists and front line healthcare employees	1		4411 ALL& MIG 481	টাকাঃ ২,১৫,০০০/- (দুই লক্ষ পদের হাজার)
১৮ মরপর ব	হাহ্বানকারীর নাম	ডাঃ আনিক মাহমুন।			also take the bottles from them, he said.	25	বিশেষ নিৰ্দেশনা	১। দরপত্রের যাবতীয় শর্তাবলী নি	
	হাজানকারীর পস্বী	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও গঃ গঃ			Students of pharmacy, chemistry and biochemistry		The first from the first state of the state	উল্লেখ বহিয়াছে।	HALF THE DISCHARTER
	মাহলাগৰাধীয় ঠিকাগা মাহলানকাৰীৰ গোৰাজ্যসময়	তপচেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও গাঁৱ গাঁৱ মন্দ্র /উলিয়েন্দ্র মন্দ্রাণ ৫৮০৮ৰ	কর্মকর্তার কর্মালয়, গোয়ালব্দ, রাজনাড়ী এ৬১০৮ । মোবাইল সম্বায় ০১৭১২-০০	0 h.m. i	departments at Dhaka and Jagannath universities are preparing the sanitiser, he added.	1		২। ব্রুটিপূর্ণ/অসম্পূর্ণ দরপত্র সরাসরি	বতিল বলিয়া গণ্য হইবে। কর্তপঞ্চ
			ব্রং৫২০৬ । সোণাহল গন্ধায় ০২৭২২-০০ ৭) টাকা (অক্ষেরহযোগ্য) নিজন্থ প্যান্তে			1		কোনরূপ কারণ দশাঁনো ব্যতিরেকে	
লঙাবের :	ক্যাশ শাখা হতে দরপর স	দিল কয়/সঞ্চাহ করিতে পরিবেদ				1		দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ	করেন।
			যে কোন বা সকল দ্বাপত্র গ্রহণ/বাজিল ন	ধীবার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ	US forecast sees virus	1		৩। দরগত্রে দি পাবলিক প্রকিউর	মন্ট ৱস্তু-২০০১, পিপিন্নার-২০০৮
	সৰ্বনিচ্ন দৱদাতার দৱপত্র বিজয়িটিও শর্ভাবলী মিসাচ					2		অনুসরণ করা হাইবে।	
			মাত্র অত্র অফিসের নোটিশ ব্যেয়ের মান	য়ে জানানো হটবে।	FROM PAGE 12				
		সর গায়ে সন্নিবেশিত থাকিবে।	The second s		late last year the number of confirmed cases has reached	1		ব্রিগেঃ ক্ষেঃ মো	ঃ ইউনুছুর রহমান
			with the set	IN STREET	almost 3.6 million while fatalities have topped 252,000.	1		e5	bields.

Europe remains the hardest-hit continent with around

1010-934

145,000 deaths while the US has recorded close to 68,700,

the biggest single-country toll.

। শতাৰদা চোচতদেও সাৰে সাইবৈদ্যত ৰাজেৰে।	ডাঃ আদিক মাহনুন কোড নং ১২৪৪২১ উপজেল সান্ধ্য ও গঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তা গেরালন্দ, রাজবাঠা
	Crister, storage

Refs-938





🔲 DHAKA WEDNESDAY MAY 6, 2020, BAISHAKH 23, 1427 BS 🌒 starbusiness@thedailystar.net 🛽

## **TAMING CORONAVIRUS RAMPAGE**

## 8.5pc GDP growth set for fiscal 2020-21 on hopes of V-shaped recovery

#### **R**EJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is gunning for an 8.5 per cent GDP growth next fiscal year in the hope the economy would be springing back to a higher expansion trajectory once the coronavirus outbreak has been quelled.

The government is expecting a V-shaped recovery in fiscal 2020-21 after its hopes of



pulling off an 8.2 per cent gross domestic product output this fiscal year were shattered because of the pandemic, said an official of the finance ministry.

A V-shaped recovery involves a sharp decline in economic output followed by a sharp rise back to its previous peak.

The International Monetary Fund also projected a V-shaped recovery for Bangladesh,

saying the GDP growth would be 2 per cent this year, the lowest since 1988, before recording its highest-ever expansion of 9.5 per cent in 2021.

The new growth target was disclosed to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina vesterday in a meeting with a finance ministry team led by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal at the premier's official residence.

The next budget and the implementation of various stimulus packages announced by the government to pull the economy out of the wreckage thanks to the public health crisis were also discussed at the meeting.

An 8.5 per cent GDP growth target is within the sight of the economy as the stunning collapse this fiscal year was not for any fundamental reason but a public health emergency, the official said.

"So, once the crisis is over, the economy will charge ahead in full steam as in the past," he added

Bangladesh clocked the highest economic growth in Asia in 2019.

Both the government and the central bank have so far declared 18 stimulus packages worth Tk 95,619 crore to tackle the economic fallout from the pandemic. The packages are equivalent to 3.5 per cent of the country's GDP.



The typically bustling Shapla Square in Motijheel, located near the centre of Dhaka, is gradually seeing traffic and crowd back after wearing a deserted look for the best part of the past five weeks. The photo was taken yesterday.

## How should a budget during a pandemic look like?



#### SOHEL PARVEZ

The devastation of searing coronavirus all over the globe has called for extraordinary measures from governments worldwide. And Bangladesh is no exception.

And it is under the tall shadows of the minuscular virus that the finance ministry has set out to frame the fiscal measures for the next fiscal year, set to take effect from July 1.

The need of the hour is policymakers come out of their known territories and typical drawing board to take the economy back to its high-growth trajectory

To get a read of what should get top



consistently as a percentage of the total budget, although there has been demand from various quarters to increase it to ensure food security of the nation.

Allocation to agriculture -- including fisheries and livestock, land, water and environment -- declined to 5.42 per cent of the total proposed budget for fiscal 2019-20. In fiscal 2017-18, the sector's share was 6.1 per cent of the budget.

This year, the call becomes louder as the fear of famine for the pandemic is growing, with many countries restricting exports.

"Food security is not in immediate danger but we should not let our attention shift away - global markets, including the Indian market, cannot be relied upon any longer. We also need to support domestic cultivation of other food items we import like onions," Murshid said.

Agriculture should be given a big

## **BB** orders longer banking hours

FIROZ AHMED

#### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The central bank yesterday instructed banks to extend their banking hours to 2:30 pm from 1 pm from May 10 in preparation gradually resuming economic activities, which have been put on an induced coma to flatten the curve on coronavirus.

Banks will have to keep open all their branches in the capital's Motijheel and Dilkusha areas and Chattogram's Agrabad and Khatungonj.

Branches that are yet

billing in the Tk 550,000 crore-budget for fiscal 2020-21, The Daily Star asked seven economists and all but one said cited the health sector.

Providing livelihood support to the poor and low-income people to prevent them from hunger came second, followed by ensuring enough investment in agriculture to ensure food security as dependence on the international market might cost the nation a lot in times of need.

And all of them wanted the government to trim vanity and least urgent projects under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) so that the current crisis can be overcome by optimum use of resources.

"Bangladesh has never framed a budget in such an uncertain environment since its independence," said Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

While there was scarcity just after independence, there had been no such uncertainty.

"So the priority would be to win the war against coronavirus to restart the economy," he said, adding that the infection rate is still increasing in Bangladesh and is yet to hit a point of inflection.

He cited public health experts and said 20,000 tests should be done daily to contain the disease.

"We are at risk. So we will need a clear strategy and work plan for increased testing, contact tracing and isolation. Based on this, we need to estimate resource and the financial requirement to do the job. We have to do it. There is no scope of a trade-off here.'

These are preconditions to restart the economy.

"It should not be seen vaguely and you have to give attention to every single detail and prepare the budget,"

#### Hussain added.

Health must be at the centre of all efforts for at least the next six to eight months, said KAS Murshid, director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

"It is vitally important that we do not let the contagion get out of hand."

A large-scale health debacle will demoralise the public, cause panic and make it difficult for the economy to be restored.

"Without some kind of minimum confidence level among the public that they can get treatment if they get infected, it will be difficult to open up the economy on many fronts. Thus, we will need to give health and the health-related economy our highest priority this year.'

The need of the hour now is to improve the delivery of public health services and access of citizens to testing and treatment.

Mass testing must begin rapidly.

"Many countries are doing this, including Senegal, using cheap kits. If we can produce it domestically, it would be best," he added.

#### Policy Dialogue (CPD).

"Our capacity now seems like a drop in the ocean," she said, adding that the health sector never received due attention from policymakers.

Public financing as a percentage of GDP has been declining since 2011 and stood at 0.68 per cent in 2015, showed the Bangladesh National Health Accounts (BHNA) 1997-2015. It stood just above Pakistan amongst all the SAARC countries.

Negligence to developing healthcare Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute (PRI) of

sector should be done," he said.

immediate caretaker administration.

he added.

system, said Fahmida Khatun, to the union levels, said Salehuddin government's expenditure on the executive director of the Centre for Ahmed, a former governor of the agriculture sector has been shrinking

Bangladesh Bank.

Because erosion of health leads to erosion of income," he said, while also recommending the introduction of health insurance.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

This is another area that should get priority. Hussain said livelihood support to vulnerable people who cannot afford to not to work is vital apart from addressing the health emergency.

"Social protection is complementary to each other," he said recommending cash transfer to poor through bank accounts instead of providing them food

Rahman said the lockdown and squeeze of income opportunity have created a group of new poor apart from the existing poor. It should get top priority, he said.

The poor cannot survive without assistance in the form of relief or employment, Murshid said, while calling for transfer via the mobile

## AGRICULTURE FOR FOOD

emphasis, Hussain said, while calling for adequate inputs, machinery, credit and incentive for farmers.

Crop, fisheries, poultry and dairy are important from the perspective of nutrition and inputs should be made available. Credit also needs to be easy and available to farmers, he said.

#### SUPPORT TO COTTAGE, MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (CMSMEs)

Budgetary measures are needed so that CMSMEs, a source of livelihood for tens of thousands of people, can start operations, Hussain said, while suggesting easy access to credit for the ventures.

'SME restoration has to be very important as we will face a big problem with returnee migrant workers. We should think of how to utilise the human resources," Rahman said.

Importance should be given to job creation and increasing purchasing power, Ahmed said.

"These are more necessary than focusing on growth," he added.

#### EFFECTIVE AND TRANSPARENT IMPLEMENTATION OF STIMULUS PACKAGES

A transparent mechanism of the stimulus package is needed, said Selim Raihan, executive director of South Asian Network on Economic Modelling.

The main thrust of the next fiscal year should be given to revival of the economy by managing it during the crisis period and preparing a recovery plan for the post-crisis period, he added.

Effective implementation of the nearly Tk 100,000 crore stimulus packages is imperative, according to Mansur.

The package also needs to increase the government's stake in terms of burden-sharing to reduce pressure on banks, he added

to be brought under the online coverage will have to remain open until further instruction, according to a BB notice.

addition, the In Bangladesh Bank also asked lenders to keep open at least one of their branches in every upazila.

The BB asked banks to keep open their authorised dealer branches settling foreign for exchange transactions in metropolitan or divisional cities.

Bank employees will have to stay put at branches until 3:30 pm every working day to complete their official tasks. They will get a break of 15 minutes for Zuhr prayers from 1:15 pm to 1:30 pm.

Health and safety guidelines provided by the World Health Organisation must be maintained in the branches.

Banks have been giving financial services on a limited scale since March 29 as per the central bank instruction amid the countrywide general shutdown.

However, the curtailed banking hours have led to customers flocking the bank branches, disregarding the social distancing rule needed to safeguard oneself from coronavirus contagion.

The latest instructions will give a boost to the country's business activities, the BB notice said.

## WB to redirect funds from sluggish projects for budget support

#### **REJAUL KARIM BYRON**

The World Bank has decided to free up funds from three ongoing but slow-moving projects and relaxed conditions to allow Bangladesh to secure \$250 million in budget support as part of its efforts to help the country stave off financial ruins.

Bangladesh was supposed to get the

this year, but now the Washington-based multilateral lender has brought forward the date to make the funds available by May.

Some \$160 million would be re-routed from the three projects, said an official of the Economic Relations Division.

funds in budgetary support in September negotiation on May 14 and the funds may be available within a couple of days of the meeting, he added.

Bangladesh desperately needs the funds as it has unveiled 18 stimulus packages amounting to Tk 95,619 crore to pull various sectors of the economy out of the coronavirus-induced slump The WB and the government would sit for and protect the poor and newly

unemployed.

Another \$100 million would come from the WB's IDA-19, the current round of the International Development Association, one extreme poverty in the world's poorest countries

To make the budget support available, the WB has gone one step further: it has

agreed to relax conditions related to the reforms that Bangladesh had to be put in place before availing the funds.

The reforms relate to setting up childcare of the largest sources of funding for fighting centre at the export processing zones and amending the Company Act.

The Washington-based multilateral lender has already allocated \$100 million to Bangladesh for health services.

facilities in the public sector has resulted in such a crisis of today, said Bangladesh.

"Whatever is needed for the health

Policy and institutional reforms are also needed, said Hossain Zillur Rahman, a former adviser to an

A big budget is also needed for secondary cities like municipalities so that they can provide health services,

A total overhaul of the health The pandemic has exposed the sector is needed to ensure all sorts

SECURITY dismal state of the public healthcare of modern healthcare facilities up Until this outgoing fiscal year, the

financial service platform. **INCREASED INVESTMENT IN** 



# BUSINESS

TAMING CORONAVIRUS RAMPAGE

## Foreign exchange reserves pulled towards riptide

#### **AKM ZAMIR UDDIN**

The country's foreign exchange reserve will face trouble in the days ahead as both the export earnings and remittance are now maintaining a declining trend due to the ongoing economic fallout from the global coronavirus pandemic.

Foreign exchange reserves yesterday stood at \$33.09 billion, enough to settle import payments for nearly seven months, according to data from the central bank.

But the reserve is not good enough given the impending rainy days, experts said.

Although the import bills have shrunk in size as well in recent months, this will not bring any respite to the reserves as both remittances and exports, the two major sources of foreign currency, have drastically declined.

In April, remittance hit a 34-month low of \$1.08 billion, down 25 per cent from a year earlier

April's inflows take fiscal 2019-20's tally to \$14.86 billion, up 11.77 per cent year-on-year.

The country earlier expected that remittance would surpass the \$19-billion mark this fiscal year on the back of the 2 per cent cash incentive introduced by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal in his maiden budget to encourage migrant workers to send home money through the official channels. But now the target looks unlikely to be back.

fulfilled, which will be a big blow to the reserves.

Export earnings in March declined 18.29 per cent year-on-year to \$2.73 billion due to a slump in shipments of apparel products, the country's main export item, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau.

March's receipts take the export earnings from the first nine months of the fiscal year to \$28.97 billion, missing the periodic target by 14.52 per cent.

Although the EPB has yet to release the export figure for April, earnings seem to have declined drastically due to the ongoing shutdown in the majority of the export destinations.

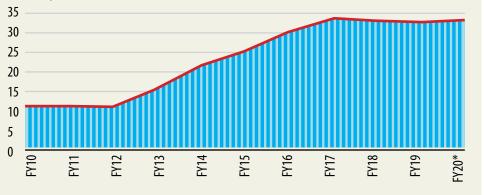
Both the export and remittance will maintain the ongoing negative trend in the next few months, so this is a crucial period for the central bank to handle its foreign exchange reserves, said Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

"Reserve is the last resort for any economy to tackle the economic meltdown. Considering this, the central bank should cut back on its foreign currency sales to banks.

Countries in North America, Europe and the Middle East will take a good while to restructure their economies. If those economies do not rebound, Bangladesh's exports and remittance will not bounce

#### **FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES OVER THE DECADE** (in \$b)

#### \*as of May 4; SOURCE: BB



Besides, thousands of Bangladeshi workers are waiting to come home, which will have a further adverse impact on the rural economy. The lower import is not much of a comfort for the reserves, Hussain added.

The settlement of letters of credit, generally known as actual import, in terms of value, fell nearly 9 per cent year-on-year to \$4.54 billion in January.

Import in the first seven months of fiscal 2019-20 stood at \$32 billion, down 4.43 per cent year-on-year.

The central bank has not prepared the import figures after January due to the ongoing disruption in economic activities all over the world

A good number of central bankers predicted that the import payments might decline significantly during the period.

The oil price in the global market has declined rapidly in the wake of the pandemic, giving a breathing space to the country's balance of payments, Hussain said. "But this will not help keep stable the headquartered ACU.

reserve. So, banks will have to stop the import of luxurious products immediately."

Besides, the government should try to manage soft loans and grants from multilateral donor agencies to boost the reserves, Hussain said.

The declining export and remittance in May and June will create a severe strain on the reserves, said Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

Salehuddin Ahmed, a former governor of the central bank, echoed the same.

He suggested banks stop the import of capital machinery to tackle the shortage of foreign currency.

"There is no need to expand investment in the industrial sector right now. Rather, we have to protect the existing industrial plants and factories from the recession," Ahmed said.

The central bank yesterday paid ACU \$650 million to settle payments for imports, which will bring down the reserves to less than \$32.50 billion within a day or two.

The ACU is an arrangement by which the participants settle payments for intra-regional transactions among the participating central banks on a net multilateral basis.

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are members of the Tehran-

## Ban relaxed for non-essential product delivery by e-commerce

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The commerce ministry yesterday allowed online businesses to deliver non-essential products like fashion products such as dresses, electronic goods and books as the government loosened lockdowns on the occasion of Eid-ul Fitr.

It also allowed opening restaurants to sell iftar and sehri items for takeaway services and home delivery. However, the bar on the dine-in at restaurants continues, the ministry said

new approaches in marketing

Smartphones to rule in the post-pandemic era

Mobile phone makers to recalibrate strategies to stay afloat



storage rental waiver deadline DWAIPAYAN BARUA

Chittagong Port The Authority (CPA) yesterday extended the deadline for full waiver on the storage rent for import load containers by 12 more days to May 16 after its two previous attempts failed to decongest the port.

CPA extends

This is the third time the port authority has offered such benefit to the importers in the last one month in an attempt to reduce the acute container congestion stemming from poor delivery amidst the

their strategies and focus more on online channels for the distribution and marketing of

their products. In recent times, online sales comprised less than 2 per cent of the total sales, while the rate is more than 50 per cent in the Indian market that sells about 26 crore units of handsets a year, Haque added.

"Online outlets should grow a better sense of responsibility and come up with innovations," said Farhan Rashid, head of business at the Bangladesh chapter of HMD Global Oy, the exclusive licensee of Nokia phones.

Vendors will have to look for

in a circular. Online food

deliverymen have been given all clearance to carry food times to the doorsteps of customers. They, however, can't enter restaurants.

The government also extended the time duration for the delivery of products by online ventures. The e-commerce firms can now deliver goods from 6 am to 10 pm, which was earlier from 8 am to 6 pm.

The commerce ministry called for ensuring social distancing and maintaining hygiene.

The move from the ministry came following a request from the e-commerce industry, said Abdul Wahed Tomal, general secretary of the e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh. E-commerce firms have been allowed to deliver products across the country.

Online shopping has drastically fallen because of the coronavirus pandemic, but this segment can be used to ensure social distancing and can be helpful to stop the spread of the deadly virus.

and distribution while spending lavishly on research and development to incorporate new features and designs that best suit the necessities of the postcoronavirus era.

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

As a matter of course, the

coronavirus pandemic is leaving

new lessons for all spectra of life

and across all sectors. The mobile

The needs emerging due to the

novel virus are expected to change

the entire handset business

dynamics as people are now

using their devices for various

unconventional purposes like

holding office meetings, taking

academic classes and seeking

healthcare, said top assemblers

Manufacturers will go for

and importers.

phone industry is no exception.

The handset vendors said the second quarter of the year will be the worst in the history of the country's mobile device business, but this will leave a word of warning that could help them grow further in the days to come. Sales of mobile devices including feature phones and smartphones were almost zero in April because of the government-announced holidays and lockdowns put in place since March 26, vendors said.

Subsequently, sales in the first four months of the year have been 15-20 per cent short of the target but the overall impact depends on how long the pandemic will linger, said Mesbah Uddin, chief marketing officer at Fair Group that assembles Samsung mobile devices in Bangladesh.

"People are now using a wide array of digital services, which give us a glimmer of hope that smartphone sales will jump in the coming days."

Amid the growing demand for online-based services to head off the risks of coronavirus infections, a

big number of users will shift from feature phones to smart devices.

'And if this happens, the mobile phone industry will be one of the biggest in the country," Mesbah added. The industry sold about 3.11 crore

imported and locally assembled handsets last year, of which 25 per cent were smartphones.

Smartphones will account for 40 per cent of the total sales of mobile devices in the next one year, said Rezwanul Haque, chief executive officer of Transsion

brand smartphones and itel feature phones.

Though we are facing some headwinds, the pandemic could prove a game-changer," he said, adding that once normalcy returns, the next one year will be excellent for the handset industry. People are now conducting office meetings via mobile devices and increasingly using smart devices for entertainment, bill payments and healthcare services.

"In the coming days, features related to healthcare and human Bangladesh that makes Techno resources management will be

incorporated in the smartphones as people are getting used to such services at a faster pace," said Haque, also the former general secretary of the Bangladesh Mobile Phone Importers Association.

Transsion was making five lakh pieces of phones every month and was planning to expand operations, but their production came to a halt, like the other mobile assembly factories in Bangladesh, for the shutdown.

To cope with the emerging industry situation, insiders said vendors will recalibrate soon as possible.

some ways to reduce prices and improve the service quality in the post-coronavirus days as people are expected to have less to spend

on non-essentials. "We should not only sell products but also improve services such that we can offer a complete solution to customers," he added.

Eid-ul-Fitr and Pahela Baishakh are two of their peak seasons but these are going to generate depressing sales this year, which is why the overall annual sales may witness a 30-40 per cent cut, Rashid said.

Handset assemblers and importers said they registered a 15 per cent decline in sales in the January-March quarter of 2020 from a year earlier.

Companies' digital readiness could be a major factor in the post-coronavirus era as firms with strong digital presence would do better in future, said Ziauddin Chowdhury, country general manager of Xiaomi in Bangladesh. Industry experts said flexible payment options like equal monthly instalment and microcredit facilities, which are yet to flourish in Bangladesh, may open a window of opportunities in future and hence a regulatory framework should be readied as

countrywide shutdown.

"As the government holiday has been extended up to May 16, we have also extended the waiver period," CPA Chairman . Rear Admiral SM Abul Kalam Azad told The Daily Star.

He, however, warned that the deadline would not be extended beyond May 16.

On April 4, the CPA for the first time announced the waiver. But seeing from poor response the importers, the CPA withdrew the waiver on April 20.

On April 28, it reintroduced the waiver for a week until May 4.

The import containers that arrived in the country the nationwide since general holiday began on March 26 would be eligible for the waiver on condition of taking the delivery during the extended period.

The waiver will also be applicable for the containers that entered the port four days before the holiday was announced to flatten the spread of the coronavirus.

## NBR to watch over Eid sales to check VAT dodging

#### SOHEL PARVEZ

The National Board of Revenue yesterday asked field offices dealing value-added taxes to monitor sales at restaurants and shops at malls and markets to ensure collection of the actual indirect tax.

The directive came after the government loosened rules for the shops in the markets and shopping centres so that they can be opened for limited hours on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, the biggest shopping season in Bangladesh.

In the directive, signed by NBR Member VAT Implementation and IT Md Jamal Hossain, the revenue watchdog said already some large shopping malls and shops have

#### reopened.

The administration asked revenue officials to remain active in monitoring the restaurants 11,7671 crore this fiscal year. Until March, it and shops that brought Tk 375 crore to the collected Tk 64,111 crore. state coffer in fiscal 2017-18.

The amount was less than 0.5 per cent of the total VAT and supplementary duty of Tk 78,694 crore collected in the year.

"The monitoring should be done through telephone, message, e-mail and social media," said the NBR, adding that required measures and social distancing should be maintained in case anyone is required to visit any restaurant or shop.

Also known as consumption tax paid by end consumers, VAT is the biggest source of revenue for the government.

The NBR has been assigned to collect Tk

Shops and shopping centres can be kept open from 10 am to 4 pm by ensuring physical distance inside shops, complying with other heath rules and ensuring hand sanitisers at the entrance as suggested by the health ministry, said the commerce ministry in a statement yesterday.

The commerce ministry also asked all shop owners and the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other chambers to take measures in this regard.



ZINA TASREEN

Shopping centres like Bashundhara City in the capital's Panthapath are set to open their doors again to capture Eid sales after remaining shut since March 26 to flatten the spread on coronavirus.

## The Paily Star FOUNDER EDITOR LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA WEDNESDAY MAY 6, 2020, BAISHAKH 23, 1427 BS

## Reopening plan may be disastrous if not handled right

#### Govt should tighten safety rules, expand testing to support reopening

S economic pain from the coronavirus lockdown increasingly bites the country, the government has L L decided to reopen the economy partially. Starting May 10, shopping malls, all types of shops and other businesses will be allowed to function from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm every day. The directives came hours after the government extended the ongoing general "holiday" from May 7 to May 16. This is the first step in unwinding the countrywide lockdown initiatives introduced on March 26. The economic argument of the decision is hard to ignore: we are in the midst of what the IMF has described as the "Great Lockdown" that could create the worst global recession in nearly a century. For Bangladesh, this has had a debilitating effect so far: over a crore people have arguably lost their income opportunities. A vast number of individuals and families are facing risks of starvation or worse. So, some sort of a plan to phase into a reopening was expected.

But from a medical point of view, if not followed with supportive measures, the reopening plan may spell disaster for us. Experts say the health cost of a reopening could be huge, especially at a time when Bangladesh is about to enter the peak period of the coronavirus infection. The number of confirmed cases in the country has already crossed 10,000. The numbers of deaths and new infections are rising by leaps and bounds, and we have already seen that after reopening of some factories, some workers tested Covid-19 positive. What will happen if large numbers of people across the country come out on the streets and visit potential hubs of the outbreak, such as shopping centres, or join work at factories? Caution must be taken before we jump the gun to ease the lockdown. Unfortunately, the government's decision seems broad-based as instead of reopening the economy bit by bit, city by city, and business by business, it allows all establishments to reopen. Also, it doesn't provide any solution to cushion the fallout of a reopening such as mass gatherings, neither does it address concerns about the gross violations of social distancing regulations that we are already witnessing.

If the economy must reopen, a sensible decision will be to take supportive measures such as enforcing specific guidelines for each kind of business-and criminalising violations by business/factory owners-as well as having special directives for at-risk zones. More importantly, given the spike in new cases it is likely to cause, the government should ramp up testing and isolation measures. Countries that have gone for easing lockdowns so far, did so only after a significant drop in coronavirus cases. The opposite happened in our case. We must remain extremely vigilant.

## Pandemic and the unscrupulous

Govt's economic incentive must not be exploited



running over three million. The deadly virus is reported to be mutating, with no prospect yet of getting it under control. The comity of nations, both mighty and weak, stand haplessly helpless before a mortal threat. The US as the most powerful country, militarily and economically, is suffering the most. This virus has condemned the whole human machine to a juddering halt.

ORONA-

VIRUS

is razing

Is this moment not apposite for questioning the conventional security paradigm? If security means freedom from want and from fear, for citizens and nation-states alike, we all have to agree that humanity is facing its greatest insecurity in modern times. What is the value of the global defence establishment worth trillions of dollars, engaging the best brains to invent and produce lethal weapons that can obliterate nations and civilisations? Now the military might is meant for establishing supremacy/ hegemony, although in crises like this, the military usually helps the civil authorities in many ways. But, at what cost?

The latest trend shows global defence spending is rising by almost 4 percent a year since the last decade. In 2019, the US remained the largest defence spender, with a yearly spending of USD 732 billion. The defence budget increase in the US of almost 7 percent was the largest in ten years, and has increased ever since Trump took office. US investments in weapons procurement and weapons research and development alone were larger than China's total defence budget of USD 260 billion, followed by India (USD 71 billion). Knowing full well these limits, even many low-income economies invest much more in military security than in education or health.

Such military spending, most of which is unproductive, happens at a time when the world witnesses unseen levels of inequality, environmental degradation and climate destabilisation. There are new surges in nationalism, populism, conflict, trade wars, and mounting public health threats. The pre Covid-19 preoccupations with narrowly conceived traditional issues like state security, state/non-state

terrorism, or economic competition, are not unimportant, but we have entered into a "new normal" in our individual and collective lives. This is the time for some collective soul-searching on what national and global priorities should be, with limited resources. If security means primarily the provision of human wellbeing, and protection from different vulnerabilities, what kind of a security paradigm can supply these desired ends?

EDITORIAL

A report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) claims that climate change affects the social and environmental determinants of health. Climate change is now increasingly recognised by major national security agencies as a preeminent security threat,

precisely due to its role as a "threat

multiplier" that increases the risks of

of millions and future pandemics, by

amplifying disease vectors. In a hard-

hitting report published by medical

to overwhelm our health systems.

who get enough to eat.

Another research shows rising carbon

dioxide levels in the atmosphere are

the risk of malnutrition even for those

There is one thing that almost all

social disruption, conflict, water and food

insecurity, economic crisis, displacement

journal The Lancet, scientists and health

experts concluded that increasing climate

impacts—from heat waves to worsening

storms, floods and fires, already threaten

reducing nutrients in cereal crops, raising

health shocks have in common: they hit the poorest and the most vulnerable, the hardest. Acting as a poverty multiplier, they push families into extreme poverty when they cannot afford health care. At least half of the world's population does not enjoy full coverage for the most basic health services. When health disasters hit, which would occur more frequently in a world scarred by climate change, global inequality is reinforced. The poor would be much more adept in coping with and recovering from the lasting effects of storms and floods, if they have a resilient and well-resourced health system in place

Against this fact, the Trump administration has aggressively rolled back not just on the pledge to reduce



**Covid-19 challenges** 

#### PHOTO: COLLECTED

carbon emissions, but has axed the National Security Council's global health security office, sought to cut funding to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and has now threatened to cut funding for the World Health Organization.

However, coronavirus has opened a portal into a new world, presenting opportunities to reframe our vision. The following are a few areas I feel can be remoulded into the "new normal" world. First, we need a change in mindset of national and global political and military leaders in reframing the new security paradigm. Holding on to centuriesold lens of sovereignty predicated on a zero-sum game in inter-state relations

cannot help us to deal with emerging global challenges. For this, we have to get multilateralism back on a firm saddle. Political scientist Joseph Nye cogently argues that while the US has led in the production of global public goods since World War II, now global cooperation is needed, because power has become a positive-sum game for achieving global goals.

Second, the change in mindsets may not come overnight, even after this pandemic. So we need increased investments in liberal, health, environment and ethics education. In a democracy, leaders are elected by voters with an average understanding of societal issues. So the task should be to enhance the level of knowledge and awareness and to inform the average voters better, as cosmopolitan citizens.

Third, coronavirus has caught the global health systems totally unaware. All nations must now invest adequately in preparedness and prevention of pandemics. This will require more medical research and development. Promoting universal health coverage must be an effective way to reduce the long-term health impacts from future pandemics, and increase our resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change.

Fourth, the USD 100 billion pledge by the rich countries as climate finance should be realised by this year, with 50 percent of the money going for adaptation for the most vulnerable. As Dr Saleemul Huq argued in a column in this daily, the stimulus packages flowing in trillions now, all over the world, should focus on supporting the poor and most vulnerable in society to enhance their resilience, and to invest in cleaner production to reduce all kinds of pollution. In other words, the support to resuscitate the economy after the pandemic should promote health, equity, and environmental protection. We must recognise that restoring climate stability is our ultimate security.

For all these measures, at this time of economic crisis, no new money can be mobilised. But a chunk of the massive budgets for yearly military spending can be sliced off easily to invest in productive sectors, to ensure and enhance real human, national and global security. At this critical moment, we only need willing leaders to effect such a security paradigm.

Mizan R Khan is Deputy Director of ICCCAD at Independent University, Bangladesh and Programme Director of LDC Universities Consortium on Climate Change (LUCCC)

-

Holding the next global climate

NE notices a malicious tendency in some unprincipled and dishonest people to exploit and misuse relief measures of the government, particularly during times of crisis. We have seen how food grains meant for the poor have been misappropriated for profiteering. How, allegedly, PPE masks procured by the government failed to meet the required medical standards. And now we have the unscrupulous businessmen scampering for loans, taking advantage of a government policy.

The government as part of its incentive package to the businesses and industrial sector during these hard times, had announced the stay of all interest on loans between April 1 and May 31. This is in addition to the decision of the government not to declare any borrower a defaulter for being unable to pay back the loan, till June 1. But as soon as this was announced, there was a glut of applications for loans, which is in stark contrast to the situation in the previous month when all kinds of investments by the business sector were put on hold in the face of the present economic fallout and of a very uncertain future. And interestingly, many of those seeking loans are previous defaulters

We believe that such a timely measure is meant to help those industries and businesses that have been thrust in very dire straits during the pandemic. And that includes the banking sector too, who are struggling with the downtrend in borrowing in recent times. Therefore, banks must exercise strict scrutiny to ensure that those who are habitual defaulters and who thrive on bank loans- and, from time to time on the central bank's magnanimity to either reschedule or get a most favourable term of repayment of loans-do not exploit a noble measure of the government meant exclusively to overcome the crisis period. We are glad that a caveat has been imposed as a result of the sudden rush for loans, which requires the banks to provide the credit support to the borrowers, given their outstanding loans are until March 31. This must be honestly followed.



**Proper use of PPE** 

Are we using PPE in the right manner? I have heard from my peers who are serving as doctors in various hospitals that their authorities are compelling them to reuse PPE due to scarcity. But if that is done—despite it being disinfected—it beats the actual purpose of preventing the spread of the virus. As a result, a large number of doctors are purchasing their own gear from various online stores, and we are not even sure whether those PPE meet the actual safety standards. Also, there are no proper instructions about the disposal of contaminated PPE. It is time we took the proper use and disposal of PPE seriously, or else the consequences can be severe.

Sohel Ahmed, by email

## change talks

had written POLITICS OF in a previous column about the fact that the next Conference of Parties (COP26) under the United Nations Framework Convention on SALEEMUL HUQ Climate Change (UNFCCC), which

was to have been held in November 2020 in Glasgow, Scotland with the United Kingdom as COP26 President, had to be postponed to 2021 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. I would now like to provide some ideas for the COP26 presidency as well for Bangladesh to consider undertaking, so that even though COP26 is postponed, it doesn't necessarily mean a loss of momentum.

The first point is that despite the best of intentions, it is unlikely that COP26 will be held in early 2021 or even in the middle of the year, as the situation has to get back to normal not just in the UK but all around the world, from where the delegates will be flying into Glasgow. Hence, we need to be looking for ways to make progress by using virtual meetings as much as possible.

While using virtual meeting platforms as well as social media are proving quite effective in certain things, such as sharing information and campaigning, it is not a suitable format for decision-making across nearly 200 governments. Much of the way that the negotiations are conducted to get successful outcomes at every COP involves informal meetings on the side between some key delegates and countries to resolve a contentious issue, which can then be brought back to the plenary session for formal adoption.

The formal plenary sessions are only used for delegates from each country to make their statement without resolving their differences. The real negotiations take place in informal meetings where contentious issues get hammered out by contending parties. Without the opportunity for such informal meetings on the side, there is almost no likelihood of agreements being reached on major contentious issues. For the formal part of the negotiations, we will almost certainly have to wait for when the delegates from all countries are able to meet in Glasgow next year.

However, not everything needs to be

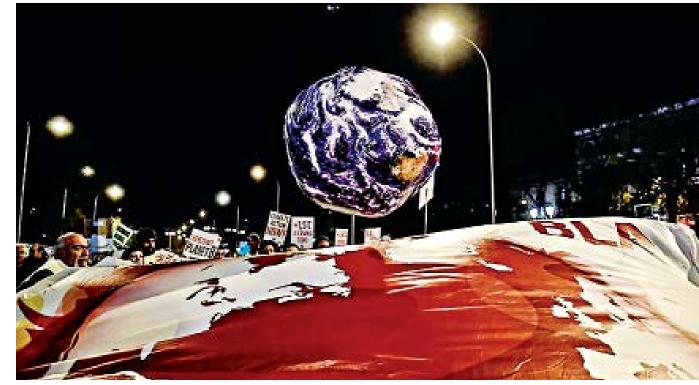
put on hold until they do meet. Many issues related to the implementation of previous agreements and decisions need not be further negotiated, but can go straight into implementation without waiting for the COP. It should be mentioned that the Paris Agreement made in COP21 in 2015 in Paris has already given all countries the blueprint for taking actions on both mitigation as well as adaptation.

On mitigation, ambitions have to be enhanced to try to reach the agreed goal of keeping global temperatures below two degrees centigrade and if possible,

adaptation can also be taken forward in practice at multiple levels—from vulnerable regions of the world like the Pacific Ocean, South Asia and Africa to the level of individual countries and, within each country, at the local level in the most vulnerable communities. The UNFCCC has already initiated the process for all countries to undertake National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and share their experiences with each other. This process does not have to wait for the COP but can be carried out at local and national levels, even under the current lockdown conditions.

of the CVF during COP26 and there is a great opportunity to discuss how the UK, as host of COP26, could collaborate with Bangladesh to enable vulnerable countries to get a high level platform at the COP. Perhaps a joint meeting with Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the opening day of the COP26 could be arranged.

It is interesting to recall that under the chairmanship of President Hilda Heine of the Marshall Islands, the CVF held their meeting as a virtual summit, rolling across the globe with different heads of state coming online in their own time



#### A balloon in the shape of the Earth is pictured during a mass climate protest during the COP25 summit in Madrid, December 6, 2019.

under 1.5 degrees. While the latter target is getting out of reach with each passing day, it is still possible if all countries take appropriate actions to wean themselves off of fossil fuels, such as coal and petroleum. The current crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic is already slowing the use of such fossil fuels and ways to return to normal without these fuels have to be explored immediately.

The other part of the Paris Agreement on developing a global goal on

In this context, it is good to note that Bangladesh is about to undertake the NAP for Bangladesh after a delayed start. We thus have another opportunity to develop an outstanding product based on our extensive experience in adaptation alreadv

Finally, we can also initiate the activities of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), which Bangladesh will chair for the next two years. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be the chair PHOTO AFP/CRISTINA QUICLER

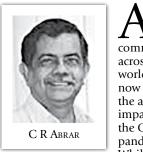
zone for a couple of hours each. Some of the pre-COP26 meetings may choose to emulate this example if they wish.

The bottom line is that tackling climate change remains an important global issue, despite the current Covid-19 pandemic, and ways have to be found to tackle both at the same time using some out of the box thinking.

Saleemul Huq is Director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development at the Independent University Bangladesh.

#### **OPINION**

## Ensuring protection of ethnic and linguistic minorities



communities across the world are now facing the adverse impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. While

LMOST

virologists and the pharmaceutical industry race against time to discover the right vaccine to bring the contagion under control; governments, public representatives, community leaders and civil society activists are grappling to minimise its negative outfall on the people. With no sign of receding in the foreseeable future, the pandemic has begun to take a disproportionate toll on those who live on the margins of society.

The official policy of lockdown to ensure "social distancing" has hit hard those who live hand to mouth and depend on wage labour. The announcement of the extension of the lockdown has triggered protests from those who face starvation and have largely remained outside the ambit of the government's humanitarian assistance programmes.

On April 20, hundreds of people from the Shaotal community of Chilagazi Union of Dinajpur Sadar upazila, who lost employment opportunities as a result of the pandemic, blocked roads and staged protests demanding government assistance. Davs later in a similar protest, more than a hundred members of the Urdu speaking community took position in front of the Government's Women College in the capital's Pallabi area. The mask wearing protestors, including women and children, held placards that read "Help Murapara camp residents". On April 30, at a meeting of elders of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) presided over by the Chakma Raja, it was noted that despite efforts of the government, "contextual needs of remote and marginalised communities remained unfulfilled".

The above snippets of discontent are essentially manifestations of concern of three different minority groups located in the northern, central and south-eastern parts of the country. Despite the dissimilarities

in their lived experiences in the Covid-19 reality, the vast majority of the members of the three communities are tied by their feelings of vulnerability. They have no work, no income, no savings to fall back on, and face starvation and malnutrition, making themselves and their loved ones susceptible to diseases, at a time when they confront the deadly virus. They are in dire need of support to maintain their subsistence.

Reports from the hill districts reveal that people are particularly hard hit, as the lean months of April and May were preceded by poor harvests in two successive years. This made them susceptible to intense food insecurity. News reports note that many poor Mro, Khumi, Tripura and Marma households are surviving only on potatoes. The extension of the lockdown exacerbated the plight of the pineapple and watermelon growers. Their dreams of making a copious profit from the bumper yield of the year has suddenly come crashing down. Weeks earlier, a pair of pineapples that was sold at Tk 30-40 now fetches a meagre Tk 10-15. The additional worry for many is how they would repay or service the loans that they have incurred, often at high interests.

The outbreak of measles in a number of areas has already taken a toll on children. On March 28, the Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum and Kapaeeng Foundation reported hundreds of children were affected in the Sajek valley of Rangamati, the Lama region of Bandarban and Dighinala of Khagrachhari. Community leaders allege that these children were left out of the government vaccination programme. In response, the civil surgeon and the local administration claimed that it was the local people's "superstition" that held up the vaccination programme.

Allegations have been made that public assistance in the CHT has mainly reached those who live next to main roads and riverways, and not many efforts have been made to reach those in remote areas. Activists note that although health is the subject matter of the Hill District Council, the Councils have been effectively ignored by the Deputy Commissioner's office. Their apex body, the CHT Regional Council, was not assigned with a meaningful role.



#### This aerial view of Geneva Camp shows how difficult social distancing can be in such a congested space.

Lack of coordination among agencies involved in humanitarian assistance has also been identified as a problem. The pandemic has gravely affected

the indigenous peoples of the plains as well. Along with their peers in other adibashi communities, members of the Garo community of Madhupur and Fulbaria upazilas of Mymensingh and of Srimongol of Sylhet; Shaotals of Gobindaganj, Gaibandha; Orao and Pahraria in Rajshahi, Banais of Netrokona, Sherpur; Hajangs of northeast Bangladesh and Mundas of Sundarbans in Shatkhira district have been left without any earnings since the outbreak of the pandemic. In normal circumstances, these communities can barely maintain their subsistence by working as wage labourers in the construction sector or brick kilns, pulling rickshaws or collecting and selling crabs, snails and fish. The suspension of economic activities and restrictions on movement imposed in the aftermath of Covid-19 has effectively wiped out their scope for earning. The actuality of the pandemic becomes patent when even beggars are deprived of alms for fear of the contagion.

A near universal grievance is the absence of any assistance from government and non-government quarters. Shaotals of Dinajpur alleged that they did not receive any assistance despite the fact that the local Union Council authorities have collected photocopies of their national identity cards.

The situation is no better for linguistic minorities-the camp dwelling, Urdu speaking community. The 116 camps and settlements located in different parts of the country house 300,000-400,000 people, the largest being the so-called Geneva camp in Mohammadpur with 30,000 residents. Residents of the camps work as barbers, butchers, rickshaw-pullers, carpenters, mechanics and in handicrafts. The relatively enterprising ones are engaged in running shops and small businesses. The suspension of economic activities has brought immense suffering to these people. The services of those who worked as domestic help, mostly women, have been terminated without compensation. Urdu poet Shamim Zamanvi of Al-Falah Bangladesh

PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

lamented—"for the first time I see camp dwellers begging". Camp dwellers have been robbed of their last precious possession by Covid-19, their sense of dignity.

Press reports highlight the propensity of camp dwellers to not abide by the shutdown guidelines such as staying indoors, wearing masks or regularly washing hands. The reality is that those affected by the shutdown, mostly men, have little option but to loiter in the streets. Their dwellings are too small and congested to stay indoors. "Maintaining social distance is a dream for us; we have so little space to live in," notes one resident of Geneva camp. The summer heat makes it more difficult. Masks costs money. Another resident asks: "how can we protect ourselves if we cannot afford to buy masks, sanitisers and gloves?" Each tap of running water services hundreds of camp residents, if not thousands.

The camps continue to remain largely outside the purview of government and NGO assistance. "There's no one to help us, it's Allah on whom we depend",

bemoans an elderly lady in Town Hall camp. In some camps, the residents vehemently protest local commissioners' claims that they provided assistance. "If indeed such distribution had taken place, then the only beneficiaries must have been those who worked for his election, noted a community worker.

The Bally Star | 9

The camps are in dismal conditions. On an average, six to eight people live in 10x12 feet structures. Experts note that if precautionary measures are not taken, the camps could be hotspots for the spread of the virus. Recently, in a single week, 11 people have been reported to have died with conditions similar to coronavirus: fever, cough and asthma.

Lack of seriousness in controlling the spread of the virus is palpably demonstrated in a case involving two patients, residents of Block B and C of the Geneva Camp, who tested positive for coronavirus. In a report by the Gulf Today, lawyer-activist Khalid Hussain of the Council of Minorities asserted that two facilities, including the IEDCR which is dedicated to treat coronavirus cases, refused to admit them, declaring their condition "not critical".

All three minority groups discussed here meet the vulnerability criteria set by the Working Group on Regional Risk Communication and Community Engagement. They depend heavily on the informal economy; occupy areas prone to shocks; have inadequate access to social services or political influence; have limited capacities and opportunities to cope and adapt and have limited or no access to technologies. There is an urgent need to "give them priority assistance, and engage them in decision-making processes for response, recovery, preparedness, and risk reduction".

Covid-19 poses a serious challenge to those involved in framing policies and implementing programmes. Along with gearing up awareness programmes, there is an urgent need to acknowledge the special vulnerability of these minority groups and provide cash assistance to the neediest, set up adequate testing and treatment facilities in their close vicinity, and create conditions for their safe return to work.

..... C R Abrar is an academic.

## **CROSSWORD** BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS	30 Plentiful	9 Road-house
1 Capital of Italia	32 Sum	10 Composer
5 Lily of "Grace	33 Diner dessert	Rorem
and Frankie"	34 Scheduling aid	16 Cove
11 Captain of	38 Entirely	19 Broke
fiction	41 2017 Pixar film	20 River of Russ
12 Galahad's	42 Judged	21 Singer Seege
mother	43 Continental	22 Final, for one
13 Wee bites	coin	23 Bounce back
14 Number in a	44 Not nervous	28 Puget Sound
sum	45 Goblet part	city
15 Issue a		29 Lists of
statement	DOWN	candidates
17 History section	1 Chimed	30 Clumsy one
18 Accept without	2 River from	31 Chops up
question	Pittsburgh	35 Bonanza find
22 Lingerie item	3 Planned in detail	36 Lot unit
24 Extra	4 Ridiculous	37 Hotel unit
25 Earth-friendly	5 Blue hue	
prefix	6 Nostalgic songs	38 Writer Tarbel
26 Contrived	7 Zany	39 Pay stub line
27 Closes	8 Whopper, e.g.	40 Driving site

## Mobilising the spirit of Ramadan in the fight against Covid-19



Mir Aftabuddin Ahmed

and, in reality, a majority of Bangladeshis today, we have a unique opportunity to invest in our faith to collectively tackle the challenges posed by Covid-19. It goes without saying that this special month of fasting, prayer and community is going to be very different in 2020, compared to past instancessocial distancing measures mean that the festive nature of Ramadan will be absent in its traditional form. Nevertheless, with Ramadan calling Muslims to reflect on their faith, we have a moral obligation to stand by the most vulnerable in our society, on a scale larger than perhaps any other time in our lifetimes. Let us think of this as an opportunity to serve our faith, at a time when it matters the most.

ROM a

religious

of self-reflection,

Ramadan has

restraint and

altruism—and

being faced by daily wage earners

perspective,

In Islam, the idea of Ithaar translates to altruism—in simpler terms, the concept begs us as Muslims to prefer others over one self. Giving precedence to the other person, over individual wants, is something that is unrelentingly encouraged. In fact, specific occasions, like Ramadan, bring out the very best of Islamic altruism. And then of course, the concept of Zakaat comes into play—one of the five pillars of Islam, Zakaat is second only to Salat (Prayer) with respect to Quranic ranking of the pillars. In simpler words, the religious duty of alms-giving is treated as a civic obligation, and Muslims are expected to provide 2.5 percent of their total savings and wealth to the marginalised, poor and needy. This forms the very cornerstone of Islamic theologyand is a key duty which is promoted during Ramadan. Based on a person's total value of possessions, one could evaluate Zakaat as a form of mandatory taxation—a kind of individualised and discretionary fiscal policy measure used to enhance equitable wealth distribution within communities. When it comes to supporting measures to alleviate hunger and poverty, either through charitable measures or mandatory Zakaat initiatives, Muslims tend to be more altruistic during

the month of Ramadan—and during this unique phase when congregations are discouraged, personal restraint encouraged, and physical interactions always been a time with community members barred, our entire focus as Muslims must be directed towards supporting the fight against Covid-19, while practicing our faith. given the struggles

In fairness however, religious obligations often carry greater traction with older members of families-Ramadan has been no different in the past. Nevertheless, given the accentuation of digital technology and the eagerness of youth groups to support initiatives in the battle against the coronavirus phenomenon, younger generations have an equal opportunity to invest their time in a very different aspect of Islam—an aspect often underrepresented across the media.

On a personal note, I have joined a social movement called #BacharLorai (the fight to survive)-that is bringing together Bangladeshi expatriates (from Canada, Australia, USA and the UK), youth led initiatives, grassroots organisations and most importantly, Bangladeshi citizens, to do our bit in the fight against Covid-19. Our efforts are limited but directed towards Bangladesh, which is increasingly looking like a hotbed for disaster.

For some perspective, two months ago, two Bangladeshis came together to create Resource-Coordination Network Bangladesh (RCNB). During that time, a few of my expat friends and I were involved in a public beneficiary campaign called BacharLorai. A month into spreading public awareness, feeding daily wage earners, assisting vulnerable communities and standing together with the healthcare sector, the two groups came together as one organisation, RCNB, to start a social movement: #BacharLorai.

Looking back at our limited efforts. we successfully distributed healthcare masks to hospitals in Bangladesh, and raised funds for ongoing relief to feed daily wage earners who had lost their jobs to Covid-19 and for the penetration of public health messaging into rural communities. As we started to grow, the Network became stronger and #BacharLorai became dearer. From collaborations with reputed grassroots organisations to welcoming artists like Desiginify who contributed their talents to the cause, all our initiatives knowingly and unknowingly were operating in the very spirit of Ithaar as promoted in Islam. As we near the end of the second phase of our approach, we are now placing a renewed focus on mosques, orphanages and the socioeconomically disadvantaged to diversify our efforts towards helping out our brothers and sisters in this time of need. RCNB and #BacharLorai is but a small speck amidst thousands of on-theground efforts by Bangladeshis to do their bit—and Ramadan provides an excellent segue for youth groups in particular, to fundraise in the name of prioritising our moral obligations.

This brings us to my last point—it is imperative that youth groups and those fundraising during this time, use the spirit of Ramadan as a positive leverage

> *Expatriate communities* have the chance to give back to Bangladesh and recognise the privilege they have, by directing funds to organisations working in alleviating the struggles of communities at this *time—sponsor* iftars, support orphans or invest in any initiative you see fit. But contribute.

to acquiesce much needed tangible financial support, and direct these funds to communities which need it the most. Whether it be through *Zakaat* initiatives or charitable fundraisers, investing in messaging through the lens of Ramadan, in a country where religion has always played an important role, is perhaps the most credible mechanism via which we can raise funds. To put it in terms of numbers, only 15 percent of the total Bangladeshi workforce earn more than USD 6 per day. The lack of medical equipment across the board has been well covered by the media—the gross lack of appropriate policy-based focus on issues that matter, throughout our national history, including investing

in workers' insurance and an adept health infrastructure network, has made Bangladesh underprepared to face today's calamity. The Government cannot address Covid-19 on its own-and therefore, private citizens stepping up is the only way that we can ensure that our people have a future.

In hindsight, this very notion of giving and supporting one another, has made me feel closer to my faith than any other instances in my lifetime—Islamic teachings promote fundraising, charities and altruism, not as subsidiaries, but as fundamental aspects of our faith. I would urge youth groups in particular, to use the teachings of Islam and the values ingrained in Ramadan, to direct resources towards the most vulnerable in our society. Mobilising the spirit of Ramadan and tapping into positive religious sentiments may provide us with a collective ray of hope, in what is otherwise, a devastating situation. Furthermore, expatriate communities have the chance to give back to Bangladesh and recognise the privilege they have, by directing funds to organisations working in alleviating the struggles of communities at this time—sponsor iftars, support orphans or invest in any initiative you see fit. But contribute. Contribute as much as possible. And contribute in the name of your faith or an idea which motivates you. But contribute.

We tend to practice the ceremonial aspects of faith. Islam promotes an additional narrative as well-that of preaching. In my interactions with my late Grandfather, he used to remind me of the precedence of social welfare and how preaching involves carrying these very teachings of Islam to our communitiesthose words, especially now, seem timeless. Let us preach and practice social welfare together and fight Covid-19 to the best of our abilities.

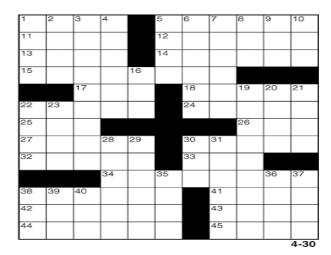
I want to end by referring to a message of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which carries great weight in today's context: "Give charity without delay, for it stands in the way of calamity" (Al-Tirmidhi)—a calamity is in motion, but we have an opportunity to ensure a future for many. Let us do so. Let us come together in this #BacharLorai.

To support the #BacharLorai movement, please email: bacharlorai2020@gmail.com

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sia er 40 Driving site

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO



#### TUESDAY'S ANSWERS



## FEAR, LOCKDOWN AMID COVID-19 Kumudini Hospital's telemedicine service comes as saviour

#### **OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail**

The patients in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila have started getting free telemedicine services at the union parishad premises, thanks to the initiative of Kumudini Hospital.

The authorities of the charitable institution, founded by late philanthropist Ranada Prasad Saha, on Saturday launched the services as patients shy away from the hospital, fearing coronavirus infection.

Under the arrangement, doctors designated for different health problems will provide services at a union every day and all the 14 unions of the upazila will get the facility by rotation.

A patient with cardiac problems, Abdus Samad, 60, of Goraki village also got serious skin diseases while Samia Akter, a Class III student of Jogirkofa village was suffering from cold and fever but they did not go to hospital for taking treatment during the ongoing Covid-19



pandemic.

As telemedicine services were arranged at the medical camp at Latifpur union parishad building on Saturday, they went there and got medical help.

Many others in the area, including Amena Begum, Shahnaz Begum, Ismot Ara Sadek Dewan, Sabuj and Rifat were also happy to get the specially arranged treatment provided by specialist doctors from the hospital.

On Sunday, doctors arranged treatment for patients at Banail union.

Some 1500 to 2000 patients usually get treatment from the outdoor while 700 to 800 patients remain admitted at the 1050-bed hospital every day, said Animesh Bhoumik Liton, assistant general manager of Kumudini Hospital.

"Now the general patients are too afraid to come to the hospital due to coronavirus outbreak. Transport crisis during the lockdown is also a factor.

"Considering the problem of patients, especially pregnant women and serious patients who need regular treatment, the hospital authorities decided to reach the telemedicine services to the local patients and it has been arranged following rules set by the health directorate after the outbreak of Covid-19," he added.



An IT professional working as assistant for telemedicine service at Latifpur union parishad in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila, writes prescriptions for patients as per suggestions from doctors of Kumudini Hospital on Saturday. Left, treatment seekers wait in queues for their turn at the medical camp. PHOTO: COLLECTED

## You stumble I catch Story of how a group of friends is serving the community during financial difficulties caused by the ongoing shutdowns

#### QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

A group of youths in Thakurgaon town are being praised for their nonprofit initiative named '30% discount store'.

The store has been doing a tremendous service to the town's low-income residents who have been in a dire situation due to Covid-19 shutdowns.

A large section of the society -especially daily wage earners such as rickshaw pullers, day labourers, masons, painters and carpenters -- is going through financial crisis due to job loss caused by the shutdowns.

At a time when prices of essentials are on the rise and many of the people in the low-income group are out of jobs, the discount store has appeared as a much-needed respite for the townspeople.

Essentials including rice, lentil, potato, onion, sugar, salt, edible oil, spices, eggs and soaps are being sold at the store every day in front of the cooperative market in the town.

A group of students united under Facebook group 'Julum Bosti' primarily launched the initiative with funds raised from group members. Many locals have also been sending contributions to the group.

Volunteers wear face masks and gloves while attending the store and they ensure buyers form lines maintaining a minimum of six feet physical distance between each other.

Number of buyers continues to rise since the store opened more than a month ago. Chick pea, a popular food have been donating the produce to well as well-wishers are their primary ingredient in meals during the month

of Ramadan, has recently been included to the low-income group. in the list of items sold at the store.

About 60 to 70 people turned up on the inaugural day. Currently the store serves nearly 160 to 170 people on an average day. Operation hours of the store are 3:00pm to 6:00pm daily. The volunteers put up an updated hand-written price list in front of the

store every day to evade any confusion. Moreover, to ensure availability of the essentials for all at reduced price, there is a quantity restriction on each item sold at the store.

Each buyer is allowed to buy a maximum of two kilograms of coarse rice, one kg potato, half kg lentil, one litre edible oil, half kg onion, 250 grams ginger, 250 gm garlic, half kg salt, four eggs, one antiseptic soap and one laundry soap each day.

Al Asma-ul-Husna Mithun, one of the organisers, told the Daily Star that they opened the discount store on April 1 with an aim to lend a hand to the vulnerable section of the society who have been feeling the brunt of the restrictions imposed nationwide to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

In early days, they used to spend around Tk 3,000 against the difference between the cost and sale price of the commodities available at the store. With growing popularity of the store, the figure has gradually reached as high as about Tk 5,000.

Aside from bearing the price difference, they also give away fresh the store as part of their responsibility source of funds for the store.

"Within two weeks into the journey,

we stumbled and were compelled to stop our operations for a day due to fund crisis. But thanks to spontaneous support we received from different quarters, we soon pulled together and resumed operations.

They hope that they would be able to serve the community until normalcy is restored following the lifting of the precautionary measures imposed by the authorities.

Explaining how it all started, Mithun said their group was created about two years back to do great things for the community.

Since then, nearly 30 to 40 members of the group had been contributing Tk 100 each month to raise funds for different welfare activities geared toward the disadvantaged who are in need of warm clothes during the winter or financial help for treatment. Witnessing sufferings of the jobless

and the low-income population amid the Covid-19 shutdowns, they felt the urge to stand beside them as well. The initial fund of Tk 5,000 was received as prize money that the group members had received by winning the championship title of a local cricket tournament, held just before the outbreak of the pandemic. The members put together another Tk 8,000 for the cause.

During the early days, they used to sell around Tk 12,000 worth of goods each day and now the amount stands produce to each buyer at no additional at Tk 20,000 daily, Mithun said, cost, he said adding that local growers adding that their group members as

#### GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH URBAN DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE 82, SEGUNBAGICHA, DHAKA Web site: www.udd.gov.bd

Memo, No.25.45.0000.000.14.051.17-

Date:04/05/2020

#### Request for Expressions of Interest

	GOVI	ERNMENT OF THE	PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC O	OF BAN	GLADESH		
1	Ministry/Division		Ministry of Housing and	Ministry of Housing and Public Works			
2	Agency		Urban Development Directorate				
3	Procuring Entity Name		Director, Urban Development Directorate				
4	Procuring Entity code		1320401				
5	Procuring Entity Di	strict	Dhaka				
6	Expression of Interest for Selection of		Consulting Firm		Lump sum		
7	EOI Ref No		UDD/PKCP/EOI/2019-2	0/02			
8	Date		04/05/2020				
KEY	INFORMATION						
9	Procurement Metho	d	Selection under a Fixed Budget				
FUN	DING INFORMATI	ON					
10	Budget and Source	of Funds	Development Budget	GOB			
11	Development Partne	ers	N/A				
PAR	TICULAR INFORM	ATION					
12	Project Code	1320401-223012800	)				
13	ProjectName	Preparation of Payra	-Kuakata Comprehensive P	lan focus	sing on Eco-Tourism		
14	EOI Closing Date	SD-1 :Developme	nt of Apps, Web Desi	ign, Ho	sting and Maintenance for		
	and Time		mprehensive Plan on 02/06/				
					'Payra-Kuakata' Comprehensive		
		Planon 03/06/2020 a	st 2:00 pm				
			-				

#### INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT

Brief Description of Assignment SD-1: Development of Apps, Web Design, Hosting and Maintenance for 'Payra-Kuakata' Comprehensive Plan. The consulting firm shall develop an interactive website and mobile application (android) for "Preparation of Payra-Kuakata Comprehensive Plan Focusing on Eco-Tourism". The firm shall be responsible for web hosting, regular updating and maintenance of the website and mobile application. The Website shall provide information on ongoing and upcoming activities of the project, provide access of the GIS based data (both spatial and attributes) and subsequent query table for all users. The mobile application should have to give access to the GIS based landuse data so that user can find their location and related information. It should provide desired map of the required area within the project area. The firm shall extend its services two years after the completion of the project. The client, UDD shall provide necessary data, information and maps only. On the other hand, the developer and service provider shall be responsible for all the necessary hardware and software installation including management and operational procedure within the hyper domain.

## No plan yet to bring home 313 devotees

#### FROM PAGE 1

later turned out to have been a hotbed of coronavirus infection as many of the participants tested positive for Covid-19.

The list of 313 Bangladeshis, which includes elderly men and women, was prepared by Tablighi Jamaat Bangladesh. They said there may be more people who went on their own. However, the Bangladesh authorities are yet to confirm how many Bangladeshi Tablighi Jamaat followers are now staying in India.

Foreign minister AK Abdul Momen told The Daily Star on Monday that they have got a list of 139 Bangladeshi Tablighi Jamaat followers who were either quarantined or arrested in India. But he was not sure of the exact number.

"Among them, some were quarantined while some others were arrested," he said, adding that they were still observing the situation.

"We are trying to find out more details," he said.

Earlier, the Indian home ministry stated that they have blacklisted 110 Bangladeshi nationals for violating their tourist visa and participating in missionary activities in different parts of India after attending the Tablighi Jamaat event in Delhi. Their visas were also cancelled.

An official at the Bangladesh mission in New Delhi wishing not to be named said the Indian authorities were helping them repatriate stranded Bangladeshi patients, tourists and students, but they were yet to say anything about the clearance of the stranded Tablighi Jamaat followers.

On April 28, 10 Bangladeshi nationals -- five couples -- who attended the event were arrested from Madhya Pradesh, under charge of staying in the state without informing local police.

Sheikh Sagir Ahmad, 55, and Roksana Begum, 50, are one of the arrested couples. They went to India by air on February 25. They were supposed to come back to Dhaka on April 7 by air, but could not because of the suspension of flights to contain the coronavirus outbreak.

Their son Sk Tanvir Ahmed in Dhaka sent three emails to the Bangladesh High Commissions in Delhi and

April 21, seeking help from the high commissions, but has not yet gotten a reply.

Talking to this correspondent, Tanvir said his parents stayed at Nizamuddin in Delhi till March 4. Then they moved to Sheopur in Madhya Pradesh to perform Tablighi activities.

On March 29, the local law enforcement agency took them to a government male hostel adjacent to Sheopur District Jail for quarantine, Tanvir said, adding that he was in a contact with them till April 28.

Tanvir said his parents experienced a lot of hardship in terms of food and hygiene. They are elderly persons and both have diabetic issues, have run out of insulin and medicine, which are not properly delivered.

"Their passports, cell phones and Bangladeshi SIM cards were seized after a few days. Then they came to know that a case was filed against them with four other couples stuck with them.

"They have never experienced imprisonment in their lives," Tanvir said, adding that one or two-months' stay in jail would be tough for them at this age.

The Daily Star received copy of another letter to the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi from eight stranded Bangladeshis who are now in virtual judicial custody in Uttar Pradesh. They were stuck in Bulandshahr district.

After their flights were cancelled, they communicated their situation to the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi through the Covid-19 hotline number. They also submitted their passport photocopies to the local police station for any sort of medical checkup required by the Indian government.

On April 1, their passports were seized by Katawali Dehat Police Station. Again, they informed the matter to the Bangladesh High Commission.

"The next day, a police officer forced us to sign a Hindi document, although we had no knowledge of what was written there nor had we been provided with any translation. Half an hour later we were picked up by a huge police convoy in the name Deputy High Commisioner's office of quarantine and taken to a school country.

in Mumbai on April 15, April 20 and compound where conditions were miserable -- just like slums."

A few hours later, they were shifted to another school compound.

"The same day, at late night, approximately at 11:30pm, police escorted us to a third location. We were quarantined there for 17 days. We spent those days under acute mental pressure.

"Authorities wearing civilian garb took our mugshots and fingerprints in the name of medical tests. Later, we understood that it was taken for police cases," read the letter.

They said they repeatedly asked for medical certificates after their quarantine period of 14 days were over, but in vain.

On April 19, the authorities escorted them to Triveni Dutt Brahmchari Saraswati Vidya Mandir Inter College in the town of Dibai, approximately 40 kilometres away from Bulandshahr district. It turned out to be virtual imprisonment, the letter said.

"In this compound, females and males are sharing the same toilet with only one shower facility. We are provided with low-quality jail food in unhygienic, foul-smelling polythene bags. No locals are allowed to supply our necessary commodities [such as sanitary napkins] here. Jail authorities are also not allowing us necessities even if we want to pay for them," the letter added.

A police official in charge of keeping them confined informed them that a first information report (FIR) has been filed against them under section 182, 269, 270 IPC and Foreigners Act section 14.

Mentioning the health risks and medical complications especially of the elderly among them, the eight appealed to the High Commissioner for assistance.

This Daily Star correspondent made several WhatsApp calls and sent text messages to Muhammad Imran, Bangladesh High Commissioner in New Delhi. He however did not respond.

From April 20 till yesterday, around 1,950 Bangladeshi nationals -- most of whom went to India for medical treatment or are students at different Indian universities -- have so far been brought back from the neighbouring

GD-793

#### SD-2 : Survey by acquisition of satellite Image for 'Payra-Kuakata' Comprehensive Plan

Acquisition of Close range aerial photograph of about 15000 acre, 3D digitization, Collection of GCP, DEM, Inundation simulation Model, 3D mesh model/Ortho-photo, Close range aerial video etc.

Name	perience, Resou of Services	Equipment and software	Experience and	Logistics	Professi	onals
SD-1 : of App Design Mainte 'Payra-	Development ps, Web a, Hosting and enance for -Kuakata' rehensive Plan		ge: a) Firms/ w be experience of 5 .5, b) Website pt, development, C if management ex c) Office spac and manageria	ith genera ycars e, APP JIS databas perience. cc, financia al strength	al Program Develop 's Graphic e	mer, GIS Programmer, Web er, Android Developer, s Designer, GIs Assistant.
acquis satellit 'Payra-	Survey by ition of te Imagefor -Kuakata' rehensive Plan		ric experience of 5	ith genera	d Photogra	ammetric expert, GIS expert
Other 1	resources includ	e office space, financial an	d managerial streng	gth, compute	er and othe	er logistics.
	Details	financial standing (accord	ing to PPA 2006an te firm's capabilitie	nd PPR 200 s to provide	8), Staffin the requi	ents showing managerial at ang and inventory of resource red services. In case of JVC.
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(Sharif Mohammad Tariquzzaman) Senior Planner, Thana Center Planning-1 & Project Director "Preparation of Payra-Kuakata Comprehensive Plan focusing on Eco-Tourism'

e-mail: sports@thedailystar.net DHAKA WEDNESDAY MAY 6, 2020, BAISHAKH 23, 1427 BS

#### **KOOKABURRA'S ANTI-VIRUS BALL**

Anisur Rahman

consecutive editions.

Australian cricket ball manufacturer Kookaburra is developing a wax applicator that allows players to shine the ball without using saliva or sweat, minimising the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Rubbing spit or sweat into the ball's surface is expressly forbidden under Australian Institute of Sport guidelines released last week that set out the conditions for the game to resume. Cricket is suspended around the globe because of the pandemic and the wax applicator would need approval from governing bodies to be used when play resumes. Kookaburra's innovation involves using a sponge to apply small amounts of wax to the ball. Current laws forbid the use of artificial substances to alter the ball but there is a long history of tampering.



## Consolidating in the times of ORONAVI

#### Abdullah Al Mehdi

"There are times when we back into a corner with no place left to back into ... and then we go on attack and become mentally stronger," Mashrafe Bin Mortaza reminisced on his injury troubles -- seven knee surgeries and more -- during an online meet with Tamim Iqbal on Monday night.

The former ODI captain, however, was not keen on emphasising on the setbacks, instead he delved into a masterclass of where a captain's priorities lay. In essence, it was a hearty conversation between a great leader and his protégé, Tamim, the newly appointed ODI captain.

The former captain had fought tooth and nail to back his teammates during his tenure and the players will always remember the way Mashrafe stood up for them. Tamim underlined the emotion and respect by saying, 'for me, you will always be captain,' verifying Mash's contribution to the team.

"I don't know what I did or if it was something brazen or not, but I remember that you wrote in the bathroom with a marker the words 'you will score a ton after six months'. Why did you do such things with me?" asked Tamim.

A chat between two friends gives a reminder of the work and motivation that goes into the making of a team. There are many facets to captaincy and each captain has his own way of doing These acts galvanised the team things. Mashrafe laid bare some facets from his bag of tricks.

had as many disagreements with anyone else as I've had with

good friends," Mash revealed.

"Whatever I tell you, I say from my heart. Whatever I have said is for the sake of the team. If I said things just for you, that will be selfish. For the team, I wanted you to score runs," he added.

be dropped from the next match, Mashrafe's response was: "If that

you. On every matter we used to from a character of Mashrafe's 'an entertainer'. So he arranged disagree but we will always be stature and so far, Tamim has understood the essence of what

he needs to accomplish. In a time when cricket has come to a standstill, Tamim has not had the opportunity to naturally communicate his ideas with trainings and When suggested that Tamim matches. Instead of sitting idle, he is consolidating the idea of togetherness under a new era

for chats with teammates to provide some relief to fans struck at home.

He was reaching out to senior members and also planning to have similar fun sessions with younger players like Rubel Hossain, Taskin Ahmed and others. These steps should matter to cohesion even as ultimately when the virus does recede,



happens, I will resign."

That kind of act leaves a mark. "You've always saved us and been there during our lowest point," Tamim remembered.

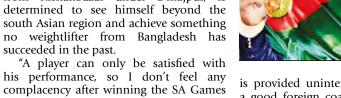
These are things that Mashrafe has not only done for Tamim alone, but the rest of the squad. and Mashrafe did that by strengthening the individuals. "I think that in my life I haven't The greatest challenge in Bangladesh cricket is to take on the mantle of leadership

with Mashrafe as a key example. Mashrafe has always inspired by helping people out and Tamim has come forward to help during

the coronavirus crisis. He has helped out sports personnel from other disciplines and brought about concerted effort from the national cricketers in order to fund those helping out in the crisis. He has also recognised that with little cricket going on, a cricketer also has to fulfil the requirement of being

things will be evaluated through performances.

But there is the thing about process and Tamim is a believer in process over result. He also has Mashrafe's blessings in this regard. "You did not accept the leadership role too well in Sri Lanka but seeing your work and what you say now makes me believe you are on the right track," Mashrafe remarked and it is the biggest backing a protégé can hope for.



Ziarul wants to go

beyond South Asia

complacency after winning the SA Games gold medal, rather I am looking forward to producing medal winning performance in bigger stages than the SA Games," the Bangladesh Army athlete told The Daily Star over phone from Dinajpur where he is in home quarantine.

Despite winning a gold medal in the South Asian (SA) Games in Nepal last December,

weightlifter Ziarul Islam could not grab

headlines owing to the presence of Mabia

Akter Simanta, who too won a gold medal

on the same day to achieve a rate feat of

clinching gold medals for Bangladesh in

from Kishanbazar under Dinajpur, is

Now 25-year-old Ziarul, a weightlifter

"I know well that a bronze medal in the Commonwealth Games is worth more than a gold medal in the SA Games. And it is also much harder and I want to prepare myself by setting the weight I need to win a medal in Commonwealth Games and Asian Games," said Ziarul, who was promoted to Lance Corporal on February 20 following his success in Nepal.

Ziarul lifted a total of 262 kilos in the 96kg category to win the gold medal, but he has long way to go to get success in Commonwealth Games or Asian Games.

In the last edition of the Commonwealth Games in Australia in 2018, India's Vikas Thakur lifted 351 kilos to ensure bronze medal in 94kg weight category (96kg category was absent) while Kari Steven of Papua New Guinea and Boady Santavy of Canada bagged gold and silver medals by lifting 370 kilos and 369 kilos respectively.

Ziarul is not only almost 100 kilos behind Vikas Thakur, but he is also overweight for Vikas's category.

মন্ত্রণালয়/বিচাগ

রজেপি

The Bangladeshi weightlifter, however, believes he can improve gradually if he



is provided uninterrupted training under a good foreign coach despite the lack of proper practice facilities.

"We need equipments, which are not sufficient. We also don't have a good gymnasium where weightlifters can practise uninterruptedly. We also need foreign coaches, who can improve the players' technique and weight as they are have full knowledge regarding when the players have to give load and rest and what will be their diet chart," said Ziarul, who claims the overall knowledge of local coaches is limited to having practice and improvement.

"If we want to bring medal from a bigger stage, we need to have quality coaches and long-term training camp. We had only three to four months' training ahead of SA Games, but such short-term trainings won't help players at a bigger stage," said Ziarul.

Ziarul started weightlifting in late 2010 after being inspired by his neighbour Manoranjan Roy, who won a silver medal in the 2010 SA Games in Dhaka. In 2011, Ziarul took part in junior weightlifting championships where he won a bronze medal, paving the way for his inclusion in Bangladesh Army in 2013. Then he skipped all events before taking part in senior national championships in 2019 and bagged gold medal in 102kg weight category before being selected for the SA Games camp.





11

সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয

সমাজসেবা অধিনকতর, ঢাক





## **RETURN ON THE HORIZON?**

(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) In Costa Rica, locker rooms were disinfected before games as local bodies attempt to enforce measures with the aim to restart local leagues. Bayern Munich players continued to train but Germany was rocked by the news that 10 players, including three at FC Cologne, had tested positive for coronavirus. Benfica's Brazilian forward Carlos Vinicius, meanwhile, was seen in an individual session in Seixal. PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS

### Korea sport season starts with baseball

AFP, Milan

#### AFP, Seoul

South Korea's professional sport returned to action with the opening of a new baseball season Tuesday, while football and golf will soon follow suit.

Friday will see the delayed start of football's K-League, and next week some of golf's leading women players will tee up in a domestic tournament as South Korea becomes a rare hotspot for live sport.

Fans were not allowed in for any of Tuesday's five opening baseball matches at the Munhak Baseball Stadium in Incheon.

## CR7 back in Turin

Juventus star Cristiano Ronaldo flew back to Italy on Monday after almost two months in lockdown in his native Portugal.

SERIE A Ronaldo and his family landed in Turin Airport just after 10.20pm local time, according to media reports in Italy.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner arrived by private jet from Madeira and will spend two weeks in quarantine.

The 35-year-old played Juventus's last Serie A game, a 2-0 win over Inter Milan behind closed doors at the Allianz Stadium on March 8, before the Italian football season was suspended amid the COVID-19 pandemic which has killed over 29,000 people in the country.

Ronaldo returned to Madeira after the Inter Milan match to be close to his mother Dolores who had suffered a stroke.

Juventus have recalled 10 overseas players as Serie A clubs were given the green light to return to individual training on Monday.

The Italian interior ministry's go-ahead for players to return to club training facilities two weeks ahead of schedule has offered fans hope that the 2019-20 season might yet be salvaged.

Juventus are leading Serie A, one point ahead of Lazio, as they target a ninth consecutive Scudetto. The club has not yet given an official date for a return to training. Juventus began carrying out tests at the club's medical centre in Turin on Monday. The first to arrive were Federico Bernardeschi, Juan Cuadrado, Carlo Pinsoglio, Leonardo Bonucci and Aaron Ramsey, all wearing face masks.

Juventus are also waiting the return to Turin of Dutch centre-back Matthijs de Ligt and midfielder Blaise Matuidi, who returned to France after recovering from the virus.

#### REUTERS

to another, we are in contact

with hotels, airports, all in

different places," Nadal told

newspaper ABC on Tuesday.

"If you gave me the

in January 2021, a normal

begin, I would sign for that

now with my eyes closed."

জিভি-৮০০

ability to guarantee that

season like before will

	a.	40,04164		1		ৰ আধনকতৰ			
Bundesliga club Hertha Berlin have suspended	٥.	সংগ্ৰহক	সৱাৰ নাম	3	মহাপরিচ চয়াভাঙ্গা		সেবা অধিদফতর, চাব	গ এর পক্ষে জেলা প্রশাসক,	
forward Salomon Kalou	8.	সংহাতক	সভার জেলা	:	চয়াওকা				
after he posted a video on	ę.		মর দরশার	1	2020-2	২০২১ অৰ্থ	বছরে সমাজসেবা অমি	ধনফতর পরিচালিত চুরাভাঙ্গা	
Facebook which showed					চেলাধীন	১ (সরকারি	শিষ পরিবার (বালিকা)	), চুয়াভাঙ্গা। ২। সমৰিত দৃষ্টি	
him and teammates shaking					- এচিবন্ধী	কার্যরম, চু	য়ডাঙ্গা এর নিবাসীদের	ছন্য থাদ্য, থাদ্যানুযন্ধিক ব	
hands and displaying					শিক্ষা, ম	ाष्ट्र, श्रमार्थनी	এবং বিবিধ মালামাল সর	ব্যাহ।	
a casual approach to	ъ.		ম্বর তারিখ	1	85.05.3	ষ্টে০২.২১,২০.২০ গ্রামীয় ০৬১.২৯,২০০,০০০,০০৬,২০,২৪			
COVID-19 guidelines.	۹.	দরপত্র প্র	চোরের তারিখ	1	02/02/	/২০২০খ্রিঃ			
The club also said in a	br,	সাগ্রহ প		1		রপত্র পদ্ধতি (			
statement that "this was the	≥.		াক: তহবিলের উৎস	1		रकडे, कि.स.वि	۹ı		
conduct of a single player"	30,		প্যকৈজ নহ	\$	08 (FR				
and denied that the squad	35.	দরপরের	পাকেজ নাম	3				ৰ পৰিচালিত হুয়াডাঙ্গা জেলাৰীন	
do not take social distancing								হ সময়িত সৃষ্টি প্ৰতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা	
and hygiene rules seriously.								ক" গ্ৰুপ খাদ্য ও খাদ্যানুযন্ধিক	
The Ivorian apologised								দা, ৰাছ্য, প্ৰসাধনী ও অন্যান্য	
for his behaviour which the					মলমল	(o) "4" 4P	ণ-থাদ্য ও থাদ্যানুয়াঞ্চক	(অপচনশীল ও পচনশীল) এবং	
German Football League					শিক্ষা ব	ায়্য প্রসাধনী ও	ঃ অন্যান্য (৪) "ড" গ্রন্থপ	বিবিধ মালামাল সরবরাহ।	
described on Twitter as	>2.	দরপর	পিডিউল বিক্রয়ের	:				তৃকীয় বার ১৪/০৬/২০২০ট্রি	
"absolutely unacceptable"		শেষ তাৰি		L_		কাল ৩,৩০ ম		B	
and which some media	20.		নাথিলের শেষ তারিথ	1		(২০২০জি		০৬/২০২০, তৃতীয় বার	
suggested could even	1.0	ও সময়	-tare reflect a	L.			রিখ দুপুর ১২.০০ মটিকা		
hamper the Bundesliga's	58.		খেলার তারিশ ও	1	২০/০৫/২০২০টাঃ ছিত্তীয় বার ০২/০৬/২০২০, তৃতীয় বার				
hopes of re-starting after the		সময়			১৫/০৬/২০২০ন্দ্রি তারিখ বিকাল ০৩,০০ ঘটিকায় দরদাতা বা তার মনোনিত প্রতিনিধির উপস্থিতিতে খোলা হবে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।				
coronavirus outbreak.	30.	ज्याईक्षाय	র নাম ও ঠিকানাঃ-	1	আতাশগ্য ওপাছতেতে পোশা ধবে (বাদ দেশ ওপাছত বাবেনা)। সরকারি শিত পরিবার, চুয়াভাঙ্গা, সমন্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম,				
Hertha's general manager	20.		র শান ও তেবনগাহ- নরপর দলিল বিরুন্ম		্যারদায় । পর পারধায়, তুরারাসা, পশার্থর পৃথে আর্থনা । পিন কার্যক্রম, চুয়াডাঙ্গা ও উপপরিচালক, জেলা সমাজনেবা কার্যালয়, চুয়াডাঙ্গা ।				
Michael Preetz said that			র দলিল গ্রহণ	1	য়ন্দ্রপথানিচ	test (art)	গণ জনা প্ৰায়ন্থা ব	যাতার, তুয়াতার। যাতাঙ্গা এবং জেলা প্রশাসকের	
Kalou had caused the club		4, 14 ,	a shirt at at a	· ·			ANDORAL ALALANS X	alonal and roun of here.	
"a great deal of damage"		গ সরগ	র দলিল খোলা	1	কার্যালয়, চুয়াতাঙ্গা। জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, চুয়াতাঙ্গা।				
and "created the impression	36.		লোগ্যতা	1	(३) देवध जनवताहरूही अधिकान				
that individual players are								পি, পূর্বে অনুরূপ কাজ করার	
not taking the corona issue								সন্স, ব্যাংক সাহলতার সন্স,	
seriously."						আরকর সনন এবং জ্যাট প্রদান (২০১৯-২০) সনদ এর অধিকারী হতে হবে।			
	29	দরপর চি	গড়িউলের মূল্য	1	দরপর ট	গিডিউলের মূল	য় ট্রেম্বারী চালান-এর ম	। বিষয়ে কোন্ত-১-২৯৩১-০০০০-	
							যোগ্য) জন্ম দিতে হবে।		
2020 lost,	L	গ্ৰহণ	সংক্ষিপ্ত নি	गतम		গিভিটল	টেডার শিকিউরিটির	2084)	
2020 1030						মূল্য	পরিমাশ		
says Nadal		夺	থাদ্য ও থাদ্যনুষঙ্গিব	s (ज	গচনশীল	@00/-	সিঙিউল মোতাবেক	সরকারি শিঙ পরিবার,	
Says Ivadal			ও পচনশীল)					চুৰাতাঙ্গার জন্য।	
AFP, Madrid		শ	শিক্ষা, বন্ধু, প্রসাধন	ય હ	ગનાન	@00/-	-1]-		
	I	भ	খাদ্য ও খাদ্যানুষ্ঠিৰ	হ (অ	পচনশীল	\$00/-	-11-	সময়িত দৃষ্টি প্ৰতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা	
Rafael Nadal has said he	I		ও গ্যনশীল) এবং	14145	া, মাছ্য,			কার্যারন্ম, চুয়াডাঙ্গার জন্য।	
views the rest of this year as			প্রসাধনী ও অন্যান্য						
"practically lost" for tennis	I	8	বিবিধ মালামাল			300/-	-मे-	১। সরকারি শিষ্ণ পরিবার,	
and would even be relieved	I							হুয়াঠাঙ্গা জন্য।	
if the sport returned as	I							২। সময়িত দৃষ্টি প্ৰতিবন্ধী	
normal at the start of 2021.								শিক্ষা কার্যরদের জন্য।	
Nadal believes chances of	28.		য়াহবানকারীর নাম				<ol> <li>মোঃ নজরালা ইসল</li> </ol>		
tennis restarting this year are	20.		মহবানকারীর পদবী				ঃ জেলা প্রশাসক, চু		
slim. "I hope to play as soon	20.		গাহবানকারীর ঠিকানা					কার্যালর, চুরাডাঙ্গা।	
as possible but if I think	25.	দরপত্র ও শর্ত্তাবলী	মাহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার	সাগে	বোগাবোচ	গর নম্বর	8 0997-99777		
about it logically, we travel	22.	1-11-1-1	-					0	
every week from one place		(주) [연]	পৱ-২০০৬ এবং াপাপ	1914-	500F (N	ংশোধতসহ)	ব হদত কৰ সংক্ৰান্ত প	দ্বতি মথামথতাৰে অনুসৱগ কৰা	
		8041							

ত ক্রন্স সংক্রান্ত পদ্ধতি মথামথতাবে অনুসরণ করা

(খ) গৃহীত দরদাতার নিকট হতে উদ্ধৃত দরের ১০% পারফরমেন সিকিটরিটির অর্থ প্রপ্তি সাপেক্ষে কার্যাদেশ প্রদান করা হবে।

(গ) "ঙ" গ্রুপের ক্ষেত্রে অর্থ বরান্দ প্রান্তি সাপেক্ষে কার্যাদেশ প্রদান করা হবে।

(খ) কর্তৃগক্ষ কারণ দর্শানো ব্যাচিরেকে যে কোন নরগর এইণ অথবা সকল দরগর বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

(৩) দলপত্র নির্ধারিত তারিখে নির্ধারিত সময় পর্যন্ত দাখিল করা যাবে।

(চ) বিশেষ নিদের্শনাঃ বিছারিত তথ্য দরপরের সিঠিউলে বর্ষিত আছে।

মোঃ নজরুল ইসলাম সরকার
জেলা গ্রশাসক, চুয়াডাঙ্গা

The Baily Star



## **Students serving** free sehri, iftar

1,000 hungry people get food on DU campus every day

#### SAYYED MOHMUD ULLAH and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Hungry people, some with children, begin to gather near Raju sculpture on Dhaka University campus after midnight, and by 3:00am, there are almost 400 of them sitting down expectantly on the street.

Soon, DU student Tanbir Hasan Shaikat and four of his friends start handing out food packets among them.

"On the first day of the shutdown, I arranged some food for about 50 homeless people on campus. Then several professors, politicians, DU alumni members and my friends started chipping in and now we are feeding sehri and iftar to nearly 1,000 people each day," Shaikat, also a member of Dhaka University Central Students Union (Ducsu), told The Daily Star last week.

Initiatives like this by individuals, associations, voluntary organisations, and student bodies are much needed because the nationwide shutdown SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

	TO USE QR CODE ON YOUR SMARTPHONE, INSTALL FREE QR READ- ER SOFTWARE FROM GOOGLE PLAYSTORE OR APPLE STORE. TURN ON THE SOFTWARE AND HOLD THE PHONE CAM- ERA OVER THE QR CODE TO GET THE VIDEO LINK.	Star LIVE	SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO		
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Tanbir, a student of Dhaka University, raises a megaphone to ask some underprivileged people if all of them have received iftar packets. Tanbir and his four friends now provide sehri and iftar to about 1,000 underprivileged people daily to ease their sufferings caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The photo was taken in the university's TSC area late last month. PHOTO: SAYYED MOHMUD ULLAH

## Air pollution raises risks, vulnerability

Researchers say about Covid-19 in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 as thousands of Bangladeshis are already suffering from chronic diseases because of their past exposure to air pollution, according to the study conducted by Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

pollution exposure has "Past air made people much more vulnerable to COVID-19 and is now contributing to the death toll and the enormous pressure on healthcare systems from the disease", said Lauri Myllyvirta, the lead analyst of CREA citing multiple studies,

The research, titled 'Air Quality, Health and toxic impacts of the proposed coal power cluster in Payra, Bangladesh' released in a virtual press conference yesterday jointly organized by CREA - an independent research organization focused SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## Govt active on TV only

Says BNP about Covid-19 response

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday alleged that the government completely failed to contain the spread of Covid-19 and it was only active on television.

"Where is the government? The government is not on the field. If you see carefully, you will find everybody is on television," said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

Addressing a press conference at party Chairperson Khaléda Zia's Gulshan office, Fakhrul criticised the government for not responding to the BNP's call to form a taskforce comprising

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

## Ducsu honours Bangabandhu with lifetime membership



May 6, 1972 Shamsuddoza Sajen

BANGABANDHU GIVEN LIFETIME DUCSU MEMBERSHIP Prime Minister



signing the lifetime membership form of Ducsu at Dhaka University on

May 6, 1972.

the Buddhist community,

will be celebrated across

the birth, enlightenment,

and death of Gautama

the country today.

## STRANDED IN INDIA AMID SHUTDOWN

## No plan yet to bring home 313 devotees

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 313 Bangladeshi followers of Tablighi Jamaat, according to the religious organisation, are stuck in India and living in dire straits following a nationwide manhunt by the Indian authorities.

Many of them are living in fear of detention after Indian police arrested

#### Buddha Purnima today UNB, Dhaka

Buddha Purnima, the biggest religious festival of

Buddha Purnima marks

several Bangladeshis from different states for the violation of the Foreigners Act and the Epidemic Diseases Act.

At least 9,000 people had participated at a congregation at the Nizamuddin Markaz Mosque in March, after which many travelled to various parts of India for missionary work. The Tablighi Jamaat event SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## **Probe early** virus cases WHO urges countries

after French study

The World Health Organization said yesterday that a report that Covid-19 had emerged in December in France, sooner than previously thought, was "not surprising", and urged countries to investigate any other early suspicious cases.

The disease later identified as Covid-19 was first reported by Chinese authorities to the WHO on 31 December and SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



all political parties and renowned economists of the country to fight against coronavirus.

"We repeatedly asked but they [government] did not do it," he said, adding that the technical committee formed on

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is today given lifetime membership of Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu). Addressing a large gathering of students at the Dhaka University premises, Bangabandhu says that imperialist forces and their local agents will never succeed in their attempts at damaging Bangladesh's friendship with the Soviet Union and India. He recalls with

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Buddha. On this day in 563 BC, Buddha was born as Siddhartha Gautama in Kopilabostu at the foothill of the Himalayas. He attained supreme enlightenment at the age of 35 and finally departed

into "nirvana" at the age of 80 in 483 BC.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages greeting the Buddhist community on the occasion.

President Hamid called upon the Buddhists to celebrate their holy religious festival at their respective homes due to Covid-19 outbreak in the country.

> Due to the coronavirus SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

#### **PRAYER TIMING MAY 6** Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 3-53 12-45 5-00 6-33 8-00 JAMAAT 4-03 1-15 5-15 6-43 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



#### SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING RAMADAN MAY SEHRI IFTAR 12 6:33 6.34 3:51 6:34 14

# খরেহ থাকি, স

AGENCIES

- 👄 করোনায় সারা বিশ্ব আন্ধ বিপর্যন্ত।
- 👄 মানুষ বাসা-বাড়ি থেকে বের না হলে সংক্রমণের ঝুঁকি বহুলাংশে কমে যায়।
- 😑 মনে রাখবেন, অসাবধানতায় যে কেউ যে কোন সময় করোনা ভাইরাসে আক্রান্ত হতে পারে।

### কাজেই ঘরেই থাকুন, সুন্থ থাকুন

- 🖝 সামাজিক দূরত্ব বজায় রাখুন, পরক্ষারের মধ্যে কমপক্ষে তিন (৩) ফুট দুরত্ব বজায় রাখুন।
- 🖕 একান্ত প্রয়োজনে বাইরে গেলে অবশাই মান্ধ পড়ন।
- 😑 ছান্থ্য অধিদন্তর কর্তৃক প্রদন্ত সব ছান্থ্যবিধি অবশ্যই মেনে চলুন।
- বারবার সাবান পানি দিয়ে কমপক্ষে ২০ সেকেন্ড হাত খোবেন। অপরিজন্ত হাত দিয়ে মুখ, নাক ও চোৰ ছেবেন না।
- ৰাজ্ঞাদের যায়্য বিধি শিখান এবং তাদেরকে ঘরে রাগতে থেলাধুলা, গয়, য়ড়া, শিক্ষা ও বিনোদনমূলক কাজের সাথে সম্পৃক্ত রাখুন।
- 🛑 নিয়মিত কুসুম গরম পানি, আদা চা এবং গরম স্থাপ পান করুন। লবণ মিপ্রিত কুসুম গরম পানি দিয়ে দিনে ৩-৪ বার গড়গড়া করন, নাকে মুখে গরম পানির ভাপ নিন।
- 🖝 জ্বর, সর্দি, কাশি, গলা ব্যথা হলে বাড়িতেই আলানা থেকে চিকিৎসা নিন।
- 🛑 জ্বর কমানোর জন্য প্যারাসিটামল ও সর্নি-কাশির জন্য এন্টিহিস্টামিন (যেমন ফেক্সেফেনাডিন, ক্রোরফেনিরামিন ইত্যাদি) থেতে পারেন।

প্রয়োজনে করোনা বিষয়ক হটলাইনগুলোতে ফোন করুনঃ ১৬২৬৩: ৩৩৩: ১০৬৫৫:

০১৯৪৪৩৩৩২২২ অথবা নিকটন্থ বান্থাকর্মী বা হাসপাতালে যোগাযোগ করুন।

মনে রাখবেন আপনার সুরক্ষা আপনারই হাতে





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A horse-drawn carriage on RK Mission Road in the capital yesterday carries 12-15 passengers on Gulistan-Jatrabari route. Such carriages are banned on the particular road but since traffic was light due to Covid-19 shutdown, it took a direct route. The passengers were crammed into the vehicle violating social distancing guidelines.

## **US forecast sees virus** death surge

**Researchers blame eased restrictions** 

#### AFP, Washington

The global death toll from the coronavirus pandemic topped a quarter of a million vesterday, with the US government predicting a further surge in fatalities as an international vaccine drive garnered \$8 billion in pledges.

The dire forecast from the United States came as much of the Western world emerged from weeks of lockdown, with hopes that the disease may have peaked in Europe after nearly two months of

confinement. Financial markets saw a light at the end of a tunnel as businesses in Europe and the United States tentatively reopened, and stocks and oil prices rallied yesterday.

But the global progress did little to cool a war of words between the US and China fuelled by American claims the virus

originated in a Chinese laboratory, a theory the World Health Organization (WHO) labelled "speculative."

Since the disease first surfaced in China SEE PAGE 5 COL 4