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Your Right to Know

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BANGLADESH
UPDATE636
New cases in 24hrs13,770
Total cases214
Deaths2,414
RecoveriesGLOBAL
UPDATE278,685
Deaths4,072,736
Total cases

Peak in 3rd or last week

Predicts govt's expert panel, says number of cases may cross 50,000 during that phase this month

RASHIDUL HASAN and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A government-appointed committee has said the Covid-19 outbreak may peak in the weeks around the Eid, but several independent experts said it is too early to make such a prediction.

A reliable prediction would have been possible had there been more testing and stricter coronavirus restrictions, they said.

In a report submitted to the Directorate General of Health Services last week, the committee said the outbreak might peak in the third or fourth week of this month and the situation would remain unchanged for almost two weeks, or until the first week of June.

The number of new cases is likely to come down to a "tolerable level" by the end of June, unless the restrictions are relaxed too early, said Prof Shah Monir Hossain, one of the eight members of the committee.

The report contains what officials call an exit plan with recommendations to lift restrictions after June 25.

The health ministry in late March formed the committee to supervise, monitor and support the coronavirus response.

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- Peak may last two weeks
- New cases tolerable by end of June
- Restrictions can be lifted after June 25
- More testing required for reliable prediction



Policemen fire tear gas canisters from an armoured vehicle at demonstrating garment factory workers on Nabinagar-Chandra road in Gazipur's Kashimpur area. The workers of Doreen Apparels Ltd blockaded the road yesterday morning after they were told that the factory was closed for an indefinite period.

PHOTO:
PALASH KHAN

RMG workers agitate for full April salary

Clash with police in Savar, Gazipur

STAR REPORT

At least 10,000 workers of 14 garment factories in Savar and Gazipur industrial belts yesterday demonstrated demanding full payment of their gross salaries for April as opposed to 60 percent.

The workers said they did not agree with the government's decision to cut the pay of those who could not join work amid the shutdown as many factories were closed and there was an acute crisis of transport as well.

In Gazipur, at least 6,000 workers of six factories took to the streets in Gazipur's Kashimpur area and blocked the Dhaka-Tangail highway around 8:00am when the factory managements started distributing payslips among the workers.

The agitators vandalised several vehicles and hurled bricks at police.

Police used tear gas water cannon to disperse

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REMEDSIVIR Eskayef submits samples to DGDA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leading pharmaceuticals company Eskayef yesterday submitted samples of remdesivir, the drug used for treating Covid-19 patients, to the deputy chief of the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA).

The reference number of the generic drug with brand name Remivir is SKF/DTL-SAMPLE/2020/14, said a press release from Eskayef, adding that it received DGDA approval on pricing of the drug on April 7.

Once the approval comes from the testing laboratory, the drug will be supplied to the markets in a few days, said the release.

Meanwhile, the DGDA yesterday sent a press release to the media, clarifying the issue over the production of the drug.

In the press release, signed by DGDA Director Ruhul Amin, the drug administration said it would issue marketing authorisation certificate to



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Most city malls opt not to open

Spread of virus prompts decision; govt announced markets may reopen today

RASHIDUL HASAN

Although the government had announced that shopping centres and malls would reopen today ahead of Eid, most owners in Dhaka and Chattogram cities have decided to keep the establishments closed as the number of Covid-19 cases keeps surging in the country.

Top leaders of Dokan Malik Samity, a platform of shop owners, in Dhaka said the decision was made also as an untoward situation could arise when shop employees, as instructed by the authorities, including the police, would force shoppers to follow health guidelines.

On May 4, the government said it decided to reopen shopping malls, all types of shops and other businesses from May 10 on a limited scale ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr. Those would remain open from 10:00am to 4:00pm every day, according to a gazette from the Cabinet Division.

The shopping malls and centres were closed on March 25, a day before the ongoing nationwide shutdown was enforced to stem the coronavirus outbreak.

But on May 6, the authorities of Bashundhara City Shopping Complex and Jamuna Future Park -- the country's two largest shopping malls -- decided not to reopen them, fearing that the coronavirus might spread to their customers, shop owners and employees.

On Friday, another popular shopping destination in the capital -- Dhaka New Market -- also decided not to reopen before the Eid on the same ground, Dewan Aminul Islam Shahin, president of Dhaka New Market Business Association, told The Daily Star.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday, leaders of 14 other shopping

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Epidemiological surveillance yet to be in place

Experts say it's crucial in fight against epidemics

MOHAMMAD AL MASUM MOLLA

Bangladesh is yet to conduct an epidemiological surveillance which experts say is very important to understand the gravity of the coronavirus situation and will help take any policy decision in this regard.

They said such surveillance would have allowed health officials to suggest the government about the next course of action like when and how the ongoing shutdown should be relaxed or withdrawn, which area is highly vulnerable and what measures to be taken.

Epidemiological surveillance is the discipline of continuously gathering, analysing, and interpreting data about diseases, and disseminating conclusions of the analyses to relevant organisations.

In Bangladesh, the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) was supposed to do the surveillance on Covid-19.

Contacted, IEDCR officials said they had started the surveillance and it would be completed in about three weeks.

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Nine out of 10 recovering

IEDCR says 8 more died from Covid-19; 636 newly infected

MOUJUD AHMED SUJAN

Eight people died and 636 tested positive for Covid-19 across the country in the 24 hours until 2:30pm yesterday, said the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

While informing about the latest Covid-19 situation in the country through a bulletin yesterday, Prof Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of DGHS, said 5,465 samples were tested in 35 laboratories across the country in the 24 hours.

The eight people who died in the 24 hours were all male and aged between 40 and 80. With them, the total death toll of Covid-19 now stands at 214.

So far, a total of 116,919 individuals' samples were tested for Covid-19 and the total number of infections stood at 13,770.

Meanwhile, with four positive cases detected in Rangamati yesterday, people of all 64 districts in the country were now infected with the virus.

Prof Ridwanur Rahman, an infectious disease specialist, recently told The Daily Star that the number of positive cases would increase further as soon as the daily testing capacity goes up.

On April 28, the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) on Covid-19 officially recommended to increase daily testing facility as early as possible.

Prof Mohammad Shahidullah, president of NTAC, recently told The Daily Star, "We have recommended to address the issues as early as possible to increase the number of daily tests."

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2,329 inmates to be released

Govt takes step to minimise infections in prisons

MUNTAKIM SAAD

The prisons authorities are releasing another 2,329 convicted prisoners from jails in third phase to ease the accommodation crisis and minimise the risk of novel coronavirus transmission in overcrowded prisons.

"Most of the 2,329 inmates are supposed to be released by today [yesterday]. But a few of them have fine issues. They will be freed within two/three days," Col Abrar Hossain, additional inspector general (AIG) of prisons, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The prisoners, who were convicted of minor crimes, had been behind bars for less than three months. Muhammad Monzur Hossain, AIG (admin) of prisons, said the prisons department sent release orders to the divisional offices on Friday.

The home ministry, after taking opinions from

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A couple in personal protective equipment and their two children take a little rest after waiting for hours to get tested for coronavirus at Mugda General Hospital yesterday. The family came from Narayanganj's Siddhirganj after days of suffering from what the couple said were Covid-19 symptoms.

PHOTO:
AMRAN HOSSAIN

BIRTHING LIFE IN A PANDEMIC Fear grips mothers-to-be

NILIMA JAHAN

Pregnancy is a stressful and overwhelming experience in itself. Add to that a global pandemic and the whole ordeal can become even more difficult and frightening.

Amidst the Covid-19 outbreak, 20-year old Ferdousi, a pregnant mother of one, was expecting to deliver her second child. However, she lives in an area that has become a "hotspot" for coronavirus.

While she wanted to deliver her baby at the local Upazila Health Complex, it has become impossible right now as the hospital currently has 33 coronavirus positive staffers.

"I'm having trouble breathing due to severe anxiety. I need to go to a doctor immediately but I don't know where to go in this situation. I don't feel the hospitals are safe," said Ferdousi.

"I'm very anxious about the whole thing as my husband lives abroad and I don't have any men in the family. My mother is old and sick," she added.

Ferdousi, who was married off at 16, gave birth to her first daughter via c-section two years ago.

In a situation so dire, she is not alone.

The coronavirus pandemic has uprooted the pregnancy plans of many and now, an overwhelming majority of them are going through both physical and psychological stress due to their antenatal appointments and finding a safe delivery place (hospitals or birthing centres) to welcome their newborns into this world.

Their fear is rational as some news reports have already said that hospitals are running out of medical staffers due to the current situation and people with emergencies are not being treated properly.

On April 24, a report went viral on social media about a 20-year old pregnant woman, Tania, being denied

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Waliur Rahman Reza no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Waliur Rahman Reza, a former lawmaker and member of ruling Awami League's national committee, passed away following a cardiac arrest at his residence in Gaibandha yesterday. He was 85.

One of the organisers of the country's Liberation War, Waliur Rahman was an elected member of the then Purbo Pakistan Gono Parishad in 1970.

He left behind his wife, son and a host of relatives, colleagues and well-wishers to mourn his death. He will be buried at his family graveyard in Gaibandha.

Meanwhile, Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock and sorrow at his demise.

In a condolence

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Drivers and helpers who could not leave Dhaka in time are now having to struggle for sustenance every day. Some set up a makeshift kitchen at Saidabad bus stand yesterday, buying ingredients using the meagre amount of money a few transport owners have provided. The workers alleged that transport workers' organisations have not come to their aid during this shutdown, and they're worried about their survival.

COVID-19 VICTIMS
Burial ground moved to Rayerbazar graveyard

HELEMIUL ALAM

The government has started using the Rayerbazar graveyard as the designated place of burial for Covid-19 victims in the capital since April 30 as the previously assigned Khilgaon-Taltola graveyard has a waterlogging problem.

"Since the outbreak, burials of coronavirus victims have taken place at Khilgaon-Taltola graveyard. But we have shifted to Rayerbazar graveyard as the one at Khilgaon gets submerged after moderate to heavy showers," said Tanzina Sarwar, chief social welfare officer of Dhaka North City Corporation.

Till May 7 evening, 246 victims have been buried in the two graveyards since the beginning Covid-19 in the country, of which 176 were Covid-19 positive while 70 were suspected of being infected.

A total of 191 persons were buried in Khilgaon-Taltola graveyard while 51 at Rayerbazar graveyard. Apart from that, two were buried at Azimpur graveyard and two at Mirpur Intellectual graveyard, said Tanzina Sarwar.

As of yesterday, the death toll stands at 214, said Prof Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The total number of infected has reached 13,770 while 5,465 samples were tested in

35 labs across the country since yesterday, Dr Nasima said.

The DNCC official said, "We had a plan to continue burials at the Khilgaon graveyard, which had a burial capacity of around 2,000. But we had to shift due to the waterlogging crisis."

She said the 96-acre Rayerbazar graveyard has a burial capacity of 1.20 lakh. "The graveyard has 16 blocks and we are primarily burying victims in Block-8," she said.

This graveyard was built in a planned way and has a better drainage system. "We will continue the burials here. At the same time, we also pray and hope that we don't need to use other blocks to bury more victims," she said.

HOW BURIALS TAKE PLACE

Three organisations -- Hamza Al-Markazul, Quantum Foundation and Rahmat A Elahi -- are involved with the burial process. Charity organisation Hamza Al-Markazul has played a key role since the beginning with the help of DNCC.

Till May 7, they have buried 216 victims in the two designated graveyards, of them 148 have been tested positive, said Shahidul Islam, acting chairman of Markazul. "We have also sent bodies of 21 Hindus to the cremation field at Postagola following proper procedures," Shahidul said.

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Fear of DSA taking terrifying form: DUJ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A faction of Dhaka Union of Journalists yesterday demanded repeal of the Digital Security Act, alleging countrymen's freedom of expression has been curbed through the law's misuse.

Issuing a statement, DUJ leaders said recently a number of journalists and writers were arrested under the DSA while common citizens were not spared either.

Besides, people were detained under the law and sent to jail for criticising the government, they said.

DUJ leaders said they repeatedly opposed the law's enactment and even took to the streets in this regard.

On the other hand, the government in face of agitation had assured that the law will not be misused, they said in the statement.

However, the government has deviated from its previous stance and "awfully misused the law against journalists and voices of dissent", it said.

It added, the fear that had grown among the journalist community earlier regarding the DSA has now taken a "terrifying form".

Repeal Digital Security Act: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that the Digital Security Act is being misused rampantly during the crisis period of coronavirus outbreak across the country.

"BNP wants to say very clearly that the government is misusing the digital security act to protect itself from people's wrath. Such unjustified act of the state must be stopped right now," Fakhrul said.

He came up with the allegation while addressing a press conference held at the party Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office in Dhaka.

Terming the digital security act "anti-people", Fakhrul called upon the authorities concerned to repeal the act and stop the ongoing harassment including arrests under the law during the coronavirus pandemic.

He also expressed his party's condemnation regarding the recent arrests of some people including journalists, a cartoonist, a writer and others under the digital security act.

Citing the arrests, Fakhrul said the government is engaged in using the act to torture and harass people deliberately.

The government blatantly misused the law by arresting photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol on World Press Freedom Day, the BNP leader said.

FAKHRUL ASKS FB TO CLOSE FAKE ACCOUNTS

Meanwhile, Mirza Fakhrul wrote to Facebook authorities yesterday, to take steps for blocking fake accounts and stopping false campaign in his name on the social media platform.

He also said a vested quarter has long been circulating false statements in his name opening fake accounts, adding that he never opened any Facebook account in his name.

'Shonge Achi' serving the hungry

Volunteers' group distributes food to the destitute and street animals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Shonge Achi", a voluntary and humanitarian organisation, recently distributed food among 7,000 poor and lower-middle income families in different parts of Dhaka.

Besides, it distributed food to about 5,000 people living on the streets, whose livelihoods have been taken away by the pandemic, said a press release.

The voluntary organisation collected funds from affluent people, then procured food items including rice, lentils, potato, onion and cooking oil, packaged those and distributed among the underprivileged since March 27.

The organisation started the food distribution as part of its effort to help people in need during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Also, it fed over 4,000 street dogs around Dhaka, 100 horses who would run carts on the Sadarghat-Gulistan route and over 150 monkeys living in old part of Dhaka.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Volunteers preparing food for the underprivileged.

"The organisation works for women, elderly, physically challenged people, sex workers and their children, dalits, hijras, street children, and low profile musicians," Md Jamal Hossain, Chief Advisor of Shonge Achi said.

Address unemployment issues of youths: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concerns over the fallout of Covid-19 pandemic on society, speakers at a webinar yesterday called on the government to take necessary steps to address the unemployment problems of youth.

They also called for adopting a holistic approach so that the country could attain the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).

The remarks came from the webinar titled "Youth Perspective on Covid-19 Crisis in Bangladesh: Response through National Budget and Planning", jointly organised by South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) and ActionAid Bangladesh.

SANEM's Research Director and Professor of Dhaka University Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha said anti-social activities might increase due to the frustration caused by the pandemic.

She underscored the need for national

preparation and economic diversification to address unemployment problems.

Zubayer Hossen, a research economist at SANEM, said the earning of freelancers in the country has dropped due to the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Nazmul Ahsan, manager of "Young People" at ActionAid Bangladesh suggested preparing comprehensive data on the youth to identify their specific requirements and areas of assistance.

"Such data can be helpful in providing economic assistance, guidelines, and social safety packages," he said.

Raihan presented the research by SANEM on the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the youth of Bangladesh. The research identified six transmission mechanisms through which the youth of the country are being affected: health, education, employment, income, poverty,

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POLYTECHNIC, TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS
Livestreamed classes begin today

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) is set to begin holding classes of polytechnic institutes through Facebook live, to minimise academic loss of students as those are closed due to coronavirus pandemic.

Live classes for diploma-in-engineering courses of public and private polytechnic institutes, technical school and colleges, will begin at 8am today, DTE Director (planning and development) Jahangir Alam told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Many students are now out of education due to coronavirus situation and they will fall behind. So, we are starting the online classes," he said.

The Facebook live classes will be available on pages like skills.gov.bd/dte and www.facebook.com/skills.gov.bd, he added.

A total of 3.25 lakh students are enrolled in 50 government and 553 private polytechnic institutes, and 64 technical school and colleges.

Classes of all 34 technologies for first year and five coveted technologies for second and third years students will be held via Facebook live, Jahangir said.

Five technologies -- civil, mechanical, computer, electrical and electronic -- have covered at least 80 percent of students.

Fifty teachers of polytechnic in eight divisional cities will deliver lecture by rotation and they have already prepared their speech, with the assistance from a2i project of the government.

"We have already sent information and class routine to all polytechnic institutes, technical school and colleges so that students can follow the classes," Jahangir said.

Earlier DTE introduced televised classroom lectures for about some 3.80 lakh SSC (vocational) and Dakhil (vocational) students at some 3,000 institutions, through Sangsad Bangladesh Television since April 19.

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education on March 29 started TV education through Sangsad TV for secondary students,

Directorate of Primary Education started TV class on the same channel on April 7 for primary students and Directorate of Madrasa Education began televised classes on April 19.

All educational institutions have been closed since March 17, and the government has now extended the closure till May 30, in a bid to stem further spread of Covid-19.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 27 said all educational institutions may remain closed till September if the coronavirus situation does not improve.

Academic activities of about four crore students are being hampered due to coronavirus crisis. Publishing of SSC examination results and holding of HSC exams have been deferred for an indefinite period. First-term exams of primary schools also been cancelled for the crisis.

Public universities and colleges under National University are in fear of session jam. Many private universities cannot complete their ongoing semester and that would delay their next semester.

World Thalassaemia Day observed with call for youth awareness

CITY DESK

On World Thalassaemia Day (May 8), Bangladesh Thalassaemia Foundation, Sandhani, Medicine Club, and Platform observed the day by creating public awareness online, amid the Covid-19 outbreak, said a press release.

This year's theme was "Thalassaemia prevention should start from the youth, blood screening before marriage will protect the future generations."

According to World Health Organisation, seven per cent of Bangladesh's population (about 11 million people) are carriers of thalassaemia. Every year, 7,000 children are born with the illness.

The keynote was presented by Prof Dr Manzoor Morshed. He said, "Thalassaemia is a genetic disease of the blood. Patients with thalassaemia do not make enough iron in their bodies. As a result, they get severe anaemia. Thalassaemia patients survive through monthly blood infusions. If left untreated, the patients die of anaemia. Human cells have two genes for making blood. A person with a defect in one of the genes that make blood is called a thalassaemia carrier, and a person with a defect in both genes is called a thalassaemia patient."

Dr Abdur Rahim, secretary general of Bangladesh Thalassaemia Foundation, said that Thalassaemia Foundation Hospital continues to provide services even during the pandemic. At present, 3,205 registered patients are receiving regular medical services there. From this hospital, free medical aid is provided to the poor and destitute patients. In 2019, 522 patients were provided free medical services throughout the year.

Dr Aminul Islam, joint secretary to the government and adviser to the foundation; Aktari Mumtaz, former secretary to the government and patron of the foundation, and Dr Habibur Rahman, line director, Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention Program (NCDC), Department of Health joined the discussion among many other distinguished persons.



A monkey takes food from a volunteer near Sadarghat area in the capital. Amid the coronavirus outbreak, alumni of Dhaka Collegiate School distributed food and relief aid among people in need last week, and did not forget about the native primates, who have been struggling for food as well.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

322 Bangladeshis return home from Australia, India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 322 Bangladeshi citizens stranded in India and Australia returned home yesterday by two separate special flights of US-Bangla Airlines and a Sri Lanka Airlines flight.

Of them, 165 returned from India and 157 returned from Australia. They were stranded in the two countries for over one-and-half-a months after the Covid-19 lockdowns hit.

The US-Bangla Airlines flight carrying the 165 Bangladeshis from Chennai landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) at around 2:45pm. The special Sri Lankan Airlines flight from Australia landed around 1am, after a stop at Colombo, said an official of Aviation Security, HSIA.

Meanwhile, 168 more Indian nationals and one Bhutanese national left Dhaka for their respective countries yesterday, AHM Touhid-ul Ahsan, director, HSIA, said.

A special flight of Air India carrying the Indian citizens left the airport around 1:15pm, while a special flight of Druk Air left the terminals around 9:30am, said Touhid.

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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC LATEST UPDATES

NEARLY 4 MILLION CASES At least 274,617 people have died of the novel coronavirus so far, according to an AFP tally at 1900 GMT yesterday. There have been more than 3,946,130 recorded cases spanning 195 countries and territories.

DEADLY FOOD DISTRIBUTION At least six people were killed in Afghanistan's western province of Ghor as clashes broke out between police forces and protesters during a demonstration against alleged mismanagement of aid to alleviate the effects of the pandemic.

CHINA ADMITS 'SHORTCOMINGS' The coronavirus outbreak exposed "shortcomings" in China's public healthcare system, a top health official admitted yesterday, saying that reforms are underway to improve the country's disease prevention and control mechanisms.

BOLSONARO 'BIGGEST THREAT' The Lancet, a leading medical journal, has described President Jair Bolsonaro as "perhaps the biggest threat" to Brazil's ability to successfully fight the coronavirus pandemic.

PENCE SPOKESWOMAN POSITIVE The US vice president's spokeswoman Katie Miller became the second White House staffer this week to test positive for coronavirus, officials said Friday.

AMERICANS OPPOSE REOPENING A large majority of Americans oppose reopening the country now, with Democrats and Republicans sharply divided on the question, according to a poll published on Friday.

10,000 MORE CASES IN RUSSIA Russian authorities yesterday said they had recorded 10,817 new cases of the coronavirus in the last day, pushing the nationwide tally to 198,676.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Eyes key route for virus infection: study

THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN

The eyes are a key route by which the novel coronavirus infects humans, a study by the University of Hong Kong has found, in addition to the upper respiratory tract, which includes the nose, mouth and throat.

The study made public on Friday also found that Sars-Cov-2 - the strain of coronavirus that causes the Covid-19 disease - was up to 100 times more infectious than the severe acute respiratory syndrome (Sars) virus, or Sars-Cov, and bird flu viruses such as H5N1, reported news agency Xinhua.

The research team led by Dr Michael Chan Chi Wai, an associate professor at the university's School of Public Health, found that the coronavirus is much more efficient in infecting the human conjunctiva - the tissue lining the surface of the eye - and the upper respiratory airways, and its level of infection is comparable to that observed for H1N1, the swine flu virus that caused a pandemic in 2009.

"This explains the higher transmissibility of Covid-19 than that of Sars. This study also highlights the fact that eyes may be an important route of Sars-Cov-2 human infection," Dr Chan said, according to the South China Morning Post.

The research team had previously discovered that the coronavirus remains alive for up to seven days on smooth surfaces such as stainless steel, glass and plastic. It is therefore possible for people to get infected when they touch these surfaces with their hands and then touch their face.

The study was published in the latest issue of The Lancet Respiratory Medicine. According to SCMP, it was assumed in the early stages of the coronavirus crisis that medical personnel would be sufficiently protected by wearing N95 face masks and protective clothing, and did not need specialist glasses. These latest findings by Dr Chan's team, it says, challenge that assumption.

The Covid-19 outbreak first came to light in late December after cases were detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan.



An Ilyushin Il-78 air tanker and a Russian Tupolev Tu-160 strategic bomber fly over the Kremlin and Red Square in downtown Moscow to mark the 75th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two, yesterday. President Vladimir Putin told Russians they are "invincible" when they stand together as the country marked occasion amid lockdown due to halt the spread of coronavirus.

PHOTO: AFP

China, Russia coordinating on virus conspiracies

Accuses US, prevents UNSC vote on pandemic truce

AFP, Washington

The United States has accused China and Russia of stepping up cooperation to spread false narratives over the coronavirus pandemic, saying Beijing was increasingly adopting techniques honed by Moscow.

"Even before the COVID-19 crisis we assessed a certain level of coordination between Russia and the PRC in the realm of propaganda," said Lea Gabrielle, coordinator of the State Department's Global Engagement Center, which tracks foreign propaganda.

"But with this pandemic the cooperation has accelerated rapidly," she told reporters.

"We see this convergence as a result of what we consider to be pragmatism between the two actors who want to shape public understanding of the COVID pandemic for their own purposes," she said.

The Global Engagement Center earlier said thousands of Russian-linked social media accounts were spreading conspiracies about the pandemic, including charging that the virus first detected last year in the Chinese metropolis of Wuhan was created by the United States.

China outraged the United States when a foreign ministry spokesman tweeted a conspiracy that the

US military brought the virus to Wuhan, but the two countries reached an informal rhetorical truce in late March after telephone talks between President Donald Trump and his counterpart Xi Jinping.

Tensions have again soared as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pushes the theory that the virus originated in a Wuhan laboratory, a stance that Beijing in turn calls disinformation.

Both the World Health Organization and the US government's top epidemiologist say there is no evidence the virus came from a lab.

China and Russia often find common cause and clash with the United States on issues from Venezuela to the use of economic sanctions to disarmament.

At United Nations, US on Friday stunned other members of the UN Security Council by preventing a vote on a resolution for a ceasefire in various conflicts around the world to help troubled nations better fight the coronavirus pandemic, diplomats said. Washington's reversal came a day after it agreed to the text, negotiators said under cover of anonymity.

The latest stalemate continues to leave the global peace and security body largely mute in the face of a once-in-a-century pandemic that has killed more than 270,000 people.

Trump, Saudi king reaffirm defense ties

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump and Saudi Arabia's King Salman spoke by phone on Friday and "reaffirmed the strong United States-Saudi defense partnership," the White House said, amid tensions over Saudi's oil output.

The two men spoke after news the United States planned to withdraw two Patriot anti-missile batteries from Saudi Arabia that have been a defense against Iran.

Trump had worked last month to persuade Saudi Arabia to cut its oil output after an increase in production during the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic put heavy pressure on U.S. oil producers.

"The two leaders agreed on the importance of stability in global energy markets, and reaffirmed the strong United States-Saudi defense partnership," White House spokesman Judd Deere said. "The president and King Salman also discussed other critical regional and bilateral issues and their cooperation as leaders of the G7 and G20, respectively."

The statement did not mention the Patriot missiles and the White House declined further comment.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo confirmed on Friday media reports that the missiles would be withdrawn, but he said it did not signal a decrease in US support for Saudi Arabia and was not an effort to pressure Riyadh on oil issues. He also said it did not mean Washington thought Iran was no longer a threat.

"Those Patriot batteries had been in place for some time. Those troops needed to get back," Pompeo told the Ben Shapiro radio show. "This was a normal rotation of forces."



Police detain demonstrators during a protest against India's newly inaugurated link road to the Chinese border, in Kathmandu, yesterday. Nepal objected to a newly inaugurated link road to the Chinese border by India that crosses a disputed area with Nepal, as police detained protestors against the move in Kathmandu.

PHOTO: AFP

Indian protesters carry dead bodies into gas leak plant

AFP, Vishakhapatnam

Angry protesters carrying dead bodies stormed an Indian chemical plant yesterday to demand the facility's closure after a toxic gas leak that killed 12 people days earlier.

Thursday's pre-dawn accident in the industrial port city of Visakhapatnam injured hundreds and knocked many unconscious as they tried to flee the area.

State government officials had arrived to conduct a safety tour of the plant, owned by South Korea's LG Chem, when a crowd of around 300 people barged past police and security guards.

Some helped cart stretchers bearing three victims of the disaster. They chanted slogans demanding justice for the dead and the shutdown of the plant before they were pushed back by security.

Relatives of the dead stood nearby, many in tears. At least three children were among the dead and dozens remain in hospital.

Authorities have started a manslaughter investigation over the leak and India's environmental tribunal has already fined the company \$6.2 million as a preliminary punishment.

ALARMING DEFORESTATION IN AMAZON Brazil to deploy troops

REUTERS, Brasilia

Deforestation in Brazil's Amazon rainforest rose sharply in April, government data showed on Friday, as the coronavirus outbreak keeps many environmental enforcers out of the field and the country prepares to deploy troops to fight illegal logging.

Destruction in Brazil's portion of the Amazon increased 64% in April, compared with the same month a year ago, according to preliminary satellite data from space research agency INPE.

In the first four months of the year, Amazon deforestation was up 55% from a year ago to 1,202 square kilometers (464 square miles), according to the INPE data.

The Amazon is the world's largest tropical rainforest, and scientists say its preservation is vital to curb global warming because of the vast amount of greenhouse gas that it absorbs.

Destruction of the Amazon surged to an 11-year high last year and continues to climb in 2020, which environmentalists blame on the policies of right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro who has emboldened illegal loggers, miners and ranchers.

Bolsonaro has called for more farming and mining in protected areas of the forest, saying it is the only way to lift the region out of poverty.

The new coronavirus outbreak has complicated efforts to combat deforestation, with environmental enforcement agency Ibama sending fewer agents into the field due to health risks. The agency has said it will scale back field agents in other at-risk areas but not the Amazon.



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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার. উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM). The Public Procurement Act-2006 & The Public Procurement Rules-2008. Includes a table of procurement items and their details.

TAMING CORONAVIRUS RAMPAGE

Our sudden and decentralised restart is hard to fathom



ZAHID HUSSAIN

Bangladesh's restart is happening, whether science supports it or not.

Justification for the hurry is sought by referring to reopening in other countries, especially China, Germany, Spain, Italy, Denmark, India and several Arab states.

A quick web-search of what these countries have done suggests we may be missing the key lessons -- health system preparedness, gradualism, selectivity, hygiene and social distancing compliance -- from how they are reopening.

Wuhan -- the birth city of the pandemic -- reopened after 76 days of lockdown.

Residents with a government-assigned green Quick Response (QR) code on their mobile phones -- certifying they are safe -- are allowed to go back to work.

In residential communities where no new cases have been reported for 14 days, one person per household with a green QR code can leave the compound two hours per day.

On March 25, public buses started to resume service; three days later, underground trains began running. Businesses and shops have gradually reopened.

Germany acted early and aggressively to roll out comprehensive testing. A lot more people with no or mild symptoms got tested, helping to slow the spread.

The government coordinated all lockdown measures, straightforwardly communicated information to citizens and officials, consulted with experts and used data to guide decisions.

Spain lifted some of the restrictions, allowing businesses whose employees cannot work remotely to reopen.

Manufacturing, construction, and some service workers have been allowed to return subject to strict safety guidelines. Their rate of new infections has been falling.

Italy allowed a narrow range of firms to resume operations at the end of April. In Denmark, schools and daycare centres reopened on April 15. Other restrictions, including a ban on gatherings of more than 10 people, remain in place.

India's nationwide lockdown was one of its strictest. It started reopening with manufacturing and farming in rural areas and neighbourhood convenience stores to provide

relief for small, cash-strapped businesses.

Small retail shops could reopen with half their staff, and with the expectation that people physically and socially distance wearing masks.

Quarantined towns and hotspots across the country remain locked.

Iran reopened mosques in areas consistently free of the coronavirus.

Jordan lifted all restrictions on economic activity, allowing businesses, industries, public transport to resume operation with safety guidelines. Universities and schools remain closed and a night curfew continues.

Malls in Abu Dhabi have reopened at 30 per cent capacity after installing thermal inspection devices. Shoppers are required to wear face masks and gloves at all times.

Saudi authorities have allowed wholesale and retail trade to resume for just two weeks (from April 29 to May 13).

not produced the desired results.

The number of infected cases is rising exponentially.

People find ways to follow their normal routines to engage in activities that provide daily sustenance and togetherness.

Individuals estimate they can go out, meet friends and enjoy the contained virus spread if everyone else is staying home, avoiding social contact.

The problem is when everyone makes the same estimate, all end up going out. Seeing all going out breaks the last straw for those still hanging in, completing the vicious circle.

Compliance with public health orders happens when people share a widespread belief that everyone is complying, as pointed out by the former World Bank Chief Economist Kaushik Basu a few years ago.

Bangladesh has, for all practical purpose, left it to the market to decide when and how

Workers are exposed to health risks in factories with inadequate occupational safety and health measures.

Their health risk is exacerbated by their often extremely crowded and unhygienic housing conditions.

Workers have been stigmatised by the people in their local communities as well as in their home districts.

Economics is supposedly driving the de-facto surrender of the most potent weapon, in the absence of vaccines and therapeutics, against the spread of the virus: social distancing. Have business leaders done their calculus right?

The latest evidence casts doubt.

A Consumer Pulse Survey by the Centre for Enterprise and Society has just assessed consumer sentiments in the context of the pandemic, upcoming Eid, and beyond.

They find consumers most concerned

Individuals estimate they can go out, meet friends and enjoy the contained virus spread if everyone else is staying home, avoiding social contact. The problem is when everyone makes the same estimate, all end up going out.



RASHED SHUMON

Cars are slowly taking over the streets again after staying off for a good five weeks for the ongoing countrywide shutdown, enforced on March 26 to flatten the curve on coronavirus that has so far infected 13,770 and claimed 214 lives since the first confirmed cases were announced on March 8. The photo was taken from the Mohakhali flyover on Thursday.

Many business owners in Lebanon have not reopened because they thought they will be losing more money if they operate under restrictions in a faltering economy.

Authorities everywhere have reopened selectively after the infection cases started declining (except India) and with a no-nonsense caution that the threat of further infections is far from over.

Staying home is highly encouraged while physical distancing and hygienic practices complied. An adequate network of hospitals and primary health care facilities exist in all these countries.

In Bangladesh, the basic pre-conditions are missing.

Public health professionals say the official figures do not capture the virus spread reality on the ground. Testing rates remain low.

There are concerns about significant "false negatives".

The capacity to test, isolate and treat patients is restricted by fragile public health infrastructure and vastly inadequate personnel.

Enforcement of social distancing through official holidays, restriction on movements, local lockdowns and public advisories have

to open, unlike any other country.

In fairness, the restriction on activities came under increasing strain as millions struggled to make ends meet.

Macro-level collective action problems can quickly surface when a public good is left upon the market to provide without effective central guidance and regulation.

Chaotic return to an elusive normal is a natural outcome.

Garment factories started production, allegedly to avert loss of business to competitors such as Vietnam and China, flouting social distancing and hygiene.

Shop owners have the discretion to open for Eid sales.

Informal sector small operators are naturally responding.

The millions rushing to Dhaka and other virus hotspots could emerge as new vectors of the pandemic. The workers are travelling between home and the workplace. Labour unrest for wage payments is adding fuel to fire.

According to a report by the Brac Institute of Governance and Development, the trade union leaders report a lack of awareness among workers and owners.

about personal and family safety, income and business. A large majority are unsure about the country's ability to recover from the economic shock. At least 84 per cent are cutting back spending.

Eid spending is likely to be deeply depressed, with restaurants and hotels hardest hit.

Except for spending on pharmaceuticals and online learning, all other spending is likely to decrease, the least for groceries, beyond Eid.

Consumer confidence is ebbing.

The fear of contracting the virus underpins the erosion of confidence. This fear, in turn, is rooted in a lack of confidence in the health system. With COVID-19 cases doubling every 5 days, the country is experiencing steepening of the curve.

Nobody can predict the health and economic consequences of such a rapid and uncoordinated reopening of the economy. Faith in herd immunity does not help much in alleviating this radical uncertainty.

A lack of coordinated effort to mitigate the health and economic risks has deepened anxieties.

The 3.5 per cent of GDP stimulus package is inadequate when the economy requires at least 5-6 per cent to support families and firms.

In Bangladesh, the basic pre-conditions for reopening are missing.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Education
Secondary and Higher Education Division
Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
Secondary Education Sector Investment Program
www.sesip.gov.bd

Memo: DSHE/SESIP/SPSU/1-438/PVIP(GD-50/a)/2019/967 Date: 09 May, 2020

CORRIGENDUM No. 3

This is being notified to all concerned that the following amendments are made to the Invitation for Bids and Bidding Documents of Tender Package: GD-50a for procurement of equipment for Pre-vocational and Vocational Program (PVIP) (Lot 2: General Electrical Works; Lot 3: General Electronics; Lot 4: General Mechanics) (Invitation ref. no. DSHE/SESIP/SPSU/1-438/PVIP(GD-50/a)/2019/910; Dated: 12 March 2020).

This Addendum is being issued pursuant to ITB Clause-8 of the Bidding Documents:

SL	Subject to be Amended	Current Contents (Including corrigendum no.2)	Amended Contents (Contents to be read as)
1	Tender Last Selling Date and Time	12.05.2020 up to 17 Hrs. BST	09.06.2020 up to 17 Hrs. BST
2	Tender Submission Date and Time (ITB 24.1)	13.05.2020, at or before 14:00 Hrs. BST	10.06.2020, at or before 12:00 Hrs. BST
3	Tender Opening Date and Time (ITB 27.1)	13.05.2020, at 14:30 Hrs. BST	10.06.2020, at 12:30 Hrs. BST

NOTE: All other Terms and Conditions shall remain unchanged. This CORRIGENDUM No. 3 shall form an integral part of the Bidding Document.

Professor Dr. Shamsun Naher
Joint Program Director (R.C.)
Secondary Education Sector Investment Program
Tel. 01816316842

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Education
Secondary and Higher Education Division
Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
Secondary Education Sector Investment Program
www.sesip.gov.bd

Memo: DSHE/SESIP/SPSU/1-439/PVIP(GD-50/b)/2019/968 Date: 09 May, 2020

CORRIGENDUM No. 3

This is being notified to all concerned that the following amendments are made to the Invitation for Bids and Bidding Documents of Tender Package: GD-50b for procurement of equipment for Pre-vocational and Vocational Program (PVIP) (Lot 1: Civil Construction; Lot 4: Refrigeration and Air Conditioning; Lot 5: Plumbing and Pipe Fittings) (Invitation ref. no. DSHE/SESIP/SPSU/1-439/PVIP(GD-50/b)/2019/911; Dated: 12 March 2020).

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NOTE: All other Terms and Conditions shall remain unchanged. This CORRIGENDUM No. 3 shall form an integral part of the Bidding Document.

Professor Dr. Shamsun Naher
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Tel. 01816316842

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA SUNDAY MAY 10, 2020, BAISHAKH 27, 1427 BS

The world at risk of mega-famines

Bangladesh cannot afford to be complacent

THE United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) has warned that the world is at risk of "mega-famines" as COVID-19 cases are expected to peak in the world's most fragile countries in the next three to six months. Even before COVID-19, there was already 135 million acutely hungry people in the world, in addition to the 821 million people who were chronically hungry, highlighted the UN organisation. The pandemic will likely double the number of acutely hungry people.

The UN's warning should be taken seriously by policymakers, particularly in countries like ours. While we are fortunate to have adequate food stocks in case of an immediate crisis, the current and imminent implications of COVID-19 on the food supply chain cannot be ignored, particularly as we are a part of the global economy. The government has taken some timely steps, such as mobilising workers from parts of the country and sending them to the haor areas, which were facing acute labour shortages, to harvest the paddy, and taking measures to save crops before impending flashfloods and cyclones in the north-eastern and southern regions, respectively. However, concerns remain whether farmers will be able to sell their crops at a fair price. Already smallholders and women farmers are having to sell their produce at one-fourth or one-fifth the usual price—how will they make up for this loss to their livelihoods and what disastrous impact will it have on the next production cycle?

The government cannot afford to be complacent at this critical stage of intervention as it strategises how to ease the lockdown and distribute and redistribute food products, without jeopardising the safety of communities. Additionally, with millions of people in extreme poverty and temporary unemployment due to the ongoing crisis, the government needs to expand its social safety net programmes to ensure access to food for all. Having adequate food supplies in stocks will mean nothing if it is not properly and fairly distributed.

Celebrating Mother's Day

Let's ensure our mothers get their rightful place in family and society

AS we celebrate International Mother's Day today, remaining confined to our homes, we, in fact, get a better chance to see the hard work our mothers have to do every single day only to make our lives comfortable. During this lockdown, it's our mothers who are sacrificing the most just to ensure that we can go about our regular life without facing much hassle. This is what mothers do in any given situation—they make sure that their children are fed, clothed and educated with whatever resources they have. They keep the family together and allow other members to work and pursue their dreams. But do we even find the time to pause for a minute and think about what they get in return for their endless love and care for their children and family? How many amongst us recognise their role in the family and society? How many amongst us make sure that our mothers are in good health, both mental and physical?

We are saddened to learn from reports that during the ongoing lockdown violence against women has increased around the world. Manusher Jonno Foundation has recently conducted a telesurvey which found that 4,249 women out of 17,203 they have interviewed faced different forms of domestic violence in April this year during the shutdown. We often come across reports in the media about how elderly parents are mistreated and abandoned by their children. Women's unpaid household and care work have not yet been formally recognised by our state. And as we all praise the role of our mothers today, an overwhelming number of expectant mothers are dying in the remote corners of the country every day due to their lack of access to proper healthcare services.

On this Mother's Day, let us take a vow to end the violence and discrimination our mothers as well as women in general face at home and ensure that their hard work is recognised in the family and society.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Turkey's response to AFP report

I am writing to you regarding the AFP news piece titled "Armenia decries crimes against 'civilisation' on genocide anniv" published on April 25, 2020 edition of *The Daily Star*. As this news reflect a subjective narrative based on the unfounded claims by the Armenian side, I would like to bring to your attention the following so that you can inform your readers with the counter arguments:

Turkey, having solidarity among its citizens regardless of their backgrounds of faith or identity, commemorates with respect Muslim, Christian and Jewish civilians of Ottoman communities who lost their lives during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

More than 500 thousand Muslims have been massacred by Armenian rebels in the same period. We would like to remind that Turkey's proposal to establish a Joint Historical Commission on the event of 1915 is still on the table. We believe the truth will be unveiled if this Commission is established. Those who try to take this proposal off the agenda are radical Armenians who want to make their responsibilities during the events of 1915 forgotten.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's message to Armenian Patriarch of Tukey, Reverend Sahak Masalyan on April 24, 2020 clearly demonstrates Turkey's approach on this matter.

Mustafa Osman Turan, Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh

COVID-19 and the assault on fundamental rights

Involuntary disappearance, re-appearance and detention



C R ABRAR

A spectre is haunting the conscientious citizens of Bangladesh—the spectre of the Digital Security Act, 2018 (DSA). By now the law has become synonymous with

curtailment of freedom of expression and repression. The recent developments of involuntary disappearance, re-appearance and subsequent detention of several commentators and social activists have raised the alarm if indeed we as a nation are shying away from upholding one of the cardinal principles of the *Muktijuddher Chetona* (the spirit of the Liberation War) to freely express our views.

A few recent cases will corroborate the above statement. On May 6, businessman Mushtaq Ahmed and cartoonist Ahammed Kabir Kishore were sent to jail and Dhaka Stock Exchange director Minhaz Mannan Emon and Rastra Chinta organiser Didarul Islam Bhuiyan were shown arrested a day after they had reportedly been picked up in a case filed under the DSA allegedly for spreading "rumours". Five persons based in Sweden and Germany and six more unnamed persons have been named for "tarnishing" the image of the father

of the nation, "hurting" the spirit of the Liberation War, and "spreading rumours" about COVID-19, army and other security forces among others, on social media.

Cartoonist Ahmed Kabir Kishore, began profiling "life in the time of corona" while Mushtaq started spreading anti-state propaganda, the complaint noted. It was further claimed that authorities had detected "anti-state chatting" in the WhatsApp and Messenger exchanges of Mushtaq, Minhaz and Didarul. The

to the fact that Kajol has been deprived of due process of law and may perhaps be a victim for freely expressing his views on matters of public interest.

Detaining individuals on charges of "spreading rumours", "tarnishing image" and "hurting spirit of Liberation War" for an unstipulated period in a situation when they cannot seek protection of higher judiciary amounts to arbitrary action. It may be recalled that initially Kajol had been detained under Section 54, violating

have noted that following the outbreak of COVID-19, there has been an increase in instances of involuntary disappearance, extra-judicial killing and human rights violations. In most cases the actions were justified on ground of tackling rumours. The feeling is pervasive among rights activists that COVID-19 may have come as a boon to that section in the administration that is disposed to remain unaccountable and non-transparent, and thus quash dissent and public scrutiny.

The country is going through a testing time. It is the need of the hour to face the COVID-19 challenge in unison. The gradual rise in the infection curve with no sign of receding and the worsening conditions of the masses reinforce the fear that we are yet to chart out appropriate course of action. Framing a suitable response necessitates discussion and debate among all stakeholders and that entails tolerance of diverse views and free flow of information. The watchdog role of civil society only ensures transparency and accountability of the public functionaries and also of non-government initiatives engaged in humanitarian assistance. Those in the administration should not only welcome citizens' engagement but create enabling conditions to facilitate the process. At the very least, it entails state's unfettered pledge to uphold the fundamental rights of the citizens guaranteed by the constitution. All responses to COVID-19 must therefore be "evidence-based, legal, necessary to protect public health, non-discriminatory, time-bound and proportionate".

In order to do away with the prevailing dreary and fatalist frame of mind of the people it is incumbent on the authorities to immediately release those detained under the DSA, make every effort to recover those who became victims of involuntary disappearance, and not proceed any further with the frivolous cases of defamation. Scrapping the DSA and instituting a credible commission of enquiry with adequate authority to look into the cases of involuntary disappearance and extra-judicial killings will go a long way to re-establishing citizens' trust in the state.

As the custodian of the constitution, the Supreme Court may consider taking immediate measures to ensure people can seek its protection without any hindrance and (in the interim, until such a system is put in place) advise the executive branch to strictly uphold fundamental rights of the people guaranteed by the constitution and act in accordance with the law, and only in accordance with the law.

CR Abrar is an academic.



original complaint was annexed with 60 pages of screenshots and a compact disc as evidence, and a 2-page list of articles seized and details of their Facebook profiles, including the URLs.

The government move came at a time when citizens were reeling from the bizarre developments centring the involuntary disappearance of journalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol (March 10), his re-appearance in the border town of Benapole (after 53 days) and subsequent placement in detention.

The authorities' attempt to present Kajol as an absconder from justice failed to gain traction. The CCTV footage of some people surrounding his motorbike just prior to his disappearance, the initial refusal of two police stations to register the family's attempt to file a case, the lack of progress in investigation, improperly detaining him under Section 54 of Criminal Procedure Code to secure time to frame other, publicly humiliating him by handcuffing his hands behind his back (a practice reserved for those accused of violent crimes such as rape, murder, terrorism and the like) and "law enforcement agencies' overdrive to keep him in prison" at a time when courts are dysfunctional, all point

the guidelines framed by the High Court and upheld by the Appellate Division. As the hearing of the government's review petition is still pending those guidelines continue to remain in force. Therefore continued detention of Kajol under Section 54 appears to be in breach of the law.

It is a matter of the courts to decide whether charges brought against the above accused for "spreading rumour", "tarnishing image" and "hurting" a sentiment are tenable or not. In most instances of involuntary disappearances, including the ones above, does not the denial of law enforcement agencies of any knowledge of whereabouts of victims amount to making a false statement? Evidence is replete that in a number of cases victims are shown as under arrest if and when they are produced before the court, some weeks and even months after they were reportedly disappeared. Should not the errant members of law enforcement agencies be held accountable for such gross misconduct?

These recent actions of law enforcement agencies have triggered widespread protests. Rights groups documenting the excesses committed by state agencies

The heroicness of children

HUMAIRA SULTANA

THINK of a child in lockdown! I can only imagine a caged bird, trying so hard to be freed. I can imagine, I can see, because I have three of them!

A child is always like a little scientist, always exploring, trying new experiments and new things, making new friends, finding new places, flying like birds in an open meadow, following the butterfly or simply roaming around the community from dawn till dusk! And now, their childhood is being lost because of a thousand instructions and set of rules of social distancing due to the pandemic.

COVID-19 holiday (lockdown) was fun for the first few days for the children. No school, relaxed study hours, comfortable sleeping times, waking up and going to bed late, movie time (for the privileged ones), or longer playtime. Some even travelled with their parents during the first few days of the government declared holiday. Children of working parents were extremely happy as they got to enjoy the company of both their parents, perhaps for

the very first time of their lives, or at least after a very long time!

But as the duration of the lockdown and the number of people infected increases, so does the burden on children. They are locked up within the confines of the four walls. Online classes, continuous dos and don'ts and no friends. These are seriously impacting their mental state.

Think of the children who are not privileged, living in urban slums or under the open sky. Most of the parents of these slum children are now jobless due to social distancing and lockdown. For these working families mostly comprising of domestic helpers, day labourers and garments workers, the miseries cannot be solved just with immediate relief. They have no work, no income, and very depressingly, no savings! These families are already starving, including the children. To them roaming around is no longer fun. And to those sleeping on the roadside, starving may be a bigger threat than the virus!

A couple of days ago, I was reading an article which said that children with disabilities are having a tough time and

becoming increasingly restless during this lockdown. On top of that, the medical facilities available to them are very limited.

Violence against children is on the rise, whereas the scope to report them has declined. Apart from this, children are also exposed to increased family violence, mostly violence against women. In both cases, children are directly and indirectly affected.

In rural areas, where agriculture is the main source of income and nutrition of the family, children are also being severely affected. Farmers are not getting the appropriate price for their crops or other products. People are predicting that there could be a severe food crisis in the upcoming days, which these families are already struggling with—as on the hand they are not receiving fair payment for their produce, while on the other, crops are getting wasted due to their inability to deliver them to the appropriate market. Families are selling off their cattle for cheap to support their basic needs, leaving them even more vulnerable. Children's food and nutrition and other basic rights

A child is always like a little scientist, always exploring, trying new experiments and new things, making new friends, finding new places, flying like birds in an open meadow, following the butterfly or simply roaming around the community from dawn till dusk!



Children at an orphanage at the capital's Azimpur watch TV.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

are being hampered. In early April, a destitute mother threw five children into the river Ganges in Uttar Pradesh as there was no food due to the lockdown! I couldn't even read the news; I didn't even dare to.

Whenever I see Facebook statuses of how bored people are getting due to the lockdown, or of mouth-watering food they are making and enjoying (I am not against people posting food photos), I think about the children who are starving and going to bed hungry or the mother who threw her children into the river. Whenever I see posts mentioning how tough life has become—to manage work and household with kids as the kids are restless—I think about the children who are running pillar to post with their parents to get some relief!

Children are wonders! If they are happily causing mischief at home, be happy for that, be happy that they are healthy, that they are having a meal, that they are at home, complying with tons of different instructions.

All the children out there or at home, they are the real heroes and fighters of COVID-19. Because they are compromising their childhood and the memories they get to make because of this pandemic.

Humaira Sultana is a development communication expert.

Paradox of analogue life in a digital age



SABBIR AHMAD

LAST Christmas break, I took my daughter out to dinner when she flew in to see me in Vancouver. We decided to go to a Vietnamese restaurant to get the traditional pho, a warm bone broth soup with savoury beef chunks and hearty noodles. As I sipped my delicious pho and caught up with my daughter about her work and life as a recent graduate mining engineer, I glanced around the restaurant to observe my fellow patrons. Dozens of people were sitting at their tables, and a good number of them had their heads down, fiddling their smartphones while waiting for their food to be served. Their eyes darted up and down the screen, and they would only look up briefly when answering or asking a question. The endless screen watching, even in social settings always made me wonder "what is the point?" A few questions also swirl around in my head. How did the world wide web take over our analogue lives? What is so mesmerising about our handheld devices that amounts to this level of addiction?

I have been self-quarantined in my home for over a month now in Dhaka, Bangladesh, where I moved back recently from Vancouver, Canada. In this lockdown state, I continue to work from home and connect with my colleagues all over the country including some from our company headquarters in Kuala Lumpur and my boss, who is stuck in Yangon due to the travel restrictions. We participate in many team meetings throughout the day using online audio-visual aids. Our company also conducted several virtual townhalls with hundreds of employees in virtual attendance. However, in most cases, we try to avoid video calls due to the bandwidth limitations.

I also converse with a few of my

colleagues in Vancouver to discuss a few initiatives that we started much before I left. The time difference works to my benefit since I can arrange my interactions before going to bed. Over the last few days, I have done several transactions through a mobile financial app called *bKash*. My wife was able to get groceries delivered at home by placing orders on a website, while I paid for cable TV, internet, electricity and phone bills using my smartphone. My teenage daughter who goes to an English medium school, becomes preoccupied during the school hours as she attends online classes from the comfort of her room. Some weeknights are spent having family time, watching YouTube or Netflix.

Seemingly, the internet has become the answer to a myriad of challenges ensuing from the strict nationwide measures to halt the transmission of the COVID-19. Many of the activities that are being conducted digitally today would have been performed through analogue means otherwise. Bridging our analogue lives to the digital world make us happily relieved during the lockdown and facilitate social distancing. That said, I still miss going to the office, meeting my colleagues, or going out for a walk to have some fresh air.

The unanswered paradox is that many of us are too immersed in our digital world while living analogue lives in normal times; we are able to do everything and anything without ever needing physical human interaction today.

From shopping groceries, virtual classrooms, online consultation with a physician or working from home to enjoy digital contents could have been the way of life today if the majority of the population were able to use most of these modalities. However, the reality is different with almost half of the world population without access to the internet. The so-called *digital divide* becomes worse when the least developed countries are considered. It also has a gender bias impacting women more than men.

Since its inception, *digital divide* is just not only a local phenomenon but also a global one. More than one billion children across the globe are unable to attend remote learning while locked at home due to COVID-19 restrictions now. Even in developed countries, internet access is often lower than perceived. Paradoxically, amidst the technological prowess of the United States of America, 12

and communication technology (ICT) to bridge the digital divide by adopting technologies and improving knowledge base. Some indicators suggest that reasonable progresses have been made; for example, last year Bangladesh advanced to the rank of 115 out of 193 counties in the UN E-Governance Index climbing 35 steps since 2012. Government policies and initiatives have offered a positive atmosphere in

sector offices are using the benefits of the large-scale *digitalisation* that the government has strived for over the years. As of February 2020, the number of mobile connections per capita in Bangladesh was equivalent to 99 percent of the total population, less than 20 percent of them had a smartphone. These numbers are 65 percent and 45 percent, respectively when the whole world is considered. Although Internet subscription in Bangladesh stood at almost 100 million, the broadband connectivity stayed at less than 6 million according to the data from the nation's regulatory body BTRC. The household computer ownership in 2019 was less than 6 percent, as per ITU.

The key focus of the digitalisation efforts either in local or global scenarios has mostly been on technology. This approach has offered a significant thrust for Bangladesh to address aspects of the digital divide in terms of ICT capabilities. Yet, the root cause of this divide is not just limited to technology, there are a number of other factors, such as income disparity, education level, geography and infrastructure playing a critical role in widening or closing the chasm.

With the small percentage of computers in households, limited broadband internet and the relatively low penetration of smartphones in Bangladesh, the paradox of digital divide may continue even when there might be a call for adopting many of the digital avenues explored today to become our way of life. We would have to relentlessly pursue our aspirations to become a true digital Bangladesh in a post COVID-19 world that may ultimately save us from our overcrowded capital city, its infamous traffic jams, pollution and enhanced public safety in the coming days. It finally started to dawn on me what was so magical about our handheld devices and why we needed to stay virtually connected more now than ever before.

Sabbir Ahmad, Director, Engineering at edotco Group. Email: sabbir@ieee.org.



As of February 2020, the number of mobile connections per capita in Bangladesh was equivalent to 99 percent of the total population, less than 20 percent of them had a smartphone.

PHOTO: STAR

million children in middle class homes are growing up without internet connection. In rural America, 19 million households still lack internet connectivity. Globally, 87 percent of the population in developed countries are connected to the Internet, compared to 47 percent in developing nations, and a mere 19 percent in impoverished countries.

In the context of Bangladesh, the nation has made impressive progress and was on track to become a middle-income economy by 2021, until the arrival of COVID-19. Governments have coined the *Sustainable Development Goals* to achieve their "Vision 2021". A major impetus was on information

implementing the roadmap toward a *Digital Bangladesh*. Today, many of us are enjoying the fruits of digitisation while being locked down at home.

However, there is a growing concern about the majority of the population continuing to live on the wrong side of the digital divide. They do not have reliable tools or means to connect to the Internet. This is not only limiting working from home or attending classes online but also defeating the greater purpose of a *Digital Bangladesh*. Except for a few private institutions, the online classroom is almost non-existent during this lockdown. The same applies to the work from home modality as only a handful of private

A choice between death by COVID-19 or famine

MOHAMMAD TARIQUR RAHMAN

IT has been more than a month since the world has been under lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of deaths will soar if the predicted second and third waves and the "biblical" famine—as UN warns—come true.

Are we then racing for a massive humanitarian catastrophe? If so, perhaps future generations will remember the COVID-19 pandemic as the biggest humanitarian catastrophe in human history!

At the beginning of this pandemic, the majority of the victims were elderly. Later the number of younger victims started to mount. Then the "rationing" of the healthcare system was chosen to save healthier and/or younger people who had more chances of recovery.

Healthcare rationing is arguably a painful paradox because of the differences in the boundary of "egalitarian" ethos, and the availability of resources. These are based on fostering the dilemma—if death should/could be delayed. Nonetheless, moral apriority in that "cruel" choice of rationing—a choice between life and death—remains a concern.

In fact, the pandemic has given us a pounding realisation to fathom the depth between life and death. We realised that the COVID-19 death sentence could fall upon any of us at any time. The reality is, we can die at any time with or without COVID-19. Yet we never thought of death as much as we are thinking about it during this pandemic!

By all means, we want to escape



United Nations' food relief agency has warned that the world is at risk of widespread famines 'of biblical proportions' caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

PHOTO: AFP

an early death sentence from the coronavirus.

Because of the lack of an effective vaccine/drug, lockdown became the best option to escape any unexpected death. To avoid any chances of getting in touch with the deadly virus, suspected COVID-19 patients were found abandoned; ousted COVID-19 patients wandered helplessly; and dead COVID-19 patients were left unattended in old homes, on the street, or even inside their house for hours to days.

We wanted to complete the full course of a nice life ourselves. We have chosen life over death.

However, given the lockdown's

success to curb the virus's claim of human lives, to ease our frustration for being locked down for so long, or to restore economic growth, many countries are slowly withdrawing or relaxing the lockdown. The hard fact is, everyone knows that both silent and actively infected coronavirus carriers are out there. And neither do we have an effective vaccine, nor a drug, yet.

In effect, what is happening now is what the "herd immunity" advocates have been endorsing from the beginning. Looks like we are going back to square one—creating the breeding ground for the next waves of the pandemic!

No doubt some have achieved what

they wanted to with the lockdown—flattening the death curve. Ironically, that also perpetuated global starvation towards a larger famine—the biblical one!

Now after a month of lockdown, we are facing a different choice—a choice between death by COVID-19 and/or death by the biblical famine. Our rationale to justify our measures at the beginning of the pandemic to save our own lives in lieu of the "less valuable" old folks, or by preventing the spread of deadly infections to save millions of lives may sound hypocritical if we ignore the millions of people in many parts of the world whose dream of living is about to end.

In fact, thousands of men, women, and children of all ages are already dying in imposed wars, famine, or ethnic cleansing. Our deplorable ignorance to that death toll has made the slaughter of humans a norm of modern civilisation! Similarly, we might ignore the death toll due in the upcoming global famine.

In a recent virtual session of the UN Security Council, David Beasley, UN World Food Programme Executive Director, cautioned "an additional 130 million people could be pushed to the brink of starvation by the end of 2020". Ironically, the amount of food that goes to waste in Europe and in the USA alone could feed the world population three times over, yet more than 20,000 people starve to death every day. And this number will increase to 300,000 per day, as David Beasley cautioned! The reality is, every human life is equally important. Everyone deserves to live a full life.

Once we are born, death is inevitable. Obviously, whether we will continue living or leave this world, is not in our control. But what we can do while we are alive, is in our control. And before we embrace death, we should want to fulfil the purpose of life as a human—serving humanity.

It is the coronavirus that perhaps helped us realise the value of our own life—let's not limit that realisation for ourselves only. There are "others" who helplessly become a victim of national or global political plays.

The global leaders have proven themselves to be resolute in the fight against COVID-19. In the same vein, the world can stand united to protect the lives of those who are becoming the victims of famine, ethnic cleansing, or imposed wars.

With the technology that is available, it is not impossible to share millions of gallons of milk instead of dumping it into the drain, thousands of tons of vegetables instead of smashing them into the ground, millions of tons of packed food before throwing those away, or millions of eggs instead of letting them spoil. These "compelled" acts of wasting food are not new—it is a part of the mechanism to maintain the balance in the demand-supply chain and run the economy. And it could be stopped. Unlike our "cruel" choice in the beginning of the lockdown, we can be a bit more "generous" to prevent unexpected deaths due to the forthcoming famine or wars.

Mohammad Tariqur Rahman is professor, Faculty of Dentistry, University of Malaya.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY



NELSON MANDELA INAUGURATED AS PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

May 10, 1994

Nelson Mandela, whose efforts to end apartheid led to his imprisonment (1962-90) and earned him a share (with F W de Klerk) of the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize, became president of South Africa this day in 1994.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Germany's Merkel
 - 7 Party thrower
 - 11 Like vistas
 - 12 State frankly
 - 13 Deli order
 - 15 Nut part
 - 16 Factual
 - 18 Bulls or Bears
 - 21 Harvest
 - 22 Blew one's top
 - 24 Work phone no.
 - 25 Swindle
 - 26 Life story, for short
 - 27 Matched up
 - 29 Corrals
 - 30 Seasonal song
 - 31 Apple center
 - 32 Burglar's bane
 - 34 Mexican holiday
 - 40 Leave out
 - 41 Judged
 - 42 Lights-out tune
 - 43 Breaks apart
- DOWN**
- 1 Fire result
 - 2 Corp. or Sgt.
 - 3 Hair goo
 - 4 Finishes
 - 5 Flexible
 - 6 Dull pain
 - 7 Ophelia's love
 - 8 Eggs, in Latin
 - 9 Tofu base
 - 10 Binary base
 - 14 Rocker John
 - 16 LBJ, for one
 - 17 Math comparison
 - 19 Fossil resin
 - 20 Bangor's state
 - 21 GOP member
 - 22 Zeus or Apollo
 - 23 Uno doubled
 - 25 Viola's cousin
 - 28 Gasps, perhaps
 - 29 Saddle part
 - 31 Move furtively
 - 33 Throws in
 - 34 Guest's bed
 - 35 "... little teapot
 - 36 Wee bite
 - 37 French friend
 - 38 So far
 - 39 Takes too much, briefly



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

F A S T S I S L E T
 A L O H A N A I V E
 D E B I T A D M I T
 N U T S O L E
 D U C K P I N S
 A N A T S A H A R A
 T I T A N P A L E R
 A T O N A L R O A M
 K N I C K E R S
 R A M N E A T
 A L I B I S A L S A
 V E N U E K N E E S
 E X I T S S K I T S

BEEBLE BAILEY



BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES



BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

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

COVID-19: money, mind and beyond

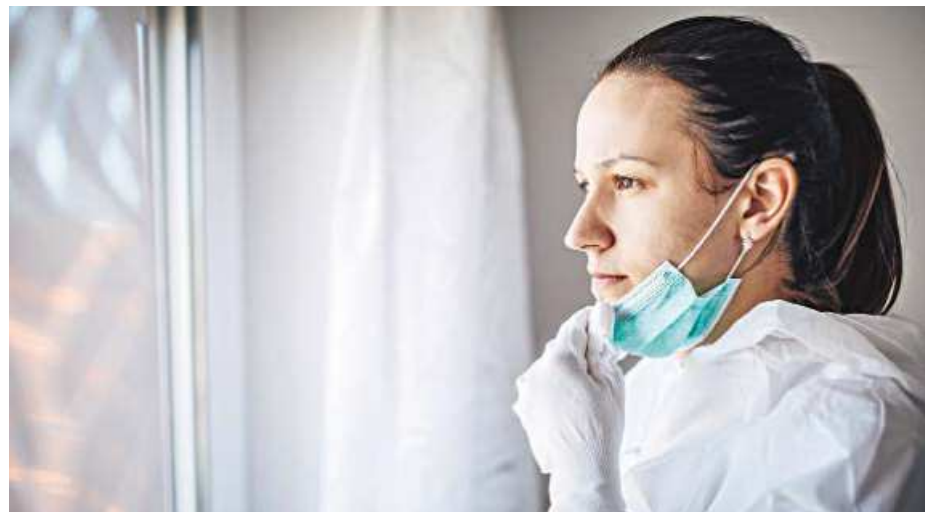
MOHAMMED MONZUR MORSHED

While having no promising success so far against the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), social distancing and quarantine are the only preventive measures advised by experts around the world. The idea is simple as you are not carrying the baton for letting the virus spread in your community. The devastating Coronavirus-show is already long enough that put everyone in critical thinking and wonder what now?

By far you have heard a lot about vaccines or drugs against COVID-19, how much have you grasped for your mental health? It is not just some sort of chemical imbalance that causes stress or depression. Stressful life events, dysregulation of mood by the brain and genetic vulnerability are also major sources of impaired mental health that exist in this pandemic.

Unfortunately for some during this pandemic, it is either Coronavirus or hunger to choose from. Some experts made a daunting speculation that this pandemic driven economic recession will be worse than ever as countries covering more than fifty percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are under lockdown. Unprecedented distortion in the circular flow of economic activities is plummeting people's positive energy.

Hence, this is not the best time for worshipping any economic theory, either be it neoclassical (naturally driven economic rehabilitation with minimum



government influence) or Keynesian (government-backed and fast-paced). Experts rather emphasise on the mobility of money where it should reach all the catalysts of the economy especially the struggling and deprived ones. Although coronavirus itself may move around traceless, the havoc of diminished financial stability is now evident and imprinting its effect on people's psyche. Any decision-making fiasco either for prolonged lockdown or getting back to work will just worsen the burden.

Our lifestyle needs a bit of tuning so that we move along with an apparent healthy living. Quarantine takes a deep

toll on our mood presenting a weird kind of boredom. Boredom and stress provoke people towards overeating, for many the sugary "comfort foods".

Imbalance in dietary choice driven by the craving for any specific food includes emotional, behavioural, cognitive or psychological process. Although carbohydrate-rich foods promote the 'happy hormone' serotonin production which stimulates our mood, it also triggers a higher glycaemic index with consequent obesity and diabetes down the line.

Sleep disturbance or change in circadian rhythm adds another level of stress. Foods rich in serotonin and sleep-promoting amino acid melatonin for dinner may

help. Having a considerable portion of veggies, fruits and leafy greens are good options. This also provides tryptophan, the precursor of serotonin and melatonin. Just maintaining the basics ensuring good sources of immuno-supportive nutrients with vitamins, antioxidants, balance of macro and micronutrients may help you fight the impaired immune response and activate your natural mechanism against any infection or altered mental health.

In addition, not going out means less exposure to the sun, leading to reduced vitamin D levels. Replenishing vitamin D may be available from a brief walk around when the sun is up or from vitamin D rich foods like commonly found poultry options.

The positive association of a balanced diet and exercise with good mental health are plenty. The last option for improved mental health is going through medication under expert hands. Again, this is nothing new as many people already went through a similar situation. In the end, mental health matters big time.

The trauma from the invisible virus haunting us everyday demands extra empathy for our own. It may sound cliché but empathy, compassion and self-care should now be the most talked and practiced life events to go the extra mile in this pandemic.

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HERPES



Billions worldwide living with herpes

About half a billion people worldwide are living with genital herpes, and several billion have an oral herpes infection, new estimates show, highlighting the need to improve awareness and scale up services to prevent and treat herpes.

About 13% of the world's population aged 15 to 49 years were living with herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2) infection in 2016, the latest year for which data is available. HSV-2 is almost exclusively sexually transmitted, causing genital herpes. Infection can lead to recurring, often painful, genital sores in up to a third of people infected.

Herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1) is mainly transmitted by oral to oral contact to cause oral herpes infection – sometimes leading to painful sores in or around the mouth ("cold sores"). However, HSV-1 can also be transmitted to the genital area through oral sex, causing genital herpes.

Around 67% of the world's population aged 0 to 49 had HSV-1 infection in 2016 – an estimated 3.7 billion people. Most of these infections were oral; however, between 122 million to 192 million people were estimated to have genital HSV-1 infection.

Genital herpes is a substantial health concern worldwide – beyond the potential pain and discomfort suffered by people living with the infection, the associated social consequences can have a profound effect on sexual and reproductive health. There is no cure for herpes. Antiviral medications, such as acyclovir, famciclovir, and valacyclovir, can help to reduce the severity and frequency of symptoms but cannot cure the infection.

HEALTH bulletin



Vigorous activity or sedentary behaviour is not associated with risk for knee osteoarthritis

Patients and some clinicians still are concerned that physical activity, particularly vigorous physical activity, might be associated with excess risk for knee osteoarthritis (OA), despite considerable evidence to the contrary.

Researchers revisited the issue in a prospective cohort of 1,194 adults (mean age, 58; mean body-mass index [BMI], 27 kg/m²) who were at high risk for developing knee OA based on weight, history of knee injury or knee surgery, lack of confidence in knee stability, and modified lifestyle due to concerns about knee damage.

About 13% of patients developed incident knee OA during as long as 10 years of follow-up. In analyses adjusted for age, sex, and BMI, no physical activity trajectory or sitting pattern was associated significantly with knee OA. Patients classified as having low-to-moderate physical activity, compared with those who undertook no exercise, had a nearly significant lower risk for knee OA.

Clinicians should be comfortable encouraging patients to pursue at least low-to-moderate levels of physical activity for its known metabolic and cardiovascular benefits, without concern about excess risk for knee OA. Such activity might even provide protection against knee OA.

Treating cancer during COVID-19

PROF DR KAZI MANZUR KADER

People with cancer appear to be at increased risk of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and their outcomes are worse than those of individuals without cancer. This is especially valid for cancer patients with other diseases like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, kidney disease etc.

Evidence from China suggests that oncological patients are quite vulnerable to infection due to their compromised immune system as a result of both cancer and active cancer therapy like chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Many cancer patients are elderly and more susceptible to aggressive coronavirus infection.

The constraints created by the pandemic have required health care professionals to make difficult choices, including those we made in drawing up prioritisation criteria to guide treatment decisions. Patients with potentially curable disease who could substantially benefit from treatment are given priority, whereas care for patients who were being treated with palliative intent, especially those for whom interventions are expected to have marginal benefit, is being deferred.

Decisions about care for individual patients are made by balancing the risk that patients will contract COVID-19 because of exposures associated with cancer treatment and their risk for complications if they do, with the benefits of receiving potentially life-saving cancer treatment.

In this pandemic, treatment should be given to cancer patients after the evaluation of all clinical situations with precaution. For example, if a patient has



locally advanced breast cancer, chemotherapy is required first for downsizing the tumour to make it operable and prevent the spread. Sometimes after surgery, adjuvant radiotherapy is required which will provide a good response to surgery, if not there is a chance of local recurrence and metastasis.

Considering the patient's condition, chemotherapy dose can be modified with prophylactic growth factor. The interval between the cycles of chemotherapy may be prolonged than the usual gap in consultation with the oncologist.

Proper nutrition with a balanced diet and antioxidant-rich food may ensure multiple ways to support cancer patients by increasing treatment effectiveness, decreasing treatment toxicities, increasing treatment tolerance, decreasing disease progression, and ultimately increasing the quality of life and better survival chances.

Patients should try to increasing immunity by having a balanced diet that includes an adequate amount of

fish, meat, egg, milk, vegetables and fruits. To control associated diseases like diabetes, hypertension and kidney disease etc., by taking regular medications, proper diet and regular exercise.

Cancer patients should take maximum precautions against COVID-19 by using facial masks when going out, maintaining social distance, staying at home, washing hands with soap repeatedly, avoid touching nose, eyes and mouth as much as possible.

In conclusion, the novel coronavirus pandemic is a battle between people and viruses. Delivering care for patients with cancer during this crisis is challenging given the competing risks of death from cancer versus death or serious complications from COVID-19. All health care professionals should dedicatedly move forward with courage and take care of cancer patients accordingly.

The writer is the Head of the Department of Oncology, Delta Medical College and Hospital, Bangladesh. E-mail: manzur2001bd@yahoo.com

Convalescent plasma therapy available in Dhaka to combat COVID-19

Evercare Hospital Dhaka has conducted the first ever convalescent plasma (CP) therapy in Bangladesh recently, says a press release. Successfully conducted in many developed countries recently, this therapy is a promising research treatment to combat the global pandemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

"COVID-19 infected patients in serious condition require Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and ventilator support. In addition to their regular treatment, research is being conducted worldwide to combat COVID-19, where one of the most promising treatments is convalescent plasma therapy", said Dr Abu Jafar Mohammed Saleh, Coordinator and Senior Consultant of Haematology and Stem Cell Transplant at Evercare Hospital Dhaka.



Facebook: /StarHealthBD

HOW TO HOME QUARANTINE

The home quarantined person should:

Stay in a well-ventilated single-room preferably with an attached toilet

Needs to stay away from elderly people, pregnant women, children

Restrict his/her movement within the house

Under no circumstances attend any social/religious gathering

Wash hand frequently with soap and water or with alcohol-based sanitizer

Avoid sharing household items like dishes, glasses, cups, utensils, towels, bedding

Wear a surgical mask at all time. The mask should be changed every 8-8 hours

Dispose off used mask in a closed bin and bin should also be handled responsibly

If symptoms appear, he/she should immediately inform the nearest health centre

Inv. Search of Excellence



PADMA BRIDGE RAIL LINK PROJECT IS BEING BUILT WITH BSRM
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GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS RECOGNIZES
World's Largest VRM
SHAH CEMENT

RELIEF IN RAJSHAHI

Still many left out

Aid given to more people than primary estimate; four indigenous villages yet to get it

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Though the relief distribution in Rajshahi so far has been provided to nearly triple the initial estimate of the poor, many belonging to indigenous communities in the district have remained out of the purview of government support.

Indigenous people, who largely work as day labourers on agricultural land or in the towns, are among those targeted by the government's relief efforts as the coronavirus situation rendered these day labourers jobless.

Many of them coped through the first few weeks of the shutdown using their savings and selling off livestock.

The Daily Star identified at least four Orao community villages in Matikata union of Godagari upazila, where the dwellers claim none have received any relief so far.

Of these families, 65 live in Habaspur village, 18 in Bhajanpur, 25 in Notunpara, and 28 in Silinda.

"None of us got relief. The leaders say wait but how long will I wait?" said Jagadish Chandra Bose of Habaspur.

"I don't get a job often when hunger forces me to go out. When I do get a job, the police chase me back home."

Ruhul Amin, chairman of Matikata Union Parishad, said these villages might have escaped the administration's notice due to their remote location. He said no one had brought the matter to his notice till now.

"Now, you've informed me. I will see for myself that



Children playing with marbles on the street while their parents are waiting for relief goods in Chattogram's CRB area yesterday afternoon. The suspension of the economy has rendered many people unemployed, and with the schools closed, students have found more leisure than ever.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Countries must return to health surveillance

Says WHO, readies coronavirus app for checking symptoms

REUTERS, Zurich

Countries must return to "basic principles" of public health surveillance if they are to bring the coronavirus outbreak under control, the World Health Organization's (WHO) top emergency health expert said on Friday.

The WHO, which said it is facing a \$1.3 billion funding deficit for its effort to tackle Covid-19, issued the call for more surveillance as many countries including the United States, Switzerland, Mexico and Germany have turned their efforts toward re-opening economies battered by the pandemic.

Mike Ryan, head of the WHO's health emergencies programme, said during a media briefing from Geneva that all nations should focus on the fundamentals of the global coronavirus fight: scouting potential new infections, hunting them down, confirming them and then separating those afflicted, to save others from the disease.

"We seem...to be avoiding the uncomfortable reality that we need to get back to public health surveillance," Mike Ryan, the head of the WHO's health emergencies programme, said during a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

LOOMING SESSION JAM

DU considering holiday cuts

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Dhaka University authorities are considering cutting holidays to prevent a looming session jam and make up for academic losses caused by the ongoing indefinite closure of the institution over the coronavirus outbreak.

They are also mulling over arranging additional classes after the resumption of academic activities to compensate for the academic losses.

Keeping these points under consideration, DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman will hold a meeting tomorrow with the deans to discuss the issues, said deans of two faculties.

A week after the country reported its first Covid-19 case on March 8, the DU authorities suspended all academic activities till March 28. The suspension, which was later extended for an indefinite period, resulted in cancellation of mid-term examinations of many departments.

Although some private universities are now offering online classes to students, the DU and most other public universities are yet to introduce such classes due to various problems, including lack of access to internet and electronic gazettes. Some DU faculties, however, are conducting surveys on online classes.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

No perpetrator will go unpunished



Bangabandhu addressing a large crowd at Pabna Stadium on May 10, 1972.

May 10, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU'S PABNA SPEECH
On the third day of the four-day tour of North Bengal, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today visits Pabna.

He was warmly greeted by the locals. Speaking at a mammoth gathering at Pabna Stadium Bangabandhu rules out the possibility of any talks with Pakistani President ZA Bhutto before the latter recognises Bangladesh as a sovereign, independent state. He further says that Pakistan has lost prestige before the world community. As Pakistan's political master, the USA, has recognised the reality of Bangladesh, the country will follow suit whether there is any discussion or not, reiterates the prime minister. He calls upon

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Another policeman dies from Covid-19

Law enforcers form teams to check on fellow infected cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another policeman died of Covid-19 while undergoing treatment at Central Police Hospital in the capital yesterday.

Jalaluddin Khoka, 47, a constable at Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), breathed his last around 7:10pm, according to a statement of the Police Headquarters.

With him, the death toll among cops rose to seven and all of them were from DMP, the statement said.

Meanwhile, different police units are forming "special teams" to visit the Covid-19 infected force members and inquire about their health, maintaining social distancing.

"The teams will visit Covid-19 infected police

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Turkish doctors turn detectives to track virus



AFP, Istanbul

In full protective gear, two doctors climb the stairs four at a time. Their first task of the day: to test a woman who has had contact with a coronavirus patient in Istanbul.

Visibly perturbed by the appearance of men in white bodysuits on her landing, the resident in the populous Fatih district answers their questions before she is tested.

She will get her results the next day. In Turkey, nearly 6,000 teams of "tracers" -- all health professionals -- track potential Covid-19 cases 24 hours a day by identifying and following up with people who have had contact with patients.

By helping find new cases who are then quickly

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

PRAYER TIMING MAY 10
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 3-49 12-45 5-00 6-35 8-00
JAMAAT 3-59 1-15 5-15 6-45 8-30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING
RAMADAN MAY SEHRI IFTAR
16 10 6:35
17 11 3:49 6:36
18 12 3:49 6:36



Rock 'n' roll pioneer Little Richard dies

AFP, New York

Little Richard, whose outrageous showmanship and lightning-fast rhythms intoxicated crowds with hits like "Tutti Frutti" and "Long Tall Sally," has died. He was 87 years old.

Reverend Bill Minson, a close friend of the legendary musician, told AFP Little Richard had died Saturday morning. He confirmed the cause of death was cancer.

With a distinctive voice that ranged from robust belting to howling falsetto, Richard transfixed audiences and became an inspiration for artists including The Beatles as he transformed the blues into the feverish new style of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Discarded gloves and masks litter the dirty water at the base of the fountain near the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The fountain, meant for beautifying the premises, has become a repulsive sight and a possible breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes. This paper published a photo of the fountain's sorry state last week but things have only become worse.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Virus inflicts huge US job losses

Europe moves to keep its border shut for another month

AFP, Washington

The United States recorded its steepest job losses in history over the coronavirus pandemic as Europe moved to keep its borders shut for another month.

Hopes have been rising that the worst of the global catastrophe, which has killed more than 270,000 people, has passed, and the United States on Friday approved a new at-home saliva test to speed up diagnosis for Covid-19.

But after weeks of lockdown across the world, the effects have been painfully visible, with the global economy suffering its most acute downturn in nearly a century.

In the United States, 20.5 million jobs were wiped out in April -- the most ever reported -- with unemployment rising to 14.7 percent, the highest since the Great Depression.

The world's largest economy has suffered the deadliest coronavirus outbreak, with more than 77,000 fatalities and nearly 1.3 million cases.

Mindful of elections in November, President Donald Trump has nonetheless vowed to reopen the country, and a growing number of state governors have already let business resume with precautions.

Trump played down the unemployment numbers, pointing to substantial gains Friday on global stock markets as proof that better times were ahead.

"We're going to have a phenomenal year next year," Trump told reporters. "I think it's going to come back blazing."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6