



# The Daily Star



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**BANGLADESH UPDATE** **1,162** New cases in 24hrs **17,822** Total cases **269** Deaths **3,361** Recoveries **GLOBAL UPDATE** **294,772** Deaths **4,381,956** Total cases

## Highest 19 deaths reported in a day

1,162 new cases in 24 hrs also a record; experts suggest taking aggressive measures as things will go out of control otherwise

MOULUDD AHMED SUJAN

The number of fatalities and infections due to novel coronavirus is increasing alarmingly in Bangladesh with the country recording 19 deaths and 1,162 new cases in 24 hours -- the highest single-day spike.

With the latest figures, the death toll rose to 269. The total number of confirmed cases crossed the 17,000-mark, breaking previous records and climbing to 17,822.

Worryingly, the number of cases has

surged significantly in the last several days when the government expanding test facilities and easing restrictions on the reopening of markets.

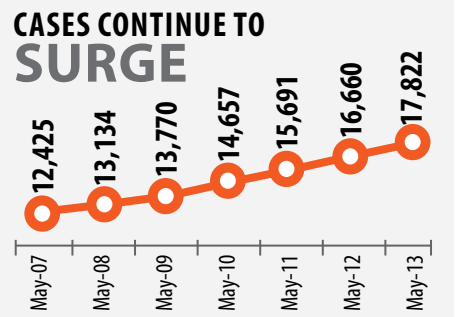
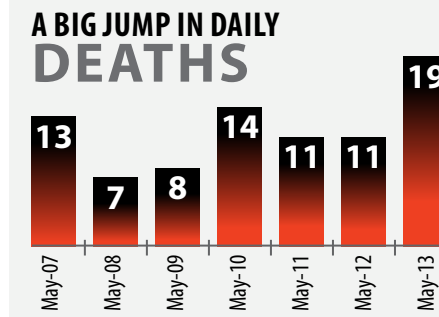
The country may see nearly 50,000 cases in total by the end of this month while the death toll may hit 800 by this time, according to a government estimate made using a projection model.

However, health experts said no projection will be accurate with inadequate detections and the country might continue

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An old widow, in white sari, sitting on the footpath and waiting for her turn to receive her old age allowance from a bank in the capital's Tejgaon. Like the woman sitting next to her with a child, she arrived around 9:00am yesterday and was still waiting in the scorching heat when the photo was taken three hours later. Due to coronavirus restrictions, long queues often build up in front of banks. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



## Bangladeshi scientists crack virus genome

Complete its sequencing to study the strain that causes Covid-19 in the country

ZYMA ISLAM

A team from Child Health Research Foundation (CHRF) yesterday successfully completed the genome sequencing of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in Bangladesh.

The announcement came late on Tuesday evening in a press release distributed by CHRF. SARS-CoV-2 is the coronavirus that causes Covid-19.

"We completed genome sequencing of the virus a few hours ago," confirmed Dr Senjuti Saha, the scientist who led the team of three. The others were Roly Malaker and Md Saiful Islam Shahib.

Dr Senjuti's father, eminent microbiologist and Executive Director of CHRF Dr Samir Kumar Saha also played a leadership role.

"The entire CHRF Covid-19 response team of more than 80 people has directly or indirectly helped us make this possible," Dr. Senjuti Saha said.

Genome sequencing is the process of

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## SPECIAL OMS OF 10-TAKA RICE IN B'BARIA

# Affluent persons listed as poor

PARITHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE with MASUK HRIDOY

He introduces himself in different ways in line with the different posts he holds.

According to his Facebook profile, Shah Alam is the general secretary of Restaurant Owners' Association in Brahmanbaria, joint-secretary of the district's Jame Mosque committee, a member of the central Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FBCCI) and a director of district FBCCI.

He is also a member of the sports association and general secretary of the blind welfare association in Brahmanbaria. Besides, he is a former general secretary of Chhatra League and former GS of Red Crescent Society in the district.

His most significant political identity is that he is the industries and commerce affairs secretary of Brahmanbaria Awami League.

The "versatile" AL leader is also an OMS dealer.

But surprisingly, his wife, daughter and some close relatives have been named in

a list of beneficiaries of the government's special open market sale (OMS) programme for Brahmanbaria municipality area, sparking debate. The list was finalised by the municipality authorities as part of an initiative to help the poor and the destitute amid the coronavirus outbreak.

This sensational disclosure came following an investigation by district committee of the OMS programme, according to relevant documents.

On April 1, the government issued a gazette disclosing its decision that it would launch a special OMS sale of rice at a subsidised rate of Tk 10 per kg in all city corporations. The move was aimed at ensuring food for lower-income people hit hard by the ongoing shutdown enforced to curb the spread of coronavirus.

The beneficiaries include beggars, transport workers, rickshaw-van pullers, day labourers, tea stall workers and members of the third gender community.

The gazette also said not more than one person from each family would be entitled to get the benefits of the programme.

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## Ansar man dies from Covid-19

166 others tested positive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A member of Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Party died from Covid-19, and at least 166 others have tested positive as of yesterday, said an official of the force.

Of them, 58 had been discharging their duties at the parliament, 65 in Dhaka Metropolitan Police area, and 43, including a deputy-director-ranked officer, at the Ansar headquarters and different districts, Mehnaz Tabassum Rabin, deputy director of the force, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Eleven of them have so far recovered, she said.

Ansar member Abdul Mazid, who was carrying out his duties at Bhatara Police Station, breathed his last on Monday.

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## Heartbreaks; hope for HERD IMMUNITY

SYED ASHFAQUIL HAQUE

"Herd immunity" is the ultimate answer to any pandemic, and Bangladesh, by no choice of its own, is rushing towards it to keep coronavirus at bay.

Eureka (found it)! Shouldn't we all exclaim like Archimedes, the great Greek scientist who ran through the streets naked after discovering the law of buoyancy while taking a bath at his home? No, we're no Archimedes and we've found no remedy. Rather, we're ending up with the lone solution after exhausting all other options.

Too much of stress and tension for the last couple of months! And there seemed to be no respite from the pandemic that brought the world to a grinding halt, claiming over 2.86 lakh lives already. Now, the 17 crore Bangladeshis can clutch at the "herd immunity" straw and try hard to survive.

All past pandemics in the world ended through herd immunity. In lay explanation, we have to become immune to the infectious disease either through natural immunity or vaccination. Vaccine should be off our list for long, as, according to media reports, at least one year would be required for its discovery and subsequent trials before going into long-haul production for 800 crore vaccine for the global population. Following the powerful-countries-first order, vaccine is unlikely to be available in Bangladesh in two years.

So, we're practically left with the only one survival option: natural immunity. What we all have to do now is to contract the disease en masse, get defence mechanism of the body react to it and in time build up an immune response to the invaders.

Sounds surreal?

It's hard to predict things in a pandemic, as situation changes on a daily basis due to the mostly unknown characteristic of virus and world's medical

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## Third doctor dies from coronavirus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another doctor, who tested Covid-19 positive, has died at a hospital in the capital.

Maj (ret'd) Abul Mokarim Md Mohsin Uddin, chief consultant (radiology) at Ibn Sina Diagnostic and Imaging Centre, breathed his last at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) around 11:20pm on Tuesday, Shafiqul Islam, manager (admin) at the centre, told The Daily Star.

Prof Mokarim, also a freedom fighter, got infected while discharging duties at Ibn Sina, he said.

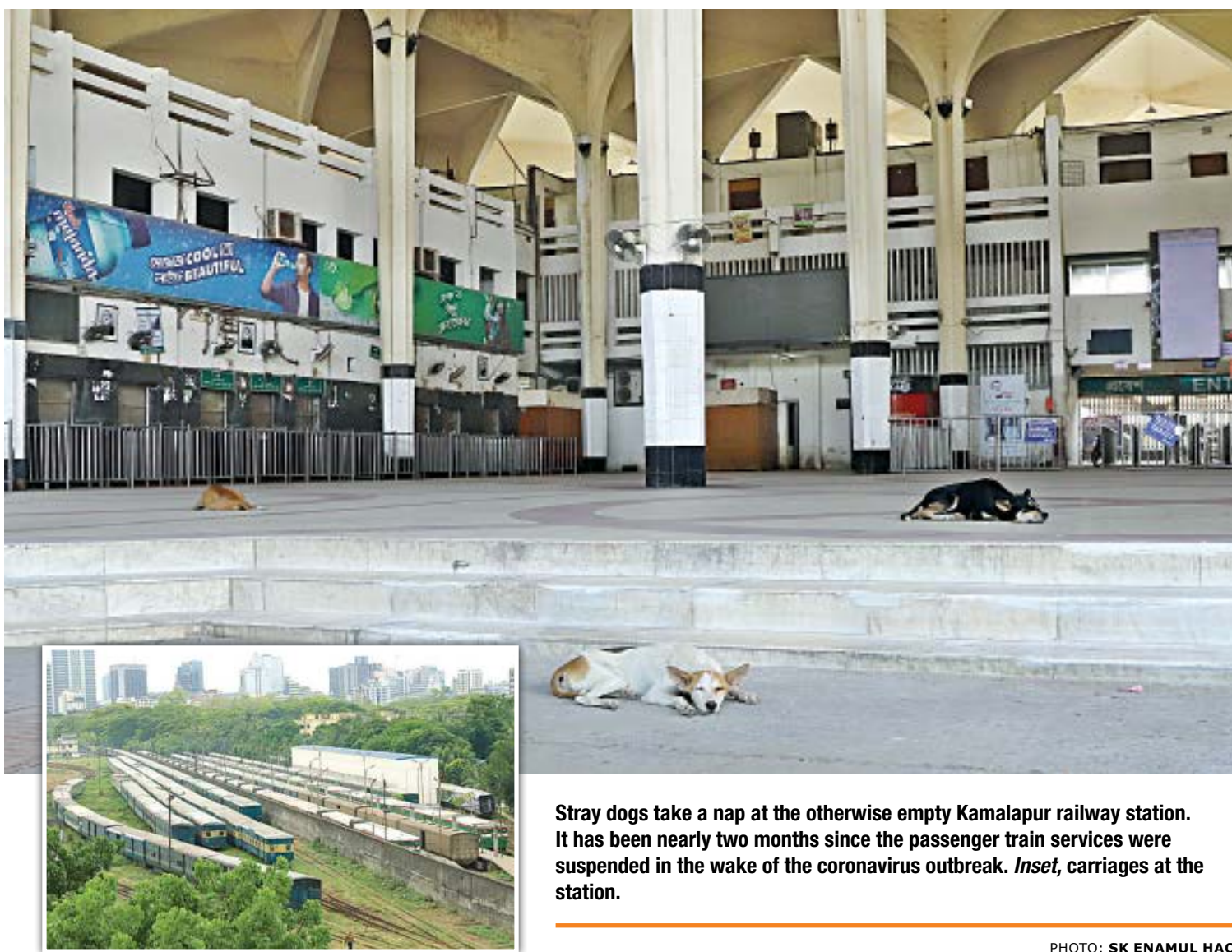
Mokarim, in a medical apron, was featured in a TV commercial of Ibn Sina in the 90s where he was seen asking viewers: "Why would you pay extra unnecessarily?"

He then urges them to visit the private hospital, which offered 25 percent discounts on medical tests.

Many thought Mokarim was an actor, but he was a noted radiologist.

His younger son Samuel

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Stray dogs take a nap at the otherwise empty Kamalapur railway station. It has been nearly two months since the passenger train services were suspended in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. Inset, carriages at the station.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## DEATH AFTER VIRUS SYMPTOMS

# 929 die in two months

Study also finds 84 were held for 'spreading rumors'

DU CORRESPONDENT

A total of 929 people died in Bangladesh with Covid-19 symptoms between March 8 and May 12, according to a report of Centre for Genocide Studies of Dhaka University.

Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), a UNDP funded research facility housed at Centre for Genocide Studies, prepared the report based on different media outlets and published it on Tuesday.

The report came out at a time when the authorities recorded only 269 Covid-19 deaths since the first three cases reported on March 8.

Of the 929 deaths with Covid-19 symptoms, 210 were in Dhaka, 167 in Chattogram, 110 in Khulna, 87 in Rajshahi, 84 in Barishal, 66 in Sylhet and 65 in Rangpur divisions, the report mentioned.

The report also mentioned that there were at least 33 incidents of ignorance from medical professionals or reticence to treat non-Covid patients.

Besides, 17 patients were denied burial, eight incidents of forced eviction from homes, 23 cases of abandonment from family or family members or colleagues and two persons died by suicide for social stigma.

The number of harassment or assault originated from social stigma cases are nine while such cases related to medical professionals' stands at 15.

RUMORS AND ARRESTS

The report recorded that as many as 79 incidents of spreading rumours and 84 arrests for spreading rumours has

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## New resolution on pandemic truce presented to UNSC

AFP, United Nations

Germany and Estonia submitted Tuesday a resolution to the UN Security Council on a ceasefire in various conflicts around the world during the coronavirus pandemic, to replace one drafted by France and Tunisia that the United States has blocked.

Encompassing five major points -- compared to the previous draft's nine -- the proposal by the two non-permanent members of the Security Council and seen by AFP "demands a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda."

## 929 die

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taken place so far centering Covid-19. In Dhaka, 34 people were arrested whereas other divisions like Chattagram, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Barishal had 12, 7, 6, 15, and 10 rumours-related arrests respectively. The highest number of people were arrested between March 8 and April 18, the report added.

**RELIEF EMBEZZLEMENT**  
Until May 5, The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives suspended 49 people's representatives -- including 18 UP chairmen, 29 UP members, one district council member and one municipal councillor -- for irregularities in distribution of relief among the poor amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

Around 8,136 people were fined or penalised on several charges including relief embezzlement, food adulteration, providing lesser quantity of relief, fraudulent, keeping shops or hotels open against government order, roaming around, bike riding, gossiping in roads, travelling, violating social distancing, stockpiling (food, medicine), and price hike of daily necessities.

At least 386 (40.31% less than last week) were detained or fined or penalised and 11 were arrested all over Bangladesh between May 3 and May 9. As of yesterday, a total of 144,538 tests have been conducted and the rate of tests per million in the country is 802, according to the data of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

## Ansar man dies

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Besides, 435 Ansar members are sent to quarantine for 14 days as they either came in contact with infected members or showed Covid-19 symptoms, she said.

Mehnaz said Ansar members were being infected as they were discharging their duties with other forces and physicians at hospitals.

"It is the Ansar member who first receives patients at hospitals and readies trolleys for them. Besides, our officials are distributing leaflets to create awareness among people."

Asked about the protection equipment, Mehnaz said they managed protective gear under their own arrangements and distributed those among the members working on the field.

## Affluent persons listed as poor

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But for Shah Alam's family, the rule appeared to be a bit relaxed, shows the primary list of 500 beneficiaries for each ward under the municipality.

Shah Alam is the designate OMS dealer at Ward 10 in the municipality area.

But he used his political clout when the list for the ward was being prepared, incorporating his family members in it, several local sources told The Daily Star.

A copy of the list, obtained by these correspondents, shows Shah Alam's wife Momataz Alam named at the 16th position. The name of their daughter Afroza appears a little further up, at the 12th spot.

Shah Alam's two brothers -- Mohammad Selim and Mohammad Alamgir -- and sister Shamsunnahar are named at the eighth, ninth and 27th positions respectively, while his brother-in-law Tajul Islam is at third, his wife Asma Islam at five and nephew Nasir, living abroad, at number seven.

Jannatul Islam, wife of Shah Alam's brother-in-law, and his sister's three in-laws -- Motiur Rahman, Mahabubur Rahman and Luthfur Rahman -- are also mentioned in the primary list.

The name of another brother-in-law, Shafiqul Islam, now living abroad, is also seen in the list.

According to Brahmanbaria municipality sources, a total of 9,600 poor people, including those left unemployed by the outbreak, are entitled to get OMS cards, known as ration cards of the poor.

Each OMS card holder is supposed to get a maximum 20 kgs of rice at a subsidised price of Tk 10 per kg.

In the face of allegations from different quarters that the rich and influential, including ruling-party members, were named in the OMS list, the district OMS programme authorities, headed by Deputy Commissioner Hayat-ud-Dowla Khan, decided to investigate the matter. District Controller of Food Subir Nath Chowdhury, also member secretary of the OMS programme, told The Daily Star.



The team members of Child Health Research Foundation (CHRF) -- Md Saiful Islam Sajib, left, Dr Senjuti Saha, 2nd from left, and Roly Malakar, sitting centre -- who successfully sequenced the genome of SARS-CoV-2 in Bangladesh, which causes Covid-19. PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Bangladeshi scientists

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identifying what nucleotides -- the basic building block of DNA and RNA -- are present in a certain cell and in what order.

"The SARS-CoV-2 virus cells contain RNA. RNA is made of four bases or 'letters' -- A (adenine), U (uracil), G (guanine), and C (cytosine). The SARS-CoV-2 virus is made up of almost 30,000 letters and we had to figure out what the sequence was," explained Dr Senjuti.

As of now, they have only finished the genome sequencing of one sample, and plan to do around 80, she added.

"We have been working on this for over a month, but the actual work of sequencing was done over 4 days of non-stop work," said an excited Dr Senjuti.

"In addition, the biologists working on the genome sequencing also had a full eight-hour shift of testing samples from patients. We did not want patients to suffer while we tried to do genome sequencing. So, all the work was done after hours," she said, speaking to this correspondent from Cambridge in England in the early hours yesterday, where she has been stuck because of the closing of the borders in the wake of the pandemic.

"To make things harder, because I had come to Cambridge in mid-March, and gotten stuck here, the collaboration had to be remote. My team in CHRF literally had to set up a camera in the space where they were doing the sequencing, so that I could see what was happening," described Dr Senjuti.

While scientists in Bangladesh have done genome sequencing of Jute and Hilsa (both of which have DNA), genome sequencing of cells containing RNA is a rare feat.

"Up until now, we have usually had to send our samples abroad for sequencing and analysis. But with help from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative/Biohub, we were able to purchase a sequencer and since before the pandemic hit we had been practising and teaching our staff to sequence dengue, RSV and influenza

viruses," said Dr Senjuti.  
**WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE FUTURE**

Doing genome sequencing of the virus means that scientists can begin to understand which type it is, which country it came from, and when it came to Bangladesh.

"This will help us make predictions for the future -- when will we hit the peak?" said Dr Senjuti.

Genome sequencing of this virus has already been done worldwide around 16,000 times, which Bangladesh can compare against, she explained.

In addition, this means that vaccines can be explored. "Vaccines are being built in other countries, but how do we know it will work for Bangladesh unless we know the type of virus we have?" added Dr Senjuti.

Vaccines will be injecting RNA of the virus into the body of the patient to help it build antibodies against the disease. The RNA in the vaccine needs to match the RNA of the virus strain hitting our country right now.

"We have also uploaded the results to an open-access database and hope that vaccine-makers will also be able to see it and incorporate that into their vaccine design," said Dr Senjuti.

The scientist has also made the sequencing protocol public and hopes that other laboratories around the country can train themselves and start sequencing samples.

"We assume that each month two 'letters' in the RNA mutate, which means this virus is constantly mutating. Therefore, sequencing too, needs to be a constant process."

Besides, having a group trained in genome sequencing can prevent the next pandemic in Bangladesh.

Dr Senjuti said that this would not have been possible if the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and IEDCR had not given them samples and the permission to test.

Previously, during the chikungunya outbreak of 2018, Dr Senjuti Saha had completed the metagenomic sequencing to discover that chikungunya is causing meningitis in children.

cancel the licence of OMS dealer Shah Alam. "District Awami League will also take action if the allegations raised against him is proved," Mukhtadir added.

After the Directorate General of Food launched the special OMS programme on April 5, different allegations raised against elected representatives of rice embezzlement forced the government to suspend the programme. The government then resumed it considering the needs of the poor people.

According to a report of Centre for Genocide Studies of Dhaka University, the LGRD ministry has suspended 49 public representatives (18 UP chairmen, 29 UP members, one district council member and one municipal councillor) for irregularities in distribution of relief among the poor amidst the coronavirus pandemic till May 5.

Besides, the Anti-Corruption Commission has filed 15 cases against 20 people, including 14 representatives of the local government, for their alleged involvement in the misappropriation of about 54,000 kg subsidised rice allocated for the poor and vulnerable people.

## France bats away China anger over Taiwan arms deal

AFP, Paris

France yesterday batted away criticism by China over a weapons deal with Taiwan, saying everyone's focus at this time should be on fighting the coronavirus epidemic.

The foreign ministry stressed that under a 1994 agreement that re-established ties with Beijing, France respected the so-called one-China policy recognising Taiwan as part of China.

"In this context, France strictly respects the contractual agreements that it formed with Taiwan and nothing has changed in its position since 1994," a ministry statement said.

## WHO stresses need to find source of virus

AFP, Geneva

Pinning down the source of the coronavirus pandemic should help in working out how Covid-19 has "invaded the human species" so quickly, a senior WHO official told AFP.

The outbreak has triggered a fierce diplomatic spat between China and the United States -- with the World Health Organization at the centre of the row.

In late March, US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping struck an informal truce in the war of words over the origin of the deadly disease.

But it quickly broke down. Trump has been accusing Beijing of being slow to alert the world to the initial outbreak in Wuhan, and openly suspects China of covering up an accident at the eastern city's virology lab.

Far from the cross-Pacific spat, Sylvie Briand, the WHO's director of infectious

hazard management, said it was crucial to know the origin of the virus "to understand how it has evolved".

"It is a virus of animal origin transmitted to humans. And so we have to try to understand how the adaptation of this virus allowed it to invade the human species," she told AFP outside the WHO's headquarters in Geneva.

**VIRUS 'PING-PONG'**  
The first cases of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the Covid-19 disease, were reported in late December in Wuhan.

Since then, the pandemic has infected more than four million people worldwide and claimed nearly 300,000 lives.

Many researchers believe the new coronavirus came from bats, but passed through another species before being transmitted to humans. "The virus multiplied in these animals, changed a little in doing so

and finally resulted in a type of virus" that is transmissible to human beings, said Briand, who in 2009 headed the WHO's influenza programme during the 2009 H1N1 "swine flu" pandemic.

Retracing the origin of the virus, by discovering the intermediate hosts, would "prevent the phenomenon from happening again -- and avoid ping-pong" transmission between humans and animals.

"Every time it jumps from one species to another, the virus can mutate a bit," the French scientist said. "That can have an impact on treatments -- it can become resistant -- while vaccines may no longer be effective enough."

For now, there are still many unknowns, despite "thousands and thousands of samples" having been taken, notably from "many animals in the market in Wuhan" -- but also from dogs in Hong Kong, said Briand, stressing that the analysis will take time.

## Heartbreaks; hope for herd immunity

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incapacity to prevent it. But it was quite easy to predict consequences of the responses of government and people in general to the contagion over months. Like it or not, our collective responses had all but sealed our fate: infection is inevitable for most of us.

Our social-distancing gap is now being bridged! Bangladesh is gradually wiggling out of restrictions it imposed about 48 days back on March 26, a week after the first death from Covid-19 was recorded in the country.

Garment factories reopened on April 26, mosques on May 7 and shopping malls on May 10. Waiting to go are the countrywide lax lockdown (national holiday) till May 15, and the shutdown of educational institutions till May 30.

"Survive by yourself" is the unspoken message as the government shifts its focus on jacking up the grounded economy. Shutdown has turned all economies, big and small, upside down in a couple of months. Truly, the government has a lot to worry about export, remittance, revenue, start-ups, small and medium industries, and looming food crisis.

But why should we be this vulnerable following lockdown for nearly 50 days?

Haven't we gone through each of the measures that all other countries had in their fight against the coronavirus? Yes, we had our share of awareness campaign for safety regulations, PPEs, testing, contact tracing, home isolation, institutional quarantine, shutdown of economy, stimulus, safety net programme for the poor, and locked down before hurrying on to reopen.

The government was slow to react, but it certainly took almost all the right decisions that any other efficient governments had taken under the circumstance.

Problem was not much with measures, but with the way measures were carried out. An army of invisible enemies exposed the grave weaknesses in the governance, political and healthcare system as well as people's mixed-up priorities.

The highest leadership is found to be mostly firm and far-sighted, with the leaderships below showing symptoms of all ailments.

The major challenge in the first part of the war on contagion was to prevent community transmission of the virus by slowing down the pandemic, isolating the infected, providing treatment to critical patients and feeding the poor, no less than two crores in number, during lockdown.

## Third doctor

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Mursalin said his father, despite being an asthma patient, used to go to the diagnostic centre regularly even after the Covid-19 outbreak.

Around 12 days ago, he first exhibited Covid-19 symptoms, including fever.

As his condition worsened a week ago and he started to have breathing problem, he was first taken to Ibn Sina Hospital from where he was shifted to the CMH, he said.

His samples were collected there and the Covid-19 result came positive, Mursalin said, adding that his mother, elder brother and sister-in-law also tested positive later.

With Mokarim, three doctors have died of Covid-19 in the country so far.

On April 15, Dr Md Moyeen Uddin, an assistant professor at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, died at Kurmitola General Hospital in Dhaka while Hematologist Prof Col (ret'd) Md Moniruzzaman of Anwar Khan Modern Medical College Hospital died on May 3.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Upazila Engineer  
Trishal, Mymensingh  
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উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র  
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Memo No. 46.02.6194.404.000.00.20/268 Date: 11-05-2020

### e-Tender Notice: 04/2019-20

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Tender last selling (date & time)	Tender closing & opening (date and time)
01.	458000, 459317	28-May-2020 11:00:00	28-May-2020 13:00:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 12:00 on closing date of the respected tender.

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

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GD-833





CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC
LATEST UPDATES

MORE THAN 292,000 DEATHS
The novel coronavirus has killed at least 292,316 people, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University at 1300 GMT. At least 4,117,740 cases of coronavirus have been registered in 195 countries and territories.

RECORD DEATHS IN BRAZIL
Brazil registered its highest COVID-19 death toll for a single day, with 881 new deaths confirmed over the past 24 hours, the health ministry said Tuesday. The total death toll from the new coronavirus has now hit 12,400 in the country, with 177,589 confirmed cases -- up 9,258 from the day before.

TRUMP SUPPORT EBBS
A Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll shows 56 percent of those surveyed now disapprove of President Trump, up five points from a similar poll in mid-April. Trump's approval rating slipped four points to 41 percent. It also found that 46 percent of registered voters would back Democratic challenger Joe Biden in the November 3 election, while 38 percent would vote for Trump.

WORK REMOTELY 'FOREVER!'
Twitter said Tuesday it is unlikely to open its offices before September, and that many of its employees will be permitted to work from home permanently even after the end of the coronavirus lockdowns. "The past few months have proven we can make that work. So if our employees are in a role and situation that enables them to work from home and they want to continue to do so forever, we will make that happen," it said.

BRYAN ADAMS APOLOGIZES
Canadian rocker Bryan Adams apologized Tuesday saying "I have love for all people" after a backlash and accusations of anti-Chinese racism over his online rant about the pandemic forcing the cancellation of his London shows this week. Adams had said in earlier expletive-laced Twitter and Instagram posts that his gigs at the Royal Albert Hall were nixed thanks to "bat eating, wet market animal selling, virus making greedy bastards."

NO NEW CASES IN THAILAND
Thailand reported no new coronavirus cases for the first time since March 9. Thailand has a total of 3,017 cases and 56 deaths since the outbreak escalated in January.

NEPAL SEES SURGE IN CASES
Nepal saw the highest single-day jump in its coronavirus tally, reporting 83 cases. But the country's total number of confirmed infections remains relatively low at 217, with a majority of the cases recorded in the country's southern districts adjoining India.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

'We have to think local'

India moves to protect MSMEs as Modi urges Indians to buy local products

AGENCIES

A day after India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged the country to be self-reliant, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman yesterday announced a slew of measures to help businesses, including micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), recover from the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

The 20-trillion-rupee (US\$266 billion) relief plan for Asia's third-largest economy came as the country enters its 50th day under the world's biggest shutdown yesterday.

Modi also announced the extension of lockdown after May 17 in a "completely different form", with new rules. The Indian leader stressed the need for the country to be self-reliant, and for people to buy local products to help the economy.

"The corona crisis has also taught us the importance of local supply chains... we have to now think local," he said.

In the first of her several addresses to outline the contours of the package, Sitharaman announced 15 different measures yesterday, which involved MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) NBFCs (Non-Bank Financial Companies), Provident Fund, Real Estate and Taxation.

To allow more liquidity in the hands of the people the government offered a 25 percent reduction in Tax Deduction at Source



\$266 billion relief package announced for SMEs and labourers

Lockdown will be extended with new rules

Finance minister announces 3 lakh crores rupees for businesses, particularly MSMEs



for non-salaried specified payments and Tax Collection at Source for specified receipts. The government also said it would pay the EPF contribution for employees of MSMEs to help them recover from the crisis. The finance minister said the intention of the her ministry is to build local brands, and integrate them into global supply chain and not meant to look inwards and cut India to be an isolated country, but to continue contributing to the globe.

to migrants now," she explained. She announced Rs 3 lakh crores collateral-free automatic loans for businesses, particularly MSMEs. Collateral free loan to be provided to SMEs with 12 month moratorium; 45 lakh units to benefit, she said, announcing parts of the economic package. For stressed MSMEs, Government to facilitate provision of 20,000 crore rupee subordinate debt for equity support. 2 lakh MSMEs likely to benefit. India was already battling a liquidity crisis, bad loans and rising unemployment even before the pandemic. Some 122 million Indians lost their jobs last month, data showed, with small traders and daily wage earners accounting for the bulk of losses.

Cancel poor countries' debt

More than 300 lawmakers around the globe urge IMF, World Bank

REUTERS, Washington

Over 300 lawmakers from around the world yesterday urged the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to cancel the debt of the poorest countries in response to the coronavirus pandemic, and to boost funding to avert a global economic meltdown.

The initiative, led by former US presidential candidate Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Ilham Omar, a Democrat from Minnesota, comes amid growing concern that developing countries and emerging economies will be devastated by the pandemic.

Widespread shutdowns aimed at containing the virus are taking a huge toll on the global economy, and especially poor countries with weak health systems, high debt levels and few resources to manage the dual health and economic crises.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on Tuesday said the Fund was "very likely" to revise downward its forecast that global output would shrink by 3% in 2020, and said developing countries would need more than \$2.5 trillion in financing to weather the storm.

Sanders said poor countries needed every cent to care for their people, instead of servicing the "unsustainable debts" they owe to the large international financial institutions.

In the letter, parliamentarians from two dozen countries on all six continents, said debt service obligations of the poorest countries should be cancelled outright, instead of simply suspended, as agreed by the Group of 20 countries in April. Other signatories include former British Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and Argentine lawmaker Carlos Menem, who enacted austerity measures when he served as president in the 1980s and 1990s.

Highest 19 deaths reported

FROM PAGE 1

to see cases and deaths rising unless measures are not taken scientifically.

"We have no alternative to taking aggressive measures in case detection and isolation to control the situation. Otherwise, the situation may get out of hand," Prof Muzaherul Huq, former advisor to the World Health Organization (WHO), South East Asia region, told The Daily Star.

On April 17, authorities reported 15 deaths -- second highest in a single day. On Monday, the number of daily detected cases surpassed the 1,000 mark for the first time with the second highest of 1034.

In last ten days since May 3, the number of detected cases almost doubled -- from 9455 to 17,822.

GOVT ESTIMATE VS REALITY

Experts said the government estimation regarding the number of positive cases and deaths from the novel coronavirus infection does not reflect the reality.

This newspaper contacted Dr Shafun Shimul, who helped the DGHS make the time-series based projection published on April 20.

According to the projection, the number of positive cases may hit 48,386 on May 31 while the death toll may cross 815.

In his another projection made based on the epidemiological model SIR (Susceptible, Infectious, or Recovered), he showed that the number of positive cases will cross 40,000 by the same date.

"The projection necessarily does not reflect the reality. This was based on the daily number of tests, detection and number of deaths. If the daily tests do not increase, there will be lesser cases than the projection," said Dr Shafun, an associate professor of health economics at Dhaka University.

He added that the real number may be two to three times higher as there are many hidden cases.

"The current situation is not like what was 20 days ago. The more we get accurate and representative data, the more our predictions are accurate. These models will help decide on future strategy to fight the outbreak."

According to media reports, around a thousand patients with Covid-19 symptoms died so far after the country reported first cases.

Talking on this issue, experts said there should be at least 10,000 tests daily immediately and it should be increased in course of time to gauge the real picture.

"Unless every person can get access to test when they need it, no prediction will reflect the reality," Prof Muzaherul Huq said.

He thinks no measures without scientific basis will work.

"The concept of herd immunity is absurd. As there is no vaccine for Covid-19, herd immunity means letting around 80 percent of the population to be infected. None but Sweden has become able to accept this," Prof Huq said.

LOCKDOWN IN THREE WAYS

Prof Huq suggested imposing district-wise three types of lockdown in this

113-yr-old woman beats virus in Spain

AFP, Madrid

A 113-year-old woman, believed to be the oldest person living in Spain, has beaten the coronavirus at a retirement home where several other residents died from the disease, the residence said Tuesday.

Maria Branyas, who was born in the US, became infected in April at the Santa Maria del Tura care home in the eastern city of Olot, where she has lived for the past 20 years, and fought the respiratory illness off in isolation in her room. The care home has recorded "several" virus-related deaths during the pandemic, the spokeswoman for the residence said.

"She survived the disease and is doing fine," a spokeswoman for the residence told AFP, adding Branyas had only displayed mild symptoms.

"She feels good now, she took a test last week and the result was negative," the spokeswoman said without giving further details.

Branyas, a mother of three, was isolated in her room for weeks, with only a single employee in protective gear allowed in to check on her, according to Catalan regional television TV3, which broadcast images of the centenarian.

Several articles have been published in Spanish media in recent years about Branyas, considered to be the oldest person in the country.

She was born on March 4, 1907 in San Francisco where her father, who was from northern Spain, worked as a journalist. Branyas moved to Spain with her family on a boat during World War I and also lived through the Spanish flu pandemic that swept the world in 1918-19 as well as Spain's 1936-39 civil war.

Spain has been one of the worst affected countries in the pandemic, with nearly 27,000 COVID-19 deaths confirmed so far.

Five plagues from China in 20 years!

NDTV ONLINE

As many as five plagues have come out of China in the last 20 years and at some point it has to stop, US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien has said, holding the country responsible for the origin of the coronavirus pandemic which has killed over 250,000 people globally.

"People across the globe are going to rise up and tell the Chinese government that "we can no longer have these plagues coming out of China", whether it is from labs or wet markets, neither one is a good answer, he told reporters at the White House on Tuesday.

"We know it came from Wuhan and I think there's circumstantial evidence that it could have come from the lab or the wet market. But, again, if you're China, neither one's a good answer," Mr O'Brien said.

"We've had five plagues from China in the last 20 years. We've had SARS, avian flu, swine flu, COVID-19 now and how longer can the world put up with this terrible public health situation that you've got in the People's Republic of China that is being unleashed on the world," the top American official said. He, however, did not mention the fifth plague to come out of from China.

When asked that the US is still looking for evidence about the origin of the virus, he refrained from giving a time frame. "I can't give you a timeframe on that. That's something that we're continuing to review and it is obviously a very serious concern."

"Look, China's got to figure out how to deal with its public health because we cannot have another one of these virus outbreaks and plagues come from China. This was a terrible thing that happened to the entire world, not just to the United States," he said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
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Education Engineering Department
Jhalokathi
ee\_jha@eedmoe.gov.bd
e-Tender Notice
Tender Notice No. 02/EED/JKT/Project Code: (1600101-120001602-3258108 & 1250301-120001602-3258108)/e-Tender/2019-20 Dt: 12/05/2020
Name of Project: (1) Repair/Renovation of Non-Govt. Educational Institutions (TMED) & (2) Repair/Renovation of Non-Govt. Educational Institutions (SHED)
e-Tender is invited through the National e-GP Portal for the following procurement of works:



TAMING CORONAVIRUS RAMPAGE

Reefer container keeps piling up despite port authority's best efforts

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Chattogram

Poor delivery of refrigerated containers, largely known as reefer containers, used to transport perishable goods continues to be a major hurdle for the Chattogram Port despite the recent improvements in the release of many other containers.

As a result, the port has run out of its capacity in the yards designated to store refrigerated containers -- a situation that is hampering the unloading of import containers from the vessels as the reefer containers are kept at the upper rows and delays in discharging them holds back the overall discharge of other import containers, lingering ships' stay and increasing the overall turnaround time.

This has prompted the traffic department of the port authority on Tuesday to warn that it would impose four times the store rent on reefer containers if importers do not speed up delivery by May 16.

The port has granted 100 per cent

waiver on store rent for all import containers until Saturday as part of its efforts to be rid of congestion.

Some 2,200 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of reefer containers, which need fixed plug-in points for constant electricity supply, can be accommodated in the port yards. But in early April, the number of reefer containers hit 3,000 TEUs.

To enhance the capacity further, the layers for storing reefer containers have recently been raised to five from three previously using equipment that has high lifting-capacity, said Enamul Karim, director for traffic of the Chattogram Port Authority (CPA).

This has extended the storage capacity of reefers to 2,600 TEUs, he added. Even then, the port ran out of capacity on Tuesday after the number of reefers reached 2,740 TEUs as daily delivery has dropped by half of normal to 150 TEUs to 200 TEUs, according to port officials.

Usually ahead of Ramadan and the summer fruit import increases and



Reefer containers stacked up at the port yards. The photo was taken yesterday.

the same happened this year as well.

But most of the letters of credits against the imports were opened before coronavirus became a global pandemic, according to Karim.

Due to the countrywide shutdown since March 26 to flatten the curve on coronavirus, fruit sales dropped off locally, prompting the importers to keep their products at the port, he added.

Sensing a delay, a vessel, TR Porthos, which was booked to carry 500 TEUs from Colombo left behind most of the reefer containers in the Sri Lankan port and brought in only 80 TEUs, said Amir Hossain Chowdhury, assistant general manager of the vessel's local agent, Marco Shipping Company (BD).

The vessel berthed at a port's jetty on May 11 but could not unload a single reefer container in the last two days due to the space shortage, he said.

Were the unloading on schedule, the ship could have left the port yesterday, but its stay might linger now.

Emirates SkyCargo resumes operation to Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Emirates SkyCargo, the largest international air airline, started operating weekly flights for a month on Tuesday, offering much-needed capacity to local industries, businesses and farmers during the global health crisis.

It aims to cater bulk cargo of readymade garments, personal protective equipment and facemasks, medicines, perishables and courier goods to Europe and the US, and imports are likely to include industrial machinery and raw materials.

The service is being operated by a passenger Boeing 777-300ER aircraft, offering cargo capacity in the belly-hold and in the cabins -- both in the overhead bins and on passenger seats, according to a statement. The flights will be on Tuesday and Thursday.

\$700m may come from IMF and with no strings attached

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh is set to request the International Monetary Fund (IMF) within a week to extend \$700 million in emergency financing to help the country avoid being overwhelmed by the coronavirus pandemic.

The amount is about half the sum Bangladesh can seek from the IMF under the country's quota as special drawing right (SDR), a form of reserve assets that can be used by countries as additional liquidity.

The tool credits member countries' accounts with new, unconditional liquidity that could be exchanged for the five currencies that underpin the SDR: the dollar, the yen, the euro, sterling and the renminbi.

Bangladesh has sought SDR500 million to address the balance of payment issues, and one SDR equals \$1.36.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal would send a letter of intent to the Washington-based multilateral lender outlining how the support would be used, said a finance ministry.

The emergency financing from the IMF would largely be with few or no strings attached, which is unlike the Washington-based multilateral lender's modus operandi, said the finance ministry official.

Under normal circumstances, when the IMF is the last-resort lender to a country, it insists that the borrowing government tighten its belt and exercise restraint in public spending.

This helps to achieve three objectives. One is to stabilise the public debt burden, to ensure that the resources made available are not wasted. The second is to limit the whole economy's need for foreign exchange, a shortage of which had prompted the country to seek the IMF's help in the first place.

And the third is to ensure that the IMF can get repaid. Since the Fund does not take any physical collateral from countries to whom it is lending, the belt-tightening helps to act as a kind of collateral.

In other words, it helps to maximise the probability that the IMF does not suffer losses on its own loan

portfolio -- losses that would have bad consequences for the fund's role within the international monetary system.

The last time Bangladesh borrowed from the creditor under the extended credit facility, it was handcuffed with a host of conditions.

But a belt-tightening may not be suggested this time because spending is needed to stop people dying or from falling into a permanent trap of unemployment.

Besides, countries all over the world are facing a shortage of foreign exchange, not because they have indulged in any irresponsible spending spree, but because of a virus beyond their control.

For example, with rising

to see how Bangladesh spends the money and whether the support is used to boost economic recovery, support affected exporters, to enhance social safety nets spending and aid agriculture, the finance ministry official said.

It would also like to look at whether Bangladesh spends money to strengthen its weak health system.

The government has announced an \$11.2 billion pro-poor countercyclical package -- which is 3.3 per cent of Bangladesh's GDP -- with a focus on social protection for the poor and support for key industries to preserve jobs.

Lending to Bangladesh would not raise eyebrows since the country has a



expenditures and declining revenues, additional government financing requirements this fiscal year are estimated at \$8.8 billion, which is 14.2 per cent of the budget.

Facing constraints on domestic borrowing, the government urgently needs external financing to support key pro-poor initiatives and to inject fresh liquidity into the economy to increase aggregate demand.

In fact, IMF's message to its members is, "please, spend as much as you can and then a little bit more," said its managing director Kristalina Georgieva recently.

However, the lender would like

good repayment record and the debt ratio is well within control.

Public debt in Bangladesh was \$105 billion in fiscal 2018-19, which is about 34.9 per cent of GDP, and the external public and publicly guaranteed (PPG) debt ratio was 14.5 per cent of GDP. Both are low.

The additional external debt of \$2.9 billion, as government projected, will increase both the external PPG debt-GDP ratio and public debt-GDP ratio by 0.9 per cent this fiscal year.

The IMF last allocated funds from the SDR to the member countries in 2009 in the wake of the global financial crisis.

Official notice from the Bangladesh Police regarding the recruitment of 1000 personnel. The notice includes details about the exam process, eligibility criteria, and the list of recruitment posts. It is signed by the Director of Police, Dhaka.

A homegrown fabric claims to kill coronavirus

Major garment exporter Zaber and Zubair Fabrics to unveil the product today

REFAVET ULLAH MIRDHA

The world is moving heaven and earth every day to line up one remedy or the other to steer clear of the novel coronavirus. And here, a company claims to have developed a fabric that can annihilate the deadly pathogen.

Zaber and Zubair Fabrics, a sister concern of Noman Group that exports apparel worth \$2 billion a year, has already started sending samples to its European and American buyers, its officials said.

The fabric will be launched in Dhaka today through a press conference at its office.

"We developed a solution that can help fight coronavirus or any other

virus or bacteria," said Anol Rayhan, the company's brand manager.

The fabric is loaded with biocidal and virucidal agents that ensure that the microbes are blocked instantly and killed within 120 seconds and with a 99.9 per cent certainty.

The treatment of the fabric, which is registered with different compliance bodies of the US and the EU, has been tested and validated under test norm ISO 18184, according to Rayhan.

"The cloth can protect users from microbes and prevent them from being infected by COVID-19," said Raashid Ashraf Khan, chief marketing officer of Zaber and Zubair.

The fabric can be used to make woven shirts, masks and personal

protective equipment (PPE), Rayhan said, adding that, as of yesterday, 75 international retailers have inquired about the groundbreaking product.

Zaber and Zubair supplies its fabrics and garments to more than 300 international and local buyers.

"But by next week the number of our buyers will cross 600 as we are getting a huge response every day," he told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

The company will start bulk production at the end of this month at its factory in Tongi and has a plan to make seven million pieces of woven garment items in a month from the specialised fabric.

The company can churn out 10 million yards of fabrics a month.

## Why don't the beneficiaries' NID numbers match with those on EC database?

*No time for confusion when people are starving*

WHILE the government's cash assistance programme for 50 lakh poor families is supposed to start from today, it is unfortunate to learn that many enlisted national identification (NID) numbers did not match the ones on the Election Commission's database. The problem was exposed when the government ran a mock test before beginning the fund transfer. Also, as the lists of people eligible for the financial assistance come from the district commissioners' office in Bangla, matching those names and their NID numbers with the national database, which is in English, has become very difficult, according to a senior finance ministry official. Moreover, it may take a lot of time to transfer the cash to the beneficiaries as most of the enlisted people do not have any MFS (mobile financial services) accounts and the providers are having to open the accounts after matching their NIDs with the EC database.

Amid such a situation, we are not sure how the government would distribute the funds to the poor families within the stipulated time before Eid. What we do not understand is why the mock test was conducted at the very last moment when all the preparations to disburse the money should have already been completed. Had this been done a few weeks earlier, there would have been more time to solve the problem. Now, how the authorities would solve the anomalies in the NIDs remains a question. We also have doubts whether all these poor people actually have NIDs. Also, there could be many who have not even been registered for getting the fund and are left out of the government's scheme.

While the government has taken a commendable decision to engage MFS operators to send the funds directly to the families' mobile banking accounts—because it will significantly reduce corruption in the disbursement process—it should also have given focus on removing the pre-existing anomalies in the NIDs. The NID mishap at this point in time is very unfortunate. The government should solve the problem as soon as possible and disburse the cash among the enlisted families. There is no time to waste because people are facing hunger on a daily basis.

## Protect migrant workers from food shortages

*International community must uphold the rights of migrant workers*

A report in this daily on May 13 painted a grim picture of the fate of Bangladeshi migrant workers with most host countries doing very little to support them. While we have already heard of the mistreatment of migrant workers during the pandemic—for example, they are being crammed into work camps, losing their jobs and facing high rates of infection—this report confirmed that at least one lakh of the over five million Bangladeshi migrants working in the Middle East are suffering from hunger.

Bangladesh embassy officials in Saudi Arabia have handed out food parcels to around 8,000 workers, and have warned that thousands more will require food aid. In Bahrain, where one-fourth of nearly two lakh Bangladeshis are in financial crisis, the embassy has received appeals for food from at least 4,200 migrants. The situation is dire not just in the Middle East—embassy officials in Malaysia, Greece and Italy have also confirmed the need for food aid and cash support for thousands of migrants.

This is only the plight of the documented workers. Reports have confirmed that many of the two to three lakh Bangladeshis who work in Saudi Arabia illegally are afraid of even leaving their living quarters due to the fear of a crackdown. This has already begun in Malaysia, where the detention of undocumented migrant workers has been widely criticised by rights groups—as has been their decision to make employers pay for mandatory coronavirus tests of foreign workers, the costs of which are expected to eventually be shouldered by the workers themselves.

The expatriates' welfare ministry's announcement of a Tk 4.5 crore fund for migrant workers, and a separate announcement of another Tk 3 crore for immediate food support, are positive steps forward. However, this is nowhere near enough to protect the millions of Bangladeshi workers abroad. Equally importantly, the question that needs to be asked is: aren't the host countries also responsible for the migrants working on their land? While the Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and other rights groups have asked these countries to protect the migrant workers, the host countries seem little concerned.

We urge the government to speak up for the rights of our migrant workers and engage at all diplomatic levels, especially with OIC countries, to protect them. It is unjust and morally reprehensible that the workers who have given their labour for these countries are now being unable to fulfil a need as basic as the right to food. The UN and the international community must hold these countries to account and uphold the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers during these difficult times.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

### Disposal of waste crucial

Many of us have been taking various measures to protect ourselves from the coronavirus, including using gloves and masks and hand sanitisers. But how are we disposing of those materials once used? Are we considering the health/environmental risks? Most of these materials produce plastic waste which is difficult to recycle. Unfortunately, the waste is not being disposed of in a safe and organised manner. This risks the spread of infections even further. Gloves and masks are commonly used in the medical field, but now that a large number of our population are using them, the threats of spreading infections are much higher. The authorities should do something about it urgently.

M A Hafez, Dhaka

# Time to push online learning in higher education

MOHAMMED SHAHIDULLAH and MUSHTAQ CHOWDHURY

WE have come a long way in teaching and learning using technology. Whatever we call it—online learning, virtual learning, or e-learning—it has made education independent of time and place. Users have access to course materials 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Learning management systems (LMS) make it possible to upload course materials, assignments, and exams as well as to create discussion boards and other communication tools. Online learning has made distance learning an accessible and effective alternative that is traffic-jam free and unaffected by unexpected campus closing because of hartals, strikes, and man-made or natural calamities like the coronavirus pandemic. Online learning makes it possible to not lose a semester or spend extra money for overstay in hostels. As a result, it solves the problem of campus housing, which is always a major problem for university students. This also provides opportunities for stay-at-home mothers and persons who have jobs but would like to advance their degrees.

Online learning has many benefits. These include, among others, flexible schedule and environment; independence of place and time; saving on on-campus housing; independence of transportation hassles and expenses; student-centred learning according to the learner's convenience and timeline; equal opportunities for all students, introverts and extroverts alike; improving technical skills through the use of LMS; freedom from campus buildings or fixed learning resources; access to many free courses like Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and modules from anywhere in the world; access to lectures from world-famous experts in respective disciplines; supplementing in-class learning; finishing a semester strong and on time; and independent learning and time management.

There are a few myths on online learning, including the notions that online learning is less rigorous and promotes "cheating", that it is isolating and lonely, and that the instructors are inferior. These are all unfounded. Because

of these myths, unfortunately, there was a strong resistance to implementing online learning in higher education. No new technology or change is readily accepted or welcomed because of its "disruptive" nature. In traditional classroom teaching, students are tested on what they read. In online learning, the emphasis is on authentic learning—learning by doing. Students engage in various ways, such as through experimentation, real-world problem solving, problem-based activities, case studies, and participation in discussion boards and virtual communication. Exams and quizzes are proctored like in the TOEFL and GRE to

is required for uploading courses and related resources on the website. Blackboard, D2L/Brightspace, Canvas, and Moodle are some of the popular LMS platforms. Moodle is a free open-source LMS. Desktops, laptops, tablets, or smartphones are needed to access an LMS. A webcam or built-in HD camera and a high-quality headset help in video conferencing and live classroom sessions using Zoom, Skype for Business, Blackboard Ultra, and WebEx. Virtual live meetings can be treated as traditional classroom sessions from one's residence, and all activities can be recorded for later review or for students who missed a class.



Online learning offers an important way forward to truly implement Digital Bangladesh.

PHOTO: SHANNON STAPLETON/REUTERS

avoid cheating. Online learning provides a strong networking community for group study, discussion, and sharing ideas and interests, reducing feelings of isolation or loneliness. In universities in the global north, most on-campus instructors also facilitate online courses, and all online instructors are required to go through training on online teaching-learning. Communication with instructors usually takes place through telephone, email, discussion boards, virtual live meetings, and chatrooms.

Online learning requires specific software, hardware, technological know-how, and, of course, high-speed broadband Internet. An LMS

These classes provide the students with the opportunity to ask questions and participate in discussion.

Many of the private universities in Bangladesh proactively adopt new technologies to provide contemporary education to their students. These students are able to complete their education on time and will have an added advantage in the job market. Most private-sector employers will prefer candidates who are trained in online learning because most jobs will require such expertise. Unfortunately, most public universities in the country are lagging behind in offering their students an opportunity to complete their education

## PROJECT SYNDICATE

# The Kerala Model



SHASHI THAROOR

Kerala, in southwestern India, has been so successful in "flattening the curve" that many now speak admiringly of a "Kerala Model" for handling public-health emergencies.

Kerala was the first Indian state to report a case of Covid-19—a medical student who had arrived from Wuhan, China, at the end of January. When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a nationwide lockdown on March 24, Kerala had the most cases of any state. Yet today, it ranks low on the list of confirmed cases, and high on the list of Covid-19 recoveries. Moreover, the state's fatality rate (0.53 percent) is the lowest in India, and it has managed to limit the spread of the virus without inflicting any of the human suffering seen in other parts of the country.

Kerala's formula for success has been straightforward. Public-health authorities have prioritised early detection through extensive testing, widespread contact tracing, and 28-day quarantines for all those infected (the rest of India, following the World Health Organization's guidance, has required only 14 days).

Since issuing its initial Covid-19 alert

on January 18, the state has screened all arrivals at its four international airports, and immediately hospitalised or quarantined suspected cases. On February 4, Kerala declared Covid-19 a state-level disaster, and shut schools, restricted public gatherings, and instituted lockdowns in early March. By the time the central government had followed suit weeks later, Kerala had already deployed more than 30,000 health workers and placed tens of thousands of people in quarantine.

Kerala's Covid-19 response emerged

states. Throughout the current crisis, Kerala's educated populace has behaved responsibly, limiting community transmission, cooperating with authorities, and seeking prompt treatment as needed.

This institutional and political culture is not the result of some one-off policy. Kerala has spent generations creating the infrastructure to support social development, placing it far ahead of the rest of India on many key indicators. In addition to its rights-based welfare system, it has a vibrant

had announced a comprehensive economic relief package for citizens in need.

Meanwhile, Kudumbashree, a Kerala grassroots network of local organisations and women's self-help groups, has helped the state's containment strategy by producing two million masks and 5,000 litres of hand sanitiser in the first month of the national lockdown. Some 1,200 community kitchens were established to feed the indigent and unemployed, and Kudumbashree has already served 300,000 meals a day.

Kerala has maintained regular communication with the public about health risks, broadcasting precautionary messages through official channels to dispel fake news. Unlike other states, Kerala's response has centred on people's participation, not law enforcement. When migrant labourers became restless, they were given free accommodation and food, and urged to wait in place. These instructions were delivered in migrants' own languages, and duly followed. In other states, migrants have been kicked to the curb by the millions.

Kerala is among India's most densely populated states, which makes its success in combating the pandemic all the more remarkable. Moreover, an estimated 17 percent of its population works or lives elsewhere (their remittances account for 35 percent of the state's annual income), more than one million tourists visit each year, and hundreds of Kerala students study abroad, including in China. All of this mobility makes the state more vulnerable to contagious outbreaks, and yet it is weathering the crisis with flying colours.

In achieving such impressive results, Kerala has built on its tradition of decentralised governance, transparency, egalitarianism, civil rights, public trust, and governmental accountability. It offers clear lessons for the rest of India, both in responding to the current crisis and in preparing for the next one. Sadly, the central government's words and actions suggest that no one in New Delhi is paying attention to the success story right under their noses.

Shashi Tharoor, a former UN under-secretary-general and former Indian Minister of State for External Affairs and Minister of State for Human Resource Development, is an MP for the Indian National Congress. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2020. www.project-syndicate.org (Exclusive to The Daily Star)



Staff members of a government-run medical college collect swabs from people to test for the coronavirus at a Walk-In Sample Kiosk in Ernakulam in Kerala, India, on April 6, 2020.

PHOTO: REUTERS

from a template that long preceded the current crisis. Among Indian states, it is unique for having allocated significant resources to public-health infrastructure, devolved power and funding to village-level bodies, and established a social system that promotes community participation and public cooperation.

In addition to having the highest literacy rate in India (94 percent), Kerala also boasts a declining birth rate, higher life expectancy, more empowered women, and stronger welfare support for the indigent and the marginalised. People do not beg or starve in Kerala. The state offers universal access to health care and medical information, and respects all residents as rights-bearing citizens. No one is treated as a mere subject, as is common in many other Indian

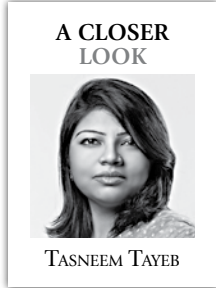
civil society, free and independent media, and a competitive political system. Its robust form of social democracy reflects the contributions of alternating coalitions of Communist and Congress-led governments over time. As foreign observers have noted, the state's social compact reflects extremely high levels of trust in institutions and elected representatives.

As a result, Kerala was able to impose restrictive measures far more humanely than other states have. When Keralans under home quarantine reported that they had no one to bring them essential supplies, the police promptly delivered what they needed. When schools were closed, poor parents who rely on school lunches to provide their children with proper nourishment received the meals at home. Before the central government had even declared a lockdown, Kerala



# Fighting the demons in our head

How work culture will change post-Covid-19



**A CLOSER LOOK**  
TASNEEM TAYEB

staff, instructing them on how to go about the urgent tasks in my absence. And it was mostly on the phone or messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp or Viber. Sometimes there were those Skype calls, absolutely on indispensable occasions. And oh boy, those days were tough coordinating with my team from home—there were so many things I had trouble explaining to them, such detailed instructions were needed, feedbacks, follow-ups and more feedbacks. And then there were those meetings where I had to send a team member on my behalf and then getting them to brief me the next day. And still, despite all these attempts, there was a lack of coordination somewhere. Working from home seemed like an absurd idea—is it even possible to work from home?

And then things changed, and pretty suddenly. Even while watching the news on Al Jazeera of a mysterious disease claiming lives in a faraway town in China—it was late December I think—I did not realise that, a few months down the line, my life would be turned upside-down by this illness, and I would be scrambling to find meaning of what was happening around... all the chaos, commotion, change and then the calm of the shutdown. And not just me, Covid-19 has torn apart the social fabric in all the corners of the world. There is no longer the world

that we once knew, that we called home. It is a different place now, a difficult navigation, and one that is often riddled with danger. And while Covid-19 has changed the society as we know it, its most visible impact will probably be at the workplace.

For one, we are not going to go back to the same workplace that we had left when we walked out of the office for the last time before the shutdown. It might not look so different but, in practice, it will be. When we go back to work, we will probably be wearing masks and gloves, if not PPE, and see stockpiles of hand sanitisers and disinfectants at every communal space. The offices will feel sterile thanks to all the deep cleaning that they have undergone. But while this might be good for my health, I am not sure how this will affect my emotional wellbeing.

And then, there will be no more handshakes or the occasional high-fives with colleagues after achieving small feats. Probably, there will be no more gossip over lunch at the cafeteria as social distancing will remain a key priority, of course to keep us safe. And we will sit spaces apart. We will fear contagion and our social interactions with our colleagues, co-workers and teams will be coloured by that tacit knowledge.

And for sure, there will be less meetings where we are required to be present physically, and even fewer foreign travels for workshops and trainings, because these will go fully virtual. If we can coordinate with cross-functional teams—both within and outside the country—at the height of the pandemic, then surely we can do it after things become “normal”. And the less we travel for work, the lesser the possibility of contagion. And there will be fewer people we will meet, get to know, and it might feel less humane.

Amidst all these changes and uncertainties, there remains the fear of AI, robotics, IoT,



automation taking over our work. We will always be on the look out to see who will be the first to go and then the next. Despite all the reassurances from our employers, the fear of being abandoned will linger like a foul smell in the air that no deep cleaning can get rid of.

According to a recent survey by a USA-based mental health provider, Ginger, nearly 7 in 10 employees surveyed suggested that this pandemic is the “most stressful time of their entire professional career, which has aligned with stark increases in new prescriptions of antidepressant, anti-anxiety, and anti-insomnia medications,” as reported by The American Journal of Managed Care. And according to the World Health

Organization, “In public mental health terms, the main psychological impact to date is elevated rates of stress or anxiety. But as new measures and impacts are introduced—especially quarantine and its effects on many people’s usual activities, routines or livelihoods—levels of loneliness, depression, harmful alcohol and drug use, and self-harm or suicidal behaviour are also expected to rise.”

And while no one is immune to these spill-over effects of this pandemic—I, for one, fight my own demons every hour of every day, and try to stay positive by reminding myself of all the things I should be grateful for—the question is, does it really have to be this way? Certainly not.

If Covid-19 has been a frightening experience for us, it has also been a lesson on how fast we can adapt to changes and embrace transformations to stay relevant in the face of Herculean challenges. Look how we have changed the way we work, we look at work, overnight! What even a few weeks ago seemed like a dystopian, distant possibility, we are now living it, and what’s more, we are even getting better at it.

While no doubt Covid-19 has caused a hollow in our lives, do we really have to succumb to its ill motive of sucking the lives out of us even while we are breathing? Of making us cold, sterile beings? Can we not train ourselves to turn around to get the better of this disease?

We can hone our creatives skills, leadership skills—skills that make us humans, help us survive in this ever-changing world. We can choose to embrace whatever human contact we are allowed even with social distancing and relish in that. There will certainly be losses, distances, and voids that will be difficult to fill. The worries, the qualms, the uncertainties are going to be around for the next few years, if not decades, and while these feelings can trigger depression and make us feel lonely and anxious, we can still win this game of survival, even against all the odds.

Covid-19 has certainly put us in a nightmare situation, both in our social lives and how we interact professionally. But it has also enabled us to see the bigger picture: of the ability of the humans to remain resilient, to be agile, to stay relevant.

It is up to us now how we want to utilise the limbo we find ourselves in. We can either choose to be proactively productive or do nothing and be bitter about it. The choice is really up to us.

Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her Twitter handle is: @TayebTasneem.

# Why should we care about inequality?

RAJIB TRIPURA

INEQUALITY is now one of the top global issues as it poses a major threat to economic growth and social crisis. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) shows in its World Social Report 2020 how much income inequality has increased in many developed countries, and in some middle-income and developing economies. The report finds that income and wealth are increasingly concentrated in the hands of the top one percent. It shows that technological innovation, climate change, urbanisation and international migration are the reasons for this inequality. The coronavirus crisis is only worsening the poverty and inequality within and among the societies. It is hurting school-going children and affecting more the students of underdeveloped and developing countries that do not have the opportunity for virtual learning. During the pandemic, people who work in low-pay sectors are suffering more than those working in high-pay sectors. For example, the educated and high-paid employees can carry on their work from home but low-paid workers like the garment workers and individuals engaged with small and medium-sized enterprises are hit the hardest.

Why should we care about inequality? Some argue that we should focus on poverty reduction—not inequality. A model by the economist Simon Kuznets, known as a Kuznets curve, is a significant model used for this argument. Kuznets argues that inequality is an undeniable result of the early stages of economic growth and it will reduce eventually as growth advances with an increase of per capita income. So he suggests focusing on growth and poverty reduction. But many studies find that economic growth does not help to reduce inequality until the government takes special measures. There are powerful arguments in support of why inequality requires urgent policy attention.

Firstly, a society that has higher inequality tends to have more internal conflicts and destabilisation of social cohesion. It is because when inequalities continue through the generations, the excluded people tend to contest the progress that has bypassed them.

Francis Fukuyama shows in his research paper titled “the Latin American Experience (2008)” that inequality delegitimises the political system as people fight for their shares. Professor Richard G. Wilkinson also shows in an article on the impact of inequality, published in Social Research Journal in 2006, that the rate of homicide is consistently higher in societies where income differences are greater. The Global Trend 2030 also finds that the growing inequality in Africa will intensify the tribal and ethnic conflicts.

society further increases the gap between the rich and the poor. Thomas Piketty in his book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* also argues that the return on capital is always higher than economic growth which makes richer those who have the capital and poorer those who don’t have it. Poorer people also suffer more where the market mechanism is weaker, because a poor person will not have a loan if he or she cannot satisfy the lender without a guarantee. So, lack of income limits their investment in business, health, and children’s education. Thus the poor

Vijayendra Rao argues that in a patriarchal society, women are not given an equal share of property and have to confront restriction of movement. Besides, the girls are often not sent to school, and women are less likely to work outside. So, this social system keeps women dependent on men and keeps them remaining in an inequality trap. Like the example of women and girls in a patriarchal society, the unequal distribution of power enables the rich to have a good policy in their favour and to keep their social status, Vijayendra Rao argues. In an unequal society,

income growth of the bottom 40 percent of a population at a higher rate than the country’s national average by 2030. Inequality is also an important determinant to attain the aim of zero extreme poverty by 2030. A World Bank study finds that poverty rate will fall to below 3 percent if the income of the bottom 40 percent of a population increases by 2 percent faster than the national average, but the poverty rate will remain at 10 percent if the income of the bottom 40 percent grows at below 2 percentage points of average national income.

So to achieve a good democratic system, stable political and social structure, as well as sustainable growth, we need to reduce inequality. Initiatives have been taken to address the issue but these have proved to be mostly unsuccessful. Moreover, the coronavirus crisis has worsened the situation by impeding the present actions of reducing poverty and it will pull back the households that have crossed the poverty line. More social policies and actions are needed to reduce inequality. The UNDESA suggests in its report that promotion of equal access to opportunities, inclusive fiscal policies that benefit employment and disability, and legislation that tackles prejudice and discrimination and promotes greater participation of marginalised groups are necessary to minimise income inequality. An anti-poverty group, Global Citizen, together with a research agency, Glocalities, have done a poll in 25 countries during this pandemic and found that eight out of 10 people think billionaires should come forward during this crisis to end poverty and inequality. Oxfam showed in a report that the world’s richest eight billionaires are as wealthy as half of the world’s population. Oxfam finds that if an additional 0.5 percent tax could be imposed on the wealth of the richest 1 percent billionaires over the next 10 years, it would be equal to investments needed to create 117 million jobs in education and healthcare sectors. The bottom line is: a global concerted effort and a burden-sharing attitude are required to fight against poverty and inequality.

Rajib Tripura is a foreign affairs analyst and a graduate from Crawford School of Public Policy, the Australian National University.



The gap between the rich and the poor goes back hundreds of years.

PHOTO: REUTERS/ARKO DATTA

Secondly, higher income inequality is an obstacle to poverty reduction. Poor people have fewer chances of getting their share of the development pie where inequality is high. Economists Roy van der Weide and Branko Milanovic found in a study on the impact of overall inequality that high inequality has a positive impact on economic growth, however, it benefits mostly the rich group of a society. They also argue that economic growth in a highly unequal

experience the vicious circle of poverty.

Thirdly, income inequality traps can trigger an increase in intergenerational inequality and hinder social mobility. Inequality traps describe a situation where the total income distribution is stable due to the different dimensions of inequality (social, economic, political, and cultural) that interact to defend the richest group from downward mobility and to inhibit the poor from moving upward. Economist

a poor family faces difficulty in providing uninterrupted schooling for their children, which then prevents the latter from getting a higher-income job and changing their social status.

Fourthly, inequality is a matter of concern when it comes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 10 is about the reduction of global inequality. The goal has a target to attain and sustain

**QUOTABLE Quote**

**NIDO QUBEIN**  
(Born 1948)  
American businessman and motivational speaker.

Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start.

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Blacken
- 5 Tourist stop
- 10 Make movie changes
- 12 Battery end
- 13 Restaurant patron
- 14 Japanese comic books
- 15 Quarterback
- 16 Hoppy pint, for short
- 18 Collins base
- 19 Gobble up
- 21 Pool sticks
- 22 Cub Scout leader
- 24 Silas Marner's ward
- 25 Common sense
- 29 U2 singer
- 30 Amateur
- 32 Crumb carrier
- 33 Hallucinatory drug
- 34 Opposite of post-
- 35 Native group
- 37 Brighten
- 39 Space sighting
- 40 Light fare
- 41 Listens to
- 42 Indiana city

**DOWN**

- 1 Guiding principle
- 2 Made better
- 3 On the go
- 4 Deplore
- 5 Baby's call
- 6 Words before tear or dare
- 7 Taste bud setting
- 8 More nervous
- 9 Inclines
- 11 Victory
- 17 Pushes onward
- 20 – a customer
- 21 Like caramel
- 23 Rants
- 25 Madison's successor
- 26 Prompt
- 27 Gazelle's cousin
- 28 Toothbrush target
- 29 Cookie quantity
- 31 Poor
- 33 “Why don't we!”
- 36 Garden area
- 38 Fall back

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO [dsopinion@gmail.com](mailto:dsopinion@gmail.com).

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS**

C	O	S	T	S	M	A	M	A	S
U	N	C	A	P	A	D	O	R	E
T	E	R	R	A	R	A	T	E	D
U	S	E	C	A	R	M	I	N	E
P	I	E	E	L	I	O	A	R	
S	E	N	T	F	E	R	N	S	
C	O	G	D	O	C				
C	A	M	U	S	N	A	S	A	
S	A	P	R	E	F	P	E	R	
L	I	T	I	N	T	O	T	A	D
A	M	U	S	E	A	B	U	S	E
C	A	R	L	Y	M	O	R	O	N
K	N	E	E	S	S	P	E	N	T

**BEETLE BAILEY** BY MORT WALKER

I DON'T CARE WHAT ANYONE THINKS. I'M SIGNING AN EXECUTIVE ORDER ON THIS!!

WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?

ADDING LICORICE TO THE VENDING MACHINE

**BABY BLUES** BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

CHLOE? IT'S DARRIL McPHERSON. CAN YOU BABYSIT FRIDAY NIGHT?

UH-HUH... UH-HUH... LET ME ASK.

DO WE OFFER A COMPREHENSIVE BENEFITS PACKAGE?

TELL HER THERE'S A FRESH GALLON OF COOKIE DOUGH IN THE FREEZER.

GRAPEVINE



**MOUTUSHI BISWAS**  
speaks about nature

Everything is at a halt because of the pandemic and everyone from the entertainment industry has been remaining indoors. It has been almost one and a half months that actor Moutushi Biswas has been staying home with her husband and daughter. She has been spending a lot of quality time with her daughter and reading her favourite books. The actor said, "This pandemic was supposed to happen. We have been polluting our

planet with so much waste that mother nature decided to take revenge. We forgot that the planet is not only for humans, but there are other living things as well. We have been torturing animals, cutting down trees, and the novel coronavirus is just a response from nature for our crudeness. I am trying to create a positive and jovial ambience at home because we need physical strength and mental peace to get through this crisis."



**OYSHEE'S**  
New Song

Singer Oyshee recently released a new song, *Joibon Gelo*, written and composed by Habib Mostafa. The music for the song has been directed by Anu Mustafiz. Regarding the song, Oyshee said, "The song has a unique melody and depth in it. My audience will find me in a new light in this song. I gave

my voice for a song after a long time. Besides, I have also been singing from home on songs related to COVID-19 to promote awareness. Further, composer Habib Mostafa stated that the music video for the song, released under the banner of *G Series*, has been appreciated by the audience.

**Bappy Chowdhury's**  
**INITIATIVE**

During this holy month of Ramadan, popular actor Bappy Chowdhury's fan club has been regularly distributing Iftar. He has also been sending Iftar to BFDC's Mosque and mentioned that this will be done until Eid-ul-Fitr. Since the year 2015, Bappy Chowdhury's fan club has been providing free medical aid to underprivileged children in Feni. In 2016, the members established a primary school for the children and currently has fifty-six students. Like every year, the club is providing Iftar to the students. However, due to the nationwide shutdown, the club is distributing Iftar packages to their doorsteps. Bappy said, "To maintain social distancing and keep everyone safe, we have made the arrangements for distributing fifty-six Iftar packages to their houses. We are also trying to look after their other needs and help them with their necessities."



CENTRE STAGE

**Ferdous Ahmed**



Popular actor Ferdous Ahmed has been maintaining social distance and staying indoors. He has been spending time with his family and learning to cook. In this interview with Star Showbiz, the actor shared what he misses most during quarantine and what he will be doing after shutdown lifts.

**What have you been doing during quarantine?**

Before quarantine, I never got to spend much time with my family. I have been able to do that now due to quarantine. I spend a lot of time with my family cooking, playing games or watching movies together. I never got to spend this time with my children. I also spend my time watching the news. There are a lot of unread books at my house, and I plan on reading all of them before quarantine ends. By doing some freehand exercises, I have been staying both physically and mentally healthy. I've been making some videos at home where my daughters act as my cameramen. Another thing that I spend a lot of time doing is checking up on my colleagues. In the past, I would only call them to ask things like when we have to go to shooting or what I have to wear for an event. Now, I call them to ask how they are doing, how their families are. I have also been calling to check up on my senior artists. I didn't get to talk to them regularly before, but now I make sure to check on them regularly. One thing that I think everyone should be doing is helping those in need. I opened a *Bkash* account to do that. I see how many people who worked in films are facing a financial struggle, and I try to help them to the best of my abilities. I would like to especially express gratitude to our honourable Prime Minister as she is doing her best to help the people of Bangladesh. It is all of our duties to help others out.

**What new skills have you learnt while in quarantine?**

I have learnt a lot of cooking by watching *YouTube*. It seems that I have a knack for making food. I can now make a wide variety of foods. Since we cannot bring food from outside for my children, I try to make whatever they want at home.

**What do you miss the most while you are in quarantine?**

I miss acting. I am an actor by profession, so that is what I miss the most. Sometimes, I even have dreams where I am going to a shooting spot to shoot a film, and at other times, I think about when I might get to act again. I also miss how people would get excited whenever they got to see me in public. However, I understand that if I gain something, I have to lose something. I am getting to spend more time with my family now, but I am not being able to act.

**What is the first thing that you will do once quarantine ends?**

At first, I will have trouble believing that it is actually over. I really don't know what I'll do once it ends. Now, it feels like it will go on forever, so when it ends, it will seem kind of unbelievable. I know that I will be ecstatic, and the feeling will be similar to that of winning a war.

**Do you have any message for the readers?**

Throughout my whole career, I have never spent this much time staying at home not doing anything. Acting is my main source of income, and since I cannot act, I have not been earning anything. This is not just the case for me; many artists are facing the same problem. We still stay at home because that is the only way to not just keep ourselves safe, but to keep others safe as well. I am certain that Allah will save us from this virus, and until this crisis ends, people should not go out unless it is absolutely necessary. We should stay at home and regularly wash our hands. I also see that many policemen are getting infected. If we stayed at home, the police would not have to risk their lives by going out to make sure that people don't come out. If they can risk their lives, we should support them by staying at home. I urge everyone to stay healthy and safe.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub



POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

Here are some binge worthy movie and series you can spend your time watching while you stay at home social distancing, keeping yourself, as well as others, safe.



**The English Game**

*The English Game* is a historical sports drama television miniseries on *Netflix*. It has been created by Julian Fellowes, alongside others, produced by Rhonda Smith, and stars Edward Holcroft, Kevin Guthrie and Charlotte Hope, among others. The series focuses on the origins of modern football and how it broke the division between classes. It was released on March 20, 2020.

**THE HALF OF IT**

*The Half of It* is a coming-of-age drama-comedy movie on *Netflix*. It has been written and directed by Alice Wu, produced under the banner of *Likely Story*, and stars Leah Lewis, Daniel Diemer, Alessis

Lemire, and Collin Chou, among others. The story focuses on an introverted girl who acts as the wingman of a popular jock at school to get a girl that she secretly likes. It was released on May 1, 2020.



**Extracurricular**

*Extracurricular* is a South Korean drama TV series on *Netflix*, directed by Kim Jin-min, written by Jin Han-sae, produced under the banner of *Studio 329*, and stars Kim Dong-hee, Jung Da-bin Park and Joo-hyun, among others. It follows the life of a high school student with an illegal business to pay for college who has to deal with the consequences after being caught by a classmate. It was first released on April 29, 2020.

Shreya Shomoyeeta & Amina Hossain



**Never Have I Ever**

*Never Have I Ever* is a coming of age comedy-drama television series on *Netflix*. It has been created by Mindy Kaling and Lang Fisher, who also produced the series alongside others, and stars Maitreyi Ramakrishnan

Ramona Young and Lee Rodriguez, among others. It tells the story of an Indian-American teenager as she faces and overcomes unique struggles thrown at her in life. The series premiered on April 27, 2020.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

6 Find the differences from, "Ocean's 8"



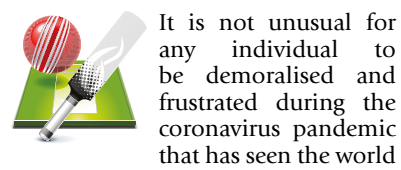
ANSWERS FOR THE PREVIOUS ISSUE:

1. Pocket 2. Eyelashes 3. Silhouette 4. Bracelets 5. Luggage



## 'Not upset as everyone is in the same boat'

RAMIN TALUKDER



It is not unusual for any individual to be demoralised and frustrated during the coronavirus pandemic that has seen the world come to a standstill.

Like the general population, the national cricketers are now far removed from their regular lifestyle, which revolves around playing cricket. While it is usual to be upset about being away from a beloved activity for such a long period, Bangladesh batsman Mohammad Mithun has remained positive.

"I do not see anything to be very upset about right now. Because this situation is true for the entire world. I would only be upset if cricket is being played as usual and I was somehow unable to play. The feeling that I am not able to play while others are playing is the thing that would be upsetting," explained Mithun.

The 29-year-old has had to adjust to difficult situations throughout his career. And adaptability was on Mithun's mind as he said now is the time to keep himself ready so that as soon as cricket returns, he can adjust quickly.

"There is nothing to be upset about. Instead, it is now very important and challenging to keep myself ready, so that whenever cricket returns, I can also return and adjust -- mentally, physically and skill-wise -- quickly and recover from the huge gap," said Mithun.

The right-hander, who is yet to cement his place in the national squad, also mentioned that he never regretted anything as he reflected on his cricketing career.

"To be honest, I do not regret much. I can usually shrug off disappointments and do not regret much about anything as regretting would not be of much benefit to me.



If I keep regretting, then I would not be able to give my 100 per cent in my future endeavours. It is true that all players want their position in the team to be stable and to cement their place, and I am no different.

"Actually, I have made mistakes. Sometimes luck did not favour me. I think in cricket luck plays a big role. I can work hard and give my all but still I cannot guarantee that I will score a century. You can get out because of a run-out, or a misjudgement by the umpire or you might even fall prey to an excellent delivery even after scoring 30 runs and being set at the crease. And then again there are some mistakes that I made, avoiding which I could have been in a better position in my career now," admitted Mithun.

The right-hander also went on to mention that the players in the subcontinent usually have to deal with pressure from the crowd and the media, which also affects their game. However, Mithun accepted that it is their duty as professional cricketers to deal with everything and be unfazed

when they play.

Mithun is now helping his family members in household chores and is looking after his two children. While he is enjoying every bit of familytime, the batsman was positive about the domestic season resuming and for cricket to return, be it even behind closed doors, but obviously by taking all precautions.

"It [playing cricket behind closed doors and in a crowd-less stadium] is going to be a new thing. But the situation and the virus is also a novel one. It might look different but it is important that cricket resumes.

"And ensuring safety is also important. It is better to play in an empty stadium than to spread infection by playing amid thousands of fans," said Mithun, who also thought that much like the initiatives taken in major European football leagues and also in the international cricket arena, players in the country also need to be tested for coronavirus before resuming any form of sport.

## Day's new contract from middle of Aug

SPORTS REPORTER



Although the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) wanted to renew their contract with head coach Jamie Day before his current deal expires on May 15, it is likely to wait for a few more days as the draft agreement was not completed till Wednesday.

"We have been working with the agent of Jamie Day for the last three weeks to renew his contract for the next two years from mid August of 2020. We have already had four meetings online and several e-mail communications to prepare a draft agreement. We are hoping to finalise all terms and conditions within a week," BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag told The Daily Star.

The 40-year-old coach has been in England since early March after FIFA suspended World Cup Qualifying fixtures following the global outbreak of coronavirus.

Shohag informed that the agreement will come into effect from August 16 as FIFA is likely to resume the World Cup Qualifiers in late November or early December, subject to the normalcy of the situation.

However, the BFF is not going to retain



the services of the British coaches at the BFF-Fortis Football Academy.

"We had contracts with three British coaches till April 26 and we did not renew the contracts. We told them that we would communicate after things turn normal as we don't want to pay their salaries without service," said Shohag.

The BFF secretary, however, said they would take every step and provide all support to Day to find expatriates booters from Europe.

"In the discussion of last few weeks, we have wanted to ensure that Jamie will scout Bangladeshi expatriate players like Jamal Bhuiyan, especially from UK. BFF will give all kinds of supports to Jamie in this regard," said Shohag.

## London mayor opposed to PL June restart

REUTERS

London mayor Sadiq Khan is opposed to the idea of the Premier League resuming in the capital next month while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause deaths, a spokesperson for the mayor's office has said.

The possibility of a restart next month was given a boost when the government said elite sport could return behind closed doors after June 1.

Five Premier League clubs are based in London -- including Arsenal, Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur.

"As a Liverpool fan, Sadiq of course wants the Premier League to return," the spokesperson said. "But it can only happen when it is safe to do so, and it cannot place any extra burden on emergency services."

Liverpool lead the league with nine rounds remaining and need only six points to seal the title.

## Rabiot laughs off 'strike' claim

AFP, Rome

Juventus midfielder Adrien Rabiot reacted with irony on Wednesday to reports his delay in returning to Turin was because he was on "strike" in protest at the club cutting wages amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"When you realise it's your last day on ... STRIKE!" Rabiot wrote on Instagram, alongside two laughing emojis and a sad-looking photo of himself.

Shortly after, he posted a new image, a drawing of a small vial on which was written "Newspapers-TV-Press, do not swallow".



Juventus forward Paulo Dybala showed no signs of fatigue or discomfort during his individual training session at the club training ground on Tuesday following his recovery from coronavirus.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

## New PL rules ban tackles

REUTERS

Premier League players will be prohibited from tackling and pitches will have to be disinfected when clubs return to training as part of plans to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the BBC reported on Tuesday.

Citing an official protocol sent to Premier League players and managers outlining conditions for returning to training, the BBC's report said players will be tested twice per week for the virus and take a daily temperature check, while they will also be forbidden from congregating together or travelling to or from training with team mates, the report added.

The Premier League did not immediately respond to a request to comment on the BBC's report.

## Playing 2023 WC is my ultimate goal: Warner

PTI



Australian opener David Warner says he is feeling fitter than ever despite missing two of the last three years of cricket and making it to the 2023 ODI World Cup remains his "ultimate goal".

"In the last three years I'll have had almost two years off, depending on when we play cricket again," Warner, who lost 12 months due to a ban for ball-tampering in 2018, and is now losing precious time due to sport being halted worldwide.

"The longevity in your body helps. The get ups of training and playing gets harder as you get older but I haven't felt any fitter in my career than I do now," Warner said. "As the legs get older time will tell. At the moment I'm feeling as fit as a fiddle and if I can keep running between wickets as well as I have done, who knows. That (2023 ODI) World Cup is the ultimate goal."

The 33-year-old said next year's T20 World Cup in India might be a good time to



step away from the shortest format.

"There's back-to-back T20 World Cups, and I started my career with Twenty20 cricket, and I think it's important we've got younger kids coming through and they get a sniff and a chance of playing at this level.

"We're seeing a lot of guys and talent coming through Australian cricket (and) I think it's important we're leaving those opportunities open there. At that stage you will probably get two spots open up in the team with me and Finchy (Aaron Finch). He wants to go to that World Cup in three years' time as well, so there's going to be a few spots available after that."

**Pabna University of Science and Technology**  
Office of the Project Director

Memo No : PUST/PD/e-GP/OTM/08(A) Date: 13/05/2020

### e-Re-Tender Notice (FY/2019-20)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following works under "Pabna University of Science & Technology Development Project", PUST, Pabna.

Sl No	Re-Tender ID	APP ID	Package No & Invitation Ref. No	Name of Works	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Method
1	420045	158695	PUST/PD/e-GP/OTM/08(A)	Supply & Installation Of Desktop PC, UPS, Photocopier Machine, Laser Printer, Laptop, Multimedia Projector with stand & Fax Machine for the Pabna University of Science and Technology Development Project Office. FY 2019-20	13-May-2020 10:00 AM	09-June-2020 11:30 AM	OTM

This is an online Tender where only e-tender will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Engr. Lt Colonel G.M AzizurRahman, afwc, psc [Retd]  
Project Director  
Pabna University of Science & Technology Development Project

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
সাইলো অধীক্ষকের কার্যালয়  
নারায়ণগঞ্জ সাইলো, নারায়ণগঞ্জ।  
[www.dgfood.gov.bd](http://www.dgfood.gov.bd)

### "দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি"

১	মুদ্রণালয়	খাসা মুদ্রণালয়
২	এজেন্সী	খাসা অফিস
৩	সম্প্রদায়িক সত্তার নাম ও ঠেতা	সাইলো অধীক্ষক, নারায়ণগঞ্জ সাইলো, নারায়ণগঞ্জ, ঠেতা- নারায়ণগঞ্জ
৪	যে কার্যের জন্য দরপত্র	নারায়ণগঞ্জ সাইলোর খাসা ও হ্যাডলিং ঠিকাদার নিয়োগ
৫	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং ও তারিখ	১৫.১০.০০০০.০১০.৪৯.২১১.২০/১৩৭৫ তারিখ ১২/০৫/২০২০ খ্রি
৬	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	উদ্ধৃত দরপত্র (এক ধাপ দুই ধাপ পদ্ধতি)
৭	স্বাক্ষরের টেন্ডার ও প্রকৃতি	রাজস্ব বাজেট, গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার (GOB)
৮	কার্যের সময়কাল	২০২০-২১ ও ২০২১-২২ অর্থ বছর (স্বাক্ষরের পরবর্তী তারিখ হতে ২ বছর পর্যন্ত)
৯	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের শেষ তারিখ	১৭/০৫/২০২০ খ্রি
১০	দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	২২/০৬/২০২০ খ্রি অফিস চলাকালীন সময় বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
১১	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৪/০৬/২০২০ খ্রি দুপুর ১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
১২	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২৪/০৬/২০২০ খ্রি দুপুর ২.০০ ঘটিকা
১৩	দরপত্র দলিল প্রাপ্তির স্থান	খাসা অধীক্ষক (খাসা), নারায়ণগঞ্জ সাইলো, সিদ্ধিরগঞ্জ, নারায়ণগঞ্জ।
১৪	দরপত্র গ্রহণের স্থান	সাইলো অধীক্ষকের কার্যালয়, নারায়ণগঞ্জ সাইলো, সিদ্ধিরগঞ্জ, নারায়ণগঞ্জ।
১৫	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	সাইলো অধীক্ষকের কার্যালয়, নারায়ণগঞ্জ সাইলো, সিদ্ধিরগঞ্জ, নারায়ণগঞ্জ।
১৬	দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য	২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা (অফেরত যোগ্য)
১৭	টেন্ডার সিদ্ধিরগতি	৩,০০,০০০/- (তিন লাখ) টাকার পে অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট।
১৮	দরদাতাদের যোগ্যতা	ন্যূনতম ৩ (তিন) বছরের শ্রম ও হ্যাডলিং ঠিকাদারী কার্যের পূর্ব অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। যোগ্যতা যাচাই করার শ্রম ও পরিচালনা ঠিকাদারী কার্যে ন্যূনতম ১ (এক) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা এবং সাধারণ খাসা শস্য হ্যাডলিং কার্যে ২ (দুই) বছর সহ মোট ৩ (তিন) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। টেন্ডার ডাটা শীটে উল্লিখিত কর্মকর্তা/নগর হতে অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ দাখিল করতে হবে। এছাড়াও দরপত্র সিদ্ধিরগতি বর্ণিত অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা থাকতে হবে।
১৯	কার্যের সাক্ষর বিবরণ	জলবান্ধন/ব্লিক থেকে চন্দ্র/বন্দা ভর্তি গম/খালি বন্দা খাসা কক, ট্রাক/ওয়াল/স্টোয়েজ পম ভর্তি বন্দা যোগ্যতা এবং প্রয়োজনীয় স্থানিক সরঞ্জাম কল।
২০	দরপত্র জমা রাখার পদ্ধতি	কারিগরি গ্রহণ সনদিত খাসার উপরে কারিগরি গ্রহণ ও অর্থিক গ্রহণ সনদিত খাসার উপরে অর্থিক গ্রহণ সনদ করে লিখে আসসা নামে করে দুই বছর করে অন্য একটি বই নামে ২টি একত্র করে সাইলো অধীক্ষক, নারায়ণগঞ্জ সাইলো সনদে প্রকৃতি সীলগত করে দাখিল করতে হবে।
২১	দরপত্র প্রক্রিয়ার ক্ষেত্রে The Public Procurement Act, 2006/The Public Procurement Rules, 2008-এর বিধানকর্তী প্রযোজ্য।	
২২	অনির্দিষ্ট কার্যের দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ দিন দুটি ঘোষিত হলে পরবর্তী স্বাক্ষরিক কার্যক্রমে যথানিয়মে দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে।	
২৩	দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর নাম	মোঃ তাজল ইসলাম
২৪	দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর পদবী	সাইলো অধীক্ষক
২৫	দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর ঠিকানা	সাইলো অধীক্ষকের কার্যালয়, নারায়ণগঞ্জ সাইলো, সিদ্ধিরগঞ্জ, নারায়ণগঞ্জ।
২৬	যোগাযোগের ফোন নম্বর	০২-৭৬৯৩১৪০
২৭	কোন কার্য দর্শনো হ্যাডলি দরপত্র বাতিল অথবা গ্রহণের অধিকার কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে এবং সর্বনিম্ন দরপত্র গ্রহণে কর্তৃপক্ষ বাধ্য নহে।	

Engr. Lt Colonel G.M AzizurRahman, afwc, psc [Retd]  
Project Director  
Pabna University of Science & Technology Development Project

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## GARBAGE MANAGEMENT WORKERS Many still left unprotected

Without protective gear, they face severe risk of Covid-19 infection

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

A large number of garbage management workers in the capital have been working without any protective gear, putting themselves at grave risk of contracting coronavirus and other diseases.

Though a section of workers have received personal protective equipment (PPE) from the authorities concerned or from non-government organisations, many others are still doing without.

Those involved in door-to-door collection of household waste are mainly under severe risk -- either they are not equipped with protective gears or do not want to use these as they feel uncomfortable, according to workers.

Around 2,500 garbage management workers are under Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and around 5,400 work under Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

Around 4,000 more work in garbage collection for the DNCC and several thousand for the DSCC contractually, but they are not employees of the two city corporations.

Md Jasim, 35, said he collects garbage from different houses and apartments at Ibrahimipur, Mirpur, from 7:30am to 4:00pm every day.

"Every day, I return home with fear of coronavirus as I do not use any protective gear," said Jasim, who has not been provided with protective gear so far.

Islam Uddin, a worker in Farmgate, too said he has not received any protective gear till now.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



The swarming crowd of people at the kitchen market in the capital's Jatra Bari makes it seem like there is no outbreak of a highly contagious and deadly disease in the country. Sights of people putting themselves and others at risk are becoming all too common. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## ATTACK BY GOONS 10 garment workers hurt during protest

STAR REPORT

At least 10 garment workers were injured when goons attacked them while they were demonstrating at their factory demanding full payment for April in Fatullah of Narayanganj yesterday.

The attackers, allegedly associated with the factory owners, attacked the workers of Fateh Ullah and Jalal Hazi Spinning Mills around 7:00am when they were demonstrating for their demand of 100 percent salary payment, instead of 60.

Some workers said the injured were receiving primary treatment in a local clinic.

The injured workers said some 10,000 workers were employed in the two mills for three shifts. The factory was close for some 18 days and the management yesterday said they will not pay Eid bonus this year, they alleged.

The workers protested the decision of 60 percent salary payment and the non-payment of bonus. The workers started their demonstration in front of the factory gate in the morning and also threw brick chips inside the gate.

Then, the group of goons appeared at the scene and attacked the workers,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## Eid holidays in KSA to be under curfew

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia will enforce a nationwide 24-hour curfew during the five-day Eid al-Fitr holiday later this month to fight the coronavirus, the interior ministry said Tuesday, as infections spike.

The kingdom, which has reported the highest number of virus cases in the Gulf region, is scrambling to limit the spread of the deadly disease.

A full lockdown will be re-imposed around the country from May 23-27, the ministry said in a statement released by the official Saudi Press Agency. The period coincides with the Muslim festival that marks the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Most parts of the kingdom were put under full lockdown following the outbreak, but last month the government relaxed the curfew between the hours of 9:00am and 5:00pm.

Malls and retailers have been allowed to reopen, except in major hotspots including the holy city of Makkah -- where confirmed cases have soared, despite a stringent lockdown.

The health ministry said Tuesday the number of Covid-19 deaths had risen to 264 and confirmed infections to 42,925,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

### Bangla must be used in all spheres



May 14, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

TRADE AGREEMENT WITH INDIA WILL BE BENEFICIAL FOR BOTH: BANGABANDHU

In an interview with Pran Chopra, former editor of Statesman (India), Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman yesterday said the recently concluded trade agreement between Bangladesh and India would be beneficial for both countries. He justified Bangladesh's position to export jute to India by saying that in return Bangladesh would get the much-needed coal. The prime minister expressed his gratitude to the Indian government and people for their relentless support to the reconstruction effort of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Bangabandhu praying for the departed soul of veteran politician Kafiluddin Chowdhury whose namaz-e-janaza was held at Baitul Mukarram on May 13, 1972.

## Gonoshasthaya sends 200 kits for trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoshasthaya Kendra yesterday supplied 200 locally-made rapid test kits to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) for performance trial.

Dr Bijon Kumar Sil, the lead researcher of Gonoshasthaya Pharmaceuticals, and Dr Mohibullah Khandakar, vice-principal of Gonoshasthaya Samaj Vittik Medical College, submitted the kits to the BSMMU around 11:00am.

Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, founder and trustee of Gonoshasthaya Kendra, said, "The BSMMU asked for 400 kits; 200 in each of two phases. We will provide them with the rest of the 200 kits whenever they ask for."

Earlier on Tuesday afternoon, Gonoshasthaya received a letter from the BSMMU, seeking supply of the kits and a deposit of Tk 435,000 as fees for the tests.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## Toilet duty for social distancing violators



AFP, Jakarta

Indonesians who violate social distancing rules in the capital could soon find themselves forced to clean toilets to atone for their sins.

Latrines duty is among a range of punishments listed in new rules aimed at battling coronavirus infections in the Southeast Asian megacity of Jakarta.

Going outside without a mask can result in a 250,000 rupiah (\$17) fine, while residents gathering in crowds could be forced to clean public facilities -- including toilets -- while wearing a vest that labels them as rule-breakers.

Firms that ignore shutdown orders or violate public-health rules can be hit with fines of up to 50

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### PRAYER TIMING MAY 14

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 3-48	12-45	5-00	6-37	8-00
JAMAAT 3-58	1-15	5-15	6-47	8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



### SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN MAY SEHRI IFTAR				
20	14	6:37		
21	15	3:47	6:37	
22	16	3:47	6:38	

## 60-yr-old held for rape of minor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Police yesterday arrested Md Abdus Sattar, 60, for raping a 10-year-old in Gaibandha's Sadar upazila.

On Tuesday, Sattar allegedly took the child to his house and raped her. The girl's relatives rescued her after the incident and her uncle filed a case with Sadar police station yesterday noon.

Speaking to The Daily Star, her uncle said, "This is boro harvesting season and every one was busy with the harvesting work... Yesterday, my niece was playing on the road adjacent to the accused's home. When we were working, he forced my niece to his house and raped."

During that time, the child tried to shout, hearing the muffled sounds, her aunt went the spot but the door was looked from inside. When she knocked, Sattar hit her and manage to flee the spot, the uncle said, adding, "After the incident,

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Garment workers wearing face shields and masks going to work yesterday morning. The women wearing the shields said their management was quite serious about maintaining health safety. The photo was taken at EPZ

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Europe steps up reopening

Unveils plans for summer travel as top US scientist warns of uncontrollable new outbreaks

AFP, Brussels

Europe moved ahead with its emergence from coronavirus lockdown yesterday and laid out plans for summer tourism, but the pandemic gathered pace elsewhere and America's virus pointman warned against reopening the United States too quickly.

Britain followed France, Italy and Spain in easing its lockdown but only in England, where people were given more freedom to leave their homes and return to their jobs if they cannot work remotely.

Austria said its borders with Germany would reopen from mid-June and Berlin said it aimed to end virus checks at its land borders in about a month.

Desperate to save millions of tourism jobs, the European Union set out plans for a phased restart of travel this summer, with EU border controls eventually lifted and measures to minimise the risks of infection, like wearing facemasks on shared transport.

"Today's guidance can be the chance of a better season for the many Europeans whose livelihood depends on tourism and, of course, for those who would like to travel this summer," EU Commission executive vice president Margrethe Vestager told reporters.

But with the global death toll from the coronavirus exceeding 292,000, the picture was grim in other parts of the world.

Russia, now the country with the second-highest number of virus cases, recorded more than 10,000 new

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2