### 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

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

### 929 die

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 councilor -- 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

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

FROM PAGE 1

Besides, 435 Ansar members are sent to quarantine for14 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.

about the protection equipment, Mehnaz said they managed protective gear under their own arrangements and distributed those among the members working practising and teaching our staff to chikungunya is causing meningitis in



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

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

"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

"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

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 help from the Bill and Melinda Gates samples and the persmission to test. Foundation and Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative/Biohub, we were able to before the pandemic hit we had been sequencing to discover sequence dengue, RSV and influenza children.

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, 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 had to send our samples abroad for General of Health Services( DGHS) sequencing and analysis. But with and IEDCR had not given them

Previously, during the chikungunya outbreak of 2018, Dr Senjuti Saha purchase a sequencer and since had completed the metagenomic

## Affluent persons listed as poor

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

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 brotherin-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 Hayat-ud-Dowla Commissioner Khan, decided to investigate the matter, District Controller of Food Subir Nath Chowdhury, also member secretary of the OMS programme, told the Daily Star.

Alam seeking an explanation from

Referring to the OMS policy, the letter said a dealer could not mention the names of his wife, daughter and other close relatives in the list of beneficiaries. The letter asked Shal Alam to reply

within two working days as to why his dealership would not be cancelled as per the OMS Policy 2015.

Contacted, Shah Alam told The Daily Star he was not aware of the list. "My brother is a local leader. He told me about a list of the poor and those from the lower middle class in our area. The list was sent to the local councillor and it was finalised by the municipality.

"Besides, I did not distribute any card. As a dealer, I cannot give any card," he said.

Shah Alam is not alone facing the allegation. Names of 84 other people, who according to locals are affluent and do not need assistance, can be found in such lists in the municipality area.

For instance, the name of a man who owns two five-storey buildings in the municipality area, featured at the 34th position of the list prepared for

Besides, a millionaire whose two sons live abroad, a leading cloth merchant in the municipality, and another man with two five-storey buildings have been mentioned in the list for Ward 7, said locals and documents.

Besides, the district Krishak League General Secretary Faridudin Dulal and a ward Awami League president Harun Ur Rashid were named in the list for Ward 12.

The Daily Star could not reach them for comments.

Asked about the irregularities, Brahmanbaria AL president and local lawmaker R A M Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury said the matter was being investigated by the administration.

"If investigation finds the allegation to be true, the authorities will take action against the culprits," he said.

Replying to a query, he said he would request the government to

The DC on April 11 wrote to Shah cancel the licence of OMS dealer Shah Alam. "District Awami League will also take action if the allegations raised against him is proved," Muktadir 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

> the Anti-Corruption Besides, 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

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 reestablished ties with Beijing, France respected the so-called one-China policy recognising Taiwan as part of

"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

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

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 and finally resulted in a type of virus 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

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

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

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

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.

And, we gallantly wasted the first There are many heart-warming stories

good two-month Bangladesh had got to prepare against the contagion that ran havoc in Wuhan, the Chinese province from where the Covid-19 broke loose in January before rampaging through Europe in February and the US in March, killing

close to 1.85 lakh people. Sadly, most of the influential ministers, political leaders and the government machinery were found to be doing what they're good at: sycophancy, inefficiency and intolerance to critical voices.

When people looked to them for reassurance, they heard boasting like: "Awami League is more powerful than coronavirus." "Coronavirus would not come to Bangladesh." "The country is free from corona under the competent leadership of the prime minister." "Bangladesh is better prepared to prevent coronavirus than developed countries," and so on.

The power of coronavirus was completely misunderstood by the people in power. It should have been a full scale medical war, with doctors, healthcare staff, scientists, engineers, enforcers, members from welfare organisations and volunteers operating like a single disciplined force under one chief of health staff. For lack of it, no measure, no order, no directive and no wisdom seemed to have worked ever since the first coronavirus infection was reported on March 8.

Truly, almost all the countries struggled with the battle plan. But we had the time to take a serious lesson from Vietnam, a country with dense population, economy and healthcare system like Bangladesh. It showed the whole world how to take the fight to coronavirus and win the first part of the war in less than 30 days of

Zero death and recovery of 249 out for Vietnam that instituted rigorous quarantine policies, and carried out complete tracing of all people who came in contact with the virus.

As Vietnam did not afford mass testing like South Korea, they stuck to contact tracing and quarantine. They also meticulously kept track of second, third and fourth levels of contact to infected persons, and placed all of these people under successively stringent levels of movement and contact restrictions.

Sadly, our story is of corrupt culture and mixed-up priorities. Contact tracing was completely missing, testing way too inadequate, quarantine or home isolation a mockery and treatment at hospitals a big whimper. two of our war on contagion.

of the frontline bravehearts -- doctors, police and volunteers, but those were lost on a mass madness.

Even when our existence is

threatened by the contagion, we could not break away from our precontagion sorry selves and continued to make shocking headlines: corona test by handheld infrared thermometer for passengers on arrival from coronavirus source countries, quarantine formalities done by verbal instruction for "14day home isolation" to about 7 lakh expatriates who flew in, substandard PPEs supplied in the name of N95 quality, doctors-nurses not getting PPEs but admin officials wearing those, traders arrested over selling used gloves and masks, thousands of people rushed to Cox's Bazar for holidaying as soon as the government declared nationwide shutdown, 54 chairmen-members arrested for stealing rice for the poor, over 1.5 lakh people attended janaza of a preacher violating lockdown, devotees packed like sardines in mosques during Juma prayers while social-distancing was in full force, human-jam at kitchen markets during lockdown, 11 journalists-activists sued under the Digital Security Act over corruption reporting and critical views, victim of alleged enforced disappearance photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol showed up" after 53 days, only to be arrested legally, handcuffed on the Press Freedom Day etc.

These are a few snapshots of the first part of our war on coronavirus, which, judging the scale of infection 45 days into community transmission elsewhere in the world, is believed to have gone very deep into the bedrock

of population by now. The war's not won for sure, but also

not lost, as vet. Though no scientific research is done, a number of natural factors is of 288 infected people spoke volumes likely to be working in our favour. We're quite immune to six other strains of coronavirus that cause seasonal flu. Factors of heat, our strange immune system developed surviving against plethora of microorganisms and pollutions over decades, comparatively low death number (269 with coronavirus and a few hundred others with symptoms) and the gene that drives us to fight against adversities all the time hold

out hopes for herd immunity. The road to herd immunity is expected to be dotted with deaths, but at the end of the road most of us should survive through a lot of sufferings. With survival of life, comes in the struggle for a living, the part

### Third doctor

FROM PAGE 1

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 sisterin-law also tested positive

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 (retd) Md Moniruzzaman of Anwar Khan Modern Medical College Hospital died on

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

Local Government Engineering Department

Office of the Upazila Engineer উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র Trishal, Mymensingh www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

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

# e-Tender Notice: 04/2019-20

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SI. No.	Tender ID	Tender last selling (date & time)	Tender closing & opening (date and time)
01.	458000,	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

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