



# The Daily Star



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**BANGLADESH UPDATE**

**1,602**  
New cases in 24hrs

**23,870**  
Total cases

**349**  
Deaths

**4,585**  
Recoveries

**GLOBAL UPDATE**

**317,662**  
Deaths

**4,845,102**  
Total cases

## Heedless of risks, people rush home

Amid lax enforcement of movement curbs, thousands leave Dhaka for Eid, raise fear of further spread of coronavirus

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and RASHIDUL HASAN

Thousands of people have begun to leave Dhaka for their village homes ahead of the Eid, ignoring the risks of contracting the coronavirus and spreading it to many others.

There were so many people on the ferries on the Padma yesterday that the authorities in a bid to prevent crowding suspended the services on Shimulia-Kathalbari and Paturidauldia routes for hours.

In the absence of public transport because of the shutdown, the holiday makers travelled by pickups, motorcycles and battery-run three wheelers. Many had to spend two to three times the usual fare.

The Dhaka-Chattogram highway witnessed a 25km tailback in Daudkandi, caused mainly by thousands of cars leaving Dhaka.

The coronavirus had hit Dhaka and its adjacent areas the hardest in the country. Experts said this rush of thousands of people will further spread the deadly virus and delay the reopening process.

After observing the crowds that have been getting bigger for the last few days,



the Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity in a statement yesterday urged the government to announce a 10-day curfew around the Eid to slow the spread of the outbreak.

Around three crore people used to leave Dhaka and other major cities ahead of the Eid, it said. And many people have started leaving the cities for their hometowns this week.

The government announced the shutdown on March 26 and extended it six times. Most of the private and public offices will not open, and transport services will not resume before May 30.

In a circular on May 14, the cabinet division said movement of people will

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Crammed with people heading home to celebrate Eid, a ferry leaves Shimulia Ghat in Munshiganj's Louhajang upazila yesterday morning. There was not even the slightest room for maintaining social distance. Later in the day, the presence of passengers increased further, forcing the authorities to suspend ferry services on the Shimulia-Kathalbari route on the Padma. The move was taken to avoid coronavirus transmission.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Amphan may be as bad as Sidr

Met says about the cyclone that may hit coastal belts early tomorrow

PINAKI ROY

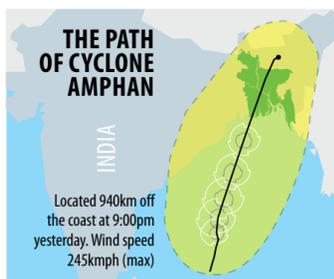
Cyclone Amphan was gaining pace in the Bay yesterday and may hit Bangladesh coast near the Sundarbans in the early hours of tomorrow, the met office warns.

With a wind speed of up to 245kmph, Amphan was located 940km off the coast at 9:00pm yesterday. It was formed in the Bay of Bengal on Saturday.

Weathermen fear that if it does not weaken before hitting the coast, it could be as devastating as Cyclone Sidr.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the cyclone may come as a double blow to disadvantaged people in the coastal regions. Many of them are reluctant to go to cyclone shelters as they are worried about protecting whatever little resources they have left.

"Along with the existing 4,071 permanent shelters, we have already prepared another 1,278, where around 51 lakh people could be accommodated. But with the coronavirus situation in mind, we will ensure maintaining social distance among



the people," Dr Md Enamur Rahman, state minister for disaster management and relief, told The Daily Star yesterday.

If somebody does not want to go to cyclone shelters, law enforcers will have to force them to leave vulnerable areas, he said.

These shelters are located in 19 coastal districts under Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram divisions. The ministry has allocated 3,100 metric tons of rice, Tk

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## Cops grapple with Covid-19

Number of cases reaches 2,621; one more die

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The numbers of Covid-19 infection in Bangladesh Police, Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Party are rising sharply on a daily basis.

In the 24 hours till 2:30pm yesterday, a member of police died in Dhaka and 64 more were found infected with coronavirus across the country. Ten Ansar members have also tested positive for the virus in that period, according to officials of the forces.

Till yesterday, the total number of infections in the police force rose to 2,621 and 222 in Ansar.

The police official who died yesterday was Mujibur Rahman Talukder, 56. He joined the force on January 1, 1983 and was working as a sub-inspector of Special Branch (City) of police, according to Police Headquarters.

Mujibur was admitted to Impulse Hospital on May 11 after he tested Covid-19 positive. As his condition deteriorated, he was shifted to the Intensive Care Unit of Central Police Hospital, where he breathed his last at 8:51am, said Sohel Rana, assistant inspector general of PHQ.

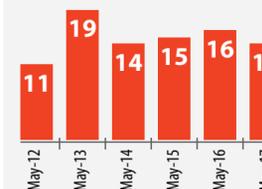
Hailing from Sirajganj, he left behind his wife, two sons and a daughter. The body was sent to Bogura, where his family lives. Mujibur's death brings the number of police personnel to have died with Covid-19 while discharging their duties to nine.

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## Virus deaths surge, new cases too

21 more die, 1,602 test positive in 24 hrs; experts for further expansion of testing facilities, change in govt strategy

ANOTHER RECORD IN DAILY DEATHS



7,000 NEW CASES IN 7 DAYS



MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The country yesterday saw the highest number of deaths from the novel coronavirus -- 21 in a single day -- with a record 1,602 positive cases.

With this, the death toll now stands at 349 and the number of Covid-19 cases rises to 23,836.

However, experts fear that the actual number of infected people is much higher than that, and the hidden Covid-19

cases continue to spread the virus. If the government fails to trace them, the situation will deteriorate further.

"Many are failing to avail themselves of the testing facility. On the other hand, the testing capacity is limited, which is why a good number of infected people have remained untraced," said Prof Muzaherul Huq, former regional director (Southeast Asia) of World Health Organisation.

Testing facilities should be expanded to

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## FAILURE TO PAY WAGES BGMEA asks govt to close 46 factories

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has recommended that the ministry of labour and employment close down 46 garment factories that failed to pay the workers' salary for March despite repeated requests from the association.

BGMEA on April 30 sent a letter to Begum Monnujan Sufian, state minister for labour and employment, requesting her to allocate money for these factories from the Central Fund of the government.

The Central Fund came into being in 2017 and every garment exporters have been contributing 0.03 percent of their export receipts to this fund created mainly for the welfare of garment workers.

In the letter, BGMEA said about 99 percent of their members have paid

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Monir Hossain, an ambulance driver, sits on a stretcher on the pavement in front of the BSMMU as dawn breaks. He was waiting for his turn to be tested for coronavirus at the hospital. The man from Jatrabari said he went to Shahbagh on Sunday noon after people from his locality threatened to drive him out of the area if he failed to show them his Covid-19 test report.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Scientists, health officials in dark

Experts say they're making predictions on outbreak based on assumptions, not science

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Health officials in the country are making predictions about the coronavirus outbreak based mostly on assumptions, not scientific analyses, experts said.

Scientists and public health experts are still in the dark, because the R-naught, which is a representation of the number of new infections estimated to result from a single case, has not been measured in the country yet.

So, it is difficult to tell at what stage the outbreak is now and when it may peak and how lethal it might get, they said.

R-naught, also called R0, gives insightful information that helps policymakers decide when to enforce strict lockdowns and when to lift the restrictions, Prof Ben-Nazir Ahmed, former director of disease control at the Directorate General of Health Services, told The Daily Star.

"The government and health officials are predicting based on assumptions, not sufficient and authentic scientific evidence," he said.

"Our health officials' predictions are based on assumptions, not proper scientific data," he said.

Lower R-naught score means fewer new cases and higher score means the opposite, he added.

"So, R-naught is very crucial in understanding the current status and to predict the future and to take actions based on evidence," he added.

Experts said IEDCR was supposed to work out a plan to determine the R0 after the first case was recorded in the country on March 8.

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# UK gov't boosts vaccine funding as daily virus deaths fall

AFP, London

Britain on Sunday reported 170 more coronavirus deaths -- its lowest number since late March, when lockdown restrictions were introduced, although the figures from Northern Ireland were not included.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson meanwhile acknowledged public frustration with the restrictions imposed to fight the virus.

The deaths take the government's official rolling tally of fatalities, which includes all positive cases after tests, to 34,636 -- the second-highest in the world.

Broader official data, which includes suspected deaths, is more than 36,000, although ministers say the country has passed the peak and there is a downward trend in cases.

Reporting is typically lower at weekends and business secretary Alok Sharma said technical problems meant Northern Ireland had not been included in the latest figures.

Sharma meanwhile announced tens of millions of pounds in extra funding to develop a coronavirus vaccine, which could see 30 million doses available in Britain by September.

An additional £84 million (\$102 million, 94 million euros) would be made available to "accelerate" efforts to trial and mass-produce a Covid-19 vaccine, he said.

Unveiling the new funding commitments at the daily Downing Street briefing, Sharma said Britain was home to two of the world's "frontrunners to develop a vaccine".

The projects, at Oxford University and Imperial College London, have already received £47 million in state

aid, said Sharma.

Both were making "good progress" at "unprecedented speed", he added.

Participants in the first clinical trials of the Oxford vaccine received their doses earlier this week. Imperial was set to start its tests in June and again in October.

Oxford had finalised a global licensing agreement with global pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca for the commercial manufacturing of its vaccine, Sharma said.

"This means that if the vaccine is successful, AstraZeneca will work to make 30 million doses available by September for the UK as part of the agreement to deliver 100 million doses in total," he added.

"The UK will be first to get access," he added, noting it would also work to ensure the vaccine could be made available "to developing countries at the lowest possible cost".

The business secretary also announced a £93 million funding boost to finish building a specialist "manufacturing and innovation" vaccine centre, a year ahead of schedule.

Under construction in Oxfordshire, south central England, it is now set to open in mid-2021. It will have the capacity to produce enough vaccine doses to serve the British population within six months, the government said.

The new funding took government funding of vaccine development to £250 million, said Sharma. But he warned "there are no certainties".

"We may never find a successful coronavirus vaccine," he added.



Farmers hurriedly harvest paddy in a field in Jhalakathi's Kandargati village yesterday, fearing that the crops may be destroyed by approaching Amphan, a cyclonic storm.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## Virus deaths surge, new cases too

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district and upazila level, he said.

Professor Be-Nazir Ahmed, former director (disease control) at the health and family welfare ministry, also gave similar opinion.

According to official data, more than 10,000 people got infected with the deadly virus over the last nine days. One in every seven suspected cases tested positive for Covid-19 during this period.

The first coronavirus case was detected in the country on March 8.

Talking to this newspaper on Thursday, Dr Liaquat Ali, a medical scientist and member of an expert committee, said, "We submitted a report to the DGHS saying the Covid-19 outbreak may reach its peak in the third or fourth week of this month and the situation would remain unchanged for almost two weeks, or until the first week of June."

The government formed the eight-member committee in late March to supervise, monitor and support its efforts to combat the deadly virus.

On May 9, the number of novel coronavirus cases was 636. It rose to 887 the following day, and crossed 1,000-mark a day later.

Amid the rise in Covid-19 cases, some shopping malls and clothing stores reopened on May 10 following a government decision. Since then, movement of people as well as traffic on roads have increased.

"Obviously, the relaxation of restrictions is one of the main reasons

behind the rise in Covid-19 cases," said Muzaherul.

Since May 10, the health department has tested 58,489 samples and found 8,498 of those positive for the virus.

But in terms of testing coverage, Bangladesh still lags behind several countries in South Asia.

Official data shows Bangladesh has so far been able to test only 1,143 out of every one million people in the country. The number is 1,500 in neighbouring India and 1,600 in Pakistan.

And 122 out of every one million people in Bangladesh have been infected with the virus, and it saw two deaths per million people.

On the other hand, one-fifth of the infected people have so far recovered from the disease.

**HIGH NUMBER OF CASES IN CAPITAL**

The capital has seen a steady rise in Covid-19 cases over the last few weeks.

The number of infected people in the city stood at 9,565 yesterday, according to the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research.

The number was 6,162 on May 08 and 3,973 on May 01.

At an online briefing yesterday, Prof Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of the Directorate General of Health Services, said that of the dead, 12 were from Dhaka, seven from Chattogram, one from Sylhet and the other from Rajshahi.

So far 4,585 patients have recovered

from the disease, and the recovery rate was 19.21 percent, added the DGHS official.

**EXPERTS' ADVICE**

Experts say the government should bring changes in its strategy to fight Covid-19 and give district civil surgeons more responsibility for tackling the deadly virus in their areas.

"Since they [civil surgeons] are health experts, they know what steps are required. In this battle, they will need support from deputy commissioners and superintendents of police," said Muzaherul.

He suggested that the government should divide the country into three zones -- green, yellow and red. The districts having less than a hundred Covid-19 cases each will be put in the green zone, the ones with 100-300 cases in the yellow zone and those with more than 300 cases in the red zone.

The infected people in all the three zones would be kept at institutional facilities and their movement would be restricted, he mentioned.

In the green zone, restrictions on academic and economic activities would be relaxed, whereas the red zone will be kept under complete lockdown, and markets will be kept open for only three hours a day, he said.

In case of the yellow zone, the areas where Covid-19 cases were detected would be under lockdown, but other areas would see a relaxation of restrictions, added Muzaherul.

## Heedless of risks

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be restricted from May 17-May 28 across the country. The circular also said that no one would be allowed to leave the city of their work during the period. The local administration and law enforcers were supposed to enforce the restrictions.

Police on Sunday stepped up measures to restrict the movement of people. They set up check posts across the country to prevent people from travelling from one district to another during the eid unless there is an emergency.

But the number of people leaving Dhaka increased yesterday.

Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated on May 24 or 25, subject to the sighting of the moon.

**CROWDING AT FERRY TERMINALS**

The number of people leaving Dhaka has been increasing since Friday, a day after the government announced the extension of the eid holidays.

Ferry operators on the Shimulia-Kathalbari route said they have been transporting several thousand people across the Padma every day this week.

The authorities reduced the number of ferries from 14 to just four early yesterday to prevent crowding. But from 6:00am to 10:00am, the operators had to carry only people across the river because there was no room for vehicles, said an employee.

As the day progressed and the crowd became larger, the authorities suspended the services around 3:00pm.

The services didn't resume as of 9:00pm.

Ferry terminal staffers said there were thousands of people there.

At Paturia and Dauldia terminals, there were similar pictures.

As the number of small vehicles increased in the last few days, the authorities stopped transporting small vehicles from 11:00pm on Sunday, Zillur Rahman, BIWIC deputy general manager at the terminal, told this newspaper.

As the number of small vehicles kept increasing, they stopped operation of all five ferries from 11:00am yesterday, he said. "We will resume operation after getting permission from higher authorities and will only carry goods-laden vehicles now."

Rifat Rahman Shamim, superintendent of police in

Manikganj, said the movement of people could not be controlled.

Police on Sunday set up a check-post at Golra on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Manikganj, he told our Manikganj correspondent. But, people have been reaching Paturia Ghat at night, using bypass roads, he added.

The terminals witnessed similar crowds when the government on March 23 announced the shutdown from March 26.

**DHAKA-CTG HIGHWAY**  
The long tailback from Eliotganj to Daudkandi started yesterday morning and the situation became normal around 4:00pm.

As the number of private vehicles increased, police intensified their checking activities, causing the gridlock, reports our Cumilla correspondent.

Abdullah Al Mamun, officer in charge of Daudkandi Highway Police Station, said they have been working to maintain the "lockdown" strictly. Vehicles carrying goods and emergency transports were only allowed to move towards Dhaka.

Lorry driver Shafikul Islam, however, said when police forced the cars to return to Dhaka, they caused the jam.

**WHAT HEALTH EXPERTS SAY**  
Prof Dr Shah Monir Hossain, one of the eight members of a government-formed expert committee to supervise, monitor and support the coronavirus response, said: "It's a clear indication that we are going towards a worse situation."

"In a nutshell, I can tell you that the way people... are returning to their village homes... we are heading towards a crisis."

The government should immediately take measures to stop the flood of people leaving Dhaka, he added.

Prof Muzaherul Huq, former World Health Organisation regional adviser for Southeast Asia, said, "I think the death rate from coronavirus may increase if the government failed to prevent people from going to their homes."

"We are yet to know who tested positive or negative for Covid-19. That's why a sea of people, especially from the hotspots, going back to their villages, poses serious risk to others," he said.

## Scientists, health officials

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Contacted, health officials said they started working on it, but had stumbled due to lack of available information.

IEDCR consultant and epidemiologist Mushtaq Husain said, "We are collecting data and the work is progressing."

He added that the government officials' predictions were based on analyses of daily new cases, number of tests, and mortality rate.

"But yes. R naught gives a very good direction in when to do what. The work is going on and we are hopeful of getting results soon," he said.

Experts say R-naught meant the number of new infections estimated to result from a single case. If R0 is 2.5, then one infected person might infect, on average, 2.5 others. The 2.5 others may infect another set of people at the same rate.

An R0 below 1 suggests that there are fewer new cases and that the restrictions can be lifted. An R0 above 1 suggests that the number of cases is growing and that more restrictions should be in order.

According to reports, Italy recently found out that its social and economic restrictions had pushed the virus's R0 down to 0.8. France estimated that timely lockdowns pushed R0 down to 0.5 from 3.3. And India estimates its R0 to have declined to 1.36 from 1.55.

Prof Iqbal Arslan, a member of the national technical committee on covid-19, said it is always wise to follow the global practice, because of their wide range of experiments.

"But in some cases, countries can customise the global practices. If we don't follow the global practice, then certainly it will create problems," he said regarding R naught.

## Cops grapple with Covid-19

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Of the dead, eight were discharging duty in Dhaka Metropolitan Police areas. The infected rate also remains higher in DMP areas with around 1,097 till yesterday, according to officials.

As the Central Police Hospital is struggling to deal with the huge number of patients, police authorities have booked Impulse Hospital to treat its members.

Of the infected, 56 are from the diplomatic security division of DMP and most have started recovering and getting ready to resume duty, Rajon Kumar Saha, assistant commissioner of the division, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The division's high officials have been trying to boost police personnel's immunity by providing protein-rich diets regularly in the barracks, mess and hospitals, said MD Ashraful Islam, deputy commissioner of the division.

Around 32 officials of Gulshan Division of DMP tested Covid-19 positive.

"A number of police officials were infected while working in the field. We are communicating with the infected officials regularly and providing them

with fruits full of vitamin and minerals so that they do not lose mental strength in this time of crisis," said Sudip Chakrabarty, deputy commissioner of Gulshan Division of DMP.

On May 9, different police units formed "special teams" to visit and inquire about the health of Covid-19 positive colleagues while maintaining social distancing.

Meanwhile, of the infected Ansar members, 193 contracted the virus while discharging duty in Dhaka and 29 in other districts.

Of them, 77 had been on duty at the parliament and 90 in the DMP areas, Mehnaz Tabassum Rabin, deputy director of the force, told The Daily Star yesterday.

So far, one Ansar member, Abdul Mazid, who was carrying out his duties at Bhatara Police Station under DMP, died from Covid-19 infection on May 11.

Besides, 457 Ansar members remain in quarantine as they either came into contact with infected members or exhibited Covid-19-like symptoms, she said.

The first Ansar member tested positive for Covid-19 on April 10.

Mehnaz said they have already

taken measures including providing protective equipment to their members and also taking care of the infected members in hospitals so that they can recover and remain mentally strong.

The outbreak has also impacted the department of prisons, with around 24 prison guards and two inmates testing Covid-19 positive till yesterday, according to department sources.

Besides, around 309 more people remain in quarantine, including 242 inmates across the country who have exhibited Covid-19-like symptoms, Md Monzur Hossain, assistant inspector general of department of prison headquarters, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The prisons department earlier arranged isolation units for inmates inside jails in Kishoreganj, Madaripur, Pirojpur, Sylhet, Feni and Dinajpur districts, according to a home ministry report.

Prison officials said they remain on high alert and have taken all necessary steps, like keeping the compound clean, using disinfectant spray regularly and keeping new inmates on 14-day quarantine before allowing them into the regular cells.

## Amphan may be as bad as Sidr

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50 lakh in cash, Tk 31 lakh for children's food, Tk 28 lakh for fodders for livestock to support the people on the coastal belt during their stay at the shelters.

"From our experience after Cyclone Bulbul and Foni, we can say it takes seven to eight hours to evacuate 20 lakh people from their homes and take them to the shelters," the state minister said.

Law enforcement agencies will help people living on chars and in island areas and bring them to the mainland today.

Volunteers were using loudspeakers and urging people to move to the shelters, reports our correspondents from Khulna and Barishal divisions. Already more than two thousand people have moved to cyclone shelters in Satkhira's Gabura.

Zohora Khatun, 60, a survivor of Sidr, which killed over four lakh people in Bangladesh, moved to Chadnimbukh MM High School yesterday afternoon.

"We have moved here after hearing the announcement about the cyclone on loudspeaker," she said over telephone yesterday evening.

Many, however, don't want to leave their houses, leaving behind their livestock and poultry, while others complained that the shelters were in bad condition.

Imtiaz Uddin, a fisherman of Dakkhin Bedkashi village in Koyra upazila, told The Daily Star that they were the most vulnerable and affected people in any cyclone due to poor embankment.

"If I leave home and go to a shelter, where will my two cows and 10 ducks go? The cyclone shelter is two and a half kilometers away from my home," said Imtiaz, a survivor of Sidr and Aila, two severe cyclones that hit the Bangladesh coast in 2007 and 2008.

"My wife and mother will go to the shelter tomorrow [today] if this cyclone is that bad or if any instructions come from the administration," he said.

Uttam Mondal, of Sutorkhali village in Dacope upazila, told The Daily Star that people of the village usually do not go to shelters due to their poor environment.

"Almost all shelters are dilapidated and most of the windows and gates are damaged. Very few locals go to shelters," said Uttam, adding that there is no privacy for women there either.

"If any major crisis comes, I will go to the shelter with my father," he said.

Over 50,000 people in Patuakhali's coastal area are fearing a sudden surge due to the storm and that some area like Charipara, Kuakata, Lotachapli and Dulsar under Kolapara upazila may be

submerged.

Around a 500-kilometer-long embankment built to protect those areas has been damaged and its repair work is still going on.

"The flood protection dam has been damaged in our area. We fear that water will come rushing through this breach of the dam. And our whole village may go under water," said Abdur Rahim of Charipara village.

Several hundred people on that remote island of Dhalchar have already been evacuated.

"In the district, there are 21 risky remote islands, on which around three lakh people are living. Most of them don't want to go to the cyclone shelters. But we will try to bring in as many as possible [to the shelters]," said Mohammed Masud Alam Siddique, deputy commissioner of Bhola.

**GETTING CLOSER**

Amphan, a Thai word meaning ambition or strength, was located 940km southwest from Payra, 955km southwest from Mongla, 990km away from Cox's Bazar and 1,045km from Chattogram at 9:00pm yesterday.

"If it does not weaken before making the landfall, it could be worse than Cyclone Sidr," said Samarendra Karmakar, a retired director of the Bangladesh Meteorological

## US tells China not to interfere with its journalists in HK

AFP, Washington

The US has warned China against interfering with American journalists working in Hong Kong, as a row between the two countries escalated.

The two sides have expelled each other's reporters in tit-for-tat moves over recent months as they trade barbs over press freedom and the coronavirus pandemic, with US President Donald Trump threatening to impose fresh trade tariffs.

"It has recently come to my attention that the Chinese government has threatened to interfere with the work of American journalists in Hong Kong," US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement Sunday.

"These journalists are members of a free press, not propaganda cadres."

Pompeo did not explicitly criticize China or give specific examples of what he was referring to, but the statement is the latest US response after Beijing expelled more than a dozen American reporters.

"Any decision impinging on Hong Kong's autonomy and freedoms as guaranteed under the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law would inevitably impact our assessment of One Country, Two Systems and the status of the territory," Pompeo said, referring to the arrangement under which Hong Kong was handed back to China from Britain in 1997.

It is designed to guarantee rights and freedoms in the semi-autonomous city.

"Hong Kong affairs are purely China's internal affairs," China said yesterday, without directly addressing or denying the allegations from Pompeo.

"No foreign government, organization, or individual has the right to interfere," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told reporters at a regular press briefing.

Zhao also accused the US of "escalating its crackdown on the Chinese media" and "seriously interfering with the normal reporting activities of the Chinese media in the US."

## BCGMEA asks govt

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the salaries for March, except these 46 factories.

"We have asked the authorities of these factories to sit with the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments now and settle their dues before closing their factories," said a senior executive at BCGMEA seeking anonymity.

But since these factories have not cleared March salaries, they would not be eligible to avail interest-free loan from the government's stimulus package for the garment sector.

It is one of the major conditions that borrowing companies need to meet for obtaining loans from the stimulus package.

Workers who have been demonstrating in Ashulia, Savar, Gazipur and Narayanganj mostly belong to these 46 factories.

Anisul Awwal, director general of the Central Fund, said the money from the central fund would be allocated only to the factories that were forced to be shut due to the coronavirus fallout.

"We do not allocate any financial assistance for any open factory," he told The Daily Star over the phone.

Anisul said upon receiving the list of 46 factories, he held a meeting with various stakeholders at the ministry on Sunday.

The meeting, however, ended without any decision on releasing fund for the factories in question.

So far Tk 210 crore has been deposited in this fund of which some Tk 90 crore has been spent, he said.

The Central Fund authorities will hold another meeting this week to take a decision about the fund allocation to these 46 units, he said.

Department.

Currently, the wind speed is between 225km to 245km.

In its special bulletin, the Bangladesh Meteorological Department said the cyclone may intensify further and may cross Bangladesh coast between Khulna and Chattogram early tomorrow, which could, however, be delayed to tomorrow evening.

The sea will remain very high near the eye of the cyclone, the bulletin said. The met office asked the Chattogram and Cox's Bazar port authorities to hoist signal number six, while Mongla and Payra port authorities were asked to hoist signal number seven, which means those ports will experience a severe storm.

The coastal districts of Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur, Barguna, Patuakhali, Bhola, Barishal, Laxmipur, Chandpur, Noakhali, Feni, Chattogram and their shore islands and chars will suffer the worst of the storm, while low-lying areas of those districts could be inundated.

All fishing boats have been asked to take immediate shelter until further notice.

(Our correspondents from Khulna, Barishal, Bhola, Patuakhali, Bagerhat, Pirojpur and Noakhali contributed to the report.)

## PM helps out 6,970 Qawmi madrasas

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has provided financial assistance of Tk 8.63 crore to 6,970 more Qawmi madrasas across the country ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr.

"The prime minister has given the financial assistance of Tk 863,45,000 for the country's another 6,970 Qawmi madrasas," PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told the news agency yesterday.

The allocated money was sent to the bank accounts of the deputy commissioners through electronic fund transfer (EFT) on Sunday.

Of the 6,970 Qawmi madrasas, 839 are in Rangpur, 662 in Rajshahi, 431 in Khulna, 202 in Barishal, 937 in Mymensingh, 2,202 in Dhaka, 1,211 in Chattogram and 486 in Sylhet divisions.

Earlier, the premier had provided financial assistance of Tk 8.31 crore to nearly 7,000 Qawmi madrasas during the month of Ramadan.



In a desperate effort to hide from the glaring sun, several men lie down under the shade of a tree, finding little respite during the long day. The blistering heat is especially merciless to those who must stay outdoors, and it is during such weather that these towering trees become their best friends. This photo was taken from the capital's Gulistan Park on Sunday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'Donate plasma to save lives'

Plasma therapy unit urges Covid-19 survivors

PORIMOL PALMA

Plasma therapy unit working to apply the life-saving treatment to novel coronavirus is seeking plasma from Covid-19 survivors as it sees high demand for the therapy amid rise in the infection every day.

"We are getting calls from people infected by the novel coronavirus for plasma therapy. We have already extracted plasma from three survivors. We need more. We can save more lives if we get more donors," said Prof MA Khan, who heads the technical sub-committee on plasma therapy.

The health ministry has in principle approved the protocol on plasma therapy, and administration of the therapy will begin in a day or two, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

"What we need the most is donors of plasma," said Prof Khan of Bone Marrow Transplantation at the Department of Hematology of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. He has been recently co-opted as a member to the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) formed to combat coronavirus pandemic.

Convalescent Plasma therapy can quickly develop passive immune system of a person against a virus and fight Covid-19 and thus can help save lives before any vaccine or medicine is developed.

Medical scientists in the US and China as well as other studies have found that those who recover from Covid-19 develop neutralising antibody in their plasma. This antibody, if transfused into the body of an infected person, can destroy the virus and save the infected ones.

Plasma therapy was used effectively before the specific treatment was developed for H1N1 influenza (Spanish virus), Ebola, SARS-1 and MERS virus. Elderly people who are critically ill and health workers could be priority groups for administration of this plasma therapy, said Dr Khan.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Mother, daughters assaulted by landlord 'over rent'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mother and her two daughters were beaten up by their landlord and his family allegedly for not being able to pay rent.

The incident took place at Kalachandpur in the capital on Sunday. The victims are Subhra Ghagra, and her daughters Jhumu Ghagra (17) and Mou Ghagra (25).

Subhra alleged that they were attacked for not paying this month's rent while the landlord, Nazrul Islam, and his family claimed there was a "minor scuffle" between them as they did not want the tenants to bring their relatives or guests inside the building frequently amid ongoing shutdown.

According to Subhra, the homeowner on Sunday morning asked for this month's rent and she requested him to wait till May 20.

As her daughters, who work in parlours, are now out of work and needed more time. She said the rent is Tk 12,000 for two rooms on the 5th floor.

"Nazrul became angry and misbehaved with us," she said. Around 5:30pm, her daughters and three-year-old granddaughter while coming back from a local kitchen market found the main entrance of the building closed.

They asked guards to open but they did not as per Nazrul's order, alleged her eldest daughter Mou.

Meanwhile, Nazrul came down and engaged in an altercation with them.

At one point, his wife Fatema Begum appeared and started hitting them in front of passersby, she alleged. Soon her son joined in.

"Our dresses were torn and my younger sister was strangled by the landlord's son," alleged Mou, adding that all the groceries

they bought fell on the street.

When her mother came down to help them, she was also attacked by the owner's family, she further alleged.

They said they were not able to enter the building until they went to the nearby Gulshan Police Station and complained. Upon their complaint, an SI from the station helped them get in, she added.

Contacted over phone, Nazrul Islam's wife Fatema Begum denied the allegations. "They were bringing guests frequently and we asked them not to do so amid the shutdown. But they did not listen and brought guests that day. An altercation took place between me and the girls, nothing more," she added.

At this point of the conversation, she handed the phone over to her son, Fahad Islam, saying her husband was not feeling well. Fahad, a university graduate, also denied the allegations.

Asked, Mou Ghagra said, "We did not bring any guest or relative. They [owners] always have such restrictions. You can ask other tenants."

This correspondent spoke with a number of locals who said they witnessed the incident and the mother and daughters were attacked and beaten by the landlord and his family members.

One of the guards from an adjacent building said, "I saw the landowner's son strangling one of the girls and the wife slap the other."

Wishing anonymity, a tenant of the building said the landlord often misbehaves with them and their guests.

Upon verbal complaint, Sub-inspector Mohammad Belal of Gulshan Police Station visited building around 9:30pm.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## Prof Muntassir Mamoon beats Covid-19

RAFIUL ISLAM

Panicking does not help; all should remain resilient during this time of crisis, said noted historian Prof Muntassir Mamoon yesterday, after winning the battle against Covid-19.

"Panic over coronavirus has become rampant... We need to thoroughly follow health guidelines. My 85-year-old mother has also won the battle against Covid-19," said the 68-year-old Dhaka University teacher, who returned home yesterday after two weeks of treatment at Combined Military Hospital, Dhaka.

He was first admitted to the Mugda Medical College Hospital on May 3 with Covid-19 symptoms after his mother tested positive.

Prof Mamoon was found positive the next day.

A six-member medical board was formed for his treatment following the prime minister's directives. After his health deteriorated, the professor was shifted to the ICU.

He was later taken to CMH as per the PM's direction.

"When my mother tested positive, I got tested too but at that time the result came negative. Yet, I isolated myself from others, as I assumed that I was infected. Four to five days later, I faced difficulty in having meals and started vomiting. Those

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



## Biman focuses on freight service to make up losses

Another airline to follow suit

RASHIDUL HASAN

After US-Bangla Airlines, national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines has fully started air-freight service using its passenger aircrafts.

Apart from the two airlines, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) temporarily permitted Meghna Aviation to operate cargo-flights between domestic destinations using its helicopter.

"As regular passenger flights were directed to be suspended from March 16-May 30, different airlines have applied to us to operate cargo flights, using passenger aircrafts or helicopters, to recover from their huge losses," Air Vice Marshal Mafidur Rahman, chairperson of CAAB, told this correspondent yesterday.

"After formulating necessary guidelines, we have given temporary permission to three airlines so far, considering their losses," added the CAAB chief.

Mohibul Haque, senior secretary at civil aviation ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday that for the first time, Biman was forced to go for air-freight operation to make money, as it has been suffering from serious cash-crunch due to the pandemic.

He said the national airline so far has incurred losses worth Tk 939.19 crore in the last four months since January, due to dwindling passengers and suspension of flights.

The senior secretary also said Biman will primarily use its two wide-bodied Boeing 777s for freight operation.

"We will use more aircrafts if we get more orders," Mohibul said. "We will be able to go to any destination depending on demand and orders."

He said Biman has already trained its ground and other staff so aircraft seats are not damaged while carrying cargo items.

Sources at Dhaka airport said Biman operated its maiden full-cargo flight on May 15, which came to Dhaka from China carrying medical equipment.

During normal flight operation, any aircraft can carry cargo items in its belly.

Although passenger flights remain suspended for the defined period, freight and special flight operations are ongoing.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## FISHING BAN IN BAY VGF rice for over four lakh fishermen allocated

UNB, Dhaka

The government has allocated 23,496.98 tonnes of rice under the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme to assist the families of 4,19,589 fishermen in 44 upazilas of 12 districts and Chattogram city during the period when fishing in the Bay of Bengal is banned.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock has allocated the VGF rice, said a press release yesterday.

Under the programme, the families of registered fishermen will get 40kgs of rice per month for May and June in the first phase.

The deputy commissioners concerned have been asked to complete the distribution of rice within June 15, said the release.

The upazilas span across Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Noakhali, Laxmipur, Barguna, Pirojpur, Patuakhali, and Bhola.

The government is going to impose a 65-day ban from May 20 to July 23 on fishing in the bay in the interest of the national economy.

## Bogura road mishap kills 2

UNB, Bogura

Two women were killed and three others were injured in Sherpur upazila after a truck hit an auto-rickshaw on the Sherpur-Dhaka Highway at Zamuna Para area on Sunday morning.

The deceased were identified as Nila Khatun (35) and Arpita Saha (20).

The accident occurred around 10am when the Dhaka-bound truck hit the auto-rickshaw, leaving Nila dead on the spot and four other passengers injured, Sherpur Fire Service and Civil Defence station officer Ratan Islam said.

The injured were rushed to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, where on-duty doctors later declared Arpita dead.

Road crashes claim thousands of lives every year and they are mainly blamed on unskilled drivers, unfit vehicles and rundown road condition.

Even during the countrywide shutdown, road crashes refuse to cease completely and regular cases keep occurring around the country.

Last year, road crashes left 5,227 people dead and 6,953 injured, according to a road safety advocacy group.

## ANTI-MOSQUITO DRIVE

## DNCC teams slap Tk 76,000 in fines

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) yesterday filed Tk 76,000 to owners of different house, under construction buildings and establishments at different place of DNCC for getting Aedes larva.

DNCC teams at its third day drive visited 1,349 houses, structure and under construction buildings at Uttara, Baridhara, Mirpur, Paikpara, looking for Aedes larvae.

"We all know Aedes mosquito breeds in clean water at residential and non-residential buildings, and especially under-construction buildings," said Dhaka North City Corporation mayor Atiqul Islam while overseeing the operation, along with LGRD minister Tajul Islam at Baridhara yesterday morning.

The mayor said they had announced that they would take action against house owners if they find Aedes larvae in any house or under-construction building, but unfortunately they are not paying any heed.

Urging people to clean up stagnant water every three days, the mayor said those who construct buildings are rich people, but they are putting all citizens under risk of dengue for their negligence.

During the visit, the teams found a large number of Aedes larvae at an under-construction building at Road-9 Park Road in Baridhara.

According to control room data from Directorate General of Health Services, a total of 302 patients were admitted to different hospitals across the country since January 1 with dengue, of which 67 were outside of Dhaka.

## DSCC MAYOR URGES SOCIAL DISTANCING

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday inaugurated relief distribution programme to provide food to 8,000 families of ward-59.

Through a videoconference from Nagar Bhaban, he extended Eid greetings to residents of ward-59 and talked with the local wrad councilor. He urged locals to maintain social distancing and use mask and gloves to keep themselves safe from coronavirus.



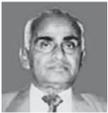
Large portions of a road leading to Shapla Chattar in the capital's Motijheel have been dug up, as sewage work continues there for the metro rail project. At any other time, this would cause a serious headache for commuters on one of Dhaka's busiest roads, but thanks to the general holiday, that has not been the case. The photo was taken earlier this week.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

### Nurun Nabi's death anniv

CITY DESK

Today is the 4th death anniversary of AKM Nurun Nabi, former president of the editorial council at The Daily Financial Times, says a press release.



Nurun Nabi, a former district registrar and father of The Daily Financial Times Editor Anwarul Kabir Shahzada, died of cardiac arrest at BSMMU in 2016, at the age of 78.

His family members have requested relatives, well-wishers and countrymen to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.



A man drives his motorbike carrying two pillion passengers who are wearing masks but no helmet. They had pandemic precautions in mind; all they need are some road safety measures. This photo was taken from the capital's Elephant Road on Sunday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

### Donate plasma

Prof Khan had prepared a protocol of the therapy and applied to the health ministry for approval in late April. The NTAC also recommended that the therapy is applied. The health ministry also approved it in principle, and formal approval could be issued in a day or two.

Meanwhile, three survivors of Covid-19 - physicians Dildar Hossain Badol of Shaheed Shuhrawardy Medical College Hospital and Rawnak Jamil of Salimullah Medical College Hospital and a journalist Ashiqur Rahman Apu of ATN News - donated plasma.

Male survivors of Covid-19 aged 18

to 55 and unmarried women of the same age can donate plasma. Married women cannot donate because of scientific reasons, said Dr MA Khan. There is no legal bar for collecting plasma. It's more or less safe and like the way people donate blood, he said.

Initially, Dr Khan said they have decided to administer the therapy on 45 Covid-19 patients. However, as Covid-19 infection is increasing, it is obvious that people will be demanding this therapy more and more.

"We, therefore, want an extended emergency access programme. This means, we should go for collection of more plasma and apply to more

people," he said.

Many of the private hospitals too have machines for collecting plasma and those could also be used for this purpose, he said.

However, the government needs to have a protocol for that and a regulatory body. The present plasma therapy sub-committee can be the regulatory body for management of plasma collection, preservation and administration.

"For all this to happen, we need more plasma donors. Young people and members of police who recovered from Covid-19 can easily donate plasma. It will save lives," said Dr MA Khan.

### IUB provides aid to 2,500 families

CITY DESK

As part of its activities and commitments to establishing an equal society, Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) has always stepped up to help those in need.

During the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, crores of people are going through a crisis of food and essential household goods. As part of their dutifulness, IUB, in collaboration with Sajida Foundation, has initiative a relief programme, a press release said.

Under the programme, 2,500 underprivileged families in Dhaka's Uttara, Vatura, Badda, Satarkul areas were provided aid packs, the release said.

Each family received eight kilograms of rice, edible oil, potatoes, daal, onion, and some other family goods.

During the distribution of the aid, IUB VC Prof Milan Pagon was present. He was accompanied by the treasurer, registrar, and other senior officials of the university. From Sajida Foundation, Monerul Islam Khan, Director, Support-unit; Rabiul Karim, Divisional manager and others were present.

Followed the relief distribution, Sajida Foundation volunteers discussed health & hygiene issues, particularly emphasising handwashing and using masks on a regular basis, the press release said.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

### Prof Muntassir

FROM PAGE 3 the first symptoms of infection," said Prof Mamoon.

"I have fully recovered from the infection now... I express my heartfelt gratitude to the prime minister for the role she played in my treatment," he said.

The noted historian also thanked the doctors and nurses of the hospitals who tried their level best to cure him as well as his well-wishers and friends.

### Mother

"I have asked for CCTV footage from the landowner and upon inspection, we will go for action," he said. No general diary has been filed yet, he said.

Contacted, DNCC Ward Councillor-18 Zakir Hossain said, "It is unfortunate that such an incident took place. No matter what, landlords cannot beat their tenants," he said.

"As far as I know, this issue is being handled by Gulshan police. I want a free and fair investigation and police are doing so," he assured.

### Biman focuses

Earlier from April, country's leading private airline, US-Bangla, started operating cargo flights using its passenger aircraft.

Reeling from fund crisis due to ongoing global travel restrictions, Sonali Bank in early May approved a loan of Tk 1,000 crore to Biman, which sought Tk 1,500 from the state-owned bank to stay afloat.

FROM PAGE 3

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Male survivors of Covid-19 aged 18

### There is no alternative

only be achieved by adopting a socialist economic system. There is no alternative to socialism to save the people of the country, he adds. He urges the members of the NAP and Communist Party to cooperate with the government to build socialism in the country.

Referring to the nationalisation of banks and industries, the prime minister says the government will not allow private ownership of these important national institutions because once it is allowed it becomes really difficult to get rid of such an exploitative system.

The prime minister assures that the government will take serious action against hoarders, smugglers and criminals. GOVT INITIATIVE TO BRING NAZRUL TO BANGLADESH

The government has taken an initiative to bring rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, along with his family members, to Bangladesh. Earlier, the poet's family accepted the government's invitation to shift to

Bangladesh. This year, the poet's birthday will be observed nationally in his gracious presence.

### TK 10 CRORE MORE FOR TEST RELIEF

The government will allocate Tk 10 crore more for test relief, informs Relief and Rehabilitation Minister AHM Kamaruzzaman. Earlier, the government undertook test relief programme worth Tk 16 crore under which new roads were built and canals were dug in rural areas. These public works created employment for a large number of jobless people, says the minister. Referring to the food situation the Minister says that the government is trying its best to reach food-scarce regions. He assures that the food situation will improve significantly soon after arrival of food aid from various nations. India tops the list in terms of providing food aid to Bangladesh, followed by the US and the Soviet Union, shares the minister.

SOURCE: May 20, 1972 issue of Dainik Bangla

### China supports

FROM PAGE 12 and learn from its experience. WHO is committed to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement," Tedros said.

The review must encompass responsibility of "all actors in good faith," he said.

"The risk remains high and we have a long road to travel," Tedros added, saying preliminary tests in some countries showed that at most 20% of populations had contracted the disease but most places that less than 10 percent.

A resolution drafted by the European Union called for an independent evaluation of the WHO's performance and appeared to have won consensus backing among the health body's 194 states.

China has previously opposed calls for a review of the origin and spread of the coronavirus, but Xi signalled Beijing would be amenable to an impartial evaluation of the global response once the pandemic is brought under control.

"This work needs a scientific and professional attitude, and needs to be led by the WHO. And the principles of objectivity and fairness need to be upheld," he told the meeting via video.

Calling the pandemic the most serious global public health emergency since the end of World War Two, Xi said: "All along we have acted with openness and transparency and responsibility."

In his speech, Xi said: "After the research and development of China's coronavirus vaccine is completed and it is put into use, it will be made a global public good."

### Make sure

FROM PAGE 12 In the petition, the rights body prayed to the court to issue a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain why they should not be directed to take necessary steps to ensure treatment of patients at the private hospitals and clinics.

It also urged the HC to direct the respondents to show cause why their failure to protect the people from coronavirus outbreak should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

### Lebanon job market

FROM PAGE 12 "We are receiving reports of clashes between migrants and companies over low wages. It's because the employers are paying in Lebanese Lira, whose value has fallen drastically over the last few months," said Abdullah Al Mamun, first secretary of Bangladesh embassy in Lebanon.

He said the value of 5 lakh Lebanese lira was worth about \$335 before the crisis began in the last quarter of 2019, but presently the same amount worth something between \$100 and \$150.

This is why it has become difficult for the migrants to manage their survival and send remittance home, said Mamun. Rana Ahmed, a migrant in Lebanon, told The Daily Star that many of them had been subsisting on loans from relatives and friends back at home.

He also said the job market for Bangladeshi migrants have narrowed down as Syrian refugees could be hired at a much lower wage.

Some 1.5 million Syrian refugees are living in Lebanon. Many of the migrants, especially some 40,000 undocumented Bangladeshis are facing the toughest time. Migrants are living in the congested rooms lessen their accommodation cost, Rana said.

Most of some 50,000 women domestic workers are undocumented and are facing a shortage of jobs as many Lebanese have left cities for their village homes following the economic setback.

Lebanon has been witnessing civil protests since September last year. The protest erupted against the government's decision to increase taxes on gasoline, tobacco and VoIP calls.

The protest eventually turned into a countrywide revolt against the sectarian political system which is believed to be the cause of the country's stagnant economy, unemployment, and corruption in the public sector, reports international media.

The International Monetary Fund said Lebanon would experience one of the worst recessions in the world this year as its economy might shrink by a staggering 12 percent.

Asked if the Lebanese economy has any chance to recover soon, Bangladesh First Secretary Mamun said it was unlikely given the political situation.

"Tourism is the largest earning source of Lebanon, but the country had been seeing fewer tourists for the last two years. The situation may remain the same this year due to the coronavirus pandemic," he told The Daily Star on Thursday.

Asked about the repatriation of Bangladeshi migrants, Mamun said following the government requests, IOM was working to mobilise support from the donors.

### Virus hits Brazil, South Africa

FROM PAGE 12 While restaurants, bars, cafes, hairdressers, and stores were allowed to re-open in Italy yesterday, not all proprietors have jumped at the opportunity to receive customers again.

"Either they're not ready to go or they don't have the economic strength to do so," said Mauro, a construction worker sipping a coffee at the only cafe open at Rome's Piazza Navona.

In Greece, President Katerina Sakellaropoulou was among the first to visit the historic Acropolis of Athens as archaeological sites across the country reopened after two months.

Spain is also set to further ease its lockdown measures, while Germany has already taken several steps towards a return to normality, including the resumption of its top football league -- but with empty stadiums.

With an eye on dampening the economic storm unleashed by the crisis, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel were set to present plans to kick-start European Union activity later yesterday.

S AMERICA, AFRICA HIT HARD Despite the optimism in parts of Europe, the deadly pandemic remains on the march having claimed more than 315,000 lives.

The latest data has focussed fears on South America and Africa.

Deaths in Brazil have risen sharply in recent days, and with more than 241,000 infections reached over the weekend, South America's largest country now has the fourth-highest caseload in the world.

While President Jair Bolsonaro has been a staunch opponent of lockdowns, claiming they have unnecessarily hurt the Brazilian economy, experts and regional leaders have warned that healthcare infrastructure could collapse.

The far-right leader alongside several

ministers greeted hundreds of supporters in the capital Brasilia on Sunday in defiance of social distancing measures, telling the crowd that the virus restrictions were too much.

Latin America and the Caribbean have recorded more than half a million infections, almost half of them in Brazil, and there is growing alarm about the impact of the virus on the least privileged in the region.

Ecuador reported the first Covid-19 case in one of its indigenous Amazon tribes, deepening the crisis in one of South America's hardest-hit countries.

Nicaraguan hospital staff have said the country's health system is overwhelmed with patients suffering from respiratory illnesses and relatives say the bodies of loved ones are being carted off in pick-up trucks for "express burials" without their consent.

"Mourners are forced to chase trucks with the coffin to find out where their loved ones are being buried," the opposition National Coalition said in a statement denouncing government secrecy.

Relatives "are threatened by police or paramilitaries so that they do not tell the truth about the causes of death," it said.

There was also grim data in Africa, where the number of infections rose rapidly.

South Africa on Sunday reported 1,160 new coronavirus infections, the highest daily number since the first case was recorded in March, taking the total to 15,515 - the highest on the continent.

In Asia, India extended its lockdown covering 1.3 billion people to the end of May as it reported its biggest single-day jump in infections on Sunday.

DEEP ECONOMIC PAIN The pandemic has left the world economy facing its worst downturn since the Great Depression, with Japan announcing its first recession since 2015 -- new evidence of the deep economic damage.

### Canadian family

FROM PAGE 12 out the size and the height of the holes," Ellis said. "We worked on it until late hours of Saturday night, and then we had everything set up for Mother's Day on Sunday."

"It was a great gift." A video they recorded of the moment they embraced was shared on social media and quickly went viral. But Ellis says she was surprised by how fast it took off.

"I just wanted to hug my mom," she said. "We were quite shocked on how quickly it went viral, but thrilled that other people are benefiting from our hug. We loved it."

And while a plastic-covered hug will never be as good as the real thing, it was still comforting -- after weeks of lockdowns and other social distancing measures -- to be able to hold her mother again, Ellis said.

"This allows it to kind of get back to normal. It really gives us a sense of hope that it's not going to be forever," Ellis said.

### Homicide suspect

FROM PAGE 12 Sensing presence of the law enforcers, the criminals opened fire on police, prompting them to fire back that triggered a gunfire.

Sujan was caught in the line of fire while the others managed to flee.

Police later rescued Sujan from the spot and took him to Bancharampur Upazila Health Complex where the duty doctor declared him dead.

Five policemen were injured during the incident. They are Assistant Sub-Inspector Monirul Islam, Constables Mofizul Islam, Nurul Amin, Monirul Islam and Mubarak Hossain.

They are undergoing treatment at Bancharampur Upazila Health Complex.

Police also recovered a firearm, four bullets and domestic weapons from the spot.

Sujan was accused in at least six cases, said the OC.

Police sent the body to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Executive Engineer, DPHE  
Natore District, Natore  
Email: ee.natore@dphe.gov.bd

**Invitation for Tender Notice**

Memo No. 46.03.6900.061.18.001.20-862 Date: 17.05.2020

1. Ministry/Division	Local Government Division.
2. Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering.
3. Project name	Bangladesh Municipal Water Supply and Sanitation Project (30 Pourashavas).
4. Procurement nature	Goods.
5. e-Tender ID	460600
6. Description of work	Supplying of Operational Items (liquid Soap and Napkin Paper) for Hand Washing System.
7. Tender closing date and time	02-Jun-2020, 12:00

This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website www.sprocure.gov.bd

Md. Alamgir Miah  
Executive Engineer, DPHE  
Natore District, Natore

GD-868

Office of the Executive Engineer  
Department of Public Health Engineering  
Mymensingh Division, Mymensingh

**Invitation for e-Tender Notice No. e-GP/19-20/51-84, Date: 18.05.2020**

1. Ministry/Division	Local Government Division.
2. Implementing Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering.
3. Project/program name	Project for Safe Water Supply throughout the Country.
4. e-Tenders IDs	460848-460881 = 34 Nos. Tender ID.
5. Description of works	Installation of different types of Tube well with Submersible Pump at different Upazila, DPHE, Mymensingh.
6. Name, designation & address of official inviting tender	Muhammad Samiul Hoque, Executive Engineer DPHE, Mymensingh Division, Mymensingh. Tel. No. 091-67636.
7. This is online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website: www.sprocure.gov.bd	

Muhammad Samiul Hoque  
Executive Engineer, DPHE  
Mymensingh Division, Mymensingh

GD-867

ট্রেডিং কর্পোরেশন অব বাংলাদেশ  
প্রধান কার্যালয়  
১, কাওরান বাজার, টিএসিবি ভবন, ঢাকা।

সদস্য ক্যাডার টিএসিবি  
অতিরিক্তীয় ব্যবহার করুন  
মোবাইল: ০২৪৬৩-২৭০৩০০

তারিখ: ১৮-০৫-২০২০ খ্রি:

নং-২৬.০৫.০০০০.০২২.১১.০৫১.২০.২৪৩

**টিএসিবি'র বিভিন্ন এক্সেট/টিকাদার নিয়োগের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

২০২০-২০২১ ও ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বছরের জন্য টিএসিবি'র নিয়োগ এক্সেট/টিকাদার নিয়োগের জন্য প্রকৃত ও বাস্তব প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা সম্পন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের নিকট হতে শীলমোহরকৃত পৃথক পৃথক খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে। এক্সেট/টিকাদার এর ধরন, দরপত্র গ্রহণ, খোলার তারিখ ও সময় এবং দরপত্রের সাথে প্রেরণ দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ নিচে উল্লেখ করা হলো।

ক্রম নং	এক্সেট/টিকাদার এর ধরন	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সন্ধ্যা সময়	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র সিটিভিলে তুল্য (মহেৎসেপে)	দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ
০১.	টিএসিবি প্রধান কার্যালয়ের পরিষ্কার টিকাদার (প্রতিমাসে বারবার পরিষ্কার)	১৮-০৫-২০২০ সকাল ১১.০০ টা পর্যন্ত	১৮-০৫-২০২০ সকাল ১১.৩০ টা	৳ ১,৫০০.০০	৳ ৫,০০,০০০.-
০২.	টিএসিবি প্রধান কার্যালয়ের শিল্পমাই এক্সেট/টিকাদার	-	-	৳ ১,৫০০.০০	৳ ২,০০,০০০.-
০৩.	টিএসিবি অফিসিক কার্যালয়, টিএসিবি প্রধান কার্যালয় (প্রতিমাসে বারবার পরিষ্কার)	-	-	৳ ১,৫০০.০০	৳ ৫,০০,০০০.-
০৪.	টিএসিবি অফিসিক কার্যালয়, টিএসিবি প্রধান কার্যালয় (প্রতিমাসে বারবার পরিষ্কার)	-	-	৳ ১,৫০০.০০	৳ ২,০০,০০০.-
০৫.	টিএসিবি অফিসিক কার্যালয়, টিএসিবি প্রধান কার্যালয় (প্রতিমাসে বারবার পরিষ্কার)	-	-	৳ ১,৫০০.০০	৳ ৫০,০০০.-
০৬.	টিএসিবি অফিসিক কার্যালয়, টিএসিবি প্রধান কার্যালয় (প্রতিমাসে বারবার পরিষ্কার)	-	-	৳ ১,৫০০.০০	৳ ৫০,০০০.-
০৭.	টিএসিবি অফিসিক কার্যালয়, টিএসিবি প্রধান কার্যালয় (প্রতিমাসে বারবার পরিষ্কার)	-	-	৳ ১,৫০০.০০	৳ ৫০,০০০.-

(১) দরপত্র সিটিভিলে সোনালী বাবুংক লি., টিএসিবি ভবন, ১, কাওরান বাজার শাখা, ঢাকা ও টিএসিবি প্রধান কার্যালয়ের অর্থ ও হিসাব শাখা এবং টিএসিবি আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয় চট্টগ্রাম, রাজশাহী ও বরিশাল হতে দরপত্র দাখিলের পূর্ব দিন পর্যন্ত সকল কার্যালয়ের অফিস ক্যালেন্ডার সময়ে নির্ধারিত মুদ্রা (অফিসের স্ট্যাম্প) পরিশোধ সাপেক্ষে ক্রয় করা যাবে।

(২) দরপত্রসমূহ উপরে হতে বর্ণিত নির্ধারিত সময় পর্যন্ত টিএসিবি প্রধান কার্যালয়, ১, কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা এর অফিসিয়াল কক্ষ (ভূতীয় তদাঙ্ক) রক্ষিত দরপত্র বাসে প্রেরণ করা যাবে।

(৩) দরপত্র সিটিভিলে বর্ণিত সকল শর্তাবলী পূরণকরণে দরপত্র সিটিভিলে হতে দর উত্তরকরণের দরপত্র সিটিভিলে বর্ণিত প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্র সংযুক্ত করে দরদাতার নিজস্ব গাঢ় ফরওয়ার্ডিং পত্রে মাধ্যমে শীলমোহরকৃত খামে প্রতিটি দরপত্রের উপরিভাগে সফ্রিট এক্সেট/টিকাদার এর কাজের নাম অবশ্যই স্পষ্টভাবে উল্লেখ করে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।

(৪) দরপত্রের সাথে যে কোন তফসিলি বাবুংক হতে "ট্রেডিং কর্পোরেশন অব বাংলাদেশ" এর অনুমোদিত বাবুংক ড্রাকট বা পে-অর্ডারের মাধ্যমে প্রতিটি কাজের জন্য পৃথক পৃথকভাবে দরপত্র জামানত (ফোর্সেট মানি) সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।

(৫) দরপত্রে কোনরূপ কাটাকাটি/ঘামামা করা হলে দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।

(৬) টিএসিবি কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন অথবা সকল দরপত্র প্রত্যাহার/বাতিল করার এবং একই কার্যালয়ের জন্য এক বা একাধিক এক্সেট/টিকাদার নিয়োগের সমস্যা সংরক্ষণ করে।

(৭) একই ব্যক্তির মালিকানাধীন প্রতিষ্ঠান/একই পরিবারের সদস্যদের মালিকানাধীন ব্যক্তির প্রতিষ্ঠান দুইয়ের অধিক কার্যালয়ের জন্য ২টি বিঘারের অধিক দরপত্র দাখিল করলে তা বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।

(মোঃ শেখবুর রহমান)  
প্রধান কর্মকর্তা(সিএমএস ও বিতরণি)

GD-870

# Virus may 'burn out naturally'

Says former WHO chief; Moderna's vaccine shows early promise

AGENCIES

Coronavirus could "burn out naturally before any vaccine is developed", according to a former World Health Organisation chief.

"We are seeing a roughly similar pattern everywhere - I suspect we have more immunity than estimated," Professor Karol Sikora, who previously directed the WHO's cancer program, said on Saturday.

"We need to keep slowing the virus, but it could be petering out by itself. It is my opinion that this is a feasible scenario."

His hopeful comments come days after a new study in the International Journal of Clinical Practice, using local authority "R" transmission rate data, estimated some 19 million people are "likely" to have already contracted the virus in the UK.

Recent polling by Opinium suggests the public are similarly pinning their hopes on a vaccine. Researchers found more than a quarter of UK respondents said they would not feel comfortable taking public transport until a vaccine is found.

Meanwhile, Moderna Inc yesterday said its experimental COVID-19 vaccine showed promise in a small early-stage trial, with the vaccine producing virus-neutralizing antibodies similar to that found in recovered patients.

Eight patients who were administered Moderna's vaccine were found to have antibody levels similar to those in blood samples of people who have recovered from COVID-19, according to early results from the study.

Moderna expects to start a larger late-stage trial in July.

There are currently no approved treatment or vaccine for COVID-19 and experts predict a safe and effective vaccine could take 12-18 months to develop.



Pan-democratic legislators Chan Chi-chuen and Chu Hoi-dick scuffle with security during Legislative Council's House Committee meeting, in Hong Kong, yesterday. Hong Kong's legislature plunged into chaotic scuffles for a second time this month, as pro-Beijing lawmakers yesterday took control of a key committee, paving the way for a debate on a bill that would criminalise abuse of China's national anthem.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

### KEY UPDATES

#### MORE THAN 315,000 DEAD

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 315,270 people since the outbreak first emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT yesterday. At least 4,727,220 cases of coronavirus have been registered in 196 countries and territories. The United States has the highest number of deaths overall with 89,564 from 1,486,742 cases. Britain has the second highest toll, with 34,636 deaths. It is followed by Italy with 31,908 deaths, France with 28,108 deaths and Spain with 27,650 fatalities.

#### REMDESIVIR CLOSE TO EU NOD

The head of the European Union's medicines agency Guido Rasi yesterday said an initial authorisation for US pharmaceutical company Gilead's remdesivir as a COVID-19 treatment could be granted in coming days. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) has already recommended the compassionate use of remdesivir, which allows a drug to be administered to patients even before it has been fully authorised.

#### JAPAN SLIDES INTO RECESSION

Japan dived into its first recession since 2015, according to official data, with the world's third-largest economy shrinking by 0.9 percent in the first quarter as it wrestles with the fallout from the coronavirus. The drop in gross domestic product followed a 1.9 percent decline in the fourth quarter of 2019 as a tax hike and typhoons hit Japan hard - even before the pandemic shut down much of the economy.

#### 'DEADLIEST' APRIL IN BELGIUM

Coronavirus brought Belgium its deadliest April since World War 2 last month, according to a new study as the country begins slowly to lift lockdown measures. A total of 14,790 people died in Belgium last month as COVID-19 swept the nation - substantially higher than the normal April total of deaths below 9,000, researchers from VUB university in Brussels found. Not since the Nazi occupation of the 1940s has Belgium seen such a high mortality rate in April.

#### CASES DECLINING IN RUSSIA

Russia yesterday reported 8,926 new cases of the novel coronavirus in the last 24 hours, pushing its nationwide case tally to 290,678. The daily rise in cases was for the third day in a row below 10,000, a threshold that it has been above for much of May. Russia's coronavirus taskforce said 91 people had died overnight, bringing the death toll to 2,722.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

# Virus a 'wake-up call' for the world

Warns UN chief, says crisis showcased world's fragility

AFP, Geneva

The coronavirus pandemic should serve as a "wake-up call" to the world which must be more united in responding to the crisis, UN chief Antonio Guterres said yesterday.

The secretary-general said COVID-19 was the "greatest challenge of our age" and had demonstrated the world's fragility, as nations went their own way in tackling the pandemic.

Guterres said the crisis was an opportunity to rebuild a better world - but he questioned whether countries were up to it.

Despite great scientific and technological advances in recent decades, a virus had "brought us to our knees", the United Nations chief said at the start of a virtual meeting of the World Health Organization's (WHO) World Health Assembly.

He said the pandemic had exposed the frailties not just in health systems but in international institutions, tackling the climate crisis, cyber-security and nuclear disarmament.

"COVID-19 must be a wake-up call. It is time for an end to the hubris," Guterres said, slamming countries for their disjointed approach.

"We have seen some solidarity, but very little unity in our response to COVID-19."

"Different countries have followed different, sometimes contradictory strategies

and we are all paying a heavy price. "Many countries have ignored the recommendations of the World Health Organization.

"As a result, the virus has spread across the world."

He said COVID-19 was now spreading in the southern hemisphere, where its impact might be "even more devastating".

Guterres reiterated his call for a WHO-led international response, expanded mental health services and policies to address the social and economic problems caused by the crisis.

"Unless we control the spread of the virus, the economy will never recover," the secretary-general said.

The former Portuguese prime minister and former head of the UN refugee agency said the recovery from the crisis must lead to more equal and sustainable economies.

It is "an opportunity to rebuild differently and better", he said, referring to the climate crisis and flawed social protection systems.

"Instead of going back to systems that were unsustainable, we need to make a leap into a future of clean energy, inclusivity and equality, and stronger safety nets, including universal health coverage."

But he asked: "We can do it, but will we?"

"Either we get through this pandemic together, or we fail."



## Taliban blast near Afghan base kills 7, injures 40

Taliban fighters yesterday detonated a car bomb near an Afghan intelligence agency installation in the central province of Ghazni, killing at least seven people and wounding 40, officials and the Taliban insurgents said.

"Around 4:30am, a base of the National Security (NDS) forces in Ghazni was targeted by a car bomb," said a police official, adding that seven people died at the blast site and 40 injured were taken to a military hospital. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said fighters of the Islamists group were responsible for the attack in Ghazni.

## Libyan forces aligned with Tripoli govt claim key air base

Forces aligned with Libya's internationally recognised government yesterday said they had taken control of an air base south-west of Tripoli in what could be their most significant advance for nearly a year. Watiya air base, 125 km (80 miles) from the capital, has been an important strategic foothold for LNA forces loyal to eastern-based commander Khalifa Haftar, who launched an offensive to capture Tripoli in April 2019. The advance comes after GNA forces pushed back against their rivals in recent weeks with increased support from Turkey, capturing towns on the coast west of Tripoli last month.

## Americans will be expelled from Iraq and Syria: Iran



Americans will be expelled from Iraq and Syria, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sunday, renewing Iran's demand for US troops to be withdrawn from the Middle East. Khamenei said Americans' actions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria had led to them being hated, according to a transcript of a speech to students published on his website. "The Americans won't stay in Iraq and Syria and will be expelled," Khamenei said.

## Malaysia's king upholds PM's appointment

Malaysia's king yesterday said the appointment of Muhyiddin Yassin as PM during turmoil this year was proper and constitutional. Muhyiddin's appointment on March 1 has been challenged by the opposition who say it was not clear that Muhyiddin had majority support from among the 222 members of parliament's lower house. The lower house speaker had initially approved a motion tabled by Muhyiddin's 94-year-old predecessor, Mahathir Mohamad, seeking a vote of no confidence in Muhyiddin, but the vote was postponed indefinitely after the government shortened Monday's meeting, only allowing time for the royal address.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Lydia Hassebroek says hi to her friend Rose through her kitchen window during the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Brooklyn, New York, US. Photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## ASIA'S BIGGEST-EVER DRUGS BUST

### Huge fentanyl haul seized in Myanmar

Experts fear spread of drug in the region; 193m yaba tablets seized

REUTERS, Jakarta

Myanmar police say they have seized a huge haul of liquid fentanyl, the first time one of the dangerous synthetic opioids that have ravaged North America has been found in Asia's Golden Triangle drug-producing region.

In a signal that Asia's drug syndicates have moved into the lucrative opioid market, Reuters can reveal more than 3,700 litres of methylfentanyl was discovered by anti-narcotics police near Loikan village in Shan State in northeast Myanmar.

The seizure of the fentanyl derivative was part of Asia's biggest-ever interception of illicit drugs, precursors and drug-making equipment, including 193 million methamphetamine tablets known as yaba. At 17.5 tonnes, the yaba almost equalled the amount seized in the previous two years in Myanmar.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said the scale of the bust was unprecedented and Myanmar's anti-drug authorities had "dismantled a significant network" during a two-month operation involving police and military. Also seized were almost 163,000 litres and 35.5 tonnes of drug precursors, as well as weapons. There were more than 130 arrests.

Even so, the methylfentanyl discovery was an ominous indicator for the region's illicit drug market, the UN agency said. Fentanyl itself is 25 to 50 times stronger than heroin.

As well as being easier and cheaper to produce than heroin, strong synthetic opioids like fentanyl can be readily concealed and transported as only small amounts can deliver thousands of doses.

"We have repeatedly warned the region fentanyl could become a problem but this is off the charts," said the UNODC's Southeast Asia and the Pacific representative Jeremy Douglas. "It is the shift in the market we have been anticipating, and fearing."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
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Phone No-02-9555253

Memo No-General-556/Stha

Dated-18-05-2020

### e-Tender Notice

This is to notify for all concern that the following Re-Tender have published through e-GP Portal. Previous tender (ID NO. 436344) has been canceled.

Sl.No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of Works	Publishing Date & Time	Last selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
01.	461372	DOA/e-GP/20-06	Computer Accessories	19 May 2020 10:00	08 June 2020 12:00	08 June 2020 14:00
02.	461402	DOA/e-GP/20-07	Engineering & Other Equipment.	19 May 2020 11:00	09 June 2020 12:00	09 June 2020 14:00

The interested persons/firms/supplier may visit the website [www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) to get details of the e-Tender.

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP portal (<https://eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guideline are available at the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

( Biswajit Barua )  
Superintending Architect

Signature of the tenderer,  
full name with designation  
date, address and seal.

Circle-Co-ordination  
Department of Architecture,  
Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000.  
Telephone-02-9555253.

GD-865

## Bangladesh Land Port Authority

T.C.B Bhaban (5th Floor)  
Kawran Bazar, Dhaka- 1215  
[www.bsbk.gov.bd](http://www.bsbk.gov.bd)

Memo No. 18.15.0000.023.14.093.19-501

Dated: 17/05/2020

### e-Tender Notice

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 for downloading the e-Tender documents of following package from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Tender ID	Last date & time of submission documents	Tender/ proposal opening date & time
1.	Construction of open stackyard, transshipment yard, parking yard & internal road at Korotaili, Gobra-kura-Korotaili Land Port, Mymensingh.	461162	21-Jun-2020 13.30	21-Jun-2020 14.00
2.	Construction of weighbridge scale at Gobra-kura-Korotaili Land Port, Mymensingh.	461219	21-Jun-2020 14.00	21-Jun-2020 15.00
3.	Construction of warehouse watch tower and external electrification at Gobra-kura- Korotaili Land Port, Mymensingh	461426	21-Jun-2020 13.30	21-Jun-2020 15.30

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

Md. Hasan Ali  
Project Director  
Development of Gobra-kura-Korotaili Land Port  
Phone: 55013830

GD-864

## Ardern NZ's most popular PM in a century

REUTERS, Auckland

Jacinda Ardern became New Zealand's most popular prime minister in a century, a Newshub-Reid Research poll showed yesterday, thanks to her COVID-19 response that made the country among the most successful in curbing the spread of the disease.

The first public poll since the coronavirus crisis took hold showed popularity for Ardern's Labour jumped 14 points to 56.5% - the highest for any party ever. As preferred PM, Ardern was at 59.5%, up 20.8 points on the last poll and the highest score for any leader in the Reid Research poll's history.

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
Closed	Closed	\$1,767.70 (per ounce)	\$34.59 (per barrel)	▲ 3.44%	▼ 0.48%	▼ 0.62%	▼ 0.24%	BUY TK 83.95	89.84	100.72	11.65
				30,028.98	20,133.73	2,539.28	2,875.42	SELL TK 84.95	93.64	104.52	12.25

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# Star BUSINESS

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## TAMING CORONAVIRUS RAMPAGE

# Overcapacity in power sector to increase financial loss: study

REJAU KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh's plan for significant coal- and LNG-fired power plant additions will cause substantial overcapacity, with major financial implications, said a new study.

The country already has excess power generation with only 43 per cent capacity utilisation in fiscal 2018-19.

And this low usage even before coronavirus outbreak resulted in Tk 9,000 crore (\$1.1 billion) capacity payments for power plants to sit idle, necessitating both government subsidies and electricity price hikes for consumers.

The pandemic-induced lull is currently lowering power demand significantly, increasing financial stress on the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) by reducing revenue whilst capacity payments to idle plants have to be maintained, according to the study by Ohio-based Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).

"Based on our own forecast of power demand growth, which takes the economic impact of the COVID-19 into account, we calculate that Bangladesh is on course to have capacity that can generate 58 per cent more power than the nation needs by 2030," said Simon Nicholas, the lead author of the study report and an energy finance analyst at the IEEFA in Australia.

Overcapacity is the situation in which a

nation's power sector cannot sell as much as its plants are designed to produce.

The COVID-19's impact will also mean long-term power demand would be lower than forecast, making overcapacity by 2030 worse if the current plan for coal- and liquefied natural gas (LNG)-based power capacity additions go ahead as usual.

"A long-term switch from cheap domestic gas towards more expensive imported coal and LNG, combined with the severe, long-term overcapacity Bangladesh is on course to see subsidies continue to rise," Nicholas said in a press release.

The study finds that power tariffs for consumers can also be expected to increase. It argues that large fleets of big coal and LNG plants are increasingly less appropriate to meet lower-than-expected demand growth in developing nations.

Sara Jane Ahmed, the co-author of the report, highlights that there are important lessons for Bangladesh from the experience of Indonesia, which is suffering the financial impact of overreliance on coal power.

PLN, the Indonesian state-owned power utility, has seen its over-commitment to coal power lead to a rapid escalation in government subsidies, which reached an enormous \$5 billion in 2018, said Ahmed, also an energy finance analyst at the IEEFA in the Philippines.

Indonesia's power development plan includes an overestimated power demand growth forecast for 2019-2028.

Such mis-forecasts compound over time and are the basis for planning too much power capacity development, resulting in overcapacity, higher capacity payments, subsidies and tariffs.

The study draws similarities to the rapidly

escalating financial crisis of BPDB resulting from existing overcapacity whilst pushing forward with the completion of the Payra coal plant.

Half the capacity of Payra will sit idle forcing BPDB to make additional payments of Tk 160 crore per month.

"Bangladesh needs to heed to these lessons," Ahmed said.

In Bangladesh, 35 per cent of the electricity will be generated from coal as primary energy by 2041 from 1.7 per cent now, according to the IEEFA and the annual report of state-run Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh.

Considering the future electricity demand, the government has undertaken initiatives to construct about 9,000MW by 2030 and 20,000MW by 2041 coal-based power plants, both in public and private sectors.

Bangladesh currently produces 2,750 million cubic feet of gas per day against a demand of 3,850 mmcf and expected demand of 6,713mmcf in 2041, according to state-run Rupantarita Praktirik Gas Company.

The country is looking to LNG imports to bridge the gap between the local production and the demand amid fast-depleting natural gas resources and insignificant new gas discovery.

According to the study, it is now time for Bangladesh to consider more appropriate, modular renewable energy (without capacity payments) and grid investments to meet lower demand growth and reduce the overall system cost while improving domestic energy security and resilience.

"Bangladesh is well-positioned to take advantage of deflationary renewable energy to reduce overall system cost and provide affordable energy to households and industry."

The amount of land suitable for renewables in Bangladesh is likely to be

more than previously assumed.

However, some tough choices over land use may have to be made if Bangladesh is to avoid entrenching a power system dominated by expensive, imported coal and LNG with higher power tariffs and government subsidies.

The COVID-19-induced delay to coal power projects allows Bangladesh to reset energy development policy and redirect resources to support economic fundamentals and energy price stability, the study said.

The cost of renewable energy is declining in Bangladesh and with proper backing and commitment from the government, the cost of renewable energy would decline even further as has been seen in other parts of South Asia.

There is a prevailing belief that Bangladesh does not have the land available for a major roll-out of wind and solar power installations, although some evidence suggests there are more suitable sites available than previously thought.

A 2019 study found the maximum installable capacity was: onshore wind 16 gigawatts (GW), offshore wind 134GW, solar photovoltaic rooftop 35GW, solar photovoltaic utility 156GW and floating photovoltaic 31GW.

"With neighbouring India well ahead in its transition towards renewable energy, importation of ever-cheaper wind and solar power from Indian states could be part of the long-term solution," the report said.

Globally and regionally in South Asia, renewable energy is already less than two-thirds the cost of imported fossil fuels.

Given likely falls in solar module prices of 5-10 per cent over the coming decade, not only will renewable energy soon be the cheapest form of new power generation in Bangladesh, but it will also be quick to build while not adding to air pollution or carbon emissions.

# Marico minting the popularity of its Parachute Coconut Oil

AHSAN HABIB

Indian fast-moving consumer goods company Marico's profits soared 30 per cent to Tk 264 crore in the financial year that concluded in March as its flagship Parachute-branded coconut oil continues to win the hearts of Bangladeshi customers.

Subsequently, the Bangladesh subsidiary of the Mumbai-based company declared 950 per cent cash dividend for the year.

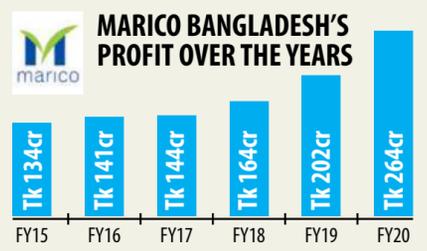
The company has been generous in sharing its spoils with its shareholders, announcing 450 per cent to 650 per cent in cash dividend since 2015. But the dividend for the just-concluded financial year is its highest since its listing on the Dhaka bourse in 2009.

In the 2019-20 financial year, Marico Bangladesh's revenue soared 11.7 per cent to Tk 979.59 crore, and Parachute Coconut Oil alone raked in Tk 636.30 crore, up 5.11 per cent year-on-year.

However, the company though is not hoping to coast on the popularity of the product indefinitely; it has been busy diversifying its product portfolio.

For instance, earlier in February, the company rolled out a male grooming line and a year earlier a baby product range.

Marico's value-added hair oil sales surged 25.23 per cent to Tk 262.34 crore and those of baby products, male grooming and skincare products 43 per cent to Tk 65.4 crore.



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# Tax-free income limit to go up to Tk 3 lakh



REJAU KARIM BYRON and SOHEL PARVEZ

The government may increase the tax-free income limit for individual taxpayers after five years in fiscal 2020-21 to give relief to people in the lower-income bracket such that they can manage the economic hardship brought on by the pandemic better, said officials of the finance ministry yesterday.

The tax-free income threshold is likely to be Tk 3 lakh, up from Tk 2.5 lakh fixed back in fiscal 2015-16.

Besides, taxpayers in the lower income threshold are also likely to see a new slab -- 5 per cent -- next fiscal year as the government aims to increase the disposable income of taxpayers and their purchasing capacity in the initial slab.

Currently, the NBR collects tax from individual taxpayers on five rates beginning from 10 per cent for taxpayers with an annual income of between Tk 2.5 lakh and Tk 6.50 lakh.

The income tax rate goes up progressively to 15, 20, 25 and 30 per cent for taxpayers with higher annual income.

Some 30 per cent tax is levied on the taxpayers with an annual income of more than Tk 47.50 lakh, according to the

National Board of Revenue (NBR).

Apart from the individual taxpayers, the government is also considering reducing the corporate income by 2.5 percentage points to 32.5 per cent for non-listed companies with the view to strengthening their capacity such that they recover from the devastating effect of the two-month-long lockdown enforced to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Companies typically provide more than 60 per cent of their total direct tax receipts to the state coffers and the government collects tax from companies in various categories -- from as low as 25 per cent for publicly listed companies to as high as 45 per cent from cigarette makers and non-listed mobile operators.

Some 40 per cent tax is applied on listed mobile phone operators. Grameenphone is

the lone listed carrier at present.

And the tax rate for listed banks, financial institutions and insurance companies is 37.5 per cent. For non-listed banks, financial institutions and insurances, it is 40 per cent.

Apart from the rates, the government imposes a reduced tax of as low as 5 per cent for manufacturers of air conditioners, refrigerators and motorcycle, 12 per cent for garment factories and 15 per cent for textile mills.

Besides, a host of sectors, such as electricity and information technology, are enjoying tax breaks.

Officials said medical equipment makers may come into the list of the tax benefit from next fiscal year.

Direct or income tax is the second biggest source of the total tax collected by the NBR.

The share of income tax was 33 per cent of total annual collection Tk 223,890 crore in fiscal 2018-19.

On Sunday, the NBR held a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her official residence to discuss budget proposals for next fiscal year.

The government expects the NBR to take tax measures that don't put any pressure on the common people and that protect domestic industries.

The revenue generation target for the NBR would not go up by more than 5 per cent in fiscal 2020-21 from the original target of Tk 325,600 crore for this fiscal year.

"Coupled with our quality offerings, we increased investment in advertising and promotion across portfolios that have contributed to the satisfactory growth in these segments," said Christabel Randolph, director for legal and corporate affairs of Marico Bangladesh.

The company's advertising, market research, communication, business promotions and other marketing costs were Tk 114.77 crore in the last financial year, up from Tk 77.37 crore a year earlier, according to the financial report.

The current coronavirus pandemic has affected consumption and it was reflected in the sales in March, the last month of the company's financial year, she said while replying to a query from The Daily Star.

The company's hair colour sales stood at Tk 5.84 crore in the 2019-20 financial year, up 5.2 per cent year-on-year. However, its edible oil sales dropped 9.36 per cent to Tk 9.68 crore.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, consumers are now more conscious about hygiene and have a greater need for hygiene products in addition to daily consumer products, the company said.

"We expect the impact on the non-essential discretionary category of products like grooming and cosmetics as a result of this crisis."

Considering the change in consumer behaviour, last month the company launched Mediker SafeLife range of hand sanitiser and handwash with a "no profit" commitment for the first six months as a commitment to consumers.

The company initially faced challenges on account of disruptions to supply chain, logistics and movement of goods, it said.

"However, with excellent support from the commerce ministry, local administration and law enforcement agencies we were able to tide over the situation and continue the supply of essential products to the consumers."

Marico Bangladesh stocks traded at Tk 1,562 on March 25, the last trading before the bourses shut for the countrywide general shutdown to flatten the curve on coronavirus.

# Steel makers seek Tk 3,000cr from stimulus package

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Steelmakers yesterday demanded Tk 3,000 crore working capital at low interest from the government-announced stimulus package such that they can make up for the losses caused by the pandemic.

During March-April, the industry faced a net loss of Tk 3,000 crore as sales were insignificant while the manufacturers had to pay staff salaries and bear other expenditures, said Manwar Hossain, chairman of Bangladesh Steel Manufacturers Association (BSMA).

"We are bracing for massive losses as the pandemic has disrupted import of raw

materials and production, which will take a toll on infrastructure development," Hossain said at a virtual press conference where he also talked about tax and VAT issues.

As much as 90 per cent of the raw materials are imported from the US, Canada, Italy, the UK and Australia, which have gone into partial or full lockdown since the beginning of March to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

"The lockdown in those countries are unlikely to be lifted soon," said Hossain, also the managing director of Anwar Group of Industries that owns Anwar Ispat.

If the situation goes on like this until December, the losses will run into Tk

15,000 crore, he said, adding that steel manufacturers are also unable to bring in spare parts or capital machinery as economic activities have come to a standstill around the world.

"The sector would need around two years to recoup the present losses."

Regarding the stimulus package, he said some banks are showing a positive response but most of the lenders are giving them a wide berth.

"We are not seeking donation -- we are asking for low-cost loans to fight the ongoing crisis," Hossain said.

Banks can extend the tenure of payment for letters of credit by an additional six

months without the need for taking prior permission from the central bank, he said, while calling for a fund for short-term loans against LCs.

In the past few years the country saw a good number of new steel and re-rolling mills that use state-of-the-art technologies and churn out world-class products, said Md Shahidullah, secretary general of the BSMA.

He demanded low-interest loans for 12 years with a grace period of six years to help them iron out the hitches brought about by the pandemic.

The association called for reducing customs duty to Tk 500 from existing Tk 1,500 for importing each tonne of

melting scrap and imposing a 15 per cent supplementary duty on import of finished MS rod.

The BSMA also demanded reduction of corporate tax to 10 per cent from 35 per cent now and withdrawal of 5 per cent advance income tax at the import stage for the next fiscal year.

The steel industry is now worth Tk 50,000 crore and the country has about 40 active steel makers, who altogether can manufacture nine million tonnes of steel a year.

Of them, Abul Khair Steel, GPH Steel, BSRM and KSRM meet more than half the annual demand for about eight million tonnes.



**TAMING CORONAVIRUS RAMPAGE**

# Airlines teetering on the edge of collapse

Says Novoair MD

RASHIDUL HASAN

The country's airline industry is grappling with strong headwinds and may drift further towards the verge of collapse without substantial financial support from the government, according to Mofizur Rahman, managing director of domestic carrier Novoair.

As airlines offer a critical lifeline to the economy by providing one of the fastest and most essential means of communication, many countries have come forward with rescue packages for their aviation industry.

"And our government should also follow suit," Rahman told The Daily Star in a recent interview.

The aviation industry in Bangladesh has remained largely grounded for the last couple of months to contain the spread of the deadly novel coronavirus.

In the middle of March, Bangladesh banned passenger flight operations with all countries but China, plunging the sector into mounting losses.

The pandemic could erode passenger volumes in Bangladesh and wipe \$190 million or Tk 1,615 crore off the revenues of airline operators in 2020, according to an estimate by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

The IATA forecasts airlines across the globe will lose \$314 billion in passenger revenue this year amid the coronavirus outbreak and those in the Asia-Pacific region \$113 billion.

"The pandemic wreaked havoc on the aviation industry across the globe but the impact is more profound in Bangladesh," Rahman said, adding that air travel is not going to return to normalcy in the foreseeable future.

Novoair with seven aircraft in its fleet used to operate one international flight and seven domestic ones before the pandemic began to sweep the globe.



Mofizur Rahman

"We don't know what the future holds for us. We only see uncertainties looming large. So, it's difficult right now to devise strategies. But one thing is for sure, we can't be back on track anytime soon."

Besides, new regulatory measures and restrictions to ensure safety and hygiene in these extraordinary pandemic times will jack up costs.

There will be cuts in capacity, retrenchment of the workforce and structural adjustment in payroll for the survival of the airlines.

About their activities during the shutdown, he said: "We are now virtually connected with our staff members and trying to warm them up through counselling."

Professionals like pilots and engineers are getting their skills revamped by attending online classes. On the challenges they foresee, Rahman said they are going to face unprecedented risks, which will be difficult for them to deal with.

"There will be multi-tier restrictions across the board -- from regulators to governments -- that will make things even harder. Economic survival

will be the greatest among all the challenges."

The Aviation Operators Association of Bangladesh has recently put forward its demands to the government seeking support to cope with the financial losses inflicted by the pandemic.

"We have received assurance from the authorities concerned for the assistance we have demanded," Rahman said.

Talking about the barriers the aviation sector faces, the Novoair MD said: "We have a fundamental structural deformity for which the airline business can't flourish in the country."

The other challenges include a lack of policy support from all levels, the absence of a transparent regulatory and policy regime, high fuel prices and exorbitant operating costs.

"Problems compound with high import tax on aircraft spare parts and high bank interest. We also need to hire pilots and engineers from abroad, which raises our costs."

Rahman also blamed the susceptibility of the domestic airline industry on the existing fare levels, which he termed extremely low.

# Cement makers plead for Tk 750cr AIT refund

Rogue pathogen gobbles up 46pc sales in April

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Cement manufacturers have requested the National Board of Revenue to refund Tk 750 crore that has accumulated over the years because of unadjusted advance income tax (AIT) to give some relief to companies constrained by cash crunch and fall in profits.

The eroded margins over the years have led to a situation where all the cement players have huge unadjusted AIT of Tk 750 crore or more, said the Bangladesh Cement Manufacturers Association (BCMA) in a letter to the NBR on May 14.

An assessee is entitled to refund when the payment exceeds the tax payable. For delays in making the refund, an interest of 7.5 per cent has to be paid by the government until the refund is made.

The unfortunate part is that such refunds have not been made for years despite repeated applications, said Md Alamgir Kabir, president of the BCMA, in the letter.

"We would, therefore, earnestly request you to kindly issue necessary orders to immediately refund the accumulated advance income tax. This will provide some cash flow to the cash-strapped companies and reduce the finance cost in this critical situation," he said.

The sector has seen double-digit growth fuelled by the country's higher GDP growth and both private and public sector investment in construction projects.

Unfortunately, the sector has been suffering for several reasons for the past few years, said Kabir as he outlined the challenges facing the industry.

The annual demand for cement currently stands at about 33 million tonnes against the installed manufacturing capacity of 78 million tonnes. Another 11 million tonnes would be added over the next three years.

Because of intense competition, cement prices have declined over the years.

On the other hand, the prices of raw materials have risen owing to the devaluation of taka against the US dollar, among other factors. The cost of utility,

manpower and transport has gone up sharply.

The cost of fund has seen a big increase due to the sharp rise in interest rates and the large working capital needed to finance accounts receivables, the BCMA said.

The cement companies rely on imports for raw materials and a 3 per cent AIT is deducted at source on all imports.

At the import stage, the assessment value of raw materials is generally higher by about 25 per cent.

Hence, the effective AIT comes to about 4 per cent, the BCMA said.

Besides, tax is being deducted at source on practically all purchases of goods and services at varying rates, which go as high as 5 per cent.

If the tax at source on sales to customers and tax at source on imports are considered, the effective AIT would be about 9 per cent, according to the letter.

Effective from this fiscal year, the advance tax of 3 per cent paid on import is treated as minimum tax. The other taxes deducted at sources are also treated as minimum tax.

As companies are making negligible or no profit before tax, the advance tax is becoming minimum tax. So, the AIT of about 9 per cent cannot be adjusted against profits.

"All the cement companies are making losses this year and the situation is likely to worsen in the coming years," Kabir said.

The novel coronavirus has crippled the industry. Sales in volume dropped 46 per cent year-on-year in April.

"We apprehend that in the coming months and indeed the full year, the drop in sales will be significant since the economy will take time to revive," Kabir said.

The construction sector would take time since foreign remittances have crashed. Almost all the remittance goes towards the construction of houses in rural areas, the association said.

With declining household income, people would spend more on essential items and less for construction purposes.



# Grameenphone to pay BTRC Tk 1,000cr today

Robi to deposit Tk 27.6cr within days

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Grameenphone, the country's leading mobile phone operator, is set to deposit the second instalment of Tk 1,000 crore with the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) in line with a Supreme Court order in February.

The operator would have to pay the sum by 31 May as per the court order,

sell new connections.

The operator began the year with 7.65 crore active customers, but in February and March, it lost more 1.58 per cent market share, according to a report of the BTRC.

Grameenphone faced a scarcity of numbers from the beginning of the quarter that negatively impacted the subscriber base, said Yasir Azman, chief executive officer of the operator,

The operator, which has 45 per cent of the mobile phone subscribers hooked to its network, appreciated the recent collaboration with the regulator and looked forward to the continued cooperation in fully restoring normal operations.

The operator would get all the NOCs once it gives the second instalment, said a senior official of the BTRC.



but it has informed the commission that it would send the payment on Tuesday, BTRC Chairman Md Jahurul Haque told The Daily Star.

The development brings to a close a protracted tug-of-war between the telecom regulator and the Norwegian Telenor Group subsidiary that started at the beginning of last year over unpaid dues amounting to Tk 12,579.95 crore.

The regulator had tightened the leash on Grameenphone to get it to pay the sum, much to the detriment of the operator's business.

For instance, the operator had used up its numbering series but was not permitted to either recycle the dormant numbers nor get a new prefix, as a result of which it could not

while releasing the January-March quarter financial report, recently.

"We continued to face challenges in the first quarter of 2020. The restrictions placed on us by our regulator by not issuing NOCs [no-objection certificates] lasted until March, which impacted our planned investment in the country," he added.

But now, the operator is bringing the matter to a close by paying just one-sixth the sum the telecom regulator was holding out for. Earlier in February, the operator had paid Tk 1,000 crore to the telecom watchdog.

"With this balance adjustable deposit, we will have fully complied with the court directions relating to the injunction," Grameenphone said in a statement yesterday.

The commission has taken preparation to receive the sum from Grameenphone and is organising a media session.

In another development, Robi, the second-largest carrier, would pay Tk 27.60 crore as its fifth and last instalment within a few days.

Robi paid the first instalment of Tk 27.60 crore on January 15 and deposited the same amount in each of the following months. It would have to make the last instalment by May 31.

The BTRC is receiving a huge sum from the two operators following separate audits.

Based on its audit into Robi's books, the telecom regulator claimed Tk 867.23 crore in unpaid revenue shares, taxes and late fees.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়  
ভালুকা, ময়মনসিংহ।  
bhaluka@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd

তারিখ: ১৮/০৫/২০২০ ইং।

স্মারক নং: উপস্বাস্থ্য/ভালুকা/২০২০-২০২০/১৭৫৮

**"এমএসআর পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি"**

২০১৯-২০২০ ইং অর্থ বৎসরে ৫০ শতাংশ নির্দিষ্ট ভালুকা উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্সে ট্রায় সেন্টার এবং ০ টি উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে এমএসআর সমন্বিত সরবরাহ করার লক্ষ্যে পিপিএ ২০০৯ ও পিপিএর ২০০৮ ও সংশোধিত ২০০৯ অনুযায়ী প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী/স্বাস্থ্য/উপস্বাস্থ্যকারী প্রতিদান/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিদানের নিকট হতে নিম্ন লিখিত শর্ত যোগে ক্রয় আবেদনকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হইবে।

১।	মুদ্রা/বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগ, স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়।
২।	প্রোগ্রাম	স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর, মহালালী, ঢাকা।
৩।	দরপত্র আহ্বান কার্যক্রম উপস্থাপন	ভালুকা, ময়মনসিংহ।
৪।	আবেদনকৃত কাজের ধরন	২০১৯-২০ অর্থ বৎসরে ভালুকা উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্সের গ্রুপ ভিত্তিক এমএসআর সমন্বিত সরবরাহ।
৫।	দরপত্র আহ্বানের সূত্র ও তারিখ	স্ব.উপস্বাস্থ্য/ভালুকা/২০২০/১৭৫৮ তারিখ: ১৮/০৫/২০২০ ইং।
৬।	ক্রয় পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত পদ্ধতি।
৭।	স্বাক্ষরের উপাদান	স্বাক্ষর (হাজির/স্বাক্ষর বাত)
৮।	উন্মুক্ত সহকারী	প্রয়োজ্য নহে।
৯।	প্রোগ্রাম/সেবার কোড নং	প্রয়োজ্য নহে।
১০।	প্রোগ্রাম/সেবার নাম	২০১৯-২০ অর্থ বৎসরে ভালুকা উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্সের গ্রুপ ভিত্তিক এমএসআর সমন্বিত সরবরাহ।
১১।	দরপত্র সিডিটেল বিজ্ঞপ্তির শেষ তারিখ	০১/০৬/২০২০ ইং তারিখ অবধি চলকালীন সময়।
১২।	দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০২/০৬/২০২০ ইং, বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।
১৩।	দরপত্র বাত খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	০২/০৬/২০২০ ইং, দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৪।	দরপত্র সিডিটেল প্রতি, এমএন ও বোণার স্থান	প্রতি-উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পা পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, ভালুকা, ময়মনসিংহ। দরপত্র গ্রহণ-উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্স ও উপজেলা নির্বাহী অফিসের কার্যালয়, ভালুকা ময়মনসিংহ বেলার স্থান- উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পা পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, ভালুকা ময়মনসিংহ।
১৫।	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা (গ্রুপ ভিত্তিক এমএসআর)	দরপত্রের সঠিক সিডিটেল ক্রয় পরামিতি সত্যুক্ত করিতে হইবে- ক) পাসপোর্ট সাইজের রঙিন ০২ (দুই) কপি ছবি, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, নমুনা স্বাক্ষর সহ সনদসমূহ ও ছবি ১x১x১ সেমি সাইজের ক্রয়কর্তার ক্রয়কর্তার নামের সত্যায়িত করিতে হবে। খ) ২০১৯-২০২০ অর্থ বৎসরের ন্যায়নকৃত ট্রেড লাইসেন্সের সত্যায়িত কপি। গ) ২০১৯-২০২০ অর্থ বৎসরের ন্যায়নকৃত ট্রেড লাইসেন্সের সত্যায়িত কপি (যদি ক্রয়কর্তার জন্ম তারিখ ২০১৯-২০২০ অর্থ বৎসরের মধ্যে হইলে)। ঘ) জাতি পরিচয়পত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি (সর্বশেষ ডিজিটাল সত্যায়িত)। ঙ) ২০১৯-২০২০ ইং অর্থ বৎসরের চেম্বার অব কমার্শ এর সদস্য সদস্যের সনদসমূহ। চ) ২০১৯-২০২০ অর্থ বৎসরের অর্থের পরিচয়পত্রের সনদসমূহ (যদি প্রযোজ্য)। ক) নির্বাহী অফিসের পূর্বে কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। খ) কোনও অসংগত বা অসংগত হইতে পারবে। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। চ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ছ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। জ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঝ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঙ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঞ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ট) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ঠ) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে সনদসমূহের প্রতিলিপিকৃত কপি। ড) উপস্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রে 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## Cyclone Amphan during the pandemic

Extra safety measures have to be taken

THE evacuation of thousands of people in response to the warning of cyclone Amphan hitting Bangladesh's coastal districts is no doubt a huge challenge in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. It means thousands of villagers will have to go to cyclone shelters that usually become extremely crowded during such disaster management. So how will social distancing and hygiene practices crucial to stop the spread of the virus, be maintained in these shelters? This is what is worrying health and disaster management experts.

We welcome the government's endeavours to instruct local administration to increase the number of temporary shelters. Officials and volunteers are working to ensure that every school, college, and madrasa along the coast can be used as shelters during the cyclone. The government has given directives to ensure that social distancing is maintained and if anyone is sick or has a fever, they must be transported to the upazila health complex. However, in order to maintain social distancing, the government should identify and prepare all concrete structures available to use as temporary shelters.

Experts have given some important recommendations that must be heeded. The shelters must have masks, sanitisers and proper hand washing facilities with soap for everyone, and physical distancing must be maintained during evacuation and inside the shelters. The areas that will be hit by the cyclone have to be precisely identified to avoid unnecessary evacuation in areas that are not vulnerable. The risks of the spread of infections will be reduced if the people's stay at the shelters are shortened and there are fewer people there. Disaster management experts have also advised the government not to distribute food as this will lead to chaos and crowding. It is better if the people are asked to bring dry food, as they would probably have to be in the shelter for a few hours.

During last year's cyclone Bulbul, about 22 lakh people in 16 coastal districts were evacuated from their homes and taken to 5,670 permanent and temporary cyclone shelters. The challenges of preventing the virus from spreading inside shelters or during evacuation will be quite formidable.

At this time, we do not know how severe this cyclone will be. But being prepared is crucial to prevent the loss of life. Now, there is the extraordinary burden of the risk of the spread of the virus. The government must therefore act extraordinarily—making people aware of the need for hygiene practices and social distancing, and ensuring that they are adhered to every step of the way. Bangladesh has a commendable track record in disaster management. This time, we hope we can confront the double-edged sword of a cyclone and the spread of a virus with the same determination.

## Thousands of Bangladeshis set to return to the country

They must be strictly institutionally quarantined

AN extremely crucial time lies ahead to contain the Covid-19 pandemic, as roughly 29,000 Bangladeshis are set to return to the country over the next couple of weeks from the Middle East. This huge influx of people could prove disastrous if the authorities fail to ensure strict institutional quarantine for the returnees, a government appointed expert committee has warned.

The number of people infected per day has been rising consistently of late. According to a report prepared by the committee, the outbreak may reach its peak in the third or last week of this month. However, if we are not careful, the sudden return of all these people from abroad could lead to a second wave of coronavirus infections.

The government must prevent such a scenario at all costs. Its decision to send people on home quarantine earlier had quite spectacularly backfired; it must avoid making the same mistake twice. Every returnee should be tested for the virus and institutionally quarantined for at least 14 days, even if they test negative, as the virus could still be in its incubation period.

But quarantining such a huge number of people will be an enormous task. Again, the government must avoid its past blunder of being ill-equipped and unprepared—to avoid a situation where returnees are forced to protest and break out of their so-called quarantine within hours, risking thousands of other lives, as has previously happened.

We call on the authorities to immediately begin all the necessary preparations to receive and strictly quarantine these people in a systematic way. How well the government reacts to this particular challenge could very well decide the future direction of this outbreak.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Address mental health

The lockdown has started to have an unfavourable impact on people's mental health, not just here but all across the globe. The long-lasting effects on our mental wellbeing are becoming a matter of grave concern with each passing day. If we want a society where everyone can play their part, then we need to make sure we support and promote opportunity for all, including those living with mental health issues. As Mental Health Awareness Week begins, we must collectively try our best to raise awareness on mental health and provide support to those who need it. Mental health and wellbeing must be at the heart of planning, architecture and design. It is clear that mental health is shaped by the environment we live in, so we should ensure that our environment protects and promotes mental health, as the anxiety and concern about coronavirus further exacerbates these problems.

Handsen Chikowore, by email

# Covid-19 and the missing data conundrum

MUSHTAQE CHOWDHURY and FARZANA MISHA

THE recent outbreak of Covid-19 is unprecedented. Given the novelty and the rapidly evolving contexts, data gathered from the field is the only path to attaining the true picture of the disease's progress. Unfortunately, we do not have a handle on this yet. To design an evidence-based, feasible and effective response, the true extent of the spread and impact needs to be known, which can only be done through accumulation of accurate and up-to-date statistics. Such data is needed not only on the health sector but also on economics, businesses, education, remittance, social safety nets, etc. A constant flow of new and updated data on the response from different actors including in government, NGOs, healthcare, industry and agriculture are needed to monitor and effectively combat the disease.

Much like the lack in coordination of responses, the same holds true for data generation. Here perhaps, concerns extend well beyond coordination. It is the sheer absence of some relevant state machineries in the game. Let's take the case of two prime public sector agencies vested with the responsibility of generating data, particularly during the emergency situation in which we find ourselves—the Institute of Epidemiology and Disease Control Research (IEDCR) and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

The IEDCR was established in 1976 as the country's "disease detectives". Surveillance is an epidemiological practice through which the spread of a disease is predicted, observed and monitored to minimise harm to the populace. Over the years, it has made several important contributions. During 2007–2011, they investigated 76 disease outbreaks including the Nipah virus outbreak (although there is no recent information available on their website). In 2009, when the H1N1 threatened Bangladesh, they instituted screening of incoming passengers through 16 points including three airports, and recommended textbook containment measures such as social distancing, wearing masks, washing hands and isolating patients. An important function the IEDCR has been performing since 1978 is collecting and reporting on nationally notifiable diseases through weekly morbidity reports from upazila levels, and monthly disease profiles from medical college hospitals.

Once Covid-19 hit our shores in early March, IEDCR was designated as

the sole source of information for the disease's spread in Bangladesh. The wait for the afternoon update became almost ritualistic. The situation has come a long way since the initial days when the sole testing site for Covid-19 was the IEDCR itself. Testing capacities have been somewhat decentralised now and extended to over 30 locations in Dhaka and the main divisional cities. The fact that this is not enough—which is agreed upon by epidemiologists—is clear given that we have one of the lowest test rates in the region. Our testing rates (per million population) are almost half of those in

morbidity data? Why have they not used the medical colleges-based disease profile data to give additional estimates? If reported correctly, such data would have been more reliable than any other sources, and, in the interim, could make national preparedness more evidence based.

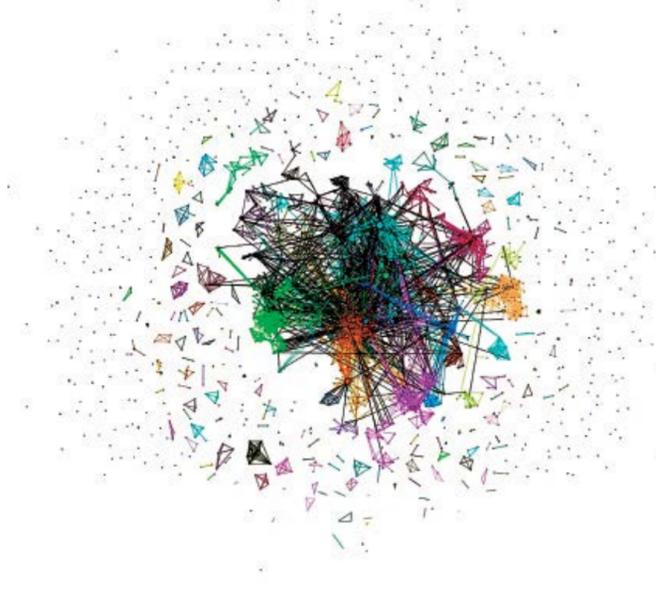
On the other side of the crisis, the premier agency for demographic and socio-economic data is the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). Conspicuously, they have been eerily quiet in this current crisis. The BBS is unilaterally responsible for running projects of

registrars and staff of the upazila statistical office. Although there are genuine concerns about its quality, the SVRS has the potential to be a critical source of information in understanding the progress of Covid-19 at the community level, particularly in terms of the number of deaths. BBS could help the national response by recommending how the testing facilities correspond to the needs, not only in medical terms but also other relevant factors such as socioeconomic status of the region and capacity of local health facilities and staff, among others. Given BBS's extensive knowledge of the population and population characteristics, they are well placed to suggest where healthcare is most needed.

The silence on their part likely stems from several reasons. Hamstrung by unyielding bureaucracy, hierarchical *modus operandi*, and a strong resistance to change stifles the enthusiasm of eager staff from the get-go. Finally, activities of the BBS are typically placed in the non-essential category, to the extent that the recent government closures stopped all BBS activities, including the preparation for Census 2021. Once we put it all together, it paints a vivid picture of why we see no movement on their part.

Given our weak infrastructure, the government needs to ramp up efforts to fill the gap—while far from perfect and much left to be desired, they're beginning to get a better handle on the technical side of the issue, that is, increased testing and supplying protective gear. On the socioeconomic front, we don't know much beyond what has been reported by various universities and think tanks in the country. While there are many ambitious plans to reach aid to those who need it, we have not heard much on how the support will target and reach the intended beneficiaries. Traditional approaches and thinking will unlikely be effective here as we have seen so far. We understand BBS's trepidation and reluctance to engage. But in a world that considers data to be the new oil, we as citizens should demand more from them—especially in the face of resistance when it comes to receiving bad news. The reputation of these organisations is not up for debate in this article, but rather to encourage them to remain relevant in a fast-changing world. The post-coronavirus Bangladesh will demand their data even more.

Mushtaque Chowdhury and Farzana Misha are respectively Adviser and Research Coordinator of BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University.



Data visualisation showing the global network of organisations working together on coronavirus research, created by TIM Open Access platform.

India or Pakistan. There are limitations to expanding the facilities fast if the quality is to be ensured and IEDCR is being relieved of its responsibilities of carrying out the tests. In the absence of widespread testing and reporting of related deaths, the media regularly reports on the number of deaths from "corona-like symptoms", which gives an alternative but less robust understanding of the spread of the disease. Couldn't this be done by IEDCR itself by using its upazila-based weekly

national importance such as the Census, Household Income and Expenditure Survey and the Labour Force Survey. They have also been running a Sample Vital Registration System (SVRS) through which data on vital events are collected and analysed on a periodic basis since 2011. Implemented in 1000 primary sampling units, it gives district-level estimates of births, deaths, marriages, and migration. Data is collected using a dual record system with the help of field

# Will Covid-19 prevent our airlines from returning to the runways?

MAHBUB JAHAN KHAN

THE fate of the 100 year old aviation industry now seems uncertain, with a global shutdown of flights owing to the impact of Covid-19. Consequently, people directly or indirectly engaged with this industry are facing great uncertainty in terms of job security. A latest report by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) states that global aviation supports 65.5 million jobs, once its wider supply chain is considered.

The Bangladesh aviation industry has experienced remarkable growth in the last decade, and now directly employs more than 10,000 personnel. The commercial airlines in Bangladesh operate nearly 50 aircraft including freighters of different types and make. Additionally, there are also a couple of helicopter operators and flying clubs. This growing industry of Bangladesh is being overwhelmed with acute cash flow crises due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The management of different airline companies are dealing with this problem in different ways—however, everyone has a common voice with regard to getting some stimulus measures from the government and the regulatory body, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB). A point to be highlighted is that in the aviation industry because of extreme price wars, profit margins are generally so low that economic consequences of this magnitude cannot be handled by the airline companies alone.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited, the national flag carrier, is perhaps the worst sufferer of the pandemic in Bangladesh, as it had to ground its entire fleet in March 2020. Within the last 20 months only, Biman had inducted six brand new Boeing 787 (Dreamliner) wide body aircraft for its long-haul flights, leased two 737-800 aircraft for medium haul operations and one Dash-8 Q400 primarily for domestic routes. Accordingly, it has nearly doubled its seat capacity to reach 4,476 seats in total. It would have received another three-brand new Dash 8 Q400s by the end of this year. Biman's own fleet is one of the youngest in the region, with only 3.5 years of average age. If we look at financials, after securing more than Tk 2000 million as profit after tax in the last fiscal year, Biman was heading for a record-breaking profit in 2019-2020. But the impact of Covid-19 has resulted in countless uncertainties in its profit-

loss calculation. Nonetheless, the Biman management has taken a number of steps, including some thrifty measures to overcome this financial and operational turmoil. It has already secured a loan worth Tk 10,000 million from the government to help offset its negative cash flow. It is also operating chartered flights to and from different destinations. By doing so, the company of 6,000 staff is getting ready, not only to re-establish its existing connectivity but also to add more destinations as the situation improves. Without the support of the government and CAAB, this target will be extremely difficult to achieve.

US Bangla, the largest private airlines in Bangladesh, started its journey in 2013 with two Dash-8 aircraft, and now

renowned private airline company, Novo Air, also started its journey in 2013 with only two 50-seater Embraer aircraft. Novo has experienced a seat capacity jump of 400 percent within only seven years of its operations by acquiring seven ATRs in phases. Importantly, it was due to induct two more aircraft of the same type in June 2020. This airline company, employing 875, is also counting the days to resume full-fledged operations with support from the government and CAAB. Regent Airway is the oldest operational private airlines and commenced its operation in 2010. This 600-strong airline has already sent nearly 100 of its employees on voluntary leave without pay and laid off another 150 personnel to endure the impact of Covid-19. It has also decided to suspend

collapse of Virgin Australia Holdings and Europe's largest regional airline Flybe sends clear signals that weak airlines (such as Afghan Airlines, which is already in trouble) have very little time to secure funds before they succumb to Covid-19.

In order for the airlines to take to the skies again, governments, regulatory authorities, lessors, financiers and other stakeholders, including individual passengers, have an important role to play. Many governments have already declared various stimulus measures, including offering easy-term loans, sovereign guarantee and other financial aid. By now, many civil aviation authorities have come forward with a bundle of supportive measures for airlines to withstand this grave crisis. For example, the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines has already decided to defer airline charges (take-off, landing, and parking fees) of local airlines. The Norwegian authority announced the cutting of aviation taxes. The Civil Aviation Administration of China has offered innovative financial incentives for airlines till June 30. Under this, for every available seat kilometre (ASK), Beijing will give USD 0.0025 for routes shared by more than one carrier and USD 0.0076 for routes operated by just one carrier. Thus, for a Dhaka-Guangzhou return flight with an aircraft of 300 seats, the Chinese government's support would be USD 10,615 per flight.

It is heartening to note that the Bangladesh government has also offered financial packages for this service sector. The most important decision of the government would perhaps be the waiving of various charges by the CAAB, which is said to be in the process of implementation. According to news media, this includes a complete waiver of aeronautical charges for domestic flights till December 2021 and 50 percent waiver of the same for international flights till December 2020. The non-aeronautical charges will also be waived for all airlines till December 2020. If such stimulus gets a final go-ahead from the government, Bangladesh airlines will certainly get some breathing space to sustain themselves during the pandemic. Without this kind of support, some airline companies may not be able to come back to the runway for their next take off.

Air Commodore Mahbub Jahan Khan, BPP, psc (Retd) is Director Planning at Biman Bangladesh Airlines.



US Bangla was expected to receive two new ATRs by September 2020.

PHOTO: COURTESY

maintains a fleet of four Boeing 737-800s, six ATRs and three Dash-8s. Within a span of only seven years, US Bangla has secured about 800 percent growth in terms of seat capacity and has more than 1200 seats in total. Besides, it is expected to receive another two ATRs by September 2020. Due to Covid-19, US Bangla is flying only one flight per week to Guangzhou now, as well as special passenger flights and dedicated cargo flights. Nonetheless, it has also undertaken various cost-cutting measures across the organisation. This 1800-strong company is looking for necessary financial support from the government and the regulatory authority to tackle this unprecedented cash crunch. Another

its flight operations till the end of June 2020. This airline, with three Boeing 737s in its inventory, is also looking for necessary financial support to remain afloat.

In the regional and global front, different measures have been taken by different airlines for their survival. Measures include, sending of aircraft, especially the wide bodies, to stores; awarding unpaid holidays to staff including pilots; deferring deliveries of new aircraft; freezing the hiring process; introduction of reduced work times and salary cuts at all levels of the workforce. However, despite all these measures, many airlines have collapsed, and many have declared themselves bankrupt. The

# Yanghee Lee: Champion of justice for Rohingyas



C R ABRAR

**“W**E all knew that [Aung San Suu Kyi] was put on a pedestal or portrayed as the icon of democracy and human rights, but ever since [her party] has taken office [after the 2015 election] and ever since she took the

office of the State Councillor, all of her actions and her words, statements point otherwise”, noted Professor Yanghee Lee, in one of her last conversations with Al Jazeera as the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in Burma. “Perhaps the world didn’t really know who she was”, she said.

At a time when the world, including neighbouring Malaysia and Thailand, have shunned the Rohingyas (acknowledged as the most persecuted minority in the world), at a time when the Burmese state audaciously tramples the whole corpus of international human rights instruments being aided and abetted by major powers; at a time when those who stand for reason, rule of law and justice feel betrayed by the high and mighty of the world, Yanghee Lee stood firm as a beacon of hope.

A developmental psychologist and professor with decades of involvement in the UN’s rights bodies, Lee held the mandate of the Special Rapporteur from 2014 until end of April this year. Over the years, she made extensive visits to the region, including Burma. Her objective reporting on the human rights situation in Rakhine and the rest of Burma did not augur well and during their last one-to-one meeting, the *de facto* head of Burmese government Suu Kyi threatened visa denial if the UN Special Rapporteur kept pushing the “UN line”. Lee refused to be cowed by the former human rights icon’s interference and Suu Kyi delivered on her threat—she has been denied entry to the country since 2017. Lee viewed the Burmese decision “as a strong indication that there must be something terribly awful happening in Rakhine, as well as in the rest of the country”. While holding office, she was one of the very few global public figures who unwaveringly championed the Rohingyas’ quest for dignity, justice and protected return to their homeland.

Yanghee Lee’s tenure came to be largely dominated by the Burmese state’s attempt to complete the “unfinished business” of Rohingyas’ physical and historical existence, the Burmese equivalent of the Final Solution, in the early fall of 2017. The genocidal terror that was unleashed resulted in the exodus of

at least 750,000 people into neighbouring Bangladesh. It was presented as a clearance operation of “ARSA terrorists”, a pretext enthusiastically accepted by Islamophobic western governments, world media and “security experts”. Choosing to ignore the genocidal nature of these “security clearance operations”, the emerging chorus of policy and media discourses faulted the Burmese military for “disproportionate and excessive use of force”, despite Lee calling out the “the hallmarks of a genocide” by Burma. As a matter of fact, on August 10, 2017, at least two weeks prior to the alleged ARSA attack on Burmese police outposts, Lee warned of the buildup and ominous movement of security forces in northern Arakan and appealed for restraint and respecting human rights.

In her parting statement to the Human Rights Council, Lee noted, “(w)hen I took up my mandate in 2014, I had thought that by 2020 a rights-respecting democracy would have been firmly established in Myanmar... Rather than a nation that protects human rights, I observe rights violations that continue to routinely occur and a country that stands accused of the most serious crimes under international law.”

Lee proposed ways to move towards an equal, tolerant and pluralistic society, including through victim-centered transitional justice mechanisms. Among other things, the UN expert underscored the need to bring the entire government and security forces under civilian control and initiate extensive legal reforms—including of the Constitution, land laws, the Citizenship Law and laws that violate fundamental rights such as freedom of expression, assembly and religion. “An end to impunity is the lynchpin for Myanmar to succeed in its transition to democracy. Perpetrators of human rights violations and international crimes must be held accountable,” she argued.

Yanghee Lee was appalled at the world’s reaction to the Rohingya plight—particularly that of the Security Council, which could not manage to agree on a single unified stance on an unfolding genocide in real time. She made her feelings loud and clear. Lee felt it was “shameful” that China and Russia, being UN security council members, have not taken any action against Burma. “China cannot be a global leader if it ignores such atrocities,” she noted. The Special Rapporteur also said the US decision to impose sanctions against senior military leaders in Burma did not go “far enough” and recommended these be tougher and applied to more generals.

She was disappointed at the response of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to the developments in northern Arakan. The situation posed an increasing risk

to the peace and security of countries of the region, she warned, urging them to prioritise human rights in its dealings with Burma. She expressed regret at the lack of response from the Government of India on her request to visit the country to meet refugees there. She reminded them that it is incumbent on member states to respect mandates established by the Human Rights Council and provide timely and reasonable answers to such requests.

Yanghee Lee was unequivocal in expressing her disappointment of the UN system in dealing with the Rohingya issue, particularly the UN’s technical agencies in the New York headquarters and in Burma. She was brutally honest about how she felt about the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by the Burmese government, UNHCR and UNDP in early June 2018 purportedly “to assist the process of repatriation from Bangladesh”. The document was not made

Rohingya refugees to the Council, Lee said “it is futile to speak about their safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return unless the root causes of their exodus are properly addressed”. She argued that to ensure such repatriation, the international community must ensure that Burma dismantles the system of discrimination against the Rohingyas by law, policy and practices that continue to exist, and guarantee fundamental human rights to them, including by restoring their citizenship rights and property.

Helping lay the foundation for global justice for both Rohingyas and other victims within the UN’s system of accountability has been the single most important contribution of Professor Lee to Burma’s oppressed communities (not just the Rohingyas), especially given that the country does not have national or domestic justice and accountability mechanisms that recognise and are capable of processing the gravest crimes in international law, such as crimes against humanity and genocide. Her persistent demand for an independent investigation into Burma’s state crimes against the Rohingyas led to setting up of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (IFFMM) by the UN that was succeeded by the creation of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) by the Human Rights Council in September 2018. The IIMM became operational on August 30, 2019—it is mandated to collect evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law and prepare files for criminal prosecution.

Despite widespread skepticism, it was the relentless effort of Lee that led to the huge success in setting up of an accountability mechanism. She even wrote the TOR of the personnel of IIMM and prepared its budget. All these were achieved with the meagre support of a desk officer and a research assistant. Acknowledging her significant role, Rohingya genocide scholar Maung Zarni succinctly noted “No Yanghee Lee, no Fact Finding Mission and The Gambia-vs-Myanmar case at the International Court of Justice”.

In our meeting during her last visit to Bangladesh, she underscored the need for sustained engagement of civil society against all odds. Brushing aside my shyness, I told her that we celebrate her good fight against a system that stands for the status quo and the powerful, and has repeatedly failed to deliver justice. I added, she was the role model for those who stand for justice for the wretched of the earth. Maintaining her graceful composure, she smiled. *Gracias*, Professor Yanghee Lee.

C R Abrar is an academic. He is the Coordinator of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit.



UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar Yanghee Lee, pictured in Kuala Lumpur on 18 July, 2019.

PHOTO: AFP

The UN’s role in addressing the Rohingya plight has been palpable. Lee personally appealed to Secretary General Antonio Guterres for an international investigation, to no avail. In October 2017, when *The Guardian* reported the scandalous news of Renata Lok-Dessalieu, UN Resident Coordinator in Burma, compromising UN Human Rights Up Front policy by prioritising a cozy relationship with Burma’s rulers, Guterres relented and commissioned former Guatemalan foreign minister Gert Rosenthal to do an internal assessment of the UN’s performance in Burma. The Rosenthal Report condemned the organisation’s “obviously dysfunctional performance” over the past decade and noted “the overall responsibility was of a collective nature; in other words it can truly be characterised as a systemic failure of the United Nations.” Accordingly, no UN official was held accountable, and Lok-Dessalieu was even rewarded with a larger portfolio when she was appointed head of the UN in India!

publicly available, nor was there any transparency about its terms. UN’s failure to defend the self-identity of the Rohingyas and their refugee status appalled her. “I am dismayed about the fact that the parties to the MoU, including the United Nations agencies involved in this process, have apparently failed to recognise Rohingyas living in Bangladesh as refugees and as Rohingyas”.

The tendency of concerned states, including Burma and Bangladesh, to deny any role to Rohingyas refugees was of grave concern for her. “Most frightful... is the fact that the Rohingyas refugees have not been included in any of the discussions... around this MoU nor consulted in relation to the repatriation process as a whole”, she noted, posing the uncomfortable but pointed question to the Council—“how can the process of repatriation be voluntary with the people who the process is for excluded from it? How can you be sure that any return is based on individual informed consent?” Conveying the common view among

## Building a sustainable society in the age of climate change



QUAMRUL HAIDER

**I**N an opinion piece published in this newspaper on April 22, 2020, I discussed the future of our planet within the context of frontier ethics. The main conclusion was that frontier ethics, which affects our attitudes

about the seriousness of environmental problems, will eventually lead to massive resource depletion and ecological disasters, and accelerate the pernicious effects of climate change. Those who believe in frontier ethics are least concerned about the declining fossil fuel reserves because they are convinced that reserves will never become dry. Their mantra—“Why be efficient if resources are unlimited”—prevents them from using available resources more efficiently. Instead, they maintain that we should increase the search for new reserves, even if it takes us into one of the few remaining pristine wilderness on our planet.

A classic example of someone who preaches and practices frontier ethics is Donald Trump. After becoming president of the United States of America, he signed an executive order opening up the entire coastal

plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to oil and gas exploration. Until then, it was an environmentally sensitive area long closed to drilling. Furthermore, he gave the coal industry in America a *carte blanche* to dig wherever there may be signs of coal. He also repealed former president Obama’s Clean Power Plan, giving states more flexibility to keep coal-fired power plants open.

Arguably, societies that believe in frontier ethics are low-synergy societies treading on a path of unsustainability. In contrast, high-synergy societies live in harmony with nature and they seek ways to enhance natural systems. Creating a high-synergy society that lives within the Earth’s means is possible if we adopt a set of sustainable ethics that ensures future generations and other species the resources they need to survive.

The tenets of sustainable ethics are: The Earth has a limited supply of resources, and they are not all for us; humans are a part of nature, subject to its laws; and success stems from efforts to cooperate with the forces of nature. Clearly, sustainable ethics recognises our place in the natural order as one of many millions of species and they favour cooperation over domination. Also, they are diametrically opposed to the tenets of frontier ethics. While frontier ethics leads to exploitative behaviour, sustainable ethics will lead to a less exploitative human presence that can

endure for thousands of years.

In addition to the three tenets, there are at least six principles that lie at the core of sustainability. They are conservation, recycling, using renewable resources, restoration, population control and adaptability. Among other measures discussed below, if we follow these principles, we can create and maintain a well-functioning global ecosystem.

In order to build a sustainable society in which future generations and other species can survive and live well, we have to change our thinking process too—from linear to system thinking. Linear thinking sees events in a straight-line sequence, ignoring a complex web of interactions, while system thinking recognises how entire systems function. In the environmental arena, system thinking helps us to see how individual parts work together and how interdependent all life forms are. By becoming better system thinkers, we can learn to avoid impacts that threaten the health and wellbeing of the planet and its organisms.

Because system thinking encourages us to look at the whole, it will naturally force us to look at the root cause of problems, especially environmental ones. Additionally, it can help society to identify key leverage points as to where changes can be made. Moreover, system thinking will enhance our ability to see the big picture as well as connections

between various parts that are essential to solving the many environmental problems, particularly those caused by climate change, and putting us on a sustainable path. Unfortunately, most of the world leaders are not system thinkers and therefore cannot guide us toward a sustainable society.

Building a sustainable society requires widespread participation with input from the rich and poor, conservative and liberal, young and old. In fact, sustainable solutions call for action from large and small businesses, individuals and governments. Individuals are important because each one of us is part of the problem. In other words, seemingly insignificant actions by us, albeit small, are responsible for many environmental problems we are facing today.

Achieving a sustainable world also requires massive cooperation between citizens and governments. Cooperation must occur on a much grander scale, with countries working together for the common good of their citizens and the planet. At the same time, we have to develop a unified strategy to fight the unique challenges posed by climate change.

But how do we achieve this cooperation and develop a unified strategy in an era when climate change is an impediment towards sustainable development? Since 1995, world governments have met every year at the so-called Conference of Parties to

forge a global response to the climate change emergency. However, besides stating lofty goals, these dysfunctional conferences were either fractious or soporific. Interspersed with moments of rare triumph though, such as the Paris agreement in 2015, they mostly failed to deliver strong commitments to tackle the terror unleashed by climate change.

In the meantime, the impact of climate change on humans, animals and the environment are becoming increasingly unbearable. It is dragging millions of people into grinding poverty. That being the case, virtually no one any longer believes that these conferences will ever be able to tackle climate change, thereby allowing us to lead a sustainable life. If it sounds downbeat, that is because it is.

So how do we create a sustainable future? As noted by Einstein, “In the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity.” Indeed, from the current crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, we can observe some encouraging trends in our behaviour and lifestyle that have profound implications in the fight against climate change. If we can hold on to these trends in the post-pandemic world, we will be able to face the ongoing existential threat of climate change effectively and thus create a sustainable society.

Quamrul Haider is a Professor of Physics at Fordham University, New York.

**QUOTABLE Quote**

**ALBERT JAY NOCK**  
(1870-1945)  
American author

*The mind is like the stomach. It is not how much you put into it that counts, but how much it digests.*

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Soaks up
- 5 Crime doer, to cops
- 9 Musical chord
- 11 Bring to bear
- 13 Surrendering cry
- 14 Less dangerous
- 15 Diamond club
- 16 Solemn word
- 18 Artists’ places
- 20 Maiden name label
- 21 Put up
- 22 Darlings
- 23 Put away
- 24 New England catch
- 25 “Dragnet” grp.

**DOWN**

- 1 Ticket remnants
- 2 Fancy
- 3 Movie theater, fancily
- 4 Mineo of movies
- 27 Pens for hens
- 29 Memorable time
- 30 German design school
- 32 Some shakes
- 34 Whopper
- 35 Cornhusker city
- 36 Seething
- 38 More polite
- 39 Famous
- 40 Transmit
- 41 Harry’s wife
- 5 Cuban cash
- 6 Final, for one
- 7 Foodie’s pride
- 8 Radio button
- 10 Show
- 12 Grove makeup
- 17 Nonsense
- 19 Out of play
- 22 Pal of Piglet
- 24 Reunion attendee
- 25 Cleaner scent
- 26 Pal of Porthos
- 27 Scoundrel
- 28 Hotel offerings
- 30 Chin cover
- 31 Future flowers
- 33 Later
- 37 Hold up

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

**BEETLE BAILEY**

OTTO IS SO CUTE AND SWEET

YOU DIDN'T INTRODUCE ME

BYE OTTO!

I'M "BEST FRIEND," NOT "WING-MAN"

**BY MORT WALKER**

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS**

S O R T P S T A S H  
T R O O P C I R C E  
R A G E D A F O R E  
A T E J E T F U E L  
W E T B A R S E E  
L O D E E L L S  
B U N S U M O  
A C S P E T C A T  
N E T L O S S A R E  
T R A I N I N B O X  
A N G L E S E L M A  
M E E T S D E A N

**BABY BLUES**

SORRY, I SAW THE CANDLES AND I THOUGHT "POWER OUTAGE" INSTEAD OF ROMANCE.

WERE JUST SNAPPED ON THE FLOOR.

HOW CAN I MAKE IT UP TO YOU?

WITH A BUCKET AND A SPONGE.

**BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT**

# Plight of long-time volunteers at Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital

They are outside payroll although Covid-19 adds to their risk

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

As many as 36 men and women, working as voluntary staff at Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital for years, are passing days amid hardship as the authorities are yet to put them on the regular payroll.

After serving without any payment for long, some of them for over a decade, they started getting meagre amounts, monthly Tk 1000 to Tk 1500 each, from the development fund of the government-run hospital three months ago.

Defying the added risk and responsibility during the Covid-19 pandemic, the volunteers have continued daily service at the hospital.

They have to pass quite a busy time working at different sections of the hospital including emergency department, operation theatre, surgery ward, paediatric

ward and doctor's chambers to help the patients, distribute medicines and manage the crowd.

"We are living subhuman life but we work here with a smiling face as our service can help the patients to recover. We have to work more during the ongoing Coronavirus disaster," said Sheikh Saadi, a voluntary worker of the hospital.

"We have already crossed the maximum age for entering government service. We are holding on to the work with the hope that the government will be kind enough to regularise our job with satisfactory payment," he added.

"Ignoring family's objection, I am doing duty amid the risk of Coronavirus. After completing our work at the hospital, many of us work in different clinics and health centres for earning," said Swapon Kumar

Mohanta, another voluntary worker at the hospital.

"We still dream that one day our job will be nationalised," he said.

Rashida Begum, who has been rendering voluntary service at the hospital for more than a decade, also echoed the same.

Dr Sirajul Islam, superintendent of Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital, said the higher authorities have been informed about the condition of the voluntary workers of the hospital.

"It's time to do something better for the long-time voluntary service providers at the hospital, especially in view of their dedication during the Covid-19 pandemic. I will write to the higher authorities concerned for taking positive steps about their job," Lalmonirhat Civil Surgeon Dr Nirmalendu Roy told The Daily Star.



Two voluntary workers attend a child patient at Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital a few days ago. They are among thirty-six people who have continued providing regular voluntary service at the hospital for years, not knowing if or when their job will be regularised.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY



One hundred and twenty families belonging to ethnic Kol community get relief materials on the premises of Bilboitha non-government primary school in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila on Sunday as voluntary organisation Tabitha made the arrangement to ease sufferings of the people during the ongoing lockdown aimed at containing the spread of Covid-19.

PHOTO: RABIUL HASAN

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD)  
Road Division, Pirojpur  
E-mail: [pirodivisionrhd@gmail.com](mailto:pirodivisionrhd@gmail.com)

Memo No. 35.01.7980.462.07.001.20-858 Date: 17/05/2020

### Invitation for e-Tender (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal for the following works:

Tender ID & Package No.	460594 & e-GP/35/PRD/2019-2020
Name of tender	Supplying of Stone Chips Pea-gravels 1st Class/PJ Bricks & Local Sand at Pirojpur Road Division stackyard for repair work of different road under Pirojpur Road Sub-Division of Pirojpur Road Division during the year 2019-2020.
Tender last selling date and time	01-June-2020 & Time 17:00pm.
Tender closing & opening date and time	02-June-2020 & Time 13:00pm.
Tender ID & Package No.	460593 & e-GP/34/PRD/2019-2020
Name of tender	Supplying of Stone Chips Pea-gravels 1st Class/PJ Bricks & Local Sand at Pirojpur Road Division stackyard for repair work of different road under Kawkhail Road Sub-Division of Pirojpur Road Division during the year 2019-2020.
Tender last selling date and time	01-June-2020 & Time 17:00pm.
Tender closing & opening date and time	02-June-2020 & Time 13:20pm.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline /hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details please contact e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

**Masud Mahmud Sumon**  
ID No. 602165  
Executive Engineer (C.C.), RHD  
Road Division, Pirojpur

GD-863

## COPING WITH COVID-19 SHUTDOWN

# Rab shows the way

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Tangail under a project have been helping people grow vegetables on unused land around their house.

Crime Prevention Company-3 of Rab-12 has taken the initiative in line with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's call to make best use of every inch of land in the country.

Rab-12 officials said they believe the initiative will motivate other villagers who could also benefit from nutritional fruits and vegetables grown on unused land near their houses at almost no cost while the country has been shut down partially in an attempt to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Members of the Rab made 12 bamboo frames (macha) on unused land near houses of 12 poor and helpless families in Kathua Juguni village under Baghil union of Tangail Sadar upazila. They also provided free vegetable seeds of different varieties to the families.

Each of the families was also given a sapling of sojne data (moringa or drumstick) as the plant grows rapidly

and the grower family can earn some money by selling the produce, which is in good demand at local markets.

Expressing gratitude to the Rab members, the villagers said for the last several months, they had no earnings as they had to stay home due to the shutdown. Rafiqul Islam, chairman of Baghil Union Parishad, thanked the Rab for their extraordinary effort in helping the villagers.

On one hand, the vegetables grown on the unused land will meet nutritional needs of the poor families

**Crime Prevention Company-3 of Rab-12 has taken the initiative in line with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's call to make best use of every inch of land in the country.**

while on the other, they will get some money after selling the excess vegetables at the market, he added.

Company Commander Maj Abu Naeem Mohammad Talat said the wheel of economic activities has stopped turning all over the world due to the pandemic and there is no alternative but to increase food production in order to prevent people from going hungry in the coming days.

"We have made frames for cultivating vegetables in unused land next to the houses of 12 helpless families. Through the vegetable gardens, the families will be able to meet their nutritional needs on one hand and on the other hand, they can also benefit financially by selling the excess vegetables at the market."

They spent only Tk 15,000 for the entire project so that councillors or members of all wards in the union can easily take similar initiatives or inspire locals in their areas, he said, adding that the affluent members of the community can also contribute in similar projects to help out the poor in their areas.



Several of the families who received frames for growing vegetables on unused land near their houses at Kathua Juguni village in Tangail Sadar's Baghil union. Crime Prevention Company-3 of Rab-12 provided the frames free of cost so the poor families can meet their nutritional needs during the Covid-19 shutdown.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Director  
Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka.

Memo.No.DMCH/Pro-1/Medical Instrument/2019-2020/4601 Dated: 17/05/2020.

### Invitation for Re-Tender

(No-13/2019-2020)

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from bonafide Experienced Importer/Agent/Supplier/Distributor to Supply Medical Instrument/Equipment (Code:4112315) as per PPA-2006 & PPR-2008. Terms & conditions are as follows:-

<b>GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH</b>			
1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (Health Service Division).		
2. Agency	Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka-1000.		
3. Procuring Entity Name	Director, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka-1000.		
4. Procuring Entity Code	GOB		
5. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka-1000.		
6. Invitation for	Medical Instrument/Equipment (Code: 4112315)		
7. Invitation Ref No	No. Memo:DMCH/Pro-1/Medical Instrument/2019-2020/4601.p		
8. Date	Dated: 17/05/2020.		
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>			
9. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).		
<b>FUNDING INFORMATION</b>			
10. Budget and Source of Funds	GOB		
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>			
11. Tender Name	Medical Instrument/Equipment (Code: 4112315).		
12. Tender Publication Date	18/05/2020.		
13. Tender Selling Date & Time	18/05/2020 to 02/06/2020 up at 2.30 PM.		
14. Tender Closing Date and Time	03/06/2020 at 12.00 Noon.		
15. Tender Opening Date and Time	03/06/2020 at 1.30 PM.		
16. Name & Address of the Offices	Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka-1000.		
17. a. Selling Tender Document	a) Office of the Director, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka-1000. b) Office of the Officer In-Charge (OC), Shabbag Police Station, DMP, Dhaka.		
18. b. Receiving Tender Document	a) Office of the Director, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka-1000. b) Office of the Director, CMSD, Dhaka. c) Office of the Officer In-Charge (OC), Shabbag Police Station, DMP, Dhaka.		
e. Place of Opening Tender Document	Office of the Director, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka-1000.		
19. Pre-Tender Meeting Date, Time & Place	N/A.		
<b>INFORMATION FOR TENDERER</b>			
20. Eligibility of Tenderer	a. The tenderer should have valid upto date Trade license, VAT registration certificate, up to date Income tax clearance certificate & Bank Solvency Certificate from any recognised Bank. b. The tenderer shall be a Manufacturer/Importer/Agent/Supplier/Distributor. If the tenderer is supplier then the tenderer shall have a minimum 3(Three) years of specific experience for supply of similar goods & related services. c. Others terms & conditions are in the tender document.		
21. Brief Description of Goods	Medical Instrument/Equipment (Code : 4112315)		
22. Brief Description of Related Services	After Sale Service.		
23. Price of Tender Document (Tk)	2000.00 (Two Thousand) Tk. (Non-refundable) for per Lot, deposited in any schedule Bank by treasury challan with online verification by District Accounts Officer in vide Code No. 1-2741-0001-2366 in favour of Director, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka-1000.		
Identification of Tender	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk.)	Completion Time in Weeks/Months
Medical Instrument/ Equipment (Code: 4112315)	Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka-1000.	The tender Security should be submitted as Bank draft/Pay order from any schedule Bank at the rate of 3% of the total value of per lot (Refundable) to the Director, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka-1000.	08 (Eight) Weeks from signing of Contract.
<b>PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS</b>			
24. Name of Official Inviting Tender	Brig Gen A K M Nasir Uddin.		
25. Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director		
26. Address of Official Inviting Tender	Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka-1000.		
27. Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel. No. 55165001	Fax No. 55165031	E-mail : <a href="mailto:dmch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd">dmch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd</a>
28. a. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders. b. If the date of selling, receiving or opening of tenders is disturbed under any unavoidable circumstances, the next working day will be applicable for the same respectively. c. Tender schedule or any item/specification can not be modified/alterd by the tenderer. d. Itemwise quantity mentioned in the schedule may be increased/decreased. e. Work order will be issued on availability of fund & Administrative approval by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.			
29. DMCH/Pro-1/Medical Instrument/2019-2020/2788, Dated:08/03/2020	স্বাক্ষরিত অফিসের তালিকাভুক্ত সকল নিম্নে উক্ত মামলার সম্বন্ধে করা যাবে।		

**Brig Gen A K M Nasir Uddin**  
Director  
Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka.

GD-866



**PADMA BRIDGE RAIL LINK PROJECT IS BEING BUILT WITH BSRM**

COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT **BSRM** building a safer nation

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# Lebanon job market nearly wiped out

*Fate of 1.6 lakh Bangladeshis becoming uncertain; inflation halving earnings*

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh is likely to lose its labour market almost entirely in Lebanon, which is home to some 1.6 lakh Bangladeshis, as the Middle Eastern country has been fraught with various economic and political adversities coupled by the coronavirus pandemic.

Bangladesh embassy in Beirut says some 20,000 Bangladeshis immediately want to return home and are awaiting flights for which the Bangladesh government has sought assistance from the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Migrants living there estimate that around 70 to 80 percent of the Bangladeshis are on the lookout for an opportunity to return to Bangladesh as most of them have lost their jobs due to the economic havoc wrought by the enduring political turmoil and the deadly virus.

According to them, even the migrants who have jobs in essential sectors like cleaning are facing problems because of a sharp fall in the value of Lebanese Lira against the US dollar.

Moreover, prices of food and other essentials have increased by three to four times, and it has become close to impossible to survive and make some savings that can be remitted home, they say.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Vehicles clog a street in Azompur area of the capital's Uttara yesterday, amid a nationwide shutdown enforced to fight the Covid-19 outbreak. Amid little or no monitoring by the authorities concerned, such scenes on the city roads have become common now.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Make sure frontliners have gear

HC orders authorities  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to ensure supply of personal protective equipment, including masks and gloves, to doctors, nurses, and staffers of all private hospitals and clinics across the country so that they can attend to the Covid-19 patients.

The court also ordered the chairman of the advisory committee for prevention of infectious diseases to submit a report before it within a week on what steps the committee have taken to prevent the coronavirus outbreak in the country.

The HC bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan came up with the order after holding a virtual hearing on a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh on May 14.

During the hearing, the rights body's lawyer Manzill Murshid told the court that many private hospitals and clinics reportedly refused to treat patients as their doctors, nurses, and staffers were not well protected.

Getting treatment is a fundamental right of citizens, which is guaranteed by the constitution, he argued.

Attorney General Mahubey Alam represented the state during the hearing.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

# WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY China supports WHO-led probe

*Vows to make vaccine a 'global public good'*

REUTERS, Geneva

The head of the World Health Organization said yesterday an independent evaluation of the global coronavirus response would be launched as soon as possible, and China backed such a review.

Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus made his promise during a virtual meeting of the WHO's decision-making body, the World Health Assembly, at which Chinese President Xi Jinping defended his country's own handling of the crisis.

US President Donald Trump has fiercely questioned the WHO's performance during the pandemic and led international criticism of China's handling of the early stages of the crisis.

Tedros, who has always promised a post-pandemic review, said it would come "at the earliest appropriate moment" and provide recommendations for future preparedness.

"We all have lessons to learn from the pandemic. Every country and every organisation must examine its response

MORE ON PAGE 5 SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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

**'There is no alternative to socialism'**



Bangabandhu speaking at the inaugural session of NAP's Convention on May 19, 1972 at Suhrawardy Uddyan.

May 19, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

## AID MUST BE WITHOUT STRINGS

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today declares that Bangladesh needs help from friendly countries but such assistance must be without any strings attached. Speaking at the inaugural session of the convention of National Awami Party (Muzaffar) the prime minister says that they cannot accept any aid belittling of the country's independence.

Bangabandhu further says that economic independence can

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



# Homicide suspect killed in 'crossfire'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

A suspected criminal, who was accused of murdering his cousin, was killed in a "gunfight" between his cohorts and police in Bancharampur upazila early yesterday.

The dead, Sujan Mia, 26, was from Jagannathpur village in the upazila.

Police claimed that he was one of the most-wanted criminals and accused in a case filed over the murder of his cousin Mahub Hasan Babu on Sunday morning.

The case was filed with Bancharampur Model Police Station hours after the killing incident, said Salahuddin Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of the police station.

He said a team of police raided Bhelanagar area to arrest Sujan and his accomplices around 2:30am.

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# Canadian family invents hug glove



AFP, Toronto

A Canadian woman has come up with an ingenious way to safely hug her mother, even during the coronavirus pandemic: the "hug glove," a plastic tarp with four sleeves hanging from a clothesline.

In the southern Ontario city of Guelph, Carolyn Ellis and her husband Andrew developed the so-called "hug glove" on the eve of Mother's Day, which this year was celebrated on May 10 in North America.

"It occurred to me that she wasn't getting the hugs, and we really needed to do something about that," Carolyn told AFP. "I want to give it for Mother's Day."

They taped plastic sleeves to a large tarp, allowing two people to hug each other without making direct contact.

"It was very much a time effort, trying to figure

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

# HC judge infected with coronavirus

*Having treatment at CMH*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court judge has been infected with novel coronavirus.

The judge, who was tested for Covid-19 on May 11, was undergoing treatment at Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka, a source close to the judge told The Daily Star yesterday.

On May 13, the judge was admitted to Mugda General Hospital. He was later shifted to CMH as his condition deteriorated.

Contacted, Attorney General Mahubey Alam said he heard about the judge getting infected with the virus and undergoing treatment at CMH.

The attorney general said he couldn't know how the judge got infected with Covid-19.

The president on May 30, 2018 had appointed the judge, along with 17 others, as an additional judge of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court for two years.



A gondolier wearing a face mask transports his very first customer as service resumes at the San Toma embankment on a Venice canal yesterday as Italy begins to ease a lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of the Covid-19 infection, caused by the novel coronavirus.

PHOTO: AFP

# Virus hits Brazil, South Africa hard

*Major European landmarks reopen as Japan falls into recession*

AFP, Rome

Major landmarks including Saint Peter's Basilica and the Acropolis in Athens reopened yesterday as Europe accelerated its lockdown easing, but mounting coronavirus infections in Brazil, India and South Africa showed the worst is still to come in many countries.

The relaxation of curbs in Europe comes as governments walk the tightrope of struggling to repair the vast economic damage unleashed by the pandemic while preventing new infections that would force another round of restrictions.

The World Health Organization has warned that reopening too quickly without a vaccine could trigger a second devastating wave of infections in the pandemic that has already infected 4.7 million people.

Once the worst-hit country in the world, Italy yesterday took its latest step in a cautious, gradual return to normality, allowing businesses and churches to reopen after a two-month lockdown.

In a live-streamed prayer Sunday, Pope Francis spoke of the "joy" of restarting services, calling it a "sign of hope for all society" as Saint Peter's Basilica threw its door open to visitors.

The Vatican, an independent enclave in the heart of Rome, has applied the same anti-virus measures as Italy, which imposed strict lockdowns after a dizzying rise in Covid-19 deaths and infections that overwhelmed hospitals.

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