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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.

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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 Mahbubey Alam represented the state during the hearing.

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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 Mahbubey 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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