

## Journo held

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member of Habiganj Press Club. Recently, Sushanta Dasgupta's newspaper ran several false reports on Abu Zahir."

"I felt that the reports directly affected the image of the press club also. That's why I filed the case," he told The Daily Star.

Lawmaker Abu Zahir said, "My public image has been compromised because of those false reports."

Meanwhile, a Habiganj court sent Sushanta to jail on Thursday after he was produced before it in connection with the case, said police.

[Our Moulvibazar correspondent contributed to this report.]

## Improve business

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in Bangladesh," Ando said. Recommendations of the Jetro representative also include the resumption of smooth operation at Chattogram port, extension of banking hours, permission from the government to lay off employees from Japanese companies and easy access to the stimulus packages announced by the government.

"We would like to request the government to deal with the challenges and issues for existing companies. Unless and until the government resolves the issues, new investments cannot be expected because investors compare the current investment climate with other countries, like ASEAN and other South Asian countries," Ando said.

"As a trade and investment promotion agency, we are doing the best to promote FDI to Bangladesh and we appreciate the government for all their efforts, on the other hand, we are working together to improve the business environment more. There is no end in improvement," Ando said.

Meanwhile, the government and Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) have recently approached Japan for more investment in the post-Covid period.

FBCCI in a letter to JETRO Dhaka office on May 12 urged the Japanese investors in China to consider Bangladesh as a potential destination.

Ministries of foreign affairs and commerce discussed the issue at a meeting held at the secretariat on May 20.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told journalists after the meeting that some Japanese investors in China have already communicated with Bangladesh.

Bangladesh embassy in Beijing in a letter to the foreign ministry sent on May 20 informed that 34 out of 690 Japanese companies in China want to relocate their manufacturing plants to other countries. The Daily Star obtained a copy of the letter.

The list of the companies includes Mazda Motor, Koito Manufacturing Company, Kasai Kogyo, Iris Ohyama, Sony Corporation, Ricoh Corporation, Asics, Sharp Corp., Nintendo Co., Kyocera Corp. Casio, Seiko, Panasonic, Aisin Seiki Co, Toyota Boshoku Corp. and Fujitsu General Ltd, the letter said.

## Facebook, Amazon chiefs see wealth balloon: report

AFP, Washington

The fortunes of US billionaires rose 15 percent in the two months since the coronavirus pandemic hit, a study found, with Amazon boss Jeff Bezos and Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg seeing massive gains.

The more than 600 billionaires in the United States became even richer as tech stocks rose during virus lockdowns, an analysis of data by two think-tanks published Thursday said.



A rickshaw carrying chai, a local fishing gear made of bamboo, in Daharpara village of Jhalakathi's Nalchity upazila on Thursday. People use this gear to catch fish in shallow waters during the rainy season.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## Blood banks on verge of drying up

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"Earlier, we used to collect blood from around 30 donors daily. Since the lockdown, we can collect blood from hardly 14 to 15 donors [daily]," she told The Daily Star.

Besides, many of their patients and donors from outside Dhaka are unable to reach the hospital due to transport problems during the shutdown, she said, adding that they have around 4,000 registered patients.

Sayedra said their regular blood collection through donation camps at different universities and colleges have been totally suspended since March 26, following the countrywide shutdown.

They now depend on the Quantum Voluntary Blood Donation Program (QVBDP) and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society for blood, she added.

Bangladesh Thalassemia Foundation also suspended their blood collection through camps since March 26.

The organisation is requesting patients to complete transfusion from nearby hospitals instead of coming to their facility in the capital's Shantinagar area.

Aminul Islam, advisor of the foundation, said, "Earlier, we would complete blood transfusion of around 60 to 70 patients daily. But now, we can only provide support to some 15 to 20 patients. We need to check for

Covid-19 symptoms before blood transfusion."

Quantum, providing support to thalassemia patients, are also facing a blood donor crisis for the last one month.

Between January and April this year, they collected 16,395 bags of blood. Last year, during the same time, they had collected 19,819 bags of blood, according to QVBDP data.

"Most of our donors' family members are not allowing them to come out only for blood donation in fear of Covid-19 infection. As a result, the collection has fallen sharply," said Moniruzzaman, coordinator of QVBDP.

He said they are providing transport support to people, willing to donate blood.

Moniruzzaman urged young blood donors to come forward during this pandemic to help save the lives of those who need blood.

Echoing his appeal, Tarek Hussain, director (blood programme), Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, said that their organisation's collection has declined by about 60 to 70 percent as outdoor collection is suspended for the last one and half months.

However, their mobile blood collection vans are going to different areas of the capital to collect blood since the end of March, he added.

## Reconstruction

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calls on Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today and inform him about the progress of the project.

**UNROD CHIEF PRAISES BANGLADESH'S RECONSTRUCTION EFFORT**

Outgoing UNROD (UN Relief Operations in Dacca) Chief Tony Hagen praises the reconstruction effort of the Bangladesh government. He says that the government has successfully completed repair works of several important rail, water and road networks and thus revived transportation across the country. Expressing his confidence in the leadership of Bangabandhu, the UN high official says that Bangabandhu would be able to resolve all the major reconstruction issues within a short period. Referring to the food crisis, he stresses on the importance of increasing import of food from abroad.

The newly appointed UNROD Chief Victor Umbricht calls on the prime minister today at his official residence.

**RIVER TRANSPORT PLAN FOR HAOR REGION**  
The Inland River Transport Authority

is preparing a plan to resolve the transport crisis in the Haor region, namely in Sylhet and Mymensingh during the dry season. Under this plan, the Surma and Kushiara Rivers and their tributaries will be dredged to ensure navigability. The project will cost Tk 8-10 crores. It will also contribute to the development of agriculture in the region.

**DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AGAINST ABSENT GOVT EMPLOYEES**

Show-cause notices are issued against several government employees who were found absent during the prime minister's surprise visit to the secretariat yesterday.

**ACUTE SHORTAGE OF MEDICINES AND EQUIPMENT IN CITY HOSPITALS**

An acute shortage of medicines and equipment in the city hospitals has plunged the health delivery system into a deep crisis. Many hospitals run out of even basic medicine such as saline, glucose injection and their medical equipment such as suction and X-ray machines are out of order due to unavailability of tools and parts.

*SOURCE: May 24, 1972 issue of Dainik Bangla.*

## Thousands leave

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suspended operation of ferry services on the Padma river on Tuesday.

Hundreds of people stuck at the terminals then crossed the river by small boats while many others returned to Dhaka.

**FERRY SERVICES RESUME, HIGHWAYS SEE RUSH**

Ferry services between Shimulia and Kathalbari terminals resumed after 12:00am yesterday and 13 or 14 ferries operated across the Padma, a BIWTC employee told The Daily Star.

Ferry services on this route were first suspended around 3:00pm on Monday amid crowds of thousands of people. Officials resumed the services for four to five hours early Tuesday before suspending them again.

Ferries between Paturia and Daulatdia terminals also resumed after three days.

Dhaka-Aricha Highway and the Paturia Ghat saw a mad rush of home goers begin yesterday morning, reports our correspondent from Manikganj.

People were traveling in cars, microbuses, pickups and motorcycles.

Akkas Ali, a shopkeeper in Dhaka, told our correspondent that he reached Manikganj by rickshaws and pickups.

"People who have their own vehicles can travel easily. But people like us are suffering the most to go home," he added.

Cars, microbuses, SUVs and motorcycles were increasing on roads since yesterday morning, reports our Tangail correspondent.

Besides cars, many people were seen heading to their villages on foot and battery- or CNG-run three wheelers, reports our Gazipur correspondent.

Police on Dhaka-Chattogram Highway, however, intensified checking on different entry and exit points to restrict movement of people, reports our Cumilla correspondent.

**CRASHES MAY RISE**

Crashes and fatalities have peaked during the Eid holidays in recent years.

Analysing road crashes during Eid from 2017-2019, Kazi Shifun Newaz, assistant professor at Accident Research Institute of Buet, said buses were involved only in 30 percent of the crashes and mostly cars were involved in the rest.

Many car owners are likely to operate their vehicles to earn some money, taking advantage of the government decision. And many inexperienced drivers are likely to be behind the wheels, resulting in more crashes, he said.

At a time when the medical facilities are struggling to cope with the Covid-19 outbreak, the crashes would put further pressure on them, he said.

During Eid last year, at least 224 people were killed and 866 others injured in 203 crashes across the country, according to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity.

Around 27.4 percent of the crashes involved buses, 26.33 percent motorcycles, 16.4 percent trucks, pickups, lorries and trailer trucks, 7.82 percent cars and microbuses, and 13.52 percent auto-rickshaws and other vehicles, it said.

**TOUGH ON ERRANT GOODS-LADEN VEHICLES**

The Road Transport and Bridges Ministry on Thursday warned of tougher actions if goods-laden vehicles carried people.

On the same day, the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) wrote to the Inspector General of Police, additional IGP (highway), all deputy commissioners and superintendents of police, and director (enforcement) of BRTA to take stern action against the offenders.

The warnings came hours after 13 people, including two children, were crushed to death when a truck overturned and plunged into a ditch in Gaibandha's Palashbari.

In its letter, the BRTA said carrying passengers on goods-laden vehicles was punishable under the Road Transport Act-2018.

## Coronavirus roils world economy

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**'GREAT UNCERTAINTY'**

In the world's largest country by population, China, the news was also grim.

Premier Li Keqiang told the opening of the National People's Congress that, given the "great uncertainty" caused by the pandemic, Beijing will not set a growth target but "give priority to stabilising employment and ensuring living standards".

In Washington, Trump -- with an eye on his re-election prospects in November -- made it clear he hopes more US state governors will move towards a loosening of anti-virus restrictions.

"We did the right thing but we now want to get going... you'll break the country if you don't," he told African-American leaders in Michigan.

Another 2.43 million Americans were put out of work last week, the Labor Department said Thursday, bringing the total of newly jobless to 38.6 million since lockdowns were put in place.

The US leader also talked about reopening places of worship, something he had initially hoped would be done by Easter Sunday, saying it was important to the nation's healing.

"People want to be in their churches," Trump said. "They're so important in terms of the psyche of our country."

Deaths are still mounting in the US, with the total surpassing 94,000, and Trump ordered flags at federal buildings be flown at half-mast for three days for the victims.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has worked non-stop since the novel coronavirus emerged, informing its 194 member states of its evolution and providing technical advice, its director-general said yesterday.

**RETURN TO NORMAL**

Across the Atlantic, much of Europe pressed on to get life rolling again, with Cyprus lifting curfews and allowing outdoor restaurants, barber shops and beaches to reopen.

But the Mediterranean island's airports and hotels remain closed.

"I want my work back and my life back," said Sakis Siakopoulos, a restaurant owner in the capital Nicosia.

In Denmark, the exit from lockdown also picked up pace as museums and zoos began reopening and health officials said the spread of the virus was slowing.

France, one of the countries hit hardest by the outbreak, saw its daily death toll dip to 83, providing a shred of optimism.

But on the economic front, forecasts remained dire.

A closely watched survey by IHS Markit indicated the eurozone economy has now "likely bottomed out", sparking hope that a recovery is to follow.

**'IT DOESN'T STOP'**

While many European countries have significantly curbed the contagion, Latin America is becoming a new hotspot with cases on the rise.

Brazil -- now home to the third-highest number of cases in the world after the US and Russia -- has recorded more than 20,000 deaths and hit a record 24-hour toll of 1,188.

Grave diggers at a cemetery outside Sao Paulo are scrambling to keep up.

"We've been working 12-hour days, burying them one after the other. It doesn't stop," said one worker at Vila Formosa, wearing a white protective suit, mask and face shield.

Peru, Mexico and Chile have also seen steady increases in infections.

The economic crisis caused by the pandemic has left an extra 11.5 million people unemployed in Latin America, the United Nations and the International Labour Organization said Thursday.

The new estimate from would mean a total of 37.7 million people in the region are now unemployed.

## Biggest haul

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following a moderate downpour. They first come across the sample eggs at 3:00am earlier yesterday.

Mohammad Elias, a seasoned egg collector of Halda River at Ramdasmunsir Hat of Hathazari upazila, told The Daily Star that few eggs were seen in the morning.

"With tide on the river, the amount of eggs began to increase giving us the record haul in recent years," he said.

Egg collectors descended on the river with 280 boats and got seven to eight buckets of eggs each, he said.

"Halda River has given us hope for better days," he added.

Eminent Halda researcher Professor D Manzoorul Kibria told The Daily Star that few factors played a role in the high egg yield this year.

First stopping of tobacco farming, then the shutdown of two polluting factories near the river and third the quick response of Hathazari upazila administration and surveillance by IDE, an NGO working to protect Halda River all combined to create a better environment for fish to lay eggs.


He said the last big haul was in 2006. That year the amount was 32,000kgs, but this year's amount was the highest in 14 years.

"If there was heavy shower with gusty wind and thunder, there would have been more eggs," he said.

Ruhul Amin, upazila nirbahi officer of Hathazari upazila, told The Daily Star that throughout the years his administration seized illegal nets, dredgers and boats.

"Halda finally paid off. Our effort and labour finally found meaning," he said.


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