

FATAL BLAZE AT UNITED HOSPITAL

# Burnt unit had no fire safety

The makeshift isolation unit was built as an extension of main building without fire clearance, violating Nat'l Building Code

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The isolation unit for coronavirus patients at United Hospital was makeshift, it lacked fire safety measures and was built in violation of the Bangladesh National Building Code, fire service officials said yesterday.

A devastating fire, which started from an air-conditioning unit in one of the four rooms there, killed five senior bed-bound patients, who could not get up and escape, on Wednesday night.

"This extension was built in violation of the building code. The hospital authorities did not seek fire security clearance from us when building the extension. While the main hospital has a fire licence, it was also necessary for them to get a similar clearance for the annexe," said Debashis Bardhan, deputy director (Dhaka division) of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

He claimed the fire service department did not even know that such an extension was built.

"The main building had a fire hydrant but this extension did not. The extension did not have a fire exit either," he said.

A fire exit is mandatory for structures providing healthcare services, according to the latest (2015) revision of the Bangladesh National Building Code.

Also, depending on the structure, the exit has to be a fire door capable of resisting fire for two to three hours. Fire hydrants are also mandatory.

One of our correspondents who visited the spot yesterday reported that the makeshift structure was made of metal wall panels, and the interior partitions were similar to plywood.

Also, the construction material used was of flammable nature, Debashis said. Meanwhile, Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam

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CID officials inspect charred remains at the isolation coronavirus unit of the capital's United Hospital yesterday. Inset, the temporary unit, which was set up outside the hospital's main building. Five patients being treated at the unit were killed after a devastating fire broke out there on Wednesday night.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'Can't get the smell of his burnt body out of head'

Says son of a United Hospital fire victim

ZYMA ISLAM



Vernon Anthony Paul, 75, was one of the five patients who died in the fire at United Hospital.

Just four hours before the fire, he was found to be coronavirus negative and was slated for a shift to one of the normal wards of the hospital.

But instead, he was consumed in the flames that took down the isolation unit while his son watched helplessly from outside.

"My father was admitted to United Hospital with pneumonia on May 25," said his son Andre Dominic Paul, an electrical engineer from Chattogram.

"He had a stroke [when he was] in the bathroom on May 17. He had gone in to shower, fell on the wet floor and lay there for

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BANGLADESH UPDATE

2,029 New cases in 24hrs

40,321 Total cases

559 Deaths

8,425 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

359,532 Deaths

5,846,653 Total cases

## 2,029 people test positive in a single day

Confirmed cases top 40,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The rate of Covid-19 infection has increased during the Eid holiday as about one out of every five people tested in the last four days showed positive for the virus.

Earlier, it used to take six or more tests to find out a coronavirus patient.

Meanwhile, the country yesterday recorded 2,029 infections -- so far the highest in a single day when 9,310 tests were conducted.

The total number of positive cases rose to 40,321.

On the day before the Eid, a total of 9,451 tests were conducted and 1,975 people were found to be positive.

On the Eid day, only 5,407 people tested for coronavirus and 1,166 came out positive.

On the next day, 1,541 positive cases recorded out of 8,015 tests.

Seventy-nine people died due to the virus in the last four days with 15 deaths recorded yesterday, said Prof Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general

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## Risky reopening

Public transport, offices to resume operations from May 31

RASHIDUL HASAN and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

While the country sees the numbers of Covid-19 patients and deaths surge sharply, the government yesterday announced the end of the temporary shutdown.

All public transport, and public and private offices will resume on a limited scale from May 31.

However, all educational institutions will remain closed till June 15, according to a circular issued by the Cabinet Division yesterday.

The government's own health expert panel said the ongoing restrictions should be effective for at least another month.

Two members of the panel said the withdrawal of the shutdown would increase the risk of further spread, and country is heading in a terrible direction.

Meanwhile, in the last 24 hours until Thursday, 2,029 people tested positive for Covid-19 -- the highest number of infections detected in a single day in the country -- taking the total to 40,321.

Fifteen Covid-19 patients have died in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 559, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

The government shut down most public and private offices, and all public transport from March 26 and extended it till May 30 in several phases.

However, people's movement to and from Dhaka continued, especially during the Eid rush and when export-oriented factories partially resumed operations last month, exposing more people to the risk of infection.

WHAT THE CIRCULAR SAYS

The circular said all public, semi-government, autonomous and private offices can resume their activities on a limited scale. However, vulnerable people, sick employees and pregnant women won't need to join work.

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## Things you might've missed

NEWS IN BRIEF (MAY 23-27)

PM ADDRESSED THE NATION

Reaffirming her government's stance to be there with people until the coronavirus crisis is over, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday said economic activities have to be resumed for the sake of the lives and livelihoods of people.

"Most countries of the world have already compelled to relax their lockdowns because it's not possible to restrict people's paths of income for an indefinite period. It's not possible at all for a developing country like Bangladesh," she said.

The prime minister said this while addressing the nation on the occasion of holy Eid-ul-Fitr.

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## Case filed over 'torturing 2 top bank officials'

Sikder Group MD, his brother sued; Exim Bank, NBL give contradictory statements about event centring TK 500cr loan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Exim Bank authorities have sued the managing director of Sikder Group of Companies and his brother for allegedly torturing two top officials of the bank and firing at them over a Tk 500-crore loan.

In a statement to the media, the National Bank Limited (NBL), a concern of Sikder Group of Companies, said the case was "baseless" and "fabricated", and that Ron Haque Sikder, managing director of Sikder Group, "did not apply for any such loan".

The case was filed with Gulshan Police Station against Ron and his brother Dipu Haque Sikder on May 19, SM Kamruzzaman, officer-in-charge of the station, told this newspaper.

THE CASE According to the case statement, Ron Haque went to the Gulshan Avenue branch of Exim Bank on May 7 morning and put forward a proposal to take Tk 500-crore loan.

He asked the bank's Managing Director Mohammed Haider Ali Miah and Additional MD Mohammad Feroz Hossain to visit the Group's property in Narayanganj's

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## Two brothers 'fled country on May 25 in air ambulance'

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

A Sikder Group air ambulance left Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport for Bangkok on May 25 with two passengers amid the coronavirus restrictions.

And the two "critical patients" were not one but Sikder Group Managing Director Ron Haque Sikder and his brother Dipu Haque Sikder, both accused of threatening to shoot and torture two top bank officials over loan permission, reliable sources, asking not to be named, told The Daily Star.

Immigration officials declined to disclose their identities, but airport authorities admitted that an air ambulance with two passengers indeed left for Thailand on May 25.

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## Cyclone took everything they had

DIPANKAR ROY from Koyra, Khulna



A man carries a child on his shoulders on an inundated road to higher grounds in Koyra upazila of Khulna yesterday. The Horinkhola embankment was destroyed by Amphan resulting in many villages getting flooded.

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

Mahmuda Akhter and her two children were heading towards Moharajpur area in Koyra upazila yesterday to look for a dry place to live.

Her house near Horinkhola embankment in the upazila was destroyed by Cyclone Amphan which battered the country's coastal areas on May 20.

"There is nothing left in my house. The tidal surge has washed away everything," she told The Daily Star yesterday.

The homemaker said they tried to stay in their village, but they could not as it was under knee-deep water. Besides, there was no food either.

"Nobody gave us food as it is very hard to reach our village," said Mahmuda.

About 70 villages in Koyra upazila went under water on May 20 when the embankment breached.

Like Mahmuda, hundreds of other people from those villages were

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### CONDOLENCE MESSAGE

Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, (MCCI) Dhaka is deeply saddened by the passing of Mrs. Niloufer Manzur, renowned educationist, founder and Principal of Sunbeams School. She breathed her last at the Combined Military Hospital at 00:55 hour on 26 May 2020. Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajeun.

One of the great nation builders of the country, Mrs. Manzur was the wife of former MCCI President, eminent industrialist and former Adviser to the Caretaker Government Mr. Syed Manzur Elahi and mother of MCCI's former President and Managing Director of Apex Footwear Limited Mr. Syed Nasim Manzur. In her passing, the country has lost not just one of its legendary educationists, but a great human being, a dedicated and caring individual and a person who never gave up on another human



being. While her legacy will be carried forward by her legion of students, whom she taught to serve humanity with equal dedication and humility, her loss will be felt deeply personally by all whose lives she touched.

MCCI expresses its deepest condolences to the bereaved family.

Mrs. Manzur left behind her husband, son, daughter Munize Manzur, daughter-in-law Dr. Samia Huq, 6 grandchildren and a large host of friends, admirers and students.

"Give me good mothers and I shall give you a great Nation". Niloufer Manzur was an exemplary mother for us and for the nation.

"When their specified time arrives, they cannot delay it for a single hour nor can they bring it forward" (16:61 Al Quaran).

On behalf of MCCI, all are humbly requested to pray for the departed soul.

"It is not the length of life, but the depth of life."  
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Things you might've missed

FROM PAGE 1  
ALL HOSPITALS, CLINICS ASKED TO TREAT COVID, NON-COVID PATIENTS

The government on Wednesday directed all public and private hospitals, clinics, and diagnostic centres to ensure treatment and services to both Covid-19 and non-Covid patients.

The public health experts suggested ensuring treatment to both Covid-19 and non-Covid patients at different parts of the same hospital, read a handout of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

All private and public hospitals having 50 or more beds, clinics, and diagnostic centres have been asked to provide treatment to both Covid and non-Covid patients under separate arrangements.

**NAGORIK OIKYA CONVENER MANNA CALLS ON KHALEDA ZIA**  
Nagorik Oikya convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna called on BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia on Tuesday.

Manna entered Khaleda Zia's residence at Gulshan in Dhaka around 8:00pm on Tuesday. He stayed there about an hour. Manna said he enquired about Khaleda Zia's physical condition and sought her early recovery.

Asked whether they talked about politics, Manna said, "No. We didn't discuss about politics. We just exchanged Eid greetings and didn't say anything else except her physical condition."

**JAPAN INCLUDES BANGLADESH IN WIDENED ENTRY BAN**  
Japan has tightened border control and widened ban on entry of people from countries, including Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, to prevent the spread of

coronavirus.

A notice on the website of Japan's foreign ministry posted on Monday said the embargo would come into effect from Wednesday.

With these countries, Japan's entry ban has been extended to 111 countries and regions, including the United States, most of Asia including China and South Korea, and all of Europe.

**PRESIDENT URGES AFFLUENT TO STAND BY POOR IN CRISIS**  
President M Abdul Hamid on Monday urged the rich people of the society to stand by the poor as their level best in this tough time triggered by the coronavirus pandemic and super cyclone Amphan that hit Bangladesh coastlines recently.

In his speech on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, the greatest religious festival of the Muslims, the President said, "In times of disaster, I urge rich and affluent people to stand by the poor and recently cyclone-affected people in south-western region of the country."

He expressed his profound sorrow and sympathy at the loss of lives due to Covid-19 outbreak as well as damages from the cyclone Amphan and also prayed for the early recovery of the victims.

**JOURNALISTS STAGE DEMO PROTESTING SACKINGS DURING PANDEMIC**

Dhaka Journalist Union (DUJ) demonstrated on Monday protesting frequent sackings of journalists from different news media and demanding clearance of their dues (salary and Eid-ul-Fitr allowance).

The journalists held a rally at Kawran Bazar on the day of Eid-ul-Fitr.

## Risky reopening

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All meetings should be held through virtual media debaring the physical presence of people and all offices must follow guidelines of the Directorate General of Health Service, it added.

No one would be allowed to leave their work stations between May 31 to June 15.

The circular also said public transport like buses, minibuses, launches and trains can be operated on a limited scale with a certain number of passengers, while following health safety rules. Everyone has to use mask, the circular added.

It said the respective ministry would issue necessary guidelines in this regard.

People's inter-district movement will remain restricted and they will not be allowed to go out of their homes between 8:00pm to 6:00am unless it is an emergency. All types of gatherings, meetings and programmes would also remain suspended.

Markets, shops and shopping malls will have to close after 4:00pm. However, all emergency services would remain out of the purview of the restriction.

**THE EXPERT PANEL'S SAY**  
Prof 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."

The government's decision will definitely increase public health hazard as there is no doubt that people will not be able to follow safety guidelines while using public transport, especially buses and three-wheelers.

"We don't have any doubt that Covid-19 transmission will increase due to the government's decision, which will prolong the duration of the peak," Monir said.

Earlier, the committee said the Covid-19 outbreak may reach its peak in late May and the situation would remain unchanged for almost two weeks, or until the first week of June if the government continues various interventions.

"We had said the number of new cases was likely to come down to a 'tolerable level' by the end of June, unless the restrictions were relaxed too early. But now I think the transmission period will be prolonged till July to August," he warned.

Another member of the committee, Dr Liaquat Ali, also a medical scientist, said they had suggested that the government impose curfew before and after Eid vacation to contain the spread of Covid-19 infection.

"Instead of doing so, the government

## Two brothers

FROM PAGE 1  
Contacted, Group Captain AHM Touhid-ul Ahsan, a director of the airport, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab), confirmed that the air ambulance belonged to the R&R Aviation Limited, a sister concern of Sikder Group.

A government authorised air ambulance flight left Dhaka for Bangkok on May 25 at 9:13am carrying two persons," he said yesterday.

The R&R Aviation Limited's hotline number relayed a recorded message: their operation is now suspended and would resume from May 31.

Asked about the identity of passengers, the Caab director suggested contacting immigration officials. Reached over the phone, the immigration desk declined to say anything.

The Daily Star tried to contact Sikder Group but could not reach anyone.

The two brothers came into discussion when Exim Bank authorities on May 19 filed a case with Gulshan Police Station accusing them of torturing two top officials of the bank and attempting to shoot them.

Foreign ministry sources said the Bangladesh embassy in Thailand sent a letter to the Foreign Ministry of Thailand

relaxed the restrictions," he said, adding that they suggested that the restrictions be lifted at least after June 25.

"What can we do if the government doesn't pay heed to our advice?"

"I believe the government's decision will cause dire consequences regarding the spreading of Covid-19 and it will take more time to flatten the curve," he said.

**RESUMPTION OF TRANSPORT**  
The civil aviation ministry yesterday said domestic flight operations will begin on a limited scale from June 1 following proper guidelines of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

"We have decided to resume domestic flight operations on a limited scale initially between Dhaka and Chattogram, Sylhet and Saidpur," Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry Senior Secretary M Mohibul Haque said yesterday.

After observing the situation, the senior secretary said, they would consider resuming flights to all the seven domestic destinations, including Jashore and Rajshahi, after June 15.

Md Shamsuzzaman, director general of Bangladesh Railway, said they would resume operation of only intercity trains, that too on a limited scale. "The number of trains would be small and we would sell 50 percent of the tickets of each train to ensure social distancing," he said.

No AC coach would be operational as per the DGHS guidelines, he added. **ALL BANKS TO REOPEN**  
Bangladesh Bank yesterday asked banks to keep all their branches across the country open from May 31.

Banks will have to operate like they used to before general holidays were declared by the government, according to a central bank notice sent out to all lenders.

This means all branches of banks will run settlements of transactions from 10:00am to 4:00pm and lenders will keep their outlets open till 6:00pm every working day.

But the branches, located in the areas where the disease has spread significantly, will be allowed to operate their activities only until 4:00pm.

**EXAMS POSTPONED**  
Half yearly exams of secondary schools, scheduled for June 13 to 24, will be deferred, said the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) Director General Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk.

Yesterday, the government extended the closure of all educational institutions till June 15 due to the coronavirus situation. All institutions have been closed since March 17.

on May 23 requesting it to allow the arrival of an air ambulance.

That government gave the permission on the same day and then a letter was sent to the Thai embassy in Dhaka, requesting it to issue medical visas for two persons.

The visa was issued on May 24 and they flew to Bangkok the next day, foreign ministry sources said.

The Daily Star called the Bangladesh embassy in Thailand twice but did not get any response. The officials also didn't respond to an email sent by this correspondent.

Flights between Bangladesh and Thailand were suspended since March 26.

Meanwhile, National Bank Limited, a concern of Sikder Group of Companies, sent an explanation signed by Abdul Baset Majumder saying that the case was filed to socially demean Ron Haque Sikder.

Contacted, Baset Majumder said, "I issued the explanation under the instruction of Zainul Huq Sikder."

Asked about the whereabouts of Ron Haque Sikder, the lawyer said, "I talked to chairman Zainul Huq Sikder."

Sudip Kumar Chakroborty, Deputy Commissioner of Gulshan Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said they are investigating the case and taking action.



Sonia, aged around 13, making garlands for sale at TSC on Dhaka University campus yesterday. The shutdown to slow the progress of the coronavirus spread has been taking a toll on the livelihoods of people like Sonia.

## Burnt unit had no fire safety

FROM PAGE 1  
yesterday inspected 11 fire extinguishers used in dousing the flames and found that eight of them passed their expiry dates.

"The partitions and rooftops were all made of flammable substances," said Mayor Atiqul. "The hospital authorities should have thought about fire risks when constructing this extension."

He added, "They should have sought the expertise of the fire department before building this annex."

The mayor also said a team trained to fight fire at United Hospital was hesitant to enter the annexe as it was an isolation unit for coronavirus suspects.

While the mayor thanked United Hospital for taking in coronavirus suspects, he said that all makeshift coronavirus hospitals must be made keeping fire safety measures in place.

"The government will have to take action against them if the investigation concludes that negligence happened. It is the reality," the mayor said.

The Building Construction Act provides for a punishment of seven years' imprisonment or a fine of Tk 50,000 or both in case of violation of the Bangladesh National Building Code and Building Construction Rules of 2006.

Meanwhile, a witness said there was inadequate fire-fighting measures inside the hospital.

Andre Dominic Paul's father Vernon Anthony Paul, 75, was one of the patients who perished in the inferno. Andre watched the fire happen from beginning till the end.

He was waiting outside the isolation unit around 9:40pm hoping to see a doctor when he heard a commotion; but he saw the door flung open and doctors and nurses file out.

The air-conditioner in the doctor's room sparked, spitting flames everywhere. "The sparks fell on the floor and a ward staffer rushed in with a wet mop to smother the electric fire, but the

mop probably had disinfectant on it, so the fire spread in a split second from the floor to a bed with paper files on it," he said. The ward staffer threw the mop away and ran out.

"They had no fire extinguishers inside the coronavirus unit, and they had to bring in fire extinguishers from the main building, which took some time, allowing the fire to spread. The fire hydrant was also in the main building and the hosepipe was too short to reach the flames because the isolation unit was further away," he narrated.

United Hospital authorities said the fire spread quickly, "as it was windy".

Meanwhile, fire service officials said oxygen cylinders inside the isolation units exploded and fed into the fire.

"Some of the patients died of asphyxiation and the others died by burning. They were all found lying in their beds," stated Abul Kalam Azad, senior station officer at Baridhara fire station.

"The fire service arrived at 10:04pm and by that time explosions could be heard. There was no scope of saving the patients."

The victims were Vernon Anthony Paul; Riyajul Alam, 45; Khodeja Begum, 70; Md Monir Hossain, 75; and Md Mahabub, 50. Of them, Vernon Paul and Khodeja Begum's blood samples came out negative for coronavirus and they were meant to be moved to the normal sections of the hospital, had the tragedy not occurred.

"My mother was brought here the day before Eid with asthma. She had a coronavirus test 15 days ago, but the result came out negative. But because the test was taken 15 days ago, the hospital suggested she be kept at the isolation unit," said Khodeja's son Mohammad Alamgir.

They got a second test done two days ago at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, and the results came negative yesterday. "Yesterday [Wednesday] afternoon,

## Case filed over 'torturing 2 top bank officials'

FROM PAGE 1  
Rupganj, which the Group offered as collateral for the loan.

Around noon, the two Exim Bank officials, along with Ron and a top NBL official, went to visit the property in Rupganj, said the statement of the case filed by Exim Bank Director Lt Col (retd) Serajul Islam.

The two Exim Bank high-ups told Sikder Group officials there that the value of the property was lower than what the Group's MD had claimed. The Group officials then requested the two to visit another property at Purbachal.

The Exim Bank officials initially refused to visit the Group's property at Purbachal saying they had a meeting with Bangladesh Bank officials.

But the two finally agreed following request from Ron Haque. They saw the property at Purbachal from outside and refused to enter the site, saying they were running late for the meeting with BB officials, according to the case statement.

The two eventually entered the site upon Ron Haque's request. They, however, turned their car back towards the capital as they could not see the cars of Ron Haque and others.

On their way back to the city, they stopped their car on the 300-foot road, seeing the vehicles of Ron Haque and others, including NBL high-ups.

Ron Haque forced the two Exim Bank officials to apologise. At one stage, he fired from his pistol in an attempt to kill Exim Bank MD Haider. The bullet flew past Haider's left ear, said the statement.

As Ron Haque was about to fire at Exim Bank Additional MD Feroz, he hid behind a car to save himself, it mentioned.

Later, Ron Haque and others took away the cell phones of the Exim Bank officials. They took the two to "Sikder House" in the capital's Banani area, keeping them hostages at gunpoint, according to the statement.

At the house, the two accused threatened the Exim Bank officials with death and finally let them go after they signed a blank paper at gunpoint, it added.

Asked, Rafiqul Islam, assistant commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Gulshan Zone), said, "We are

trying to arrest the accused."

**'BASELESS', 'FABRICATED'**  
In the statement to the media on Wednesday evening, the NBL termed the case "baseless" and "fabricated".

The statement, signed by NBL's Legal Adviser Abdul Baset Majumder, said Ron Haque did not apply for any such loan, and that the case was filed to socially malign him, the NBL and its board of directors.

It said Ron Haque did not visit the Gulshan Avenue branch of Exim Bank on May 7. "So, there is no question of any bargaining over loan and collateral."

It alleged that a director of the Exim Bank took a loan from the NBL to expand business and another loan against the name of his daughter. The director even wanted to take a loan from the NBL, remaining anonymous.

It further said Ron Haque, the NBL and its directors have been running businesses in various sectors with a good reputation.

Baset strongly protested the filing of the "baseless" case and said his client firmly believes that there will be an impartial investigation and that the culprits will face legal action.

**EXIM BANK'S STATEMENT**

On behalf of Exim Bank, Supreme Court lawyer Mia Mohammad Kawsar Alam in a statement yesterday said the complainant didn't raise any allegations against the NBL.

He said the plaintiff of the case rejected the NBL statement, which was "false", "imaginary" and "unacceptable". It was aimed at diverting the issue.

Matters such as a director of Exim Bank taking a loan from the NBL or a director's daughter seeking a loan from the NBL were irrelevant and had nothing to do with the case, Kawsar mentioned.

It is surprising that a bank issued such a statement, citing irrelevant matters, he added.

He further said the NBL denied the fact that Ron Haque sought a loan. Sikder Group is a long-term borrower of Exim Bank and the incident took place over collateral for a Tk 500-crore loan.

The lawyer also refuted the allegation that the complainant had filed the case to malign the NBL and

we approached the doctor to shift our mother and they were preparing for the transfer. We were at our home in Maniknagar when we heard about the incident. By the time we arrived, my mother was reduced to a dead body. We had to recognise her by the jewellery she was wearing," said Alamgir.

"The patients inside were all bed-ridden and therefore they could not escape. The doctors, nurses and staff could," said Dr Shagufa Anwar, chief of communication and business development at the hospital, addressing journalists yesterday afternoon.

The government has formed a four-member panel headed by Debashish Bardhan to investigate the incident.

United Hospital too is doing its own investigation and submitting a report on Sunday, said Dr Anwar. "We have formed an internal committee of 12 people, with personnel from security, human resources department and clinical management."

The hospital also filed a case with the Gulshan Police Station, reporting "unnatural deaths".

"This is just a temporary establishment. I am not aware whether we needed to get a fire safety clearance for this emergency structure," said Maj Mohammed Moinul Hossain, manager of administration and security at United Hospitals Ltd, when asked why they did not get a fire safety clearance from the department concerned.

He could not state for sure how many fire extinguishers were inside the isolation unit.

"There were fire extinguishers in the area adjacent to the isolation unit, which is about 20 or 25 metres away. We also had a fire hydrant in the main building, but the fire hydrant can only reach a certain extent, following which we need the help of professional fire fighters," he said. "Besides, the fire got too big to handle in a very short amount of time."

its board of directors.

**IMPACT ON BANKS**

Directors of two banks -- the NBL and the EXIM Bank -- had earlier taken loans from each other's banks, which led to conflict between them, said officials of the BB and commercial banks.

The Association of Bankers, Bangladesh, a forum of managing directors of banks, on Wednesday considered writing to the BB to take steps to prevent recurrence of such unpleasant incident, the MD of a bank told this newspaper, seeking anonymity.

"The ABB usually takes measures when any MD of a bank faces difficulties from delinquent borrowers or groups. But the organisation is now silent because of business-related conflicts between the directors of the two groups," said the MD.

Talking to this newspaper, Syed Mahbubur Rahman, the managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, said the latest incident, reported by the media, was completely unexpected.

This may have an adverse impact on banks as some foreign counterpart banks are asking what is happening in the country's banking sector, he said. "We all should perform our duties responsibly in the interest of the banking sector or else both local and foreign entities will lose confidence in the country's banks," said Mahbubur.

## 2,029 people

FROM PAGE 1  
(administration) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the deceased, 11 were male and four female, she said, adding that seven were from Dhaka and eight from Chattogram division.

Of them, two were between 31-40 years old, five between 51-60, five between 61-70, two between 71-80 and one between 90-100 years old, Dr Nasima also said.

The death toll now stands at 559. Meanwhile, 500 Covid-19 patients have recovered since Wednesday, taking the total number of recovered patients to 8,425, the DGHS official added.

A total of 248 people were put under isolation in the last 24 hours, she added.

## Flash flood lashes Sylhet's Gowainghat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Flash floods triggered by heavy rains since Monday has inundated Gowainghat upazila of Sylhet, while overflowing water of the Sari river submerged vast area in the upazila.

The flash floods flooded hundreds of houses and disconnected road communications in the region, said Nazmus Sakib, upazila nirbahi officer in Gowainghat.

He also said that at least hundred trees and several houses were damaged due to nor'westers on Tuesday night.

Shahiduzzaman Sarkar, executive engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) in Sylhet, said the Sari river was flowing 48 centimetres above danger level at 3:00pm on Wednesday.

The situation, however, started improving, he said, adding that the water in the river was flowing 55 centimetres below the danger level at 9:00am yesterday.

He further said that no embankment or dam of the river was damaged due to the flash flood.

Meanwhile, Sultan Ali, agriculture officer in the upazila, said at least 15 hectares of Aush seedbed that was under risk were safe as the water started receding.

Abul Kalam Azad, district fisheries officer of Sylhet, said several fisheries were flooded in the upazila and resulted huge loss.

The authorities were inspecting and calculating the loss, he added.

UNO Nazmus Sakib said "The flash flood could not damage much of the livelihood and farmlands, but left two roads -- Gowainghat-Jalpong and Gowainghat-Lengura -- ravaged."

## Cyclone

FROM PAGE 1  
looking for dray places and food.

Many people told this correspondent that they had been starving for the last couple of days and were yet to receive any government aid.

Sagar Sheikh from Golakhali village in Koyra said, "We have no way to survive. We have no accommodation and food. Nobody helped us."

He has decided to take shelter at his relative's house in a nearby village.

Sources said about two lakh people in the area have been badly affected by the cyclone. The local administration has so far distributed 50 tonnes of rice, 500 packets of dry food and Tk 75 lakh among the cyclone victims in the upazila.

Harshit Mandal, a local, also used to live near the Harinkhola embankment.

Asked if he received any relief, he said, "Only providing relief would not solve our problems as we don't have a place to live. We urge the government to repair the embankment as soon as possible."

The entire area would become uninhabitable if the embankment was not repaired, Harshit said, adding that the locals were already suffering from different waterborne diseases.

Dr Sujat Ahmed, civil Surgeon of Khulna, said huge quantities of saline water entered the area during the cyclone which was causing the diseases.

"People will face a crisis of drinking water due to salinity which would worsen the situation," he said.

The civil surgeon expressed concern that the salinity might cause health hazards in the area for a long time.

Khulna Livestock Officer Kazi Mostahim Billah said about 60 percent of the district's livestock was affected by the cyclone. Around 40,000 cattle have been shifted to another upazila.

Koyra UNO Shimul Kumar Saha said he visited the affected areas. "I have informed the higher authorities about the prevailing situation there."

## Trump planning new arms sale to Saudi Arabia, says senator

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump's administration wants to sell arms to Saudi Arabia again, one year after pushing through a controversial \$8.1 billion contract despite congressional opposition, an influential US senator revealed on Wednesday.

"The administration is currently trying to sell thousands more precision-guided bombs to the President's 'friend', Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman," New Jersey Democrat Bob Menendez said in an op-ed published online by CNN.

The government wants to conclude the sale, the details of which have not yet been made public, "even though the Saudis seemingly want out of their failed and brutal war in Yemen," he added.

Menendez, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, recalled how the previous contract to sell various arms to Saudi Arabia as well as the United Arab Emirates was blocked by Congress after the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

TREATING COVID-19 PATIENTS AT ALL HOSPITALS

## Experts fear wider transmission

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

When the government directed all the public and private hospitals with more than 50 beds to take measures for treating Covid-19 patients, some health experts said the initiative can spread transmission further.

They said the initiative can increase the risk of "cross-contamination" and "hospital infection" as many hospitals do not have proper infection control systems and patient safety measures.

The experts said the hospital authorities should ensure a proper infection control system first before going to introduce both Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 treatment.

They called for a separate set of manpower and equipment for each section to control cross-contamination.

The health ministry on May 14 issued a circular asking all government and private hospitals and clinics to take separate initiative for treating both Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 patients at the same hospitals.

The circular said the directive was given following the advice of health experts and proposal of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

It also mentioned that public health experts at DGHS, observing Covid-19 treatment in different countries, suggested that treatment of both groups of patients should be given at separate parts of the same hospital.

There are some 2,200 government and 5,500 private hospitals and clinics across the country. But there are over a dozen dedicated hospitals in Dhaka and one dedicated hospital in each of the divisions except Barishal for treating Covid-19 patients currently.

Besides, at district and upazila levels, the government hospitals have isolation centres where Covid-19 and suspected Covid-19 patients are being provided treatment.

### WHAT EXPERTS SAY?

Prof Muzaherul Huq, former Southeast Asia regional director of World Health Organization, said such a move would increase the risk of "contact

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital being cleaned and prepped yesterday, ahead of the reopening of inter-city train routes on Sunday. The station will be busy with passenger activity after over two months, although fewer people will travel in every train as part of measures to ensure social distancing amid the Covid-19 outbreak.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## GAZIPUR ENGINEER KILLING Colleague confesses to plotting murder

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Anisur Rahman Selim, an assistant engineer of Gazipur City Corporation, has confessed to a magistrate that he was the mastermind behind the murder of his senior colleague, executive engineer Delwar Hossain.

"According to my plan, I hired someone to kill Delwar, following conflicts over a previous enmity. Delwar had strongly disagreed with me regarding some of my office activities. This is why I, along with the hired goons, killed him," Selim said in his confessional statement.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Shahinur Rahman on Wednesday recorded the confessional statement after Md Mofizul Islam, an inspector of Turag Police Station and also the investigation officer of the case, brought Selim to the magistrate's chamber upon completion of his five-day remand.

After recording the statement, Selim was sent to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj on Wednesday.

Around 9:30am on May 11, Selim, along with the other killers, went to Delwar's residence in Mirpur with a microbus, he said in his statement.

To get Delwar out of his house, they paid a rickshaw-puller, who was passing through the area, Selim told the court.

They gave Tk 100 to the rickshaw-puller to make him call Delwar, saying that he

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Domestic flights to resume from June 1

RASHIDUL HASAN

The civil aviation ministry yesterday decided to resume domestic flight operations on a limited scale from June 1. The resumption comes after more than two months of ban on regular passenger flights on all international and domestic routes to contain the Covid-19 outbreak.

"We have decided to resume domestic flight operations on a limited scale initially on Dhaka to and from Chattogram, Sylhet and Saidpur routes," Civil Aviation and Tourism ministry senior secretary M Mohibul Haque said yesterday.

After observing the situation, the ministry will consider reopening all seven domestic destinations, including Jashore and Rajshahi, after June 15, the official added.

"We are also considering withdrawing the ongoing ban on international flight operations after June 15 depending on the situation," he said, adding that the government is considering the resumption

of flights to London.

The decision was taken following the government's announcement that the ongoing general holidays will not be extended after May 30, and that starting May 31, public transportation on road, rail, waterways and air will be allowed on a limited scale.

The government on March 16 suspended regular flight operation on all domestic and international routes except for China to contain Covid-19 until May 30.

The suspension included all domestic flights while cargo, special, air ambulance, relief carrying flights and emergency landing aircraft remained out of its scope.

Last week, CAAB prepared a guideline for airlines with instructions for how to run flights following all health guidelines, including social distancing.

According to the document, all airlines will have to keep at least 30 to 25 percent seats vacant on each flight to ensure social

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## Loss of a great mentor Sunbeams founding principal Niloufer Manzur passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Niloufer Manzur, renowned educationist and founding principal of Sunbeams School, passed away on Tuesday at the capital's Combined Military Hospital. She was 74.

She was admitted there with symptoms of pneumonia. On Sunday, she tested positive for Covid-19 and received plasma therapy. However, her condition started to deteriorate and she breathed her last around 3am on that day.

The noted educationist left behind her husband Syed Manzur Elahi, former adviser to a caretaker government and chairperson of Apex Footwear Ltd, son Syed Nasim Manzur, daughter Munize Manzur, daughter-in-law Dr Samia Huq, six grandchildren and a host of friends, admirers and students.

Daughter of late Dr Mafiz Ali Chowdhury, who was a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



INT'L DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS

## Of service and sacrifice

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA, back from Mali

The mighty desert sun beats down mercilessly on the sand; the thermometer reads 50 degree Celsius; humidity stands at only five percent -- that's the unforgiving Saharan climate for you. That's the West African country of Mali for you.

On our day of correspondence, a massive convoy is moving forward slowly, piercing the desert sand and its near absolute lifelessness. In the front row, a Bangladeshi soldier sits -- wearing a helmet, a pair of sunglasses, and on top of everything a 20kg bulletproof vest, standing waist-deep inside a state-of-the-art armored car in all that heat.

On one hand, he is holding a walkie-talkie; on the other a tight grip holds on to the hook of the armored personnel carrier (APC).

The desert is truly deserted, with barely any sign of life anywhere around. Neither human beings, nor trees, life is only found in the soldiers of the convoy. They're all geared with modern weaponry, but it doesn't make them feel the least bit safe.

"You cannot take your eyes off the road for even a second," said Maj Shafin, the Bangladesh army officer who was being described above. Maj Shafin is one of the 6,543 peacekeepers from Bangladesh currently on UN peacekeeping duties.

Every time something suspicious catches his attention, Shafin utters "stop" on to his walkie-talkie, and everything behind him freezes. The convoy is immensely cautious and absolutely petrified by the prospect of stepping on to hidden landmines or being hit by a rocket launcher or some other types

of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

This is especially important for the peacekeepers posted in Mali. The desert nation is sometimes called the world's capital of IEDs. Tribal feuds, which have always been common, have taken a turn for the worse in recent years, after several international Islamist groups turned Mali into their strongholds. All these partisans have planted IEDs across the country with the hopes of ravaging oppositions.

The road communication network in Mali is nothing like that in Bangladesh. In fact, there is no roads in the proper sense of the word, let alone highways. Whatever roads there are, giant potholes everywhere make them extremely bumpy. Clearly, with such daunting obstacles on the road, it's impossible to muster any speed.

In August, a 740km journey on wheels to a remote conflict-prone region took the group 17 whole days. For the entirety of these journeys, members of the convoy have to be on their toes.

"The driver of the APC is totally dependent on me. My eyes are his eyes. The challenge is, every time I utter "stop", he literally has less than a second to react and step on the brake paddle. Even a small communication gap may lead to disaster," Shafin said to this reporter recently at the Gao Super Camp in Mali.

"It's a huge pressure on your nerves. Everyone's lives and deaths depend on your eyes. One mistake and everyone could be dead in seconds," Maj Shafin continued.

"Whenever I go on an operation, I can't

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## Zobeda Haque passes away

CITY DESK

Zobeda Haque, mother of Liberation War Museum trustee



Mofidul Haque, passed away at a hospital in the capital yesterday. She was 96, says a press release.

She left behind four sons, a daughter and a host of relatives to mourn her death. Her son Manjurul Haque is a professor and a journalist in Japan. Her youngest son Mobinul Haque is a professor at a Canadian university.

Zobeda played a crucial role in left political and democratic movements.

She was buried at Azimpur graveyard after Zohr prayers yesterday.

## Report steps taken to protect Halda dolphins

### HC asks govt during virtual hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know what steps the committee led by the deputy commissioner of Chattogram has taken to protect biodiversity, environment, fishes and dolphins in Halda river in the district.

During a virtual hearing on a writ petition, the court ordered the DC to submit a report before it in the next 15 days, stating the steps taken by the committee to this effect. The HC also directed the DC to explain in the same report why a dolphin from Halda River died on May 24.

The HC bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan set June 18 for passing further orders on this issue, Deputy Attorney General Amit Talukder told The Daily Star.

During the court proceedings, writ petitioner Barrister Abdul Qaium Liton placed a report published in The Daily Star's online edition on May 24 before the HC, saying that a dead giant dolphin of around 70kg was recovered from Halda River -- even after the court formed a committee to protect dolphins and the biodiversity of the river.

He prayed to the HC to pass an order in this regard.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam represented the state during the hearing.

During hearing of the same writ petition, the HC on May 19 formed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS Malaysia to send back those who test Covid-19 negative

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysia will send back undocumented Bangladeshi migrant workers, who are currently at different deportation centres in the country, following Covid-19 tests.

Illegal immigrants who tested negative would be sent back to their respective countries, Malaysian Senior Minister for Security Ismail Sabri Yaakob told Bernama, the country's national news agency, yesterday.

On the other hand, illegal immigrants who tested positive are being treated at a temporary hospital in the country, according to reports in Malaysian media.

One report published by The Star on Wednesday on its online version said there were 227 positive cases from three deportation centres in Bukit Jalil, Semenyih and Sepang.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Precariously positioned on a moving auto-rickshaw, sitting on each other's laps and clicking selfies for the social media, this large group of friends were spotted while crossing the Postogola bridge yesterday. While the shortage of transport have been a problem for some commuters, there is no excuse for choosing to be reckless, especially at a time when roads are empty and susceptible to accidents.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



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### একজন নীলুফার মঞ্জুর। একজন বাতিঘর।

আপনাকে আরো ক'টা দিন প্রয়োজন ছিল, আরো একটু দূর পথ পার করে দিয়ে গেলে ভালো হতো। ভালো-মন্দ, সত্য-মিথ্যা এখনো জলিয়ে ফেলি, আপনি কেমন পরিষ্কার দেখতে পেতেন, কই আপনার তো স্কল হতো না। আমাদের এখনো স্কল হয়ে যায়, চকিতে তাকাই আপনার দিকে আপনার অভিব্যক্তিতে বুঝে নিই বাকিটুকু। তাই বলছিলাম, আরেকটু প্রয়োজন ছিল আপনাকে। এমন কঠিন সময়ে কেউ এভাবে চলে যায়? সন্তানদের কোন বাতিঘর দেখিয়ে বলবো ওই আলোর পথ ধরে এগিয়ে যাও, সোজাসাক্ষাৎ, লোক না দেখানোর তরিকা কে শেখাবে, এই লোক দেখানো শব্দেই? স্ট্রিট ল্যাম্পের আলোয় চলছে এখন আপাতত, তবে গল্পের বীধতে বাতিঘরের বড় প্রয়োজন ছিল। তবে জানি বুকে যে আলো জ্বালিয়ে গেছেন, তাই দেখাবো পথ প্রজ্জ্বল্য থেকে প্রজ্জ্বল্যেরে।।

Mrs. Niloufer Manzur, renowned educationist, founder and principal of Sunbeams School passed away on 26 May 2020. She was the wife of Syed Manzur Elahi, Chairman, Grey Dhaka, Chairman, Apex Footwear Ltd and former Adviser to the Caretaker Government, mother of Syed Nasim Manzur, MD, Apex Footwear Ltd and daughter of Late Dr. Mafiz Ali Chowdhury, MP, a former Minister in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's cabinet in 1972.

This is a tribute from all of us at Grey to somebody who made everybody's life a little better.

# Of service

FROM PAGE 3  
 stop thinking about my child, my wife, my parents. They also worry about me all the time. This is a war zone we are talking about. But that's the life of a soldier and we chose it for us. Duty is above everything," he said.  
 On top of this, peacekeepers hardly have any leisure. Whatever little they get, they have to spend most of it inside camps because of security concerns. All these take a toll on the mental health of the peacekeepers. Even when burnt out by all the pressure, they can't connect to their families anytime, anywhere. In Mali, mobile connectivity is almost zero outside cities -- connecting with families is not always an option. This is why many peacekeepers suffer from anxiety and stress-related disorders.  
 "Stress is a major health concern here in the UN compounds in Mali. We try to keep the soldiers cheerful by arranging indoor and outdoor games," said Dr Lt Col Amirul Hasan.  
 "During the Oryx-2 operation a couple of months ago, I was disconnected with my family for many days. Back home in Bangladesh, they thought something bad had happened to me. Their Eid was totally ruined," Shafin reminisced sorrowfully.  
 Everything a parent would not want their child to be around can be found in Mali, aplenty. Scarcity of water, security threat, no connectivity, extreme weather, and so on. "But we forget all our hardships every time we succeed in bringing peace to a conflict-prone area. The pleasant nature and the lovely hospitality of the local people act as fuel for us," Maj Shafin said. "This is what gives meaning to our work."  
**INT'L DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS**  
 Today is the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, observed to pay tribute to the uniformed and civilian personnel's contribution and to honour more than 3,900 peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the UN flag since 1948, including 102 last year.  
 This year, the challenges and threats faced by the peacekeepers are greater than ever, as they are not only having to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic, but also support and protect people in countries they are based in. They are continuing their operations to the best of their abilities and supporting the governments and the local populations, according to UN.  
 The theme for this year's day is "Women in Peacekeeping: A Key to Peace" to help mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

# Report steps

FROM PAGE 3  
 the committee headed by the Chattogram DC in order to protect the biodiversity, environment and aquatic life of Halda River.  
 In the order, the HC asked the DC to include representatives from the DC, superintendent of police, naval police, coast guard, DoE, fisheries, water development board and forest office in Chattogram, upazila nirbahi officers of Hathazari and Ramnagar of the district, and representatives from Marine Science and Fisheries Faculty of Chattogram in the committee to protect biodiversity, environment, fishes and dolphins of Halda River.  
 Abdul Qaium has submitted the writ petition as a public interest litigation to the HC on May 12 saying that 24 dolphins in Halda river were killed since 2017 endangering the environment and ecology, according to a report published in The Daily Star on May 8.



**A thunderstorm in the early hours of yesterday left two large trees along the High Court uprooted, damaging a part of the metal fencing and its concrete pillars in the process. The photo was taken yesterday morning.**

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Loss of

FROM PAGE 3  
 minister in Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's cabinet in 1972, Niloufer was venerated as an academician for founding Sunbeams School, one of the leading English-medium educational institutes.  
 She founded the school in 1974 when English-medium schools were extremely rare, establishing it at her residence with only 15 students, a few chairs and desks and a loan of Tk 10,000 from Janata Bank.  
 She led the institution for 46 years and built it as one of the country's top schools.  
 Today, the school has two campuses in the capital: one at Dhammondi and another at Uttara. Currently, it has more than 1,100 students and 161 teachers are employed.  
 She is regarded as a pioneer for facilitating English-medium education in the country where students are also taught Bengali language, literature and heritage.  
 Niloufer served as Sunbeams' "Head of School" till death. She visited the campuses regularly until the start of the pandemic.  
 After closure of all educational institutions, she used to supervise administrative tasks from home.  
 During her long resourceful teaching career, she touched the lives of thousands of students who have established their careers all over the world. Her students offered prayers and condolences on social and mainstream media when they learned about her demise.  
 She was buried after a private namaz-e-janaza maintaining all necessary health directives.

# Malaysia to

FROM PAGE 3  
 Of the infected, 53 Bangladeshis tested positive, the highest from a country, it said.  
 Asked about the number of Bangladeshis at the deportation centres, Zahirul Islam, labour welfare counsellor at Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, could not provide a number, but said some 244 Bangladeshis were at Bukit Jalil and Semenyih centres in April, adding that Malaysia has some 12-13 such centres.  
 Wishing anonymity, an official at the Bangladesh mission said the deportation could take place by special flights amid air travel ban or regular flights once air communication resumes.  
 According to the Bernama report, Sabri

thanked three countries -- Indonesia, Nepal and Bangladesh -- for agreeing with Malaysian government's proposal to send immigrants home. "The foreign ministry will discuss with its counterparts in the three countries over the move," the report quoted Sabri as saying.  
 As of yesterday, 354 illegal immigrants who tested positive were taking treatment at the temporary hospital, as per the report.  
 Meanwhile, The Star yesterday reported, quoting Sabri, that throughout the movement control order period from March 18, some 41 human traffickers were arrested while seven suspected smugglers were taken in by authorities in Malaysia.

# Experts fear

FROM PAGE 3  
 infection" and hospital infection, meaning a non-Covid-19 patient can get infected at the hospital.  
 "Hospital infection control systems in our country and other countries are not the same. Here, the infection control system at hospitals is very poor and there is very little measure for patient safety," he said.  
 If a separate hospital is not possible, Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 sections of a hospital should be kept separated strictly and there should be separate health workers for each section, he said. Besides, safety measures at hospitals should be beefed up and strong monitoring should be at place, he added.  
 Infectious diseases specialist Prof Ridwanur Rahman also echoed him.  
 He said it would not be possible for many private clinics to ensure separate facilities for patients. A separate section with healthcare providers and testing facilities must be ensured before introducing treatment of both patients, otherwise "cross-contamination" will increase, he said.  
 Nirupam Das, chief administrator of Bangladesh Doctors' Foundation, said 866 doctors got infected with Covid-19 till yesterday, of which eight died.  
 The initiative may increase people's scope for Covid-19 treatment,

especially the suspected Covid-19 patients, but it may increase infection of doctors and health workers if they are not properly protected, Nirupam said.  
 Bangladesh Private Medical College Association President Mubin Khan said the instruction to introduce Covid-19 treatment at all hospitals is not right. The government could have instructed those hospitals that have two buildings or necessary infrastructure for ensuring separate sections.  
 "The wholesale decision may warrant disaster," he said, adding, "The government should have taken the decision through discussing with all the stakeholders but we were not aware about it." The government should reconsider the decision, he added.  
 He said among 69 private medical colleges, two are providing Covid-19 treatment dedicatedly while three or four will start the treatment soon.  
**WHAT MINISTRY, DGHS EXPERTS SAY**  
 Dr Liaquat Ali, a medical scientist and member of the government expert panel, said they have given the suggestion to treat Covid-19 at all "mainstream" hospitals as "we don't have the capacity to avail treatment for all Covid-19 patients at the dedicated

hospitals."  
 He said they have also suggested proper screening of all patients and create separate zones for Covid-19 treatment and for ensuring proper infection prevention measures. "We gave the suggestion for ensuring integrated Covid-19 treatment like other countries in the world," he said.  
 Contacted, Habibur Rahman Khan, additional secretary (administration wing) to Health Services Division, said hospitals with more than 50 beds must have separate wards and it is possible to control infection if patients are treated at separate wards.  
 He said doctors and health staffers at both Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 sections use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) now for protection and when they will formally start treating coronavirus patients, they would take more precautionary measures.  
 "Covid-19 treatment at all hospitals will start ensuring proper infection control measures. The government is providing PPE at government hospitals," said Habibur, also the chief of the health ministry's media cell.  
 Besides, the authorities of private hospitals would provide their doctors and staffers with PPE as they would take treatment cost from the Covid-19 patients as usual, he added.

# Colleague confesses

FROM PAGE 3  
 has a delivery to receive.  
 As Delwar came out of the house, microbus driver Habib Mia and hired goon Helal Howlader Shahin dragged him into the vehicle, Selim said in his statement.  
 When they reached Rupnagar Beribadh area, Shahin strangled Delwar with a rope, while Selim grabbed his leg.  
 Delwar's body was then dumped on an empty plot of Uttara sector-17 near Beribadh, he said.  
 Delwar's cellphone was also thrown into a lake in Dishari area, Selim continued.  
 Police recovered the body of the victim from Beribadh around 4pm on the same day, and the victim's wife Khodeja Akhter identified the body at Shuhrawardy Hospital the next day.  
 Later, she filed a case with Turag Police Station against unidentified people.  
 Selim, Habib and Shahin were arrested recently. Of them, Habib and Shahin gave confessional statements before the same court in the case on May 21.  
 The rickshaw-puller also gave a judicial statement before a magistrate as a witness.  
 Earlier on May 26, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) urged the government to ensure justice for Delwar, who it said was killed for his stance against corruption.  
 They also asked the authorities concerned to bring those responsible for the murder to justice through proper investigation, and to compensate Delwar's family in a fair way.

# Domestic flights

FROM PAGE 3  
 distancing by keeping a gap of at least a seat between two passengers, unless they are from the same family.  
 Additionally, front or last row seats must remain vacant on each flight for carrying passengers suspected of contracting the coronavirus. During check-in, passengers' body temperature will be measured.  
 If any such passenger is found, crew members should immediately contact the destination airport and hand the passenger over to airport health authority immediately after landing.  
 The guideline also contains instructions on protective gear for airline staffer and cabin crew, social distancing for cabin crew, and mandates that no food and drink be served in flights with less than one-and-a-half hours airtime.  
 Apart from the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital, the CAAB also asked officials of the country's other two international airports, in Chattogram and Sylhet, and all domestic airports to carry out disinfecting activities on a regular basis.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
 Office of the Principal  
 Bhola Technical School & College, Bhola  
 Ref. No. 37.03.0918.001.07.001.20-196 Date: 02/04/2020

**e-Tender Notice**

e-Tender has been invited through the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.sprocure.gov.bd>) as follows:

Tender ID No.	Description of works	Invitation date & time	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
454729	Supply of Raw Materials & Goods	28 May 2019 12:00	14 June 2019 17:00	15 June 2019 12:00	15 June 2019 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted through the National e-GP Portal and no offline hard copies will be accepted.

Principal  
 Bhola Technical School & College, Bhola  
 GD-895

# Ustad Atiqur Rahman passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 Renowned classical musician Ustad Atiqur Rahman passed away on May 24 night, at the age of 71.  
 The musician was suffering from a number of health complications, including diabetes, according to a press release issued by his family.  
 Atiqur Rahman left behind his ailing wife, three daughters, a son and numerous admirers at home and abroad.  
 Ustad Atiqur Rahman was born in 1942 at Sarail in Brahmanbaria.  
 He joined the then East Pakistan Radio in 1965 and was associated with the organisation for over 55 years.  
 Atiqur Rahman was laid to eternal rest at Sreepur, the press release added.

**READY APARTMENT SALE**

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**Vacancy Announcement**

Deadline for application: 11 June 2020

The FAO Representation in Bangladesh is inviting applications of qualified and experienced candidates for the following position to be filled under the 'Community-based Climate Resilient Fisheries and Aquaculture Development in Bangladesh (GCP/BGD/055/LDF)' funded project. The incumbents will be recruited as National Project Personnel:

- Field Coordinator (2001173)

To apply, visit the FAO employment website at [Jobs at FAO](http://Jobs.at.FAO) and complete the on-line application. Only applications received through online will be considered. Interested and qualified candidates will find the post descriptions from [Bdjobs.com](http://Bdjobs.com) also.

All recruitment to FAO posts are made on a competitive and transparent basis. Candidates are encouraged to apply directly to FAO and follow the instructions on the above-mentioned website. Please note that no intermediary is allowed to expedite or facilitate such process. All those who represent themselves as such are fraudulent and should be reported to FAO immediately.

Women candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

**Save the Children**

Date: May 29, 2020

Save the Children is the world's leading, independent organisation for children

**Invitation for Tender (IFT) for Supplies of Personal Protective Equipment**

Save the Children International (SCI) is hereby inviting for tender from the interested experienced supplier for supply of Personal protective equipment. For detailed please see the IFT schedule, which is available on <http://procurement.scibd.info/> under tender notification. Downloaded copy is acceptable for tender participation.

Sl. No.	Name of IFT	Reference No.	Last date of Tender Submission
1	Supplies of Personal Protective Equipment	IFT/SCI/BDCO/FY-20/00003	June 08, 2020 on or before 2:30pm

Phone number: +88-0961255333

**Special Instruction: (a)** All activities in connection with the said procurement of Goods will be guided as per the SCI's Procurement Policies. **(b)** If it is not possible to receive & open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received and opened on the following working date at same time and same place.  
 Senior Manager, Procurement & Supply Chain

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
 Local Government Engineering Department  
 Office of the Upazila Engineer  
 Rangpur Sadar, Rangpur.  
[www.lged.gov.bd](http://www.lged.gov.bd)

Memo No: 46.02.8549.000. 07.001.19-261

**Invitation for Tenders (OTM)**  
 Tender Notice No: 08/2019-2020

Date: 27-05-2020

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the eligible tenderers as defined in the tender documents for the under mentioned works as per terms and conditions stated below :

Sl. No	Package No.	Name of works	Tender Security (Tk)	Price of tender document (Tk)	Liquid Asset (Tk)	Time for completion (days)
1.	DNF-2018-19-558549-01	ক) শালশাখার বাহারে পার্বত্য উন্নয়ন শিবির। খ) কুচি উপ-বাছা কেন্দ্রে প্রাথমিক নির্মাণ। গ) জাটরাড়ি সিমু মারামতি নিয়ন্ত্রণে প্রাথমিক নির্মাণ।	57000.00	750.00	580000.00	150 days
2.	DNF-2018-19-558549-02	ক) কটীয়াড়ি সিমু মারামতি নিয়ন্ত্রণে সৌন্দর্যক নির্মাণ। খ) হরিন্দেবপুর উপ-বাছা কেন্দ্রে কক নির্মাণ। গ) কলিল বা মজল উপস্থিত মুন্সিঙ্গ স্কুল মজল, এরিমবাল ও সিয়াং বেড়ি নির্মাণ।	55000.00	750.00	560000.00	150 days

1. Ministry/ Division	: Local Government Division
2. Invitation Ref. No.	: Memo No: 46.690.002.00.09.035 2019-2115, Date: 29-04-2020
3. Agency	: Upazila Parishad, Sadar, Rangpur
4. Procurement Entity	: Upazila Engineer : Sadar, Rangpur
5. Procurement Method	: Open Tender Method (OTM)
6. Source of Fund	: GOB & JICA
7. Development Partner	: JICA
8. Project / Programme Name	: Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)
9. Date, time & place of pre-tendering meeting	: 03-06-2020, 10 AM, Office of the undersigned
10. Tender Last selling date & time	: 05-07-2020 upto 5:00 PM
11. Tender Closing Date & time	: 06-07-2020 upto 1:00 PM
12. Tender opening Date & time	: 06-07-2020 Time 3:00 PM
13. Name & Address of Selling Tender Documents	: a) Office of The Upazila Engineer : Upazila : Sadar, District : Rangpur b) Office of The Executive Engineer, LGED, Rangpur c) Office of The Upazila Engineer, LGED, Gangacham, Rangpur
14. Name & Address of Receiving Tender Documents	: a) Office of The Upazila Engineer : Upazila : Sadar, District : Rangpur b) Office of The Executive Engineer, LGED, Rangpur c) Office of The Upazila Engineer, LGED, Gangacham, Rangpur
15. Name & Address of Opening Tender Documents	: Office of Upazila Engineer : Upazila : Sadar, District : Rangpur

**Terms:**

- Under the tender Notice the tender security deposit amount should be submitted in the form of bank draft/pay order from any schedule bank to the Upazila Engineer, LGED, Rangpur Sadar, Rangpur.
- At the designated place of the tender, the terms will be in the form and works.
- Updated documents of controlling organization with the tender will be attached i.e. LGED licence, trade licence, bank statement, income tax certificate and VAT registration certificate.
- The cost of test for materials & other as required by the technical specification should be including by the quoted rates. No additional Payment will be made for the tests.
- With the tender, Tenderer will need to add experience certificate/ Turnover for the last 05 years. Without the additional documents tender will be considered non-responsive in the Tender Evaluation Report.
- The validity of the tender will be 90 (Ninety) days from the date of receiving of the Tender.
- After completion of the whole work , bill will be paid with respect to the availability of fund.
- Without any reason, the authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the tenders.
- The tenderer will quote the rate including VAT, IT & Test Fees.

(Md. Shamsul Arefeen Khan)  
 Upazila Engineer  
 Phone: 0521-62526  
 E-Mail: [sa.rangpur@lged.gov.bd](mailto:sa.rangpur@lged.gov.bd)

GD-894

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**  
 বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ  
 পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়  
 নারায়ণগঞ্জ

**সংশোধনী বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, নারায়ণগঞ্জ এর দায়িত্বকালে বাৎসরিক ক্রয়/বিক্রয়/সেবারত কাজের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০১/২০২০-২০২১, বর্ণিত কার্যালয়ের স্মারক নং-২০১৬/ই, তারিখ ১৪-০৫-২০২০ক্রি মূল গত ১৬-০৫-২০২০ক্রি এ প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তির ১৬নং কলামে উদ্ভূত হক

ক্রম	কাজের বিবরণ	সিডিউলের মূল্য	দরপত্র জামানত	পরিমাণ	মেয়াদকাল
১	এর পরিবর্তে সংশোধনী হক নিম্নরূপ প্রকাশ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হল।				
ক্রম	কাজের বিবরণ	পরিমাণ	দরপত্র জামানত	সিডিউলের মূল্য	মেয়াদকাল

(মোহাম্মদ জায়েদুল আলম, পিপিএম-বার)  
 বিপি-৭৫০৩০২৭৮৫৫  
 পুলিশ সুপার, নারায়ণগঞ্জ  
 ☎ ৭৬৪৮৪৪৯, ☎ ৭৬৪৮২৪৮  
 Email: [spnarayangonj@police.gov.bd](mailto:spnarayangonj@police.gov.bd)

তারিখ-১৮/৫/২০

# Farming must go on as survival strategy

SHYKH SERAJ

The number of COVID-19 affected people in Bangladesh is increasing every day. Everything seems to have gone away of control. Recently, many shops were opened for Eid-ul-Fitr and thus it is quite alarming that the spread of the virus will be even more. We saw even children were accompanying their parents in this shopping spree, although many shopping malls had decided that they won't open their shops during this crisis. I really salute them from the bottom of my heart. But the rest... why they did this, I don't know. And we the customers, couldn't we celebrate one Eid without new cloths and gifts for our dear ones? We could have easily supported the people, especially the farmers who are fighting hard to ensure our food security in this terrible time, in need with our Eid shopping budget.

Coronavirus has been ruling the world for the past five months. Bangladesh is today on its 83rd day and also well aggressive in both affected and death rate which is going fast every minute. I can understand that people are frustrated, agitated, tired and feeling hopeless. For how long this evil is going to play with us? The challenge is a diversified one: on one hand, the number of affected people and deaths has to fall down; on the other hand, the world needs to find an effective way to gear up the economy. So that people get food, the farmers can live and the marginal people can survive. No matter rich or poor, all the countries have the same headache. Many countries have already stepped down from the strict lockdown measures. Since people are coming out from their safe zones, and the disease is still uncontrollable due to the unavailability of the proven vaccine, the spread of the virus is still at large. Public health around the world is at stake and nothing has changed in the past five months.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation's sent me a press release recently which says while analyzing data of food supply since 1995, linked to FAO's statistical development of the prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) indicator, and correlating them to past local economic trends in countries that are net food importers, they found that millions of people are likely to join the ranks of the hungry as a result of the COVID-19-triggered recession. That

number will vary according to the severity of GDP growth contractions. In January, the International Monetary Fund anticipated global GDP would expand by 3.3 percent but in April, when much of the world was shutting down to contain contagion, it issued a new forecast of minus 3 percent. Many countries will experience sharp and painful economic shocks. FAO added further in the press release, governments are rolling out unprecedented fiscal and monetary stimulus packages to prop up their economies. By taking these measures, they are maximizing the chances of a relatively quick economic bounce back. If farmers, for example, are supported so that they can hold on to their assets throughout this crisis, they will be in a much better position to keep on providing for their families, communities, and towards national food security.

The most hopeful message for us is we could produce Boro rice quite substantially. We could also harvest paddies at the haor regions of the country. An agriculture ministry press note quoted that hundred percent paddies were harvested at the haor areas. The countrywide harvest of Boro is almost done except the field damages, caused by Cyclone Amphan. FAO recognizes and applauds the Government of Bangladesh for its agricultural and wider economic initiatives in response

Shykh Seraj is Bangladesh's pioneer development journalist. He received country's two highest civilian honours, Swadhinata Puroshkar and Ekushey Padak, respectively. He is a BIDS, Ashoka and Bangla Academy Fellow. He also received highest award for agricultural journalism from the United Nations, FAO A.H. Boerma Award, Gusi Peace Prize (Philippines) and many other prestigious accolades at home and abroad. At Channel i, he's the Founder Director and Head of News. He's also Director and Host of Channel i's popular agro-documentary, Hridoye Mati O Manush.



Shykh Seraj talks with a farmer, maintaining safe distance.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

to the crisis and for its recognition of the crucial importance of the agricultural sector in ensuring food security.

To stop the pandemic, we must address the health sector above everything else. Then, we should prioritize the food security, healthy and nutritious food for everyone. If the poor people, now suffering from malnutrition, are put under a safety net where they will be given food and good health support, this will really help them to stand back again and fight against the pandemic.

When Bangladesh is struggling to fight against the deadly coronavirus pandemic, another catastrophe, the extremely severe cyclonic storm Amphan swept through the country. Definitely the cyclone has intensified sufferings of low income group people living in the vulnerable areas. It left behind a trail of destruction in the country's coastal areas, affecting more than a million people in nine districts of Khulna and Barishal divisions. The

standing crops, vegetables and fruits on 1.76 lakh hectares of land were destroyed. It also damaged fish farms. According to a primary estimate, the cyclone caused damages worth around Tk 1,100 crore. The cyclone hit a total of 26 districts. Over 10,000 shrimp enclosures were washed away in Satkhira, Bagerhat and Khulna. The cyclone also caused massive damage in Satkhira mango orchards. Out of 4,000 hectares of mango cultivation in Satkhira, 3,000 hectares have been severely damaged which is 60 to 70 percent of total cultivation in the district, Agriculture Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque said in an online press briefing. He added 10 percent in Boro, 5 percent in maize cultivation, 15 percent in vegetable, 20 percent in peanut, 20 percent in sesame, 10 percent in mango, 5 percent in litchi, 10 percent in banana, 50 percent in papaya, 30 percent in chili, 50 percent in soybean and mung dal faced loss while the Aus paddy was slightly damaged.

For your kind notice, on May 1, Bangladesh Railway launched special parcel trains on three routes to ensure smooth supply of agricultural goods, vegetables, food, and perishable goods during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, due to poor response from traders railway authorities have suspended the operation of special parcel trains for agricultural goods on the Chittagong-Dhaka route just three days after its inauguration. Farmers are still unaware of the whole system of it. Additionally on May 9, the railway authorities launched special parcel train on several rail routes for the convenience of traders to transport essentials as well as vegetables, eggs and fish for the convenience of traders at the directive of the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan told me over a Skype conference that Bangladesh Railway has taken the initiative to launch these special parcel trains to transport vegetables, food grains and other perishable items produced by farmers amid lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Dear readers, we don't know or can tell when the coronavirus will leave our country or even the world. And when will we can really come back to normal life. We have seen it has been a baffling decision-making time for the researchers and policymakers. What I understand is we must face this difficult time and survive with our utmost intelligence. We must keep the production going on. Meanwhile, government has started distributing agricultural inputs to help next season's productions. The prime minister has stressed not to keep an inch of land uncultivated. Additionally, I believe the people who were hit hard by the cyclone- be it their lives or assets or crops, government will surely bring out an effective mechanism to support them at this very precarious time. Otherwise, these people will be shattered and the communities there would face severe aftermath. And, we must protect the Sundarbans as it always has protected us. Wherever you are, whether in the villages or in the cities, you all must take agricultural ventures, be it really small, to significantly survive. Your venture can save all of us and the entire nation. Belated and happy Eid-ul-Fitr greetings to all the farmers as well as every citizens of the country. Stay safe and stay strong.

## Villagers render voluntary service to check river erosion

Locals in Kurigram's Rajibpur UZ took the initiative as authorities failed to make embankment

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The people of Char Sajai village of Kodalkati union in Kurigram's Rajibpur upazila are working to make bamboo fencing at their own initiative for saving the area from erosion by the Brahmaputra River during the upcoming monsoon.

Encouraged by Aminur Rahman, a local youth, villagers joined the voluntary work as promises from the local public representatives and the administration to build an embankment to check the erosion remained unfulfilled for years.

Locals provided bamboo and financial assistance and a group of youths started work to make bamboo pilings on Thursday.

Fencing will be made on a 500-metre area at an estimated cost of Tk 4,000 and the work will hopefully be completed within a few days, Aminur Rahman told this correspondent.

"Every year a large area is eroded by the river while we got only promises for construction of the embankment. And so, we are trying our best to save the area with bamboo piling," he said.

Although this method is not fully effective to check erosion, it helps to minimise the damage, he added.

"We contributed to the work to save our houses, arable lands and crops from erosion," said Hanif Uddin, 58, of Char Sajai Purbapara village.



Locals engaged in bamboo piling work at Char Sajai village of Kodalkati union in Kurigram's Rajibpur upazila.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Dwellings, cultivable lands, orchards and important set-ups eroded and a large number of families became homeless and landless due to the river erosion at different places of Rajibpur upazila, including Uttar Kodalkati, Paikartari, Ballabhpara, Sajai Karigar Para and Shankar Madhabpur villages of Kodalkati union, said locals.

Appreciating the initiative of Aminur, Kodalkati Union Parishad Chairman Humayun Kabir Chhaku said, "A project to build the embankment has been submitted to the Ministry of Water Resources but it is yet to be approved. I am making every effort to get the project approved."



More than one hundred Indian citizens, who had remained stranded in Bangladesh for over two months due to Covid-19 pandemic, returned to their country through Akhaura international immigration check post in Brahmanbaria yesterday.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDYO

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Divisional Forest Officer  
Coastal Forest Division, Patuakhali  
District: Patuakhali  
e-mail: dfopatuakhali@gmail.com

Memo No. 22.01.7800.535.29.013.20.1410

Date: 22/05/2020

### 2nd Corrigendum Notice for e-Tender

It is hereby notified to all concerned that the e-Tender ID No. 452002, 452039, 453202 vide Office Memo No. 22.01.7800.535.29.013.20.1230, Dated: 06/04/2020 have been amended as follows due to unavoidable circumstances.

Sl. No.	Tender/ Proposal ID No.	Invitation Reference No.	Brief description of works	1st Corrigendum as per Notice			2nd Corrigendum as per Notice		
				Tender/ proposal last selling date and time	Tender/ proposal closing date and time	Tender/ proposal opening date and time	Tender/ proposal last selling date and time	Tender/ proposal closing date and time	Tender/ proposal opening date and time
1.	452002	PATUA(CFD)/SUFAL/2019-20/WD-1	Construction of Boundary Wall at Mohipur Range, Kuakata Beat.	27 May 2020 16:00pm	28 May 2020 15:00pm	28 May 2020 15:00pm	14 June 2020 16:00pm	15 June 2020 15:00pm	15 June 2020 15:00pm
2.	452039	PATUA(CFD)/SUFAL/2019-20/WD-2	Construction of Boundary Wall at SFPC, Kalapara	27 May 2020 16:00pm	28 May 2020 15:30pm	28 May 2020 15:30pm	14 June 2020 16:00pm	15 June 2020 15:30pm	15 June 2020 15:30pm
3.	453202	PATUA(CFD)/SUFAL/2019-20/WD-3	Construction of Boundary Wall at Mohipur Range Office	27 May 2020 16:00pm	28 May 2020 16:00pm	28 May 2020 16:00pm	14 June 2020 16:00pm	15 June 2020 16:00pm	15 June 2020 16:00pm

All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged. This corrigendum notice will be treated as a part and parcel of the Tender Document.

Mohammad Aminul Islam  
Divisional Forest Officer  
Coastal Forest Division  
Patuakhali  
Tel: 0441-62285

GD-891

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD  
Road Division, Nilphamari  
Telephone No. 0551 61403  
E-mail: eenil@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 700

Date: 27-05-2020

### e-Tender Notice

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

e-Tender is invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Nilphamari for the procurement of:

Tender ID & Tender No.	Name of works	Tender document price (in BDT)	Tender security (in BDT)	Last selling & opening (date and time)
e-TID No. 463202, e-Gp-32/EE/RHD/Nil/2019-2020	Repair & seal coat work at 19th(P), 20th, 24th(P), 25th, 26th & 27th(P) km of Gongachara-Pirerhat-Monthanarhat-Garagram-Kishoreganj (Nilphamari Portion) (Z-5018) Road under Road Division Nilphamari during the year 2019-2020.	1000	110000	Date: 14-06-2020 Time: Up to 17.00 & Date: 15-06-2020 Time: After 11.00
e-TID No. 463469, e-Gp-33/EE/RHD/Nil/2019-2020	Emergency supplying and installation of reflecting traffic Sign & Signal board for using at different location of different Road, under Road Division Nilphamari, during the year 2019-2020.	1000	55000	Date: 14-06-2020 Time: Up to 17.00 & Date: 15-06-2020 Time: After 11.00

Md. Monzurul Karim  
ID No. 602000  
Executive Engineer, RHD  
Road Division, Nilphamari

GD-893

TERRITORIAL DISPUTE
Nepal defers map plan after Indian fury

Nepal has for now iced a new map that was cleared by its parliament and places within its own borders a stretch of land high in the mountains that India claims as its own. A discussion in its parliament on Wednesday to clear a constitutional amendment that would formalize the new map has been deferred, reported news agency ANI.
The map was cleared last week, provoking a fierce reaction from India, which described the move as "unilateral" and not based on historical facts. "Such artificial enlargement of territorial claims will not be accepted by India," Anurag Srivastava, spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry, said last week.
Nepal claims the territory, which touches the border with China, under an 1816 treaty with the East India Company. That agreement, according to Kathmandu, sets the River Kali as its western boundary with India and says the land lying east of the river is its territory.
The new map that shows a sliver of land - including areas like Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani - jutting out from the northwestern tip of Nepal was made public a week ago.
Nepal's aggressive new move was combined with its prime minister KP Sharma Oli blaming India for infecting his country with coronavirus.
The map and a constitutional amendment followed India opening an 80-km-long road linking Uttarakhand with Lipulekh on the border with Tibet. The road stretches across the disputed piece of land and makes easier and shorter the journey for Hindu pilgrims who travel to Kailash Mansarovar in Tibet.

'All-out combat' or another flare-up?

AGENCIES

When Indian and Chinese soldiers brawled at Pangong lake in Ladakh on May 5—a punch-up serious enough to leave at least 11 in hospital—General MM Naravane, India's army chief, was unworried.
Three days later and nearly 1,200km (745 miles) away to the east along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), another fight erupted at Nathu La Pass in the Indian state of Sikkim after Indian soldiers stopped a patrol party from China's People's Liberation Army (PLA).
Such "temporary and short-duration face-offs" happened from time to time at such remote stretches of the two countries' 3,500km border, Naravane said. Both sides had "disengaged". But a week later he dashed north to the headquarters of his 14th Corps in nearby Leh, the state capital, suggesting that something more serious was afoot.
According to Indian press accounts, thousands of Chinese troops have crossed the disputed border with India

building of a new runway suitable for warplanes.
In response, the Indian army has moved several battalions from an infantry division usually based in the Ladakh city of Leh to "operational alert areas" along the border, and reinforcement troops have been brought in, reported The Guardian.
On Tuesday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with the three services chiefs and the National Security Adviser amid the worst India-China border tensions since the 2017 Doklam standoff that continued for 73 days.
On the same day, Chinese President Xi Jinping ordered the military to scale up its battle preparedness, visualising the worst-case scenarios and asked them to resolutely defend the country's sovereignty. He however did not mention any specific threat.
Though US President Donald Trump on Wednesday offered to mediate the standoff, both India and China have traditionally opposed any outside

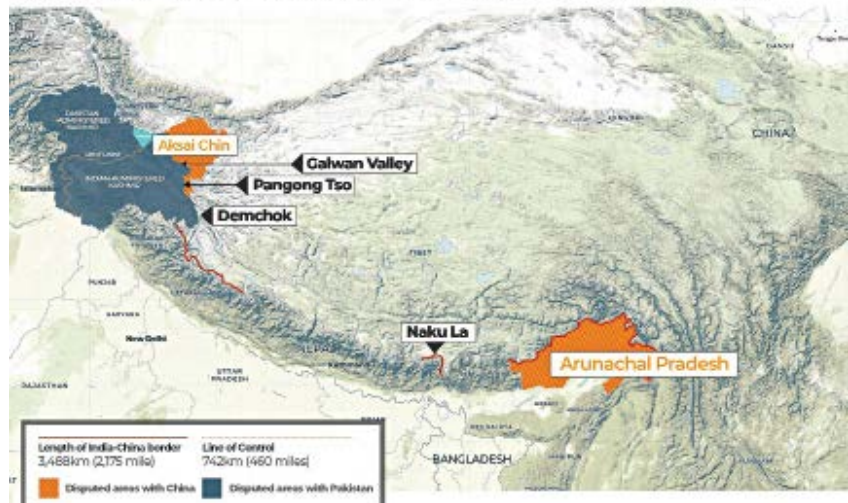


This photo taken on September 14, 2018, shows a general view of the Pangong Lake in Leh district of Union territory of Ladakh bordering India and China.

PHOTO: AFP

CHINA-INDIA
Border dispute

India and China share 3,488km-long land border, most of which remain disputed.



at several points, some reportedly penetrating 3-4km over punishing Himalayan terrain. Many are said to have destroyed Indian posts and bridges, and dug in with tents and trenches. At least 10,000 PLA soldiers are now believed to be camping on what India claims to be its territory - Pangong Tso Lake, Galwan Valley and Demchok in Ladakh, and Nathu La in Sikkim.
According to satellite footage published by the Indian news channel NDTV, there has been large-scale construction work at a Chinese military airbase less than 120 miles from the border in recent weeks, including the

involvement in their matters and are unlikely to accept any US mediation, experts said.
China's ambassador to India, Sun Weidong, struck a conciliatory note, saying the two Asian countries should not let their differences overshadow the broader bilateral relationship.
The two countries are engaged in talks to defuse the border crisis, an Indian government source said. "These things take time, but efforts are on at various levels, military commanders as well as diplomats," the source said.
With little information shared by the two countries, media reports have speculated on the reasons behind the

need to be more mindful of China on sensitive geopolitical issues."
One reason, analysts say, is India's infrastructure building activities along the LAC. In the past 10 years, India has been boosting its border infrastructure, with new roads and airbases inaugurated in remote Himalayan areas. Interviews with former Indian military officials and diplomats confirm that.
"Today, with our infrastructure reach slowly extending into areas along the LAC, the Chinese threat perception is raised," said former Indian foreign secretary Nirupama Rao.
"Xi Jinping's China is the proponent of a hard line on all matters of territory, sovereignty. India is no less when it comes to these matters either," she said.
The high-altitude border has been aggressively contested and heavily militarised since 1962 when China launched an offensive into Indian territory, sparking a short but bloody war. But post-1990s, a series of agreements between the two countries have reduced tension considerably, though border skirmishes are common along the LAC.
Ashok K Kantha, a former Indian ambassador to China and now director of the Institute of Chinese Studies based in Delhi, told The Guardian that the recent incursions and border aggressions from China were "far from routine occurrences".
He said: "This escalation is serious; I don't think this is just a localised incident. China's behaviour is more aggressive this time, backed up by a fairly large number of troops, which is not typical of this border where troop levels tend to be low on both sides. It could be a territorial claim or part of a wider messaging to India that they



GROWING DISPUTES

The US-China relationship -- seen by many as the defining global power dynamic of the 21st century -- is no stranger to confrontation and discord, but rarely has their rivalry played out on so many critical fronts as it is now. Here are some of the main areas of current dispute between the two powers:

- Coronavirus: US President Trump has accused Beijing of a lack of transparency over the coronavirus outbreak in the Chinese city of Wuhan, before it exploded into a global pandemic that has hit the United States harder than any other nation. China has furiously denied the allegations, warning that they were pushing tensions to the "brink of a new Cold War".
Trade: Trump has long been angered by what he has described as China's unfair trade advantage over the United States, also accusing Beijing of curbing intellectual property theft. He launched his trade war in early 2018 in a bid to end what he saw as "rip-off" deals with China, and escalating tit-for-tat tariffs ended up engulfing two-way trade worth hundreds of billions of dollars.
Huawei: Chinese tech titan Huawei has been the target of an escalating US campaign to isolate it internationally, with Washington accusing it of stealing American trade secrets and warning Beijing could use its equipment to spy on global telecommunications. Huawei has strenuously rejected the charges.
Hong Kong: The US State Department on Wednesday revoked the special trade status enjoyed by international financial hub Hong Kong, saying the city was no longer sufficiently autonomous from China. The move was sparked by the Chinese plan -- approved yesterday -- to impose a national security law on the city.
Uighurs: The Trump administration has been outspoken in its criticism of the detention of more than one million Uighur Muslims and other minorities in China's Xinjiang region. Uighur activists and witnesses have said China is trying to forcibly assimilate them by punishing basic Islamic practices and wiping out their culture.
Taiwan: China sees self-governing, democratic Taiwan as a part of its territory to be assimilated one day, by force if necessary. But Washington is the island's main ally and arms supplier -- without diplomatic recognition -- and Beijing has bristled at any weapons sales or high-level contacts between the US and Taiwan.
South China Sea: The US and China have also clashed over the South China Sea, a resource-rich waterway that is also the source of intense dispute in the region. China claims most of the sea and has built artificial islands to strengthen its power in the region.

SOURCE: AFP



Two women hold up posters of the US flag and a depiction of President Donald Trump during a rally in a shopping mall in Hong Kong yesterday, as the city's legislature debates over a law that bans insulting China's national anthem.

PHOTO: AFP

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
কমান্ডিং অফিসারের কার্যালয়
২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন
মুজাপাড়া, ময়মনসিংহ
উন্নুক্ত দরপত্র আহ্বান বিজ্ঞপ্তি
তারিখঃ ২৭/০৫/২০২০খ্রিঃ

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Public Health Engineering
Office of Executive Engineer, Research and Development Division
DPHE Bhaban, 14, Shahid Captain Monsur Ali Sarani, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000
Memo No: 46.03.2600.083.07.008.19 - 321 Date: 20/05/2020
e-Tender Notice
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the following package:

**CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**  
**KEY UPDATES**

**MORE THAN 355,000 DEAD**

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 355,736 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 5,705,890 cases of coronavirus have been registered in 196 countries and territories. The United States the worst-hit country with 100,442 deaths from 1,699,933 cases. After the US, the hardest-hit countries are Britain with 37,460 deaths, Italy with 33,072, France with 28,596 deaths and Spain with 27,118 deaths.

**86M CHILDREN AT POVERTY RISK**

The economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic could push as many as 86 million more children into poverty by the end of 2020, a joint study by Save the Children and UNICEF showed Wednesday. That would bring the total number of children affected by poverty worldwide to 672 million, an increase of 15 percent over last year, the two aid agencies said in a statement. Nearly two-thirds of those children overall live in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

**208 ATTACKS ON HEALTH WORKERS**

The Red Cross said Wednesday that more than 200 violent attacks on health workers connected with the COVID-19 crisis had been reported across more than a dozen countries since the pandemic began. The International Committee of the Red Cross joined 12 other global medical and humanitarian organisations, representing more than 30 million medical professionals, to issue a declaration condemning growing attacks on health workers and facilities.

**EU GOVTS BAN MALARIA DRUG**

European governments moved on Wednesday to halt the use of anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19 patients, and a second global trial was suspended, further blows to hopes for a treatment promoted by US President Donald Trump. The moves by France, Italy and Belgium followed a World Health Organization decision on Monday to pause a large trial of hydroxychloroquine due to safety concerns.

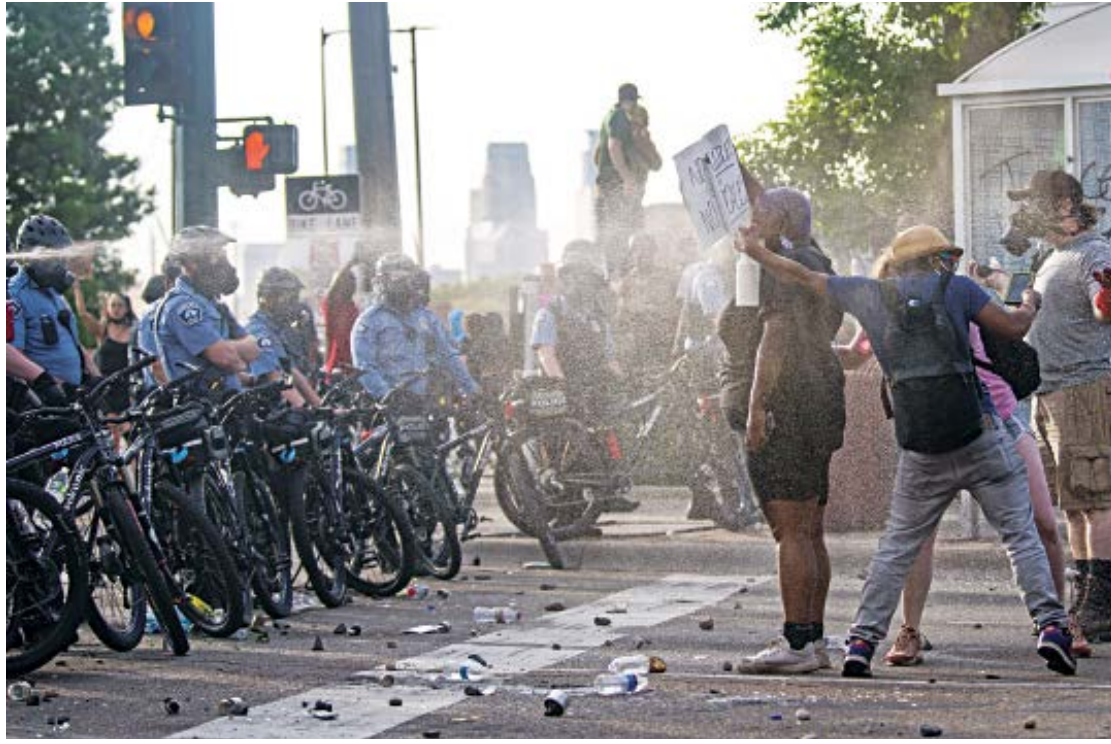
**US LAWMAKERS VOTE BY PROXY**

US lawmakers cast proxy votes for the first time ever on Wednesday, in a contentious coronavirus-era procedure that has drawn sustained criticism from congressional Republicans. Some 70 Democrats in the House of Representatives voted remotely on a measure condemning China's human rights violations. The new rules, passed this month along party lines, will remain in place only for the duration of the coronavirus crisis.

**CASES IN GULF TOPS 200,000**

The number of coronavirus cases in the six Gulf Arab states doubled in less than a month to surpass 200,000 on Wednesday, according to a Reuters' tally, at a time the region's two biggest economies move to resume activity. Coronavirus infections in the energy producing region, which crossed the 100,000 mark on May 11, had initially been linked to travel but then spread among low-income migrant workers in overcrowded quarters, prompting authorities to increase testing.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



(From top, anti-clockwise) Police use pepper spray as protesters demonstrate against the killing of a African-American man in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on Wednesday; demonstrators react in front of police in downtown Los Angeles; a group of protesters in Minneapolis demonstrate; a shop burns in Minneapolis; and a still image from a video shows a police officer on Monday arresting George Floyd, whose death sparked the protests.

PHOTO: AFP

**POLICE BRUTALITY**  
**Outrage in US**  
**over racially charged killing**

REUTERS, Minneapolis

Protesters clashed with riot police firing tear gas for a second night in Minneapolis on Wednesday in an outpouring of rage over the death of a black man seen in a widely circulated video gasping for breath as a white officer knelt on his neck.

The video, taken by an onlooker to Monday night's fatal encounter between police and George Floyd, 46, showed him lying face down and handcuffed, groaning for help and repeatedly saying, "please, I can't breathe," before growing motionless.

The second day of protests accompanied by looting and vandalism, began hours after Mayor Jacob Frey urged prosecutors to file criminal charges against the white policeman shown pinning Floyd to the street.

Floyd, who was unarmed and reportedly suspected of trying to pass counterfeit bills at a corner eatery, was taken by ambulance from the scene of his arrest and pronounced dead the same night at a hospital.

The policeman shown kneeling on Floyd's neck and three fellow officers involved were dismissed from the police department on Tuesday as the FBI opened an investigation.

Hundreds of protesters thronged streets around the Third Precinct police station late on Wednesday, about half a mile from where Floyd had been arrested. Police used tear gas, plastic bullets and concussion grenades to keep the crowds at bay.

Outrage at Floyd's death also triggered a rally in downtown Los Angeles.

The case was reminiscent of the 2014 killing of Eric Garner, an unarmed black man in New York City who died after being put in a banned police chokehold. Garner's dying words, "I can't breathe," became a rallying cry for the Black Lives Matter movement calling attention to a wave of killings of African-Americans by police using unjustified lethal force.

**MOVE TO REGULATE SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Trump to sign executive order**

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump is expected to sign an executive order yesterday after threatening to shutter social media platforms following Twitter's move to label two of his tweets misleading.

After long resisting calls to censure Trump over his truth-defying posts, Twitter on Tuesday accused the president for the first time of making false claims.

Trump had tweeted -- without any evidence -- that more mail-in voting would lead to what he called a "rigged election" this November.

Twitter's slap on the wrist was enough to drive Trump into a tirade -- on Twitter -- in which he claimed that the political right in the United States was being censored.

Trump would sign an executive order "pertaining to social media" on Thursday, his aides said, without offering any details.

But an undated draft version of the order obtained by The Washington Post on Wednesday said "we cannot allow a limited number of online platforms to hand-pick the speech that Americans may access and convey online."

The order would make it easier for federal regulators to argue that the companies are "suppressing free

speech when they move to suspend users or delete posts," The New York Times reported, citing two senior administration officials.

Both newspapers also reported that the order, which they said had not yet been finalized, could see tech companies such as Twitter, Facebook and Google held legally responsible for content posted on their platforms.

Twitter's move to tag the president's tweets comes after years of being accused of ignoring the president's violation of platform rules with his daily, often hourly barrages of personal insults and inaccurate information sent to more than 80 million followers.

Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg waded into the row, telling Fox News that his social network -- still the biggest in the world -- has a different policy.

"I just believe strongly that Facebook should not be the arbiter of truth of everything that people say online," Zuckerberg said in a snippet of the interview posted online Wednesday by Fox.

"I think, in general, private companies, especially these platform companies, shouldn't be in the position of doing that."

Twitter founder and CEO Jack Dorsey fired back on Wednesday night, saying that his platform's effort to point out misinformation did not make it an "arbiter of truth."

"Our intention is to connect the dots of conflicting statements and show the information in dispute so people can judge for themselves," he tweeted.

Kate Ruane, at the American Civil Liberties Union, said that Trump has no power to regulate Twitter.

The constitution "clearly prohibits the president from taking any action to stop Twitter from pointing out his blatant lies about voting by mail," she said.

For all his protests, Trump is a political giant on social media. By contrast, his Democratic election opponent, Joe Biden, has only 5.5 million Twitter followers.

Social media suits Trump's unorthodox communications style and his penchant for conspiracy theories, rumors and playground-style insults.

The claim that Twitter is biased against conservatives fits the White House narrative that the billionaire president is still an outsider politician running against the elite.

The row is also a useful smokescreen when Biden is homing in on widespread dissatisfaction with Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, which has left more than 100,000 Americans dead.

Polls consistently show Biden in a strong position, despite barely having left his home during weeks of social distancing measures -- and his relatively meager social media presence.

**HEATWAVE, WATER WOES, LOCUST INVASION AND CORONAVIRUS**

**India facing perfect storm**

AGENCIES

Bollywood stars and political leaders have urged Indians to wash their hands to protect against coronavirus but that's a pipe dream for slum-dwellers like Bala Devi, now sweltering through a summer heatwave.

The 44-year-old widow and her family of eight are among tens of millions of people facing months of torrid weather while stuck at home, in lockdown, without regular access to clean water to keep cool and wash.

"It is so hot the children keep asking for water to drink. How can I give them water for washing their hands when we don't have even enough water to drink?" Devi said at her cramped home in New Delhi.

Outside it is around 45 degrees Celsius but her one-bedroom tenement house has just an improvised ceiling fan to keep its occupants cool.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, water was in short supply for the 100 million people living in India's urban slums.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has listed water infrastructure as a key priority, promising to reach 145 million rural households by 2024.

But currently roughly a third of the country's 1.3 billion people cut back on washing and bathing during summer as taps run dry.

Last year the southern city of Chennai ran out of water entirely.

Heatwaves are increasing in frequency, and this week the mercury hit 50 Celsius in western Rajasthan state. Parts of Delhi



recorded their hottest May temperatures in almost 20 years.

Heat stress has killed around 3,500 people around the country since 2015, according to government figures, while farmers have killed themselves because of droughts ravaging their crops.

Meanwhile India is facing another problem as massive swarms of desert locusts are destroying crops across western and central India, seeping into Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab now, after Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana. Locust containment measures and sprinkling operations have been conducted in 303 locations spread over more than 47,000 hectares till Wednesday in 20 districts of Rajasthan, nine in Madhya Pradesh, two in Gujarat and one each in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, sources in the Agriculture Ministry said. The government is using specialised spraying machines and has set up 11 control rooms to coordinate the response.

**US ends waivers for nations in Iran nuke deal**

AFP, Washington

The United States said Wednesday it was ending waivers in its sanctions for nations that remain in the Iran nuclear accord, bringing the deal further to the verge of collapse.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he was responding to Iran's "brinkmanship" -- its series of small but defiant nuclear steps, aimed at pressuring the United States to remove sanctions as called for by the 2015 accord.

"These escalatory actions are unacceptable and I cannot justify renewing the waiver," Pompeo said.

The United States will notably do away with the waivers that allowed the modification of the heavy water reactor in Arak, which prevented it from using plutonium for military use, as well as the export of spent and scrap research reactor fuel.

Pompeo said that the United States was issuing a final 60-day waiver to allow companies involved in the projects to wrap up operations.

**Huawei exec loses battle in extradition fight**

AFP, Vancouver

An executive for Chinese tech giant Huawei suffered a legal setback Wednesday when a Canadian judge ruled that proceedings to extradite her to the United States will go ahead.

The decision on so-called double criminality, a key test for extradition, found that bank fraud accusations against Meng Wanzhou would stand up in Canada.

The interim ruling denying Meng's attempt to gain her freedom means she will continue to live in a Vancouver mansion under strict bail conditions while her case plays out.

It also effectively dashed hopes for a quick mending of Canada-China relations, which soured following her arrest on a US warrant in 2018 during a stopover in Vancouver.

Prosecutors accused Meng of committing fraud by lying to a bank, in this case an American one. That is a crime in both Canada and the United States.

During four days of hearings in January, the court heard that Meng lied to the HSBC bank about Huawei's relationship with its own Iran-based affiliate Skycom in order to secure nearly US\$1 billion in loans and credit, putting the bank at risk of violating US sanctions.

Huawei said in a statement it was "disappointed" by the ruling, adding that it looked forward to Meng ultimately being exonerated.

China's Embassy in Ottawa, meanwhile, accused the United States of trying "to bring down Huawei" and Canada of being "an accomplice."

Beijing has long signaled that her repatriation was a precondition for improved bilateral ties and its release of two Canadians detained on espionage suspicions.

The arrests of former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and businessman Michael Spavor nine days after Meng was taken into custody have been widely decried as retribution.

China has also blocked billions of dollars' worth of Canadian agricultural exports.



**Bad weather delays**

**SpaceX, Nasa ISS mission**

After a day of suspense, SpaceX's landmark launch to the International Space Station -- the first crewed mission to blast off from US soil in almost a decade -- was scrubbed Wednesday due to fears of a lightning strike. With NASA astronauts Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley strapped into the Crew Dragon capsule, the launch pad platform retracted and rocket fueling underway, SpaceX made the call to abort. The delay means a wait of at least a few more days for the first crewed launch on an American rocket since the space shuttle program ended in 2011. They will try again on Saturday. If successful, the launch will be the first time the feat has been performed by a privately owned company.

**Russia postpones BRICS, SCO summits in July**

Russia announced on Wednesday that the coronavirus pandemic has forced it to postpone two international summits set for Saint Petersburg in July. Officials responsible for the BRICS and SCO summits "decided to postpone" both events scheduled for July 21-23 in Russia's second city, according to a statement on the Kremlin website. The summits would have brought together leaders of BRICS countries, an association of five emerging economies -- Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. It would have also convened leaders of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation countries, which include Russia, China, India, Pakistan and several Central Asian countries. The Kremlin said new dates would be decided depending on the virus situation of countries participating in the summits "and in the world as a whole."

**Congress authorises sanctions**

**against China over Uighurs**

The US Congress on Wednesday authorized sanctions against Chinese officials over the mass incarceration of Muslim Uighurs, ramping up pressure on another front in the troubled relationship between the Pacific powers. The House of Representatives voted with just one dissent in favor of the Uighur Human Rights Act, hours after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo took a major step to press China on another major issue -- the autonomy of Hong Kong. Rights groups say at least one million Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China's northwestern Xinjiang region have been incarcerated in camps in a massive brainwashing campaign with few modern parallels. China initially denied the mass incarceration but has since described the camps as vocational training centers aimed at discouraging Islamic radicalism. Trump can veto the legislation. But Congress could easily override his veto.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

**NCC Bank**  
NATIONAL CREDIT AND COMMERCE BANK LIMITED  
Head Office: NCC Bank Bhaban, 13/1-2, Toyenbee Circular Road, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka - 1000

**Notice**

**Postponement of recommendation of dividend, Record Date and date of AGM of National Credit and Commerce Bank Limited (NCCBL).**

In order to comply with the DOS Circular No. 03 dated 11th May 2020 of Bangladesh Bank regarding declaration and distribution of dividend of the banks for the year 2019, the Board of Directors of National Credit and Commerce Bank Limited (NCCBL) in its 428th meeting held on May 18, 2020, among others, postponed its earlier decision about i) Recommendation of cash dividend (17.00%); ii) Record Date (June 01, 2020) and iii) Date of Annual General Meeting (July 27, 2020) which was published in different newspapers & online portal on April 28, 2020.

The new recommendation of dividend, Record Date and date of AGM for the year 2019 will be decided in due course and to be disclosed in time.

Sd/-  
Md. Monirul Alam, FCS  
EVP & Company Secretary

Dated: Dhaka  
May 18, 2020



This aerial photo taken on Wednesday shows trucks driving on the Hutong Yangtze River Bridge during a load test in Nantong, in China's eastern Jiangsu province.

PHOTO: AFP

## A horrific fire at Corona unit

*The hospital authorities must provide credible answers*

THE death of five patients in a fire that broke out at the Corona Isolation Unit of the city's United Hospital Wednesday night is an appalling tragedy. According to the hospital authorities, the fire might have originated from an electric short circuit at the unit which was built temporarily outside the main hospital building, and spread immediately as it was windy outside due to inclement weather. Although the fire was doused within 40 minutes, according to fire service officials, unfortunately the lives of the five patients getting treatment there could not be saved.

Now, the questions that naturally arise are: were the fire and the subsequent deaths of the patients a result of negligence? Did the hospital authorities take proper safety measures when giving electric connection to the Corona ward which is a makeshift structure? Why were the partitions and ceiling of the unit built with "inflammable materials", ignoring the risk of catching a fire? Also, since the hospital has its own fire extinguishing system (according to their statement), why couldn't they take any action to douse the fire before the fire service team arrived? Did the authorities try to rescue the patients with Covid-19 symptoms from the isolation unit when they noticed the fire in the first place? Moreover, why did they keep date-expired fire extinguishers at the hospital, as revealed by the Dhaka North City Corporation mayor yesterday? The hospital authorities must be made to answer these questions.

Since a probe committee has been formed by the Fire Service and Civil Defence authority to investigate the incident, we hope the actual reasons for the fire will be revealed soon. We also hope that it will be a fair investigation without any obstruction from any quarter and that the hospital authorities will not hide any information regarding the fire. And if found guilty of negligence, action should be taken against the hospital authorities according to our law. We express our sincere condolences to the families of the deceased.

## Greater caution needed after easing of lockdown

*Crucial to maintain social distancing rules and health guidelines*

THE government has decided not to extend the ongoing shutdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic beyond May 30 based on economic considerations. The economic fallout has been undoubtedly devastating with huge job losses and closing of businesses. However, the move comes at a time when the number of deaths due to the virus is on the rise, as is the number of cases being reported. Hospitals are getting overwhelmed by the sheer number of patients; so it is now more essential than ever not to give into any form of laxity. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has already directed all government and non-government hospitals to treat Covid-19 patients separately. It is difficult to see how hospital capacities can be increased any further without making some kind of special arrangements.

Once the shutdown ends, public transport is also set to resume on a limited scale—on a trial basis until June 15—as well as airline services. And government and private offices will return to business as usual. However, the government has issued health guidelines for all of the above and more, which must be strictly followed in order to contain a potential explosion of new cases and number of deaths as a result of the virus once the lockdown ends.

Any breach of social distancing rules and health guidelines due to the partial easing of the lockdown may cause the outbreak to rapidly get out of control. And so, people in general as well as law enforcers must remain on the highest level of alert. No business should be allowed to operate without strictly adhering to the government's guidelines. And transport services must be extra cautious as we do have a history of seeing our public transports being regularly overcrowded. Moreover, it is crucial for people to stay home and not gather in public places, except for in cases of emergencies.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

### Sundarbans, our friend in need

At a time when the nation is grappling with the multifarious effects of the coronavirus pandemic, bracing for the recent "super cyclone" Amphan—with wind speeds of up to 180 km per hour—was nothing short of appalling. However, by the grace of the Almighty, Amphan didn't wreak as much havoc as feared, thanks to the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest.

Coming to our rescue as it did many times in the past, it stood strongly, acting as a shield of defence for us yet again. Thus, it must be taken into serious consideration that we should protect this gift of nature for our own sake, by any means necessary. As it is, the biodiversity of the mangrove forest is already at risk, and the controversial coal-based Rampal power plant will further endanger it. Therefore, I urge the government to preserve the world heritage site by removing the coal-fired plant and other industrial units surrounding it, which will cause irreparable damage to the forest both in the long and short terms. I trust that the government will act prudently and save the country from harm's way.

Nur Jahan, Chattogram

# Education crisis will be more severe after reopening of schools

Rasheda K Choudhury, Executive Director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and former adviser to a caretaker government, talks to Naznin Tithi of The Daily Star about the impacts of prolonged school closure and what needs to be done to better manage the present situation.

The government has decided to keep all educational institutions closed until June 15. Earlier, the PM said that schools might remain closed till September, if the situation did not improve. If schools remain closed for a long period, how will it impact our primary education sector?

The closure of educational institutions has been necessary to contain the spread of Covid-19 but it has also been very challenging for the entire education sector, from pre-primary to higher education. As in many parts of the world, some of the major negative impacts of a prolonged school closure for us would be learning loss, increased dropout rate, child labour, early marriage, early pregnancy, violence against children, and malnutrition, among other things. We know for a fact that some of these are already happening, but the effects will be more visible after the reopening of schools.

If the shutdown continues for a long period, the competencies we expect from children upon completion of their education cycle will be negatively affected. However, I think the most significant impact will be the increased inequality in learning as many hard-to-reach groups are now missing out on different government and other ongoing educational initiatives through state-run TV and online courses.

The government has been trying to make up for this loss primarily through four platforms—TV channels, mobile networks, online and radio. We have observed that despite some limitations, secondary-level lessons are being delivered in a better way through television, but lessons for the primary students are not being delivered in a child-friendly manner. Moreover, with only 56 percent of the population having access to television, the majority of children from poor households in remote, inaccessible areas and those belonging to the ethnic minorities and disabled groups are currently missing out on education.

But like I said, the challenges will be more visible after the reopening of schools. Over the years, Bangladesh has achieved enviable success in reducing dropout rate, particularly at the primary level—from 40 percent in 2009 to 18 percent in 2018. After Covid-19, the dropout rate will surely increase as those who are currently missing out on learning will be reluctant to go to school anymore. The livelihood challenge for families facing acute shortages of food and other necessities will be a major factor contributing to the increased dropout rate and child labour. Moreover, when the parents will have to make a choice between sending a boy and a girl to school, they may choose the son to attend the school

and try to marry off their daughter. Thus, early marriage may become more prevalent resulting in an increase in early pregnancy.

There are reports coming in through the media that because of livelihood challenges, hunger and many other emerging psycho-social factors that parents themselves have been experiencing, incidences of violence against children inside households are also on the rise. People and their government in every country recognise the multi-dimensional negative effects of prolonged school closure. How to effectively deal with these challenges is a million-dollar question now.

**What measures should be taken to ensure that students do not drop out of schools because of the shutdown? Do you think continuing with the school feeding programmes and timely distribution of stipend will be enough to keep children in school?**

Both the school feeding and stipend programmes have been playing a significant role in ensuring higher attendance at schools and reducing dropouts. The government should continue with these programmes at all costs. However, over the last 16 years, the stipend amount has been increased only nominally; it should be increased further. The stipend programmes should also have universal coverage to include learners in non-formal education (NFE), who primarily belong to the disadvantaged groups. Moreover, in order to reduce school dropouts after reopening, the vulnerable families should be provided with financial support.

**What's your take on the reopening of schools?**

Frankly, the current Covid-19 situation in the country is not favourable to reopening schools. We are in the third month of the outbreak. Globally, countries have faced the most severe impacts of the outbreak—both in terms of deaths and infections—in the third month. We can't put our children at risk by reopening schools when the infection curve is going up. We should wait until the situation is somewhat contained and all preparations are in place. UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP and the World Bank jointly formulated a set of guidelines in late April 2020 about reopening of educational institutions during and after the pandemic. Our decision makers and other authorities concerned should be making adequate preparations following those guidelines before deciding to reopen. For example, we need to produce millions of cotton-made, environment-friendly face masks, particularly for our students and teachers,



Rasheda K Choudhury

before they go back to classes, and make sure that each and every school has proper WASH facilities.

**What are some of the areas on which the government needs to focus more to better manage the current situation?**

We understand that for now the government's top priority is to address hunger and poverty resulting from the global pandemic and the unprecedented shutdown. However, it is good to see that the government has already taken some initiatives to make up for the learning loss, and has been trying to address the challenges at different levels of education.

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education is already developing a very impressive three-phase response plan—short term (six months), medium term (12 months) and long term (24 months)—which is in its final stage. The plan includes students' improvement tracking, regular assessment, teachers' skills development, health-hygiene, protection of learners, among many other things. We hope the plan will be finalised and approved by the decision makers as soon as possible. Once it is approved, the government will need to focus on proper implementation and monitoring of the plan in cooperation with the school authorities, local communities, NGOs and other stakeholders. The plan should consider revisiting the syllabus and discontinuing unproductive national exams like the Primary Education Completion Exam (PECE).

The lessons currently being aired on TV for primary students have to be more attractive with provisions for learning through games, cartoons, etc. As nearly 30 percent of our primary students are first-generation learners, their parents are unable to help them with their education at home. We can't expect, for example, a rickshaw puller to help his kids learn from the TV programmes, particularly when the

lessons are difficult to comprehend.

My suggestion to the policy makers would be to reach out to those learners through mobile phones who can't be reached through TV or other online platforms. Since 96 percent of our population has access to mobile phones—not smart phones but feature phones (which can download FM radios)—their networks could be used for providing lessons (that are already being given through TV or other platforms) to primary children for one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening.

The mobile phone service providers should contribute here through providing free service to the unreachable children as part of their corporate social responsibility. BTRC can make such a suggestion to the mobile phone companies with specific guidelines for doing it. It would make a huge difference in primary education during the shutdown period if carried out with appropriate strategies and proper monitoring.

**Where do you see our primary education sector once the pandemic is over or somewhat contained?**

In terms of GDP, our investment in education is the lowest in South Asia. More allocations are needed in this sector—not only for stipend programmes, school meals, WASH facilities and health and hygiene, but also for increasing the quality of education, teachers' capacity building and improving the teaching-learning process. During the ongoing lockdown, primary teachers should be given orientation and training on online teaching. Since they are not much familiar with or prepared for providing lessons electronically, it has already become a big challenge. Teaching through TV or online with a focus on equity and quality could open a window of opportunity for Bangladesh after reopening. More investment will also be needed in research, assessments, data generation, analysis and monitoring. I sincerely hope that the upcoming budget will dedicate at least 15 percent of the total allocation for education, as per our national commitment to achieve the targets of SDG-4.

Considering the current and post-pandemic situation, the government should prioritise education along with other important areas like food safety and livelihood, employment generation and economic development. We may hopefully manage the adverse impacts of economic slowdown caused by the pandemic, but if we lose a generation of learners in education, it will be difficult to overcome the loss in years.

## Safe motherhood in the time of Covid-19

Joby George

COMPLICATIONS of pregnancy and childbirth are among the leading causes of women's death in the developing world. The 2020 Safe Motherhood Day, observed on May 28, comes in the backdrop of the added risks to mothers across the world, as the strained health systems struggle to provide essential and life-saving services to women and children. The situation in Bangladesh is no different. The shifting attention of the health systems to respond to the pandemic, restrictions in travel, economic hardships, and the fear of contracting the infection from health care facilities are preventing many mothers from seeking the much-needed care during pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal periods. The declining trends in the utilisation of maternal health care services since the start of the epidemic are concerning.

While the outlook of the pandemic may be grim, there is still a lot to cheer about. One of them is the valiance and determination of the hundreds of health care providers, who continue to provide life-saving services to women and children. On the occasion of this Safe Motherhood Day, I would like to pay tributes to some of the champion health workers, who are standing strong with the Bangladeshi mothers in the fight against Covid-19. They represent the spirit and resolve of the thousands of doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics and other health workers who are saving lives every day.

Beauty Akhter, an infinitely courageous midwife, works at the Jonaki Guchha village of Nilkomol Union in Haimchar upazila, Chandpur. Jonaki village is a remote riverine island, with no electricity, water supply or any such civic amenities. To reach the village, one has to travel across the Meghna river and then about two and a half hours on foot. During the rainy season, communication is worse and travel is risky due to the high tides. When not travelling to 25 settlements to visit her patients, Beauty provides essential services for mothers and children from a makeshift building with two rooms and a tin roof, set up by the Union Parishad. One of the



Midwives continue to provide essential healthcare services in rural Bangladesh amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

rooms is used as her residence so that she can serve round-the-clock. The villagers here have heard very little of the Covid-19 pandemic, mostly from word of mouth and the few solar-powered televisions that are present. They do not understand social distancing as they continue to go about with their lives to make ends meet. In the midst of all this, Beauty is trying to provide healthcare services to women to the best of her abilities. More than the fear of Covid-19, she fears the lack of awareness and the social and economic adversities that women face on their journey to motherhood.

Another midwife working at the Shahebrampur Union Health and Family

Welfare Centre of Madaripur district is Hosneara Akter. Her round-the-clock availability and devotion attracted most women to visit the centre until the first Covid-19 patient was identified in Madaripur in mid-March. Like everywhere else, families were frightened to go out of home for medical assistance. Given the number of mothers due to deliver soon, Hosneara felt the need to continue maternal care services though it posed a risk to her own life. She engaged local elected members to reassure the mothers that the centre is open for services and is safe. Hosneara kept calling mothers on their mobile phones reminding them of their check-up and delivery dates as well

as how they should maintain health safety instructions during Covid-19. She set up a handwashing corner outside her healthcare centre to maintain hand hygiene, arranged protective gear for herself, and followed the guidance received from her supervisors.

Nurun Nahar Begum works as a paramedic at the Union Health and Family Welfare Centre set up by the Union Parishad in the remote island of Nijum Dip in Hatiya, Noakhali. She has been serving here for the last three years and, before the pandemic struck, would provide services to an average of 150-200 mothers, including about 20 deliveries, every month. But since March, as fear of Covid-19 grew and movement became restricted, the numbers have gone down by about half. These are not the only challenges she is facing. Nurun Nahar is unable to maintain social distancing protocols among clients during satellite clinic visits. Living far away from her family, she is bravely unbending when it comes to providing healthcare services to the community.

Every day, our health workers are trying their best to save lives in these difficult times. Beauty, Hosneara, Nurun Nahar—these are just names for many of us. To their dear ones, they are more than that. Despite their families' concerns, frontline health workers like them are continuing their services during this pandemic in the numerous public healthcare centres all over the country, starting from community to district level. Worries surrounding Covid-19 sink their hearts too, yet they would not pause for a while as, according to them, they chose this profession and there is no room for compromises. To reach the remotely located population, there are over 4,400 union-level healthcare centres providing essential healthcare services in Bangladesh. Women mostly depend on these centres for maternal and newborn care services and safe normal deliveries as these centres offer round-the-clock services. On behalf of all mothers, let us be appreciative of these heroes for making motherhood safe in the time of Covid-19.

Joby George is the Chief of Party of USAID's MaMoni Maternal and Newborn Care Strengthening Project.



# A nation-builder par excellence

Niloufer Manzur, the founding principal of Sunbeams School, died from Covid-19 on May 26, 2020. As the news of her death spread, there has been an outpouring of love and condolences from her students, friends, and well-wishers. Below is a collection of three tributes sent in by our readers, all former students of Niloufer Manzur.

## My teacher, mentor and role model

RUBANA AHMED

My heart is filled with sorrow as I bow in respect to you, my teacher, my mentor and my role model. And then your words of wisdom and courage lift my spirit as I can hear you say, "When you stumble and struggle in despair, look around you and find the person who needs help, extend your hand and console his or her pain and soon you will find your solace..." You taught us to be grateful for all our blessings and reminded us that no matter what we achieve in life, we must at first be a good human being, kind-hearted, humble, thoughtful and sincere. Like so many of us, I have been privileged to be a part of the Sunbeams family. This is not just an institution, it is like a tree that is evergreen and lives on—over the seasons and beyond time.

Mrs. Manzur, as I first learned to address her, was my teacher at Geeran's Tutorial. My mother's ardent desire to ensure the necessary skills for her children brought about my changing of schools post half-yearly exams, sometime in August 1973.

I started the journey as one of the first students of Sunbeams. Our classes began in the living room and the veranda of her home at Indira Road, and history has written itself since that January day in 1974. To this day when I hear someone say they are students of Sunbeams, I glow in pride and joy to know I have met a schoolmate; they are part of my family.

My principal with a principle, Mrs. Manzur empowered each one of us, during the first few days of our initiation, to choose a name for our own school. The teachers and the students were all quite young, but that did not matter. I still recall the day: there were stacks of our English textbooks... Radiant Way- First Step, Second Step, Third Step... and then there was one named Sunbeams! And we had a name for our school! The cover of the book was red and our first benches that were built in front of us were also of the same bright red colour. From the first day, we also met the first "computer" of our school, Nurul Islam Bhai. Each morning he ushered us in



Niloufer Manzur, who died on May 26, 2020.

with a smile, knew each one of our names, whom we came to school with and their identities, relentlessly making sure to never let us leave school with anyone unless he knew them. Her dream and her team emerged with ease because she was one who emanated commitment, responsibility and affection—a unique combination of attributes that she instilled in all of us.

I learned at an early age that all good intentions are always well rewarded. Mrs. Manzur opened her home to us with generosity so we could learn, and she opened our minds' doors with her aspiration to shower children with the gift of knowledge. Humility and commitment were her strength.

She was steadfast in her commitment to enlighten each mind and give us, the new generation, the opportunities she had received. We were a family, one that evolved from a handful of students to an institution that has since generated many achievers over the last four decades. I have had the honour to be a student, a teacher's assistant and later a teacher at Sunbeams. I have learnt at each step from her.

Mrs. Manzur has always been my role model, my mentor, the reason why I became a teacher. She was a monarch on her own; she attained love and respect from all of us—students, teachers, peers, and anyone who had the honour of knowing her. She was

a pioneer in offering a platform for private education so students could be exposed to new and emerging ideas. In her desire to enlighten us, she introduced us to many acclaimed instructors such as Professor Razia Amin who taught us literature—the reason why each of Shakespeare's tragedies is embedded in my mind to this day—and Mrs. Alam who taught us history and geography. There were so many more. My principal wanted all of her students to learn from the best. We were her children, her family, and she worked tirelessly to ensure we always had the best facilities. At a time when there was no Internet, she introduced us to the British Council Library membership allowing us

access to a plethora of sources of knowledge. We could explore all our interests and learn as we pleased.

When early childhood education was not the most emphasised phenomenon, she knew it was the most necessary step in shaping the minds of children who would grow up to be the leaders and nation builders of tomorrow. Her vision was impeccable; she knew the importance of educating the young mind during their foundation years. My most important lesson when I joined as a teacher was her words during our weekly teachers' meeting: "Remember, once you are a teacher, you are always a teacher, whether you are in class or outside. Carry yourself in a way that you may earn the respect of your colleagues and your students at all times." To this day, I remember these words with gratitude.

Over the years, Mrs. Manzur had become my Niloufer Aunty, the love and affection evolved, and she was overjoyed when I went to inform her of my PhD. Her smile has always been my inspiration, her confidence my encouragement. She would always embrace me with love and affection and ask about my parents, my sister, and my aunt who was a teacher during the initial years. Her grace and magnanimity instilled a value of morality and respectfulness that has shaped my mind-set. As I stand in front of my students today, I reminisce her thoughts and tell my students, I teach so you can learn and achieve greater milestones than I could ever attain. This is what my role model, my mentor, my teacher taught me. I know that my schoolmates, like me, are also immersed in sorrow as we wipe our tears and remember each of our unique experiences with her and the honour of having her as a teacher and so much more... we are better today because she showed us the way.

Mrs. Manzur, you are like the sun in our solar system; as we revolve around you, you hold us with your strength. And like the sun, you keep us united. May we continue to uphold your ideals and values of compassion and caring.

Rubana Ahmed, PhD, is an assistant professor at Brac University.

## The Immortal Mrs. Manzur

NABILA MURSHED

Dear Mrs. Manzur, Sunbeams will not be Sunbeams without you. The corridors will miss your steady footsteps. The students and faculty will miss your confident leadership. You gave your students a solid foundation in their life. You helped them build character. You opened up new horizons for them.

You set clear expectations. You wanted your children at Sunbeams to be resilient, sensible, self-assured, helpful, grateful, and above all, a community of givers. You defined this never-giving-up trait to be the Bengali spirit. You had decided that the medium of instruction would be Bangla and English for some subjects. You were also our emotional shelter, our loving friend, philosopher and guide.

You personified the values of kindness, simplicity, curiosity and leadership. You did not have an ounce of excess in you. You shied away from interviews. But you made an exception when you made a brief appearance in Mr. Manzur Elahi's NTV interview. You said that you admired a strong sense of responsibility, a passion for justice, intelligence, friendship and patience.

Today we are numb and heartbroken to have lost you. Kaiser Tamiz Amin, from your first batch of students, aptly reflects

that we are mourning your quietus and celebrating your immense contribution as an educationist par excellence. Sabera Zareen, also from your first batch of students, says, "I have no words right now. She has been such a source of strength for me personally. I am left truly bereft." Her 20-year-old son Areeb, a second-generation Beamer, feels the world will be a poorer place without you.

Mrs. Manzur, I think you would have been very pleased to learn that one of your students from the seventies, Tazeen Ishart Zaman, has carried her corrected grammar script (with your comments) all the way to Jeddah as a memento, which she has been fondly preserving to this date. This is a testimony to the kind of impact, respect and influence you exerted upon your students.

I think you had the knack to get brilliant teachers on board. Mrs. Amin, Mrs. Khan, Mrs. Taher, Mrs. Huda, Mrs. Omar, Mrs. Rahman, Mrs. Sattar taught their designated subjects so well. They challenged us to comprehend, imagine and create.

As for me, you are coming into my mind's eye in your pretty floral silk saris. Right now, my mind is going back to Road 22, Dhanmandi R.A., where you moved Sunbeams from your home into a bigger space. You rented Mr. Bazle Kader's first floor flat with a yard. In that yard was a seesaw, possibly a swing, a bench and

enough room to run around. There was a driveway where we would stroll and chat. You added outdoor play, the opportunity to foster lifelong friendship, to serious learning. In my mind, I still see you entering the compound with Nasim and Munize, your son and daughter. I see you heading towards your office, which was in the smallest room of the flat.

At the entrance, you had posted our vigilant "Darwan Bhai", who would only open the gate just enough to let students come in and leave, one or two at a time. You kept an eye on the safety of the children. You made it possible for Darwan Bhai to live with his family at the school.

Mrs. Manzur, you remind me of Josephine March, Louisa May Alcott's unforgettable heroine who loved her family, loved her students and loved to write. I am wondering if you by any chance kept a journal? Like Jo, you too built a school for little women and little men where there was love, learning and play. This love transformed your students into big women and big men now spread all over the world.

The community you built to do good is now raising their hands in prayer for you and saying, "O soul at peace, return to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing."

With love, regards and gratitude from Class VII of the 70s: Sabera, Shahila, Rubana, Nabila, Sohail and Kaiser.

## Touching lives near and far

UMAMA ZILLUR

Dear Mrs. Manzur, There's something really special about the community that you built and the type of leader that you were. Since the news of your death surfaced, generations of your students have been pouring their hearts out, each story highlighting special personal connections with you. Thank you to everyone who has shared their tributes to Mrs. Manzur—your words have helped me when I had none of my own.

Initially, I did not fully realise the impact you had on me with your impeccable leadership—the kind that didn't shy away from creating your own indicators of success, that measured value beyond numbers and that always prioritised fostering a sense of community. Recently though, I noticed how strongly I hold onto those values in all my areas of work. I have been meaning to have these conversations with you, to express my gratitude to you for being the mentor and guardian that you were. But you were always so accessible, always around, always within reach. I felt no rush. I believed that you, as the institution that you built, were eternal.

Since graduation, I've been back in the halls of Sunbeams many,

many times—that's the type of community that you built. It has always pulled me back. One of those times, I went back to kick-start this big little dream I had, similar to yours: Kotha. I always felt I could lean on my Sunbeams family, but the support I received from the very start was beyond my expectations. I had sent out an email about a partnership with Sunbeams while sitting at the Mount Holyoke College library. I felt your warmth all the way from the US when I learnt that the school was on board.

I am so grateful to you for opening the Sunbeams gates to Kotha and trusting me with your Sunbeams children, my "siblings", back in 2016 when I was launching the small pilot project. During my school days, I had been called to your office many times—sometimes for getting in trouble, sometimes for small accomplishments. When we last met in your office, we were discussing Kotha. I remember you mentioned that you were ready to provide all the support I needed. You even threw out the idea of arranging special bus service if we wanted to hold Kotha's classes after school hours. I drew so much strength from the confidence you had in me. The community you

built played, and continues to play, an integral role in my journey with Kotha and beyond.

Over the years, I have grown to become critical of this institution and its community. When something feels like a second home and a second family, you feel responsible to hold it to higher standards, to hold it accountable and to always challenge it to be better. That is how I feel about Sunbeams. My Sunbeams family will always be close to my heart and I am so thankful to be a member of this community you have built.

There was something so comforting and peaceful thinking about Sunbeams and knowing that it was, for the most part, exactly the same as I left it eight years ago. The news of your passing immediately made me think: Sunbeams won't be the same anymore. But it has to be. I was not wrong. You, and the institution you have built from the ground up, with its seven core values—Knowledge, Leadership, Patriotism, Integrity, Humility, Confidence and Commitment—are, in fact, eternal. Your Sunbeams family will see to it.

Umama Zillur is from Sunbeams batch of 2012 and founder of Kotha, a feminist youth organisation based in Bangladesh fighting gender-based violence.

### ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

**MOUNT EVEREST SUMMIT REACHED BY EDMUND HILLARY AND TENZING NORGAY**  
May 29, 1953

Following numerous failed attempts by other climbers, Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norgay of Tibet surmounted Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world (29,035 feet), on this day in 1953.

### CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

<b>ACROSS</b>	32 Parched	9 Second person
1 Less refined	33 Mushroom, e.g.	10 TV's Danson
6 Useful skill	35 Billiards shot	16 Wise king
11 Find darling	38 Cartoon genre	17 Coffee bar order
12 Artless	41 Accepted truth	18 Cupid's missile
13 Column type	42 Henry VIII's house	20 Catch unawares
14 Didn't allow	43 Answer	21 Tribal leader
15 Rented	44 Lipstick slip	22 Poor
17 Furious		24 Print units
19 Bagel topper		25 Seventh Greek letter
20 Golfer Hogan	<b>DOWN</b>	27 Chewy candies
23 "1984" author	1 "Far out, dude!"	31 Delicious
25 Model	2 Commotion	33 Ninny
Macpherson	3 International	34 "E Pluribus"
26 Alabama team	4 Lake near Buffalo	35 Train unit
28 Brick carriers		36 Log chopper
29 Reacted to pains	5 Remembers	37 Tear
30 Stunned wonder	6 Building wing	39 Extinct bird
	7 Uttered	40 Screw up
	8 Middling card	

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

### YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

M	O	A	T	S	B	R	A	N
I	N	D	I	A	P	R	A	D
L	A	D	E	N	R	A	T	E
O	D	E	S	J	O	S	T	L
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### BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

### BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



# 'I always try to compete with myself'

May 26, 2020 marked the 15th anniversary of Mushfiqur Rahim's international debut for Bangladesh. The wicketkeeper-batsman revealed his regrets, points of satisfaction, desires and much more during a long conversation with *The Daily Star's* Ekush Tapader.

**The Daily Star (TDS):** How is Mushfiqur the cricketer faring during this crisis?

**Mushfiqur Rahim (MR):** Actually, for us players, it is really difficult to stay well without cricket. It is cricket that we miss the most at the end of the day. I am continuing my fitness work but it has been difficult to do skills training, which is more important. I am watching videos of the bowlers that I may face in the upcoming tournaments and that is how I am passing the time.

**TDS:** When all sport came to a halt, did you ever imagine that the break in action would last this long?

**MR:** No. Not just me, I think no one imagined that the time before resumption would be this long because this pandemic is such that it has no timeframe. In fact, still no one can say exactly when we can return to the field or when international cricket can resume. Our [Dhaka] Premier League had started and after it was halted, I thought it would resume again after two weeks.

**TDS:** Is there a possibility of getting rusty, having been deprived of skills training and match practice for so long?

**MR:** Look, our body has become used to staying on the field daily. When you play a match, you need to be on your feet for five to six hours. So, it takes some time for that to return to our system. You can do a lot of fitness work [at home] but for a bowler, bowling fitness is a totally different thing. It is the same for batsmen. We have been discussing the possibility of a 2-3-week pre-camp before resumption. It will be very challenging. We may be a lot more prone to injuries as it will be difficult for us to do things that we have been away from for such a long time.

**TDS:** Which areas do you think players should focus more on in order to regain form once training starts?

**MR:** Our focus needs to be on the health side as it is not that the virus will completely disappear when training resumes. The number of infected are increasing day by day in Bangladesh. We cannot go and do skills training individually. Players and net bowlers will come from different places. There will also be security personnel. So, we need to be careful. I hope that team management will give us a good guideline and we need to follow that. I cannot actually say what other players will be focusing on but I definitely will do skills training first.

**TDS:** Bangladesh batting consultant Neil McKenzie said that the players will return hungrier than ever. What is your take on this?

**MR:** The senior players are losing three months from their careers. I think there is no reason to not be hungry. For others like Liton [Das], Soumya [Sarkar], Shadman

[Islam], who have already played for a few years [in the national side], I think they also have reasons to return hungrier. I also feel bad for them. Especially for Liton. He just had a wonderful series [against Zimbabwe]. He had the momentum. Now he needs to gain that momentum again. So, players will be hungry but we need to maintain a process so that we can be successful most of the time and have more consistency. Hurrying to get back to form will not work. I agree with Neil. I visualise scoring hundreds, two hundreds even now when I am at home. So, I think I will feel better if I



can get back and do it.

**TDS:** It has been 15 years that you have been playing international cricket. Could you share some thoughts about the joys and regrets over this period?

**MR:** First of all, Alhamdulillah that I have played for Bangladesh for almost 15 years. This is actually not easy. You see, there aren't many who could play in all three formats for Bangladesh for this long. Maybe there were a few in the past but back then we did not play as many games as we do now. We usually play cricket at a stretch for 9-10 months as we have year-round tournaments like BPL, BCL and NCL besides international cricket. So, considering all this, I think to be able to maintain fitness and form and play all

these years -- Alhamdulillah.

Like any other ordinary man, I also feel the need for more. I am satisfied with what I have achieved in the past 6-7 years. But I did not get the start that I had wanted. I am satisfied with how I have converted since 2012. I am getting the results of my hard work now. If I can keep this consistency then maybe at the end of my career, I will be able to say that I have achieved more than I had wanted.

**TDS:** Your career graph has always followed an upward trajectory. So, in the next five years, where do you want to see yourself?

I learned a lot then. Another incident was the Asia Cup final that we lost by two runs [against Pakistan in 2012]. It was the most important tournament as a captain for me.

And if I talk about my happy moments, then my first double-century [against Sri Lanka in 2013, also the first double-ton by a Bangladesh player] brought me immense satisfaction. I think it was a great moment for Bangladesh cricket also. We needed the belief that a Bangladeshi player can also score 200 or more in Tests. Also, defeating Australia and England in Tests, defeating Sri Lanka in our 100th Test in their own backyard was also a rare moment.

**TDS:** A bit surprising to see you not mentioning losing the captaincy!

**MR:** I do want to say that I was disappointed in the way I lost the captaincy. I think I did not get the proper respect for my honest work as a captain and also as a player. Sometimes you see that Bangladesh players do not want to take captaincy even after being offered. Why do you think that happens? Because before giving anything to the team in this regard they face a lot of pressure and go through a lot of personal loss. This is a place that deserves respect. As long as a player is in the post, he needs to be appreciated. There are very few captains who were bid farewell with respect. I think it will be better for our cricket if this aspect improves.

**TDS:** Who do you think can emerge as the next Big Five after the five of you [Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, Mahmudullah Riyad, Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur]?

**MR:** I think every team in the world goes through this period of transition. It is hard to mention five names as I think everyone is capable. There is Liton, Soumya [Sarkar], [Mohammad] Naim, Shadman [Islam] and Mominul [Haque] are there in Tests. And if I talk about bowlers, then [Abu Javed] Rahi and Ebadot [Hossain] are there in Tests. There are Taijul [Islam], [Mehedi Hasan] Miraz, [Mohammad] Saifuddin -- I think all of them are more skilful than me. All they need to do is to keep their consistency. And I think they will be able to achieve in 8-10 years what I have achieved in 15 years.

Also, it will also be a challenge and the responsibility of the five of us to at least leave six or seven players in that position when we leave.

**TDS:** You spend a lot of time in the nets. How much time do you think you will spend in the nets after training resumes?

**MR:** It is really tough to say. My wife jokingly says, "I guess you will spend the whole 24 hours [in the nets] the first time you go to training [after resumption]."

And I say, "Yes, I will stay there in the Mirpur Academy." But I think we need to be smart. We will have to carry the workload given by the team management.



Juventus superstar Cristiano Ronaldo was working on his conditioning in an individual training session, eager to get back into the swing of things as a government decision on the fate of Serie A was due to be announced Thursday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Messi welcomes 'weird' restart

AFP, Madrid



La Liga

Barcelona and Argentina captain Lionel Messi said he was eager to start playing again but thought La Liga games behind closed doors would feel "weird".

The Spanish Football Federation won a legal judgement on Wednesday handing it control over league scheduling and then said it would allow La Liga to play every day when this season resumes.

"We cannot think about what we are leaving behind this year. It is better to think about the future," Messi said. "Like going back to day-to-day training, seeing your teammates, playing your first few games. No doubt it will be strange at first, but I am looking forward to competing again!"

He said playing without fans "implies a series of challenges. The preparation at squad level is the same as for any other match, but it is true that individually you have to train and get mentally prepared to play without people because it is very weird."

"It will be like starting over," he said. "Technically it will be the same season, but I think all teams and players will experience it differently."

Messi was due to lead Argentina this summer in the Copa America, where his country are joint hosts with Colombia, but the competition was postponed to June next year.

"Postponing the Copa America was a huge disappointment, but of course it was reasonable and most logical. I was really looking forward to playing in it again."

## Federations mull restart after govt decision to reopen

ANISUR RAHMAN

After a two-month shutdown enforced to contain the spread of coronavirus, the government announced on Wednesday that the country will reopen on May 31 to keep the economy rolling. Major national sports federations want to follow the instructions to open their respective offices but also want to observe the situation before resuming sporting activities.

The federations have kept sporting activity suspended since the youth and sports ministry on March 16 instructed all sports to be halted for an indefinite period. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) suspended its Dhaka Premier League and Bangladesh Premier League respectively, and other federations also kept their activities suspended for nearly two and a half months. "We are now thinking of carrying out activities on a limited scale but we haven't yet decided when to restart. We will work on a priority basis, such as the Dhaka Premier League, FTP and some official tasks. However, the authority concerned will take the decision to resume the league and about international commitments," said BCB chief executive officer Nizamuddin Chowdhury.

BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said: "We will now open the office on May 31 but we will ensure reduced attendance of employees after a few days because we don't have big tasks after the cancellation of the Bangladesh Premier League."

"Afterwards, we will start the process of the BFF elections, which was suspended due to the pandemic and shutdown. BFF executive committee will take a decision regarding this. We are also thinking of resuming the Women's Football League, National Football

Championship and School tournament in suitable circumstances," said Shohag.

Echoing Shohag's sentiment regarding reopening their office, Bangladesh Hockey Federation acting general secretary Mohammad Yousuf said: "To resume sports activities, we will observe the situation and wait for the instructions from the National Sports Council and youth and sports ministry. We however want to sit with the clubs to discuss about the Dhaka Premier Hockey League as we sent them letters before the shutdown was enforced. FIH [International Hockey Federation] also wanted to know about the international tournaments scheduled to take place in Bangladesh. We will discuss all matters and follow the government guidelines at the board meeting before taking any decision."

Bangladesh Archery Federation general secretary Kazi Razib Ahmed Uddin Chapal said: "We are now working out how to restart activities. We have to accept the decision of the government for but the athletes are like our children and we have to look after their health. If the athletes' parents, organisations and sponsors give us their nod, then we will start the training of the national team in a small scale. We will observe the situation till June 15 before holding the executive committee meeting."

Bangladesh Volleyball Federation general secretary Ashikur Rahman Miku said: "We first want to observe the situation. If there is nominal opportunity to restart games, we will start it by maintaining health guidelines."

Bangladesh Handball Federation general secretary Asaduzzaman Kohinoor said they wanted to start training camps and that they are thinking of resumption of play by organising tournaments in late June or early July.



Young footballers in Germany returned to business almost two weeks after the top-flight Bundesliga resumed. Members of the youth football department of Kickers Horlofftal are seen here in Reichelsheim on Wednesday in their first training session since the lockdown.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## CA sets dates for India, Afghan Tests

AGENCIES

Australia will begin their Test summer later this year with an inaugural Test against Afghanistan in Perth while Gabba will host the opening match of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India.

The Afghanistan Test will take place from 21 to 25 November and will be a day/night affair. The first of the four Tests against India begins on 3 December in Brisbane. The second Test (11-15 December) will be a day/night affair at the Adelaide Oval, while the third (26-30 December) and fourth (3-7 January) Tests will be played at the MCG and SCG, respectively.

In January this year, India captain Virat Kohli had said that he was looking forward to defend the Border-Gavaskar Trophy irrespective of the venue.

Date: May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**ACCORD**  
Public Notice

**Stichting Bangladesh Accord Foundation**

On behalf of Our distinguished Client, Stichting Bangladesh Accord Foundation, having its address at Prins Hendrikdijk 25, 1012 TM Amsterdam the Netherlands and Bangladesh Liaison Office (Accord Bangladesh) at AJ Heights Building (12<sup>th</sup> floor), Chh- 72/1/D, Pragati Sharami, North Badda, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh, notice is hereby given to all agencies of Government and all those organizations, entities, authorities, persons having any kind of interests with Stichting Bangladesh Accord Foundation that Our Client will close the operation of its Bangladesh liaison office and all their accounting records from **May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020**. In order to complete all the required formalities within the stipulated date, the office closure application and all other required documents are processed to be submitted to the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) for permission to close the Liaison/Representative office.

For and on Behalf of:  
**Stichting Bangladesh Accord Foundation**  
Omar H. Khan, Barrister-at-Law  
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh  
Legal Counsel

Montaz Vision (Suite B-4), House 11/A, Road: 99, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh  
E-mail: info@legalcounselbd.com