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# Protect the migrants

*Bangladesh urges UN in letter; asks for at least 6 months' salary if a worker is to be fired*

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh has written to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, urging for measures to protect the rights of migrants being affected by the global coronavirus pandemic.

"We told the UN Secretary-General that migrants are an integral part of development for both sending and destination countries. If migrants are terminated without compensation and deported home, they and their families will be hit hard," Foreign Minister Abdul Momen said.

"It will be disastrous for them to be terminated. They need a cushioning period. So, we said if any of the migrants are to be sacked from jobs, they should be paid compensation equal to at least six months' salary," he told The Daily Star yesterday, referring to the letter last week.

He added that migrant remittance is crucial for their families who can improve their health and education, some of the most important goals set in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Sudden termination without any compensation means the SDGs will stumble, he said.

There are some one crore Bangladeshi migrants working mostly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. They sent home \$18 billion in remittance last year, which is the second largest foreign exchange after the readymade garment sector.

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, global brands have

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PHOTO: STAR

# Biman cancels all 24 flights of today, yesterday

RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman Bangladesh Airlines cancelled all its 24 flights scheduled to operate yesterday and today on three domestic routes due to lack of passengers.

The national flag carrier was forced to cancel 46 flights between June 1 and June 4 for the same reason, said sources.

Tahera Khandaker, deputy general manager (public relations) of Biman, told The Daily Star, "We were forced to cancel all our scheduled for today [yesterday] and tomorrow [today] as number of passengers were very low."

The maiden flight of Biman on Dhaka-Saidpur route took off on Monday with only four passengers on board while the return flight had 20 passengers, said Tahera.

Except for the Dhaka-Saidpur-Dhaka, flight, the national airliner had to cancel its ten others flights on Chattogram and Sylhet route on May 1 -- the day

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# GONOSHASTHAYA TEST KIT Sample error leads to false negatives

*Asks BSMMU to suspend performance trial*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoshasthaya Kendra has asked the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University to suspend the performance trial of the coronavirus antigen kit after detection of discrepancy in the collection of saliva.

"The monitoring team for the performance trial identified that the presence of thick cough causes negative results in a number of samples. So, we have sought temporary suspension of the trial," said Dr Mohib Ullah Khondoker, coordinator of Gonoshasthaya's Covid-19 Rapid Dot Blot Project.

He told The Daily Star that clear saliva is necessary for testing antigen, but the monitoring team that is comprised of scientists of BSMMU and Gonoshasthaya Kendra identified the problem in the sample collection procedure.

"We have written to the BSMMU authorities on June 2 that we will fix the sample collection procedure in two to

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

### 'Bangladesh can be best in Asia'



Some members of boy scouts handing over Tk 601, collected by saving up their tiffin money, to Bangabandhu for the Prime Minister's Relief Fund on June 4, 1972.

June 4, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

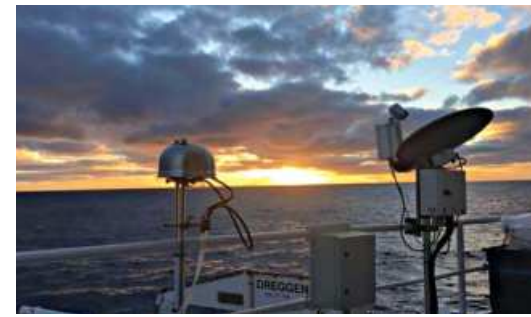
#### BANGABANDHU GREET'S JOHN STONEHOUSE

In a reception programme organised in the honour of British MP John Stonehouse, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman expresses his deep gratitude to this friend of Bangladesh who played a great role in moving world opinion in favour of Bangladesh's Liberation War. Stonehouse, in his reply, calls upon the people of Bangladesh to work hard to prove wrong those who are trying to belittle the achievement of Bangladesh. Expressing his confidence in Bangabandhu's leadership, the British MP says that if the existing natural and human resources of the country can be utilised properly, Bangladesh will be the best nation in Asia.

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# Cleanest air on earth near Antarctica



CNN ONLINE

Scientists believe they have identified the world's cleanest air, free from particles caused by human activity.

In a first-of-its-kind study of the bioaerosol composition of the Southern Ocean, researchers from Colorado State University identified an atmospheric region which remains unchanged by human activity.

It's located over the Southern Ocean, which surrounds Antarctica.

Weather and climate are closely linked, connecting each part of the world with other regions. As the climate changes rapidly because of human activity, scientists and researchers struggle to find a corner of the earth unaffected by people.

However, Professor Sonia Kreidenweis and

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# Ensure TCB goods reach upazilas

HC directs government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to take steps to sell the Trading Corporation Bangladesh's essential commodities to people at upazila level, beyond the city corporations and municipality areas, amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The principal secretary to the prime minister's office, commerce secretary and chairman of TCB have been asked to take necessary

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#### PRAYER TIMING JUNE 4

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-05 12-45 5-00 6-45 8-15  
JAMAAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-50 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## COVID-19 CENSORSHIP

# UN accuses Bangladesh, other Asian nations

AFP, Geneva

The UN rights chief warned yesterday that China and other Asian countries were using the coronavirus crisis as an excuse to clamp down on free expression and tighten censorship.

In a statement, Michelle Bachelet expressed alarm over how censorship had been tightened in several countries, along with arbitrary arrests and detention of people who criticise their government's response, or even who simply share information or views on the pandemic.

"Arrests for expressing discontent or allegedly spreading false information through the press and social media, have been reported in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam," the statement said.

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Two children enjoying the sweet relief brought by the rain yesterday after Dhaka suffered a few days of extreme heat and humidity. The photo was taken yesterday at Mugdapara.

PHOTO: SHEIKH ENAMUL HAQ

# Italy leads Europe reopening borders

*Germany to lift travel warning from June 15; Brazil surpasses 30,000 deaths*

AFP, Rome

Italy reopened its borders to European travellers yesterday as the continent slowly emerged from quarantines to restart battered economies even as the coronavirus pandemic carved its deadly path through Latin America.

European nations among the hardest hit by the outbreak have mostly flattened out infection curves and turned to the task of balancing economic recovery against the risk of a second wave of cases.

The United States, with the highest death toll, and Latin America have emerged as new centres for infections of Covid-19 that has killed more than 380,000 people worldwide since it first emerged in China late last year.

Across the globe, nations are cautiously reopening schools, businesses and returning to life after months of quarantine.

Italy -- the first country badly hammered in Europe -- is leading the way to restart, hoping tourism will revive its recession-hit economy three months after the nation shut down.

"We are cautiously optimistic. Let's hope the Italians begin travelling and take advantage of seeing an uncrowded Rome," said hotel receptionist Alessandra Conti.

Tourism accounts for 13 percent of Italy's GDP and officials are keen to reassure visitors they will be safe.

But with health experts warning over reopening too quickly, some fear foreign visitors may be reluctant to travel.

"I don't think we'll see any foreign tourists really until the end of August or even September. Who's going to

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