

High-powered

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will provide all kinds of support to the family of the deceased MCA. **TAJUDDIN VISITS INDIA**
A 3-member high-powered Bangladeshi delegation under the leadership of Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmad arrives in New Delhi today on a 3-day visit. They will discuss with their Indian counterparts about the full-fledged implementation of the friendship treaty between the two countries. The recently concluded trade treaty between Bangladesh and India will also be discussed in detail. They will also explore new avenues of cooperation between the two neighbours. The Bangladeshi delegation will call on Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi tomorrow. **\$3 CRORE AID FROM DENMARK**
Denmark will provide \$3 crore for agricultural development of Bangladesh. The money will be spent to import fertiliser and pesticides and develop fisheries. A three-member Danish expert team is currently visiting Dhaka. **NEPALI DELEGATION VISITS BANGLADESH**
A Nepali trade delegation under the leadership of President of Nepal Chamber of Commerce Sri Poshupati Giri is currently visiting Dhaka. In a press conference Giri says that a robust trade relation can be developed between the two neighbours. Nepal is interested in importing jute and jute products, leather products, clothes and newsprint from Bangladesh, informs Giri. Bangladesh can import rice, wood, stone, mustard oil from Nepal, he adds. **SOURCES:** June 9, 1972 issue of Purbodosh.

Harvard builds

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or large-scale industry because of its ability to carry heavy payloads. The method of miniaturising the robot was surprisingly straightforward: researchers simply shrunk the 2D sheet design of the robot, as well as its circulatory, to a more minute scale. "Most robots at this scale are pretty simple and only demonstrate basic mobility," said Kaushik Jayaram, a former postdoctoral fellow at SEAS and Wyss and author of the research paper behind the robot, alongside Jennifer Shum, Samantha Castellanos and E. Farrell Helbling. "We have shown that you don't have to compromise dexterity or control for size."

However, making the robot smaller does effect some changes that need to be accounted for, such as stride length and the stiffness of its joints. The researchers developed a model which could predict running speed, foot force, and payload size based on the size of a target.

The robot's bigger sibling, HAMR, was announced in 2013 and could be used for search and rescue and infrastructure inspection. It was also able to move across water by sinking itself and walking under the surface.

This is done by applying an electric voltage to the water, which reduces the contact angle between the feet of the robot and the water. This breaks the surface tension, and the robot will sink.

Currently, the larger robot requires assistance in the form of a soft slope or ramp in order to break out of the water, although it has been hypothesised that gecko-like adhesive legs or greater jumping ability would give it this functionality.

Since HAMR-JR has the same design as HAMR, it's likely that improvements to the larger model can be translated to the smaller one, giving it all the same capabilities.

Nasim

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Infected with Covid-19, Nasim later suffered a stroke and went into a "deep coma" as his condition deteriorated further on Saturday night.

The 13-member medical board, led by Kanak, said this after a meeting at Bangladesh Specialised Hospital in Shyamoli where Nasim is being treated.

The board was formed on the instruction of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

On June 1, Nasim was admitted to Bangladesh Specialised Hospital as he was feeling unwell. Later, he tested positive.

He then suffered a brain stroke. Nasim's son Tanvir Shakil Joy, also a former AL MP, told the media on Friday that his father had undergone a successful surgery after suffering a stroke.

On Saturday, talking to The Daily Star, Dr Raziul Haque, a neurosurgeon of Bangladesh Specialised Hospital, said the senior AL leader was currently unconscious and on a ventilator at the ICU.

Raziul added that Nasim's blood pressure was very unstable. "We are using medicine to keep the blood pressure under control. His overall condition is now very critical as he is infected with Covid-19 and had a brain stroke," he said.



Four girls playing a game on a footpath near Bhasantek slum. With the financial implications of the coronavirus pandemic hitting the lower-income groups the hardest, children like them have to find solace in each other amid a diminishing reality of even less food and happiness at home.

PHOTO: SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Poverty taking toll on slum children

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on the children's physical and psychological growth.

According to the World Food Programme, stunting -- a condition resulting from poor nutrition and with negative effects on children's physical growth and cognitive development -- affects 36 percent of children under five in the country and peaks at 50 percent among the poorest and those living in the slums.

Visiting other such informal settlements in the capital, these correspondents found others in a similar state to Rupban's family.

In Bhasantek slum, construction worker Babul has been taking sole care of his 10-year-old daughter since his wife left the family six months ago.

Out of work since the shutdown began, Babul can't afford to feed

his daughter every day. While initially reluctant to step out onto the streets to seek help, he said, poverty forced him to ask for alms from passers-by.

People didn't particularly stop to help him, Babul said, as he looks fit enough to work and tended to give more to the elderly and the disabled.

"I went out seven days last week. I only got food on two days and gave it to my daughter," he said. Those two days were the only days when his daughter was able to eat well that week.

Rickshaw-puller Reza, who lives in Jheelpar slum, would earlier buy milk every day to take home to his six-year-old daughter -- he knew it was important for her growth and development.

Without income, Reza can no longer afford milk for his daughter and feels guilty that he is depriving his daughter of essential nutrition.

"The relief the government and NGO provided is not enough. Where else will I seek money? My neighbours are poor too," said Reza.

Dietician and nutritionist Farzana Ahmed said most children in these settlements usually suffer from malnutrition year-round as their families cannot afford to provide them with a balanced diet.

"Due to the shutdown, this problem may intensify. Eating less and low-quality food will hamper their physical and mental growth."

For example, the development of children's immune systems will likely be hampered and they will not flourish intellectually, said Farzana.

Such experiences of hunger, malnutrition and boredom among children living in poverty will have a negative impact as they may increasingly adopt aggressive and violent behaviour, said Dr Muntasir Maruf, assistant professor of psychiatry at the National Institute of Mental Health.

Currently, these children are barred or discouraged from social interactions and playing sports and other physical activities outside the home. This situation is forcing them into a life of monotony, he said, which could lead to children between 12 and 15 years especially engaging in arguments and fights with their parents and guardians.

"These children may also experience depression or engage in anti-social activities," he said.

Global virus death toll tops 400,000

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highlighted the long road to recovery.

China reported a plunge in foreign trade on the back of subdued consumer demand and weakness in key overseas markets.

Analysts say a deeper downturn in exports is looming for the world's manufacturing powerhouse, where the virus first emerged late last year.

Factories in India are also struggling to restart because of labour shortages, as the country slowly emerges from a strict nationwide lockdown that sent millions of migrant labourers back to their far-flung home villages.

Malaysia yesterday said it would reopen nearly all economic activity and allow interstate travel starting June 10, lifting coronavirus restrictions imposed nearly three months ago as it moves to revive an economy battered by the pandemic, reports Reuters.

US 'LARGELY THROUGH'
The worst health crisis in more than a century has infected more than 6.9 million globally and forced tens of millions out of work just in the United States, the world's hardest-hit nation.

But President Donald Trump said his country was bouncing back.

"We had the greatest economy

in the history of the world. And that strength let us get through this horrible pandemic, largely through, I think we're doing really well," he told reporters.

As the country reels from a second weekend of massive protests against racism and police brutality, Trump -- facing re-election in November -- reiterated his calls to further ease stay-at-home measures.

It followed surprisingly upbeat employment numbers that showed the country gained 2.5 million jobs in May.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio early yesterday lifted a curfew he had imposed on the city for nearly a week as anti-racism protests raged there and nationwide.

This week New York will enter phase one of the state's plan to reboot economic activities shuttered due to Covid-19, which caused more than 21,000 confirmed and probable deaths in America's most populous city.

EU TO REOPEN BORDERS

In Europe, badly-hit countries slowly continued on a path toward a post-pandemic normal, also seeking to revive key tourist sectors in time for the summer.

The European Union said it could re-open borders to travellers from outside the region in early July, after some countries within the bloc reopened to European visitors.

In France, the Palace of Versailles reopened without the US and Chinese tourists that usually make up a third of its visitors, reports AFP.

The country also marked the anniversary of the 1944 D-Day landings with a fraction of the big crowds seen in previous years, owing to strict social distancing restrictions. Elsewhere, the golf's Asian Tour became the latest international body to announce plans for a restart, after the pandemic threw the world sports calendar into disarray.

Play is expected to resume in September, although organisers said lingering flight restrictions may force competitors to travel without support staff.

Signs that life was beginning a return to normal in Europe and Asia were tempered by the bleak numbers streaming in from Latin America.

Brazil's death toll passed 35,000 as Bolsonaro echoed criticism of the WHO by Trump, who has said the US will defund the organisation because

it is too close to China.

Iran's health ministry said yesterday a surge in new reported infections was due to increased testing rather than a worsening outbreak.

CHINA EXONERATES SELF

A beleaguered China yesterday exonerated itself from the global allegations of delay in reporting the coronavirus outbreak, saying the virus was first noticed in Wuhan on December 27 as a viral pneumonia and human-to-human transmission was discovered on January 19, after which it took swift actions to curb it.

A whitepaper released by the Chinese government gave a lengthy explanation to refute the allegations of cover up and delay by Beijing on reporting the Covid-19 outbreak last year in Wuhan.

Trump and leaders of several countries have accused China of not being transparent in reporting the deadly disease, leading to huge human casualties and economic crisis across the world.

Pope Francis yesterday warned Italians to not let their guard down against coronavirus now that infection rates have fallen and urged them to obey government rules on social distancing and wearing masks.

Cop arrested over death of farmer

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Talukdar, brother of the deceased, Nikhil Talukdar, 32, a farmer.

According to Nikhil's cousin Milon Talukdar and a local named Jhantu who was with Nikhil when the incident took place, Shamim assaulted the 32-year-old farmer at 11:00am on Tuesday morning when the police official, along with a few locals including Rezaul, happened upon Nikhil, Jhantu and two others playing cards.

According to their account, Shamim spotted the four and started recording the quartet's activity from afar, when three of them fled, but Nikhil was caught and the police official assaulted him.

Shamim hit Nikhil's spine with his

knees a few times and that, according to Jhantu and Milon, caused a fracture to his back.

At first Nikhil was taken to Barishal Sher-e-Bnagla Medical College, before doctors referred him to Dhaka Pangu Hospital as his physical condition worsened. He died under treatment around 4:00 pm on Wednesday.

Muhammad Saidur Rahman Khan, superintendent of police of Gopalganj said to The Daily Star, "A three-member departmental investigation team has been formed to probe the incident and the team was asked to submit the report within three working days. After getting the investigation report, we will take necessary steps."

Media reports yesterday also

claimed that the matter had been settled through an out-of-court payment of Tk 5 lakh to the victim's family.

Nikhil's cousin Milon Talukdar said, "In a meeting at the conference room of Kotalipara Upazila Parishad the incident was settled with Tk 5 lakh. They gave us Tk 2 lakh and assured that they would provide us jobs."

OC Lutfar said, "I was not present when the money was given to Nikhil's family. I attended the mourning meeting of Nikhil which was held at Kotalipara upazila parishad conference room. The upazila parishad chairman and other local leaders gave the money."

Talking to The Daily Star, Khokon Bala, chairman of Ramshil union

parishad, said the issue was settled with Tk 5 lakh in the presence of Bimal Krishna Biswas, chairman of Kotalipara upazila parishad and some other local influential persons.

All of them assured the family member that they would ensure a job for Nikhil's wife Iti Talukdar. When contacted, UP Chairman Biswas said the money was not part of an extra-legal settlement.

"We knew that the family was poor and wanted to help them," Biswas said. "I personally contributed, and I asked some influential locals to contribute, and we gave the family Tk 2 lakh. We will pay the rest later."

"Our main intention was to help the family and punish the police official," Biswas added.

Israelis rally against West Bank annexation plan

AFP, Tel Aviv

Thousands of Israelis rallied in Tel Aviv Saturday night against the government's plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, an AFP reporter said.

Demonstrators waved Israeli and Palestinians flags and held placards against the occupation of the West Bank and the possible annexation of parts of it, in a rally organised by leftwing NGOs and political parties.

US President Donald Trump's controversial Middle East plan, unveiled early this year, gives Israel the green light to annex Jewish settlements and other strategic territory in the West Bank.

As part of a recent agreement to form a coalition government with Benny Gantz, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu can submit the Trump plan to his cabinet and to parliament as early as July 1, for possible endorsement.

The plan also envisions the creation of a Palestinian state, but on reduced territory and without meeting the key Palestinian demand of having its capital in east Jerusalem. The Palestinians have rejected the plan outright.

One demonstrator called for more solidarity between Palestinians and Israelis.

"We have done so much damage to each other, the Palestinians and the Jewish" people, Anat Schriber told AFP.

"We are brothers -- we belong here, both of us, we can do so much more together than separately."

Another rally attendee, identifying herself as Eden, called for "justice to Palestinians and peace to both people, Israelis and Palestinians."

"In an apartheid reality there cannot be peace for us or them, nor can there be justice."

An annexation of the territories would violate international law and likely inflame tensions in the volatile region.

"I am afraid of the annexation plan," Eden said. "I think it will lead to riots and even war." The plan "will not achieve anything... (and) has no connection to peace," she contended.

400 migrants held on tourist boats allowed to land in Malta

AFP, Valletta

More than 400 migrants disembarked in Malta overnight Saturday from four tourist boats in an about-face by the government that allowed them to land after nearly 40 days onboard.

The 425 migrants, who had been picked up in the Mediterranean during various rescue operations, had been in limbo since April on the chartered boats held outside Maltese waters.

Malta had refused them entry, pointing to the closure of its ports due to the coronavirus emergency and also to its full detention centres.

Zafullah

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Dr Zafullah made significant contribution to the health sector of Bangladesh since the Liberation War in 1971. He was behind the country's drug policy that helped flourish the pharmaceutical industry.

A freedom fighter and physician, he has been demanding fast approval of Gonoshasthaya Kendra-developed rapid test kit for Covid-19 at the earliest.

The antibody test kit is of low cost and can help authorities with large-scale tests and isolation -- the two most important things in curbing the spread of coronavirus.

Rohingya

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Sharif was first rushed to a local health complex and then to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital. The doctors at the hospital declared him dead, the OC added.

Two policemen were injured in the "gunfight" and were undergoing treatment at Teknaf Upazila Health Complex, the police official said, adding that the body was sent to morgue for autopsy while two cases were under process.

Police claimed to have recovered two local firearms and seven rounds of bullets from the spot.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the police claims.

1,011 Bangladeshi

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Nigeria that landed at 8:00pm at the Dhaka Airport, said Dr Akram.

Due to the Covid-19 situation, Bangladesh suspended regular flight operations in all international routes except for China since the middle of March.

As per the government decision, all the returnees would have to be sent to a 14-day institutional quarantine if they fail to show medical certificates at the airport on their arrival here.

AFP, Tripoli

Fighters loyal to Libya's UN-recognised government yesterday kept up their counter-offensive against forces of strongman Khalifa Haftar, but fighting slowed on the outskirts of the strategic city of Sirte.

The Mediterranean coastal city -- the home of former dictator Moamer Gaddafi, who was ousted and killed

in 2011 in a Nato-backed uprising -- is also a key gateway to the country's major oil fields in the east.

The Turkish-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) based in Tripoli has in recent weeks retaken all remaining outposts of western Libya from pro-Haftar loyalists, who had sought to capture the capital in a 14-month offensive.

Haftar, following his string of

military setbacks, was in Cairo on Saturday where he supported a ceasefire proposal made by his key backer, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, meant to take effect at 0400 GMT today.

The so-called "Cairo declaration" called for the withdrawal of "foreign mercenaries from all Libyan territory, dismantling militias and handing over their weaponry," Sisi said.

But the resurgent GNA has rejected the truce plan and bombarded Sirte, the last major settlement before the traditional boundary between western Libya and the east, Haftar's traditional stronghold.

Mohamad Gnounou, a spokesman for the GNA's forces, declared on Saturday that "we will choose the time and place when" the war ends.