



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



REGD. No. DA 781 | Vol. XXX No. 152 | ASHAR 7, 1427 BS | **Your Right to Know** | SHAWWAL 28, 1441 HURI | 16 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00

BANGLADESH UPDATE **3,240** New cases in 24hrs **1,08,775** Total cases **1,425** Deaths **43,995** Recoveries **GLOBAL UPDATE** **464,701** Deaths **8,852,035** Total cases

WHEREABOUTS OF THE INFECTED DGHS has no clue about half of them

Officials can't explain reasons; experts fear zone-wise lockdown might not work due to this

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

The Directorate General of Health Services has no data on the whereabouts of almost half the people who tested positive for coronavirus.

Health experts say the government's latest attempt at enforcing lockdowns on certain areas will be of little benefit unless the authorities know the exact location of the Covid-19 patients.

On June 16, the location information of 55,909 confirmed coronavirus cases across the country was available on the website of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR). But the number of total confirmed cases was 94,481, meaning at least 38,572 cases were missing from the list.

According to the World Health Organization's Bangladesh Covid-19 Situation Report-16, the geographical distribution of only 51,271 out of 90,619 reported Covid-19 cases was available as of June 8.

Contacted on Wednesday, Prof Abul Kalam Azad, director general of the DGHS told this correspondent to ask IEDCR Director Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora about the matter.

She, however, was not available for comments yesterday.

On Thursday, the IEDCR took down from its website the area-specific information on confirmed cases in Dhaka.

According to the WHO report, the age and gender of only 24 percent of the reported cases and 58.9 percent of the reported Covid-19 deaths

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



An old woman taking care of her 72-year-old husband, both infected with the coronavirus, as they arrive at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The man, a retired professor of English at National University, began to suffer from breathing difficulties yesterday and was admitted to the ICU.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



Kamal Lohani no more

RASHIDUL HASAN

Noted personality Kamal Lohani, who tested positive for Covid-19, died at a city hospital yesterday morning. He was 86.

He was renowned for various reasons -- an Ekushey Padak winning journalist, a leading cultural activist, language movement veteran and also a noted freedom fighter.

From his early life till his last breath, he was associated with various historical and socio-cultural events of the country.

Kamal Lohani was undergoing treatment at the ICU of Sheikh Russel Gastro Liver Institute and Hospital in Mohakhali.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2



Mashrafe tests positive for Covid-19

Nazmul Islam, Nafees Iqbal also contract the virus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza has tested positive for coronavirus, confirming the news through a Facebook post yesterday. The 36-year-old, who is the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

WB injects \$1b to help cushion pandemic blow

The funds to be used in programmes to bring back lost livelihoods, keep economy running

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh's efforts to feed the nation, create jobs and keep the ailing economy afloat amid the progressively ferocious pandemic received a shot in the arm after the World Bank yesterday approved \$1.05 billion.

"This is an extraordinary response to an unprecedented crisis," said Mercy Tembon, the WB's country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan, in a press release after the loan was sanctioned.

The coronavirus pandemic has deeply jeopardised many of Bangladesh's remarkable achievements in poverty reduction and shared prosperity, including

- \$500m to go to economic zones, software parks to help create 150,000 jobs
- \$295m to enhance govt's cloud computing capacity, create 1 lakh jobs, train 1 lakh youths
- \$250m to support govt's Covid-19 crisis response

livelihoods of its population, she added.

The massive fund injection from the Washington-based multilateral lender will hopefully reverse some of the damage caused by the rogue virus, which is showing no signs of abating.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

DIGITAL SECURITY ACT Freedom of expression under threat

Says TIB; condemns arrests of journalists, teachers, writers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing deep concern over the recent arrests and intimidation of journalists and citizens across the country, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) said the constitutional right to information and expression is under threat in the name of digital security.

In a press statement yesterday, TIB demanded immediate

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

MASK MESS-UP

Probe body goes soft

Recommends no action against supplier despite finding it at fault

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

No action against the supplier has been recommended following a government probe into the alleged supply of regular masks packaged as N95 ones to various hospitals.

The controversy over the mask supply came to the fore in early April when health professionals in various hospitals were questioning the quality of respirators, with some resorting to social media to vent their frustration.

With the complaints over poor-quality respirators surfacing, the Central Medical Store Depot (CMSD), the government body that sources medical supplies, withdrew the masks received from JMI Hospital Requisite MFG Ltd.

It also served a show-cause notice to the company.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'MP Shahid linked to 2 lawmakers'

Kuwaiti paper reports

STAR REPORT

New information and evidence of wrongdoings were piling up against Laxmipur MP Mohammad Shahid Islam, charged with human trafficking and money laundering in Kuwait, media reported.

Kuwaiti media have accused the MP of trading visas and siphoning off money to the US for laundering.

Sources close to the investigation told Kuwait's Al Qabas newspaper that the suspect is a member of

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2



A man squeezes through a bamboo fence placed there to enforce a lockdown in the port city's Uttar Kattali area as many people there tested positive for coronavirus. Sadly, a policeman, who is supposed to watch over people's movement, was standing nonchalantly when the photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

2 doctors die from Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more doctors died with Covid-19 in the capital yesterday.

Dr Shafiqul Islam, a first batch student of Sir Salimullah Medical College, breathed his last at Bangladesh Specialised Hospital around 9:00am, said Dr Rahat Anwar Chowdhury, joint secretary of the Foundation for Doctors' Safety Rights and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'We can't leave the battlefield'

Overburdened, MMCH staffers struggle to treat rising patient flow as 215 of them tested coronavirus positive

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

The Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital (MMCH) is struggling to provide services to an increasing number of patients, including those with Covid-19, since the easing of the countrywide shutdown on May 31.

The total number of coronavirus cases in Mymensingh district was 564 as of June 1. Within just two weeks, by June 19, the number of cases jumped to 1,208 in Mymensingh while that of Jamalpur, Netrokona and Sherpur were 440, 366 and 192, respectively.

The number of patients seeking treatment for other illnesses at the hospital are also increasing, said doctors.

A month ago, some 500 admitted patients would be present at the regular wards of MMCH on any given day; now the number is about 1,000, said Laxmi Narayan Majumder, deputy director of the hospital.

He said patients, who could not reach the hospital during the shutdown, have started coming in from all over the division as public transport has become available.

While MMCH already has a shortage of doctors, the situation turned worse as 215

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

In Loving Memory



We deeply mourn the passing of

Mr. Waliur Rahman Bhuiyan, OBE

Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajjun

He served as the Director of the Board of ACI Limited since 2007. He has had an illustrious career as the Managing Director of Linde Bangladesh Limited (Previous, BOC Bangladesh Limited) from 1998 to 2011.

He is survived by his wife and two children.



Freedom of expression

FROM PAGE 1
and unconditional release of the detained journalists, teachers, writers, cartoonists and others, and stopping such undemocratic harassment in order to protect the constitutional right to free expression. They also demanded avoiding the path of arbitrariness.

It expressed deep concern over the recent attacks, lawsuits, and threats against various classes and professions across the country, especially writers and journalists, due to sharing various irregularities through news, cartoons, photographs or social media content.

"Such arbitrariness must be prevented from being normalised," the statement added.

According to media reports, journalists, teachers, writers and cartoonists across the country have been accused in cases for collecting or publishing news on various issues, especially on the irregularities in relief distribution and in tackling the Covid-19 pandemic.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said that in most of the cases, the charges are so-called "spreading rumours", "spreading false information", "criticising the government", "tarnishing image", "threatening to kill", "defamation" etc. on the news and social media. Such cases are undermining the citizens' freedom of speech and expression.

"Unconstitutionally, many have been tortured and sent to prison in unjust cases, which are not only a threat to free speech, but is also normalising arbitrariness in the country," said the TIB official.

He added that the authorities concerned should respond to the criticism of their work, and control the alleged irregularities and corruption with due importance given to published information.

"Do not walk the path of [taking] undemocratic and arbitrary [measures] by controlling the flow of information

or suppressing dissent. We demand the immediate withdrawal of such motivated and preventive cases and the release of those unjustly arrested," Zaman said.

TIB also demanded exemplary punishment of those involved in the alleged corruption by bringing them under the purview of the law and conducting thorough investigations in this regard.

He said instead of solving the mystery of journalist Shafiqul Islam Kajal's disappearance, authorities were busy arresting him in an apparently fabricated case of illegal entry into his own country.

"Such behaviour in the face of various disclosures or criticisms of corruption and irregularities is on the one hand contradictory to the prime minister's declaration of 'zero tolerance' against corruption and, on the other, against the constitutional right to free expression."

In particular, where prosecuting a citizen on charges of independent expression or publishing news is preventive, the harassment of detainees in such cases is the ultimate violation of civil rights, the TIB Executive Director said, citing the inhuman harassment of Kajal.

Criticising the arrests of different individuals in over 50 cases under the Digital Security Act this year, Zaman said, "The state should have created an environment in which the media could publish information in an independent, impartial and objective manner. Because if there is a deficit in the normal flow of information, [further] rumours and mistrust will develop, he said.

TIB said it considers the process of arresting and torturing journalists and other citizens in these cases to be tantamount to institutionalising arbitrariness by violating commitment to the rule of law in a democratic country.

tests during his treatment came negative. But on June 16, doctors conducted another test and found him to be Covid-19 positive.

He was put on ventilation later on the day as his condition deteriorated, Dr Rahat said.

With them, at least 42 doctors have died of Covid-19 so far and six others passed away with coronavirus symptoms, according to FDSR.

On the other hand, Bangladesh Doctors Foundation said 43 doctors died with infection and six others breathed their last showing symptoms.

2 doctors die

FROM PAGE 1
Responsibilities (FDSR).

Dr Shafiqul got infected with the virus nearly three weeks ago and admitted at the hospital, Dr Rahat added.

Meanwhile, Dr Mujibur Rahman Ripon, an associate professor at Central Medical College and Hospital in Cumilla, died at United Hospital.

Dr Mujibur got admitted to the hospital with breathing difficulties on June 3 and he was tested Covid-19 positive there, said Dr Rahat.

Later, the results of two consecutive

Probe body goes soft

FROM PAGE 1
In an official statement, JMI then said it was a packaging mistake.

Later, a government probe body has found that JMI supplied "research-stage N95 masks" manufactured with "unapproved imported raw materials" against the demand for regular ones.

But it did not say what steps should be taken against the supplier.

The Daily Star has obtained the summary of the probe report, submitted to the health ministry on April 27, which is yet to be made public.

The Health Services Division formed the probe committee on April 19, the day before Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a video conference expressed her annoyance over the PPE and face-mask controversies.

The committee, headed by M Saidur Rahman, additional secretary (development) to the Division, was asked to submit the report within three days. Later it was given seven more days.

THE REPORT

The probe body made three recommendations.

Firstly, the committee said, it is necessary to take action against the officials concerned who received the mask delivery without informing the director of CMSD, even after suspecting that those were not genuine N95 masks.

Secondly, skilled manpower has to be increased to identify the demand and distribution process of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Thirdly, the authority concerned needs to be more cautious in approving, manufacturing and marketing N95 masks, it said.

In the opinion part of the summary report, the committee also mentioned three points.

"The company supplied research-stage N95 masks against the demand of regular ones; the supplied research-stage N95 masks were manufactured with unapproved imported raw materials, and the CMSD director directed the supplier to give explanation and take back the products."

The Daily Star shared a copy of the undisclosed report with Bangladesh Medical Association's Secretary General Ehteshamul Haque Chowdhury.

He said the report is not substantial. "This report may have aimed to allow someone to escape. None was held responsible or accountable specifically in this report."

Ehteshamul, a former director of DGHS (admin), also said, "In my long career, I have never seen such a type of report. The message is not clear in the report."

The Daily Star approached several health ministry officials about the probe report, but they declined to make any comment.

Contacted on June 10, the probe committee head, M Saidur Rahman, said, "The committee has submitted the report within the stipulated timeframe, and I will not say anything about the content of the report."

When told that The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the probe report and



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Labourers travel crammed on the bed of a truck on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Hemayetpur area. Many people with low income cannot afford to abide by the physical distancing rules. The photo was taken yesterday.

DGHS has no clue about half of them

FROM PAGE 1
was available to officials as of June 8.

The IEDCR provides this data to the WHO Bangladesh office weekly under the International Health Surveillance protocol.

"It seems a large amount of data is missing," Prof Mohammad Shahidullah, president of the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19, told The Daily Star, adding, "Maybe many of the laboratories are not providing all the information."

Infectious diseases specialist Prof Ridwanur Rahman said, "If we do not know the location of the patients, how would we be able to control transmission through lockdowns?"

Lockdown, testing, tracing and isolating are the keys to controlling the outbreak. "Accurate data is the main tool for success here."

THE REASONS

An official linked to the DGHS told

The Daily Star that nearly 3,000 people tested everyday are tested for the second time.

Besides, data from all laboratories are not sent to the DGHS on time. "There is a shortage of human resources at the laboratories," the official said requesting anonymity.

A team of the ICT ministry under its a2i project is trying to locate the patient from their phone numbers, according to Prof Abul Kalam Azad.

An official admitted that the project did not have location data of around 30-40 percent of the confirmed cases.

However, many of the patients are often found not to be at the location of their phone numbers, officials said.

DAILY BRIEFING

Since January 28, a total of 5,96,579 samples were tested. Of them, 1,08,775 tested positive including yesterday's 3,240 new cases.

The rate of positive cases was around 21 percent yesterday.

Prof Nasima Sultana, additional director general of DGHS, did not answer when asked yesterday about the proportion of second tests.

Prof Ridwanur Rahman said, "If the number of second-time tests is included in the count of daily tests, it will not represent the actual picture. No plan will work out with this faulty data."

At yesterday's daily briefing, Prof Nasima Sultana said 37 Covid-19 patients died in the 24 hours preceding 2:30pm, taking the tally to 1,425. The mortality rate was at 1.31 percent.

On the other hand, a total of 1,048 Covid-19 patients recovered in those 24 hours, taking the tally to 43,993. The recovery rate was 40.44 percent.

A total of 628 people were put under isolation in the last 24 hours, Prof Nasima added.

WB injects \$1b to help cushion

FROM PAGE 1
The government has been compelled

to seek additional financing from abroad after domestic revenue generation crashed and the flow of exports and remittances -- the country's two major sources for foreign currencies -- dropped sharply because of the fallout of the pandemic at home and abroad.

And the multilateral lenders seem to be rallying behind Bangladesh in this hour of need.

Earlier, the World Bank's sister concern International Monetary Fund has sanctioned \$732 million in emergency funding to meet the urgent balance-of-payments and fiscal needs arising from the coronavirus outbreak in the country.

The Asian Development Bank has approved \$500 million and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank sanctioned \$250 million.

And all stand ready to inject more funds if needed.

Economists are in favour of the government turning to external financing instead of dipping its hand into the domestic banking system, which can go on to crowd out private sector investment when the economic recovery eventually happens.

Besides, the interest burden for external funds is substantially lower than for domestic borrowing given

the historically low-interest rates prevailing in the Western world for a while now.

The latest round of fund injection from the WB came for three projects to help the country create quality jobs, accelerate economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and build resiliency to future crises.

The projects will help the people and the economy bounce back by creating more and better jobs and promoting direct private investment in specialised economic zones while enhancing the foundations for a digital economy, according to Tembon.

The \$500 million Private Investment and Digital Entrepreneurship (PRIDE) Project of the WB will promote and attract about \$2 billion direct private investments and strengthen social and environmental standards in selected public and private economic zones and software technology parks. It will also create 150,000 jobs, of which about 40 percent of the jobs in software parks and 20 percent of jobs in Economic Zones will be for women.

The \$295 million Enhancing Digital Government and Economy (EDGE) Project will establish an integrated, cloud-computing digital platform for all government agencies

'We can't leave the battlefield'

FROM PAGE 1
medical professionals of the hospital got infected by the virus.

They include 50 doctors, 74 nurses and 91 other medical staff, Zakiul Islam, assistant director of MMCH, told this correspondent on June 16.

Of the infected medical personnel, 35 doctors, 55 nurses and 23 staff have recovered and rejoined work while the rest are recovering at home isolation, he added.

The physician said they are reeling under severe pressure both physically and mentally to maintain the duty rosters. Even the pregnant and lactating doctors and nurses have been assigned for regular non-coronavirus wards or tele-medicine service.

At present, 1,727 health professionals, including 311 doctors, 1,003 nurses and 413 other medical staff, are working at the hospital, which has 135 vacant posts for doctors, according to MMCH sources. Some 42 physicians are assigned for duty at the 70-bed isolation ward for Covid-19 patients at the SK Hospital, a British-era facility now part of MMCH.

Besides, a unit with 150 isolation beds has been dedicated for Covid-19 patients in MMCH's new building. But it is not yet operational.

"We made the duty roster for three shifts a day -- morning, evening and night -- at the isolation ward with 14 doctors and 14 nurses covering each shift," said the assistant director.

Each team of medical staff continues the roster for a week, then goes into 14-day quarantine while a fresh team takes over by rotation, he added.

Deputy Director Laxmi Narayan said they have already asked the higher authorities to fill up the vacant posts soon.

"We are the most vulnerable section of the community but we can't leave the battlefield," said Mohiuddin Khan Moon, registrar of the Medicine Department at MMCH.

One of his colleagues, assistant professor Md Emdadullah Khan of the department, was referred to Sheikh Russel Gastro Liver Hospital in Dhaka in a critical state on June 13. He tested positive the following day and is currently recovering.

Nursing Superintendent Umme Saifun shared how at times it becomes difficult to work while risking coronavirus infection as many of them have young children at home.

Hossain Ahmed Golandaj, secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association's Mymensingh unit, held patients, who got admitted at hospitals concealing their health ailments, responsible for the high number of Covid-19 positive cases amongst health professionals, starting early April.

He also said, "The doctors and medical staff might not have been supplied with standard personal protective gear at the early stage of

and improve cyber-security, which will result in savings of \$200 million in the public sector's IT investments.

Further, it will build resiliency during future crises, whereby the platform will enable the government to operate virtually and deliver critical public services to citizens and businesses.

The project will create 100,000 jobs, with a special focus on women, train 100,000 youth in digital and disruptive technologies, and establish a digital leadership academy and centres of excellence.

The \$250 million Second Programmatic Jobs Development Policy Credit will create fiscal space to support the government's response to the COVID-19 crisis, while helping recovery and building resiliency of the economy, of workers and vulnerable populations to future shocks.

The financing will help Bangladesh to create large-scale jobs for citizens, including women, youth, and migrant workers.

The project -- which is the second one in a programme of three -- supports reforms to modernise the trade and investment regime, build a stronger system of expanded safety nets and labour protections, and help vulnerable population access better jobs, especially during crises.

the coronavirus contagion. It could be another reason for the large number of cases."

ABM Mashui Alam, civil surgeon of Mymensingh, told this correspondent that around 268 medical professionals were tested positive in the district as of June 16.

About tele-medicine service, he said, "There are five hotline numbers at every upazila health complex for treatment seekers to contact directly. We receive around 250 calls per day and the assigned doctors provide necessary advice."

"We have already opened mobile medical service in Tarakanda, Phulpur and Muktagachha upazilas and the service will be extended to other upazilas soon," he added.

Mymensingh Divisional Director (Health) Md Abul Kashem said 448 health professionals, including 107 doctors and 108 nurses, got infected by the virus in the division as of June 16.

Sources from his office yesterday said in entire Mymensingh division, MMCH and SK Hospital are the only government facilities with ICU.

There are 10 ICU beds for Covid-19 patients and 10 for non-Covid-19 patients at MMCH, and seven, all for Covid-19 patients, at SK hospital.

The division has 1,228 isolation beds in total.

The sources could not give any information on the number of ICU beds at private hospitals and clinics in the division.

9 die after showing Covid-19 symptoms

STAR REPORT

At least nine people have died with Covid-19 symptoms in three districts since Friday.

Of them, seven were admitted to Khulna Medical College and Hospital (KMCH).

Mizanur Rahman, resident medical officer at KMCH, said the dead were aged between 35 and 70. All of them had one or more Covid-19 symptoms including cold, cough and respiratory disease.

Samples were collected from their bodies and sent for coronavirus test, he added.

In Rajshahi, a 45-year-old government employee died with coronavirus symptoms at Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital (RMCH) early yesterday.

The victim was a resident of Dogasi village in Sadar upazila of Pabna. He was serving duties as secretary of Ataikula Union Parishad in the same upazila.

He had been suffering from fever for almost a week. His sample was collected for coronavirus test on June 17, but yet to reach his family, said Joyal Abedin, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) in Pabna Sadar.

As he started suffering from breathing complications, he was taken to Pabna Medical College Hospital on Friday night. But his physical condition kept deteriorating.

Then, he was shifted to RMCH where he breathed his last around 12:10 am, the UNO added.

In Rajbari, a 70-year-old man died with coronavirus symptoms in Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The victim was a resident of Luxmikhola area in the upazila. He had been suffering from fever, cold and respiratory disease for last few days, said Nurul Islam, the district's civil surgeon.

He was taking treatment at home but his physical condition kept deteriorating. His family members were taking him to Rajbari General Hospital yesterday morning. He died on the way, said the civil surgeon.

Our Khulna, Pabna and Faridpur correspondents contributed to this report.

Mashrafe

FROM PAGE 1
elected Member of Parliament

from Narail-2, relayed a positive message and sought prayers for a quick recovery.

"Today [Saturday] I tested positive for COVID-19. Seeking everyone's prayers so that I can recover quickly.

The number of infected [in the country] has already surpassed 1 lakh and we need to be careful. Let's not step outside unless necessary. I am receiving treatment at home and following all the guidelines. We

must not be afraid, instead we need to be aware," read Mashrafe's post, which included a picture of him wearing a mask alongside a digital copy of his test report.

The charismatic leader, who had been involved in various philanthropic activities during the pandemic, had his samples tested at the Child Health Research Foundation laboratory.

Earlier, Mashrafe's brother Morsalin Bin Mortaza informed the media that the pacer had been suffering from fever for the past few days.

"Mashrafe had a fever for the past two days. His sample for the coronavirus test was collected on Friday

and it came back positive today [Saturday]. He has a slight fever with body aches. As he has no other

symptoms, Mashrafe is currently receiving treatment at home. He is staying in isolation and is doing well at the moment and his family is also fine," informed Morsalin.

The pacer's family was hit by the coronavirus earlier this week as two of his relatives -- his mother-in-law and his wife's niece -- contracted the virus on June 15.

Bangladesh's cricket fraternity overall was also hit hard by the coronavirus yesterday as left-arm spinner

Nazmul Islam and former opener Nafees Iqbal confirmed that they had tested positive.

Nazmul informed that he had been feeling unwell since his trip to Narsingdi for relief work last week.

Nazmul, who did his test on Wednesday, received the result yesterday and has kept himself in isolation.

Earlier yesterday, Nafees, who is the older brother of Bangladesh ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal, sought

prayers for a quick recovery and informed that he was in good health despite testing positive.

Ashikur Rahman, a development coach of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), was the first detected Covid-19 positive case in Bangladesh cricket. Ashikur, who had tested positive on May 9, recovered and was released by the hospital on May 29.

Mahbubul Alam Hanif leaves country for Canada

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League joint general secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif left the country for Canada on Friday morning. Hanif's personal assistant Tariqe Ul Islam Tutul confirmed the news to The Daily Star, saying that the AL leader went to Canada to meet his wife and two sons who are settled there, and in connection with his brother's illness.

Hanif, a lawmaker from Kushtia-3, left Bangladesh by a Qatar Airways flight that left Dhaka at 3:45am, Tutul confirmed.

A close aide of Hanif said he could not meet his family for two years due to political activities and of late the coronavirus situation, and thus he went to Canada to visit them.

He also informed that Hanif will return soon.



Even a few months ago, Rabbi's life was very different. He was just starting third grade at a local school, and with both his parents working, did not have to worry about food. Since his father suddenly died a few weeks ago, of an undiagnosed illness, he has been pushed to the deep end. Rabbi now carries water containers to roadside food stalls in return for food, which is often yesterday's stale bread. The photo was taken near Islambagh, next to the Buriganga.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Living with the dead to save the living

DMC mortuary staffer staying in morgue since mid-March to keep his family safe

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and RAFIUL ISLAM

His workplace and home are 150 yards apart, a distance that takes no more than five minutes to cover.

Yet for Sikandar Ali, a mortuary assistant at Dhaka Medical College, the morgue has been his home since mid-March.

He has not been going home to protect his family from being exposed to coronavirus.

"Sometimes I feel an intense urge to see my little grandchildren but I remind myself I should not be the source of infection for my family members," Sikandar said.

To prevent his family from getting exposed to coronavirus, Sikandar has been living in a room at the mortuary for the last three months, sometimes enduring the acrid smell of decomposing bodies.

Sikandar is well aware of the risks at his job. He knows he could be infected anytime, as he examines corpses sent from different parts of the country or while talking to relatives of the deceased.

The protective gear given to Sikandar and his colleagues are not nearly adequate enough.

They have to reuse them after a wash, increasing the risk of the infection, said some staff members.

"My wife is a cardiac patient. Her heart valve was replaced seven years ago during an open-heart surgery. Apart from this, there are also four kids in my house," said Sikandar.

Just opposite Dhaka Medical College Hospital's entrance, close to its new building, Sikandar's wife, a son, two daughters and four grandchildren live. "Whenever I talk to them, my grandchildren ask why I don't come home."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Sand dumping on century-old lake sparks outrage



Trucks full of sand have been unloaded on side of the Sitaram-er Dighi, despite verbal warnings by the administration to stop doing so.

PHOTO: STAR

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Filling up of a part of a century-old waterbody allegedly by a former local public representative has caused an uproar among concerned citizens and activists in Barishal.

The 2.96-acre Sitaram-er dighi is situated near Kashipur Bazar under ward 29 of Barishal City Corporation (BCC). Claiming himself to be an owner of the lake, Ali Hossain Hawlader, a former chairman of Kashipur union parishad under Sadar upazila, has been dumping sand in the waterbody for nearly a month, locals alleged.

Local administration had also verbally asked him to stop the encroachment recently, but until last week, he had been continuing dumping sand into it, said people living in the area.

Asked about it, Ali Hossain claimed that he, along with some others, bought the land and the lake from successors of its owners.

Contacted, Abdur Rahman, deputy assistant officer of Kashipur union land office, said Ali Hossain had legal documents of ownership, although it was not recorded in the land records yet. The last ownership record shows one Syed Kawsar Hossain as owner, and the land is classified as a "water reservoir for public use".

According to the Playground, Open Spaces, Gardens, and Water Bodies Conservation Act 2000, waterbodies

that are used for the greater interest of a community cannot be changed, even by its owners, without the permission of the authorities concerned, said Hasan Tareq Palash, an advocate of the Supreme Court.

Furthermore, authorities of the Barishal City Corporation (BCC) has included the Sitaram-er Dighi as a reservoir in the city's masterplan, he added.

Veteran lawyer of the city Manabendra Batabyal said the lake must be at least a hundred years old, because it was recorded in CS Khatiyon documents. If it is classified as a water reservoir in land documents, there is legally no scope for anyone to fill it up.

Sourav Mahmud, an environmentalist, said the large reservoir plays an important role in balancing eco-diversity in the city.

Anwar Zahid, a renowned citizen, said the lake was dug as a water source for common people, and must be protected. Asked about the issue, Ali Hossain Hawlader said he did not fill up the lake, but dumped sand to reinforce its banks.

Contacted, Mehedi Hasan, assistant commissioner (land) of Barishal sadar upazila, said he sternly warned Ali Hossain Hawlader not to fill up the lake.

Following this warning and outrage from local environmental activists, the encroachment activities stopped for a while, before beginning again a few days later.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

6,047 granted bail by lower courts last week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The lower courts across the country granted bail to 6,047 people in five working days last week.

With these bail orders, a total of 39,202 people including 536 children, accused of criminal charges, secured bail from the lower courts in the last 25 working days.

Among the 536 children, 471 were handed over to their guardians after they had got released from three Shishu Unnayan Kendra (children development centres), Supreme Court sources said yesterday. More than 300 courts granted bail to the accused through holding virtual hearings.

The subordinate courts disposed of total 73,116 petitions filed by the accused seeking bail in the cases against them.

The courts disposed of total 12,697 bail petitions and granted bail to total 6,047 accused in five days last week (June 14 to June 18) in connection with the cases filed against them, according to the sources.

Most of the accused people, who were granted bail, already got released from jail.

The virtual court functions started on May 11 after a gap of 46 days, to deal with the urgent cases. Regular activities of courts across the country including Appellate and High Court Divisions of the Supreme Court remained suspended since March 26 due to ongoing coronavirus outbreak.

103 judiciary personnel infected with Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty lower court judges, 24 Supreme Court staff and 59 staff members of subordinate courts across the country have so far been infected with Covid-19.

Six lower court judges with Covid-19 symptoms are receiving treatment in isolation, Supreme Court sources said yesterday.

Besides, Md Kausar, a staff of Madaripur District Judge Court, died with Covid-19 symptoms on June 18 and Mohiuddin Mohan, an office assistant of Naogaon District Judge Court, died with symptoms the next day.

Their samples for Covid-19 test were collected but the test results were yet to be received.

District and Sessions Judge of Netrokona, Shahjahan Kabir, and Chief Judicial Magistrate of Munshiganj, Begum Rokeya Rahman, who were the first among the judges to have been infected with the virus, have already recovered and joined their offices.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

DMP's traffic dept, DB get four new divisions

15 new SP-ranked posts created; 28 get new roles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With an aim to keep a closer eye on Dhaka's traffic movement and crime detection, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) authorities have increased four new Superintendent of Police (SP)-ranked officers' posts each, in Traffic Department and Detective Branch (DB).

Earlier, the DMP's traffic and DB had four separate divisions -- North, South, East and West -- and deputy commissioner (SP rank officer) used to take care of a each division's work.

Now, there will be eight SPs in eight divisions of traffic and DB police -- Uttara, Motijheel, Wari, Lalbagh, Tejgaon, Ramna, Mirpur and Gulshan, according to officials.

Walid Hossain, deputy commissioner (Media) of DMP, confirmed about creating new division.

"We hope that we will get more effective results as some more police officials will start working in DB and traffic departments," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Besides eight SP-rank new posts in DB and traffic department, DMP will also get three more SP-ranked posts in the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit.

DMP has also created three new departments -- Supreme and Special Court department, secretariat department and ICT department. An SP-ranked officer will monitor activities of these departments.

Along with it, the DMP headquarters has divided its state and development department into two new sections -- the state department and development department.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Penniless, sex workers ending up homeless

NILIMA JAHAN

The life of sex workers on the streets, hard as it is during normal times, has taken a worse turn after the coronavirus pandemic hit the country.

Many floating sex workers have been pushed into begging, as their regular means of income has almost disappeared.

They are also facing assault and harassment at the hands of local goons, law enforcers and other people, living on the streets.

Mukta, 40, a floating sex worker, shared how she was attacked and wounded while looking for clients near Golap Shah Mazar at Gulistan in the first week of April.

She said three young men availed her service and were about to leave without payment. When she asked for money, they berated her for sex work amidst the shutdown and then beat her mercilessly. One of them hit Mukta on her nose with a shard of blade.

"The wound required six stitches and I think the scar will never heal," said Mukta, who now begs on the streets.

At least five other sex workers shared similar experiences with this correspondent.

They said they are compelled to come out on

the street risking coronavirus infection as many of them have children to feed and families to support.

Mukta said for the last three months she could not pay the monthly fee of Tk 2,000 for her two kids, who live at a private shelter for sex worker's children.

"The shelter in-charge has been calling and yelling at me for the money. How can I make her understand that I'm in such a condition that I am having to skip most of my meals?"

Aleya Begum Lily, general secretary of Sex Workers' Network (SWN), a platform for 29 sex workers' organisations, said, most of the around 1,02,000 sex workers including the 5,000 registered in the 10 brothels of the country are jobless now.

In the capital, there are almost 20,000 sex workers, of whom 8,000 sell sex on the streets, hotels and rented apartments, she added.

Those who lived in hotels or failed to pay house rent are now living on the streets, in the parks, mausoleums, railway stations or under the bridges, Aleya said.

A large number of sex workers, who work under brokers, have also been suffering due to a sharp decline in their clientele.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

COVID-19 CASES

Recovery rate 56pc at police hospitals

Drastic increase in new infections in last five days among law enforcers

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Amidst the gloomy mood of the coronavirus pandemic, a beacon of light can be found in the recovery rate of Bangladesh Police members, who got infected with the virus while working as frontliners during the countrywide shutdown.

As of yesterday, around 8,520 members of the force have tested Covid-19 positive. Of them, 27 have died so far.

On the other hand, around 4,893 police members have already recovered, and a majority of them have rejoined work, according to officials of Police Headquarters (PHQ) operation unit.

The recovery rate stands at 55.92 percent, surely a cause for much-needed optimism for those working in the force.

Officials attribute the decent recovery rate to timely steps of the police administration, which includes ensuring standard treatment for infected members and preparing suitable medical facilities to keep up with the surge of infections since the early days.

Md Sohel Rana, assistant inspector general of PHQ, told The Daily Star yesterday that the rapidly rising recovery rate comes down to the successful implementation of advanced treatment facilities for infected members.

AIG Rana said they have also launched awareness programmes among force members along with providing safety equipment to on-duty personnel.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Halda sees second spawn cycle of carp in a month

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Ctg

Halda River, the lone breeding ground for natural spawning of carp fish in South Asia, has seen second spawning within a month after having first laying of eggs by brood fish on May 22.

The spawning is assumed to have occurred thanks to an increase in brood fish stock. Around 150 to 200kg of eggs were collected early yesterday at Baroighona and Chayarchar, two points adjacent to Halda.

Manzoorul Kibria, noted Halda researcher and professor of zoology at Chittagong University, said it is truly a promising sign for the river, which he thinks was enriched with stock of brood fish following a drop in pollution and other manmade hazards.

"When a waterbody has a large amount of brood fish, some of them take time to get matured enough to release eggs. This is what exactly happened in Halda," he said, adding that this is the first time he had seen such second spawning.

Half of the egg collectors did not go to the river as they could not sense the spawning, Prof Kibria said. Halda has around 500 egg collectors.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



A man spends some quality father-daughter time with his baby in one hand and talking to the elder right beside him at Barishal city's Januki Singha road yesterday. Since losing his left arm in a road accident, he has had to put in a little extra effort every day to provide and care for his children. On Father's Day today, we celebrate the spirit of sacrifice and selflessness every father holds close to their heart.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Coca-Cola, Care Bangladesh hand PPE to 1,000 frontliners

CITY DESK

In continuation of its efforts towards combating Covid-19, Coca-Cola partnered with Care Bangladesh to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for more than 1000 healthcare professionals, said a press release.

The PPE distribution kicked off in Dhaka yesterday, in presence of officials from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). This initiative will also cover some health facilities located in Comilla and Gazipur.

Care's local implementing partners in this initiative are Social and Economic Enhancement Programme (SEEP) and Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM).

Director General of the DGHS, Prof Dr Abul Kalam Azad was present as Chief Guest on the occasion. He said, "During this time, the private sector and NGOs need to come forward and join hands with the government. I thank Coca-Cola Foundation and Care Bangladesh for coming forward to support health facilities."

A thousand personal protective equipment (PPE) for doctors and nurses who are tending to Covid-19 patients, 835 fabricated PPE for frontline health workers, 1000 eye shields, 2600 N-95 face masks, 10,000 disposable hand gloves, 50 litres of hand sanitiser, 100 bottles of hand rub, 40 oxygen cylinders, 10,000 biohazard garbage bags and 12 thermal scanners were handed over on the occasion.

Ramesh Singh, Country Director of Care Bangladesh said, "We are going through unprecedented times. Communities across Bangladesh are in need of support. Our partnership with Coca cola has been instrumental to support communities as well as health facilities. We appreciate the Government of Bangladesh for its leadership and we are joining hands with government efforts. We are grateful to all health professionals for their commitment, but we are also concerned about their safety."

"Through various efforts, Care Bangladesh reached to 1,723,958 people in different parts of Bangladesh till last month," he added.



Street children collect empty water bottles left by passengers at the waterways launch terminal, fill them with water tapwater, and resell them to outgoing passengers for Tk 10 per bottle. The photo was taken from Barishal River Port area last week.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

103 judiciary

FROM PAGE 3
Ferdous Ahmed, judge of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Lalmonirhat, has been admitted to the ICU at Combined Military Hospital, and Md Rustam Ali, judge of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Joypurhat, has been admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for treatment, according to sources.

Begum Shamim Ahmed, judge of Special Judge Court-8 of Dhaka, has been admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The other infected judges and staff members are receiving treatment at their residences.

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain has talked to all infected judges and asked officials concerned to take necessary actions to ensure proper treatment for them.

The chief justice also asked the district judges concerned to take appropriate measures for treatment.

Two separate committees have recently been formed to ensure the treatment of the infected judges across the country, sources added.

Sand

FROM PAGE 3

It now follows this stop-start routine, with the last instance of sand dumping taking place late last week, according to locals, one of whom said at least 30 feet of one side of the lake has been filled with sand.

Farid Kabir, councillor of BCC ward-29, said he has informed the mayor of the issue. The mayor is likely to take a decision soon, he told this correspondent.

Md Halim, director of Department of Environment (DoE) in Barishal, said, "Filling up a waterbody is an offense. We are looking into the matter. If the allegations are true, we will take action."

Penniless

FROM PAGE 3

Nazma, who lived and worked along with five other girls at the capital's Rayer Bazar area, was facing routine abuse at the hands of their drug addict broker.

"It was his responsibility to manage clients for us. Yet, he would hit me on my head as I couldn't give him money [due to decline in business]," said Nazma.

"I escaped in April after a physical assault. Currently, I am begging and sleeping at the Gulistan Golap Shah Mazar," she mentioned.

Drop-in-centres (DICs) for sex workers are also becoming difficult to run because of the pandemic, informed officials of Light House, an NGO funded by the international development agency Save the Children.

Across the country, Light House has 27 DICs, where sex workers usually stay from 9am to 5pm.

Md Zalkad Ali, coordinator of the NGO's Chankharpul DIC, said, "It has been difficult to continue our work because of constant pressure to shift the office. Many [landlords and neighbourhood people] treat them [sex workers] as suspected Covid-19 positive cases since they have roam the streets and mingle with unknown men."

"My landlord sent us a notice to vacate the flat immediately, and restricted the access of the sex workers. We disinfect the stairs, maintain social distance and hygiene, yet they have been harassing us in different ways," he added.

Another DIC coordinator Rina in Gopibagh also mentioned getting an eviction notice during the shutdown.

They, however, managed the landlord by limiting the number of sex workers who can enter and use the facility at a time, she said.

Beforehand, 15-20 sex workers used the DIC per day, but now a maximum of ten people are allowed, she added.

Nazma said she and others like her now use the DICs only to take showers. Though the registered sex workers living in the brothels received some aid from the government, the floating ones didn't receive any, said Aleya Begum.

Of the 29 organisations under the Sex Workers' Network, 19 were provided Tk 3,50,000 during April-May for distribution of food and other essentials among their members, Aleya informed.

"Few may have received some relief as a distressed woman but not as a sex worker," she added.

Halda

FROM PAGE 3

Egg collectors told The Daily Star that in their early days, they would see spawning thrice a year.

Seasoned egg collector Elias Hossen of Hathazari upazila said as pollution started wreaking havoc, spawning was reduced to once. "This is first time I have seen second spawning, which is really positive for the river and those of us who depend on it," he said.

Chattoogram district fisheries officer Lovely Akther told The Daily Star that they were all excited over the second spawning and it raises hopes.

During the first spawning in May, egg collectors were delighted by the huge haul of eggs in the river. A few factors played a role in the high egg yield this year, said Prof Kibria.

First stopping of tobacco farming, then the shutdown of two polluting factories near the river and third the quick response of Hathazari upazila administration, surveillance by IDE, an NGO working to protect Halda, and nationwide shutdown helped the river detoxify itself, he added.

DMP's traffic

FROM PAGE 3

In a major development, DMP Commissioner Shafiqul Islam yesterday transferred 28 SP-ranked officers.

15 of them were posted to the newly-created positions, while 13 others were shuffled.

Welcoming the move, Golam Mostofa Rashel, who got appointed as Deputy Commissioner of DB Tejaogaon Division, told this newspaper, "We will now be able to give more attention to the area, and detect crime more promptly."

According to the DMP office order, the seven others who got posted to DB police are Mashur Rahman as DC Gulshan, HM Azimul Haque as DC Ramna, Manas Kumar Podder as DC Mirpur, Abdul Ahad as DC Wari, Rajib Al Masud as DC Lalbagh, Kazi Shafiqul Alam as DC Uttara and Md Asaduzzaman as DC Motijheel.

The traffic division officers are: Joydeb Chowdhury as DC Ramna, Saiful Hoque as DC Uttara, Shahed Al Masud as DC Tejaogaon, Jashim Uddin Molla as DC Mirpur, Rabiul Islam as DC Gulshan, Wahidul Islam as DC Motijheel, Saiful Islam as DC Wari and Meheddi Hasan as DC Lalbagh.

The others who were given new postings are: AFM Mahtab Uddin as DC Supreme Court and Special Court Security Department, Shah Iftekhar Ahmed as DC Wari division, Tariq Bin Rashid as DC CT unit's admin and logistics division, Saiful Islam as DC CT unit's Investigation Department, Mahfuzul Islam as DC Counter Terrorism unit's Transnational Crime division, Abdul Mannan as DC CT unit's special Action group, Habibul Nabi Anisur Rashid as DC of CT unit's research and development department, Shariful Islam as DC of ICT department, Masum Ahmed as DC of crime unit of DMP HQ, Morshed Alam as DC Secretariat Department, AFM Al Kibria as DC CT unit's cyber crime division, and Mishuk Chakma as DC CT unit's intelligence analysis division.

According to sources, majority of these officials are from BCS 25th batch, who earlier got supernumerary promotion two years back and recently got regular promotion as SP.

Two wards of Barishal city to be locked down soon: authorities

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Barishal City Corporation is preparing to put ward-12 and 24 in lockdown as those have been marked as "Red Zone" in terms of coronavirus infection.

The date for lockdown will come in consultation with the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said a BCC official.

"It will be announced any day," said Dr Matiur Rahman, chief medical officer of BCC, yesterday.

They took the decision after holding a virtual meeting with Coronavirus Prevention Committee of BCC on Thursday.

BCC Mayor Serniabad Sadik Abdullah presided over the meeting participated by high officials of BCC, and civil, health, military and law enforcing agencies.

All wards -- except for ward-26, 27, and 30 -- have been marked as "Red Zone", said the BCC official.

SM Ajar Rahman, deputy commissioner of Barishal, said they will not put all 27 wards in lockdown simultaneously as it will require lots of preparations.

Barisal Metropolitan Police Commissioner Shahabuddin Khan said will monitor the lockdown situation.

LOST

I have lost 2 of my lands' original deed receipts. Deed numbers are: (1) 4806, date: 21-08-17, Mouza: Dakkhin Sawla, Reg. Office: Manikganj, Dist: Manikganj, Land area: 25.30 decimal, Dag No. CS/SA-42, 43, 33, 41 RS 77, 79, 67, 106(2)/757 date: 17-01-18, Mouza: Dakkhin Shimulia & Nischintapur, (i) Dakkhin Shimulia-Dag No. CS/SA 138, 156 RS 175, 173 Land area: 68 decimal (ii) Nischintapur-Dag No. CS/SA-7, RS Dag No. 7, BS Dag No. 10, Land area: 17 decimal, GD No. 1243, with Dhamondi Model Thana, has been filed.
Shamsa Ara Dolly

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
কমান্ড্যান্ট (ডিআইজি) এর কার্যালয়
পুলিশ ট্রেনিং সেন্টার, নোয়াখালী

তারিখ: ২০/০৬/২০২০খ্রিঃ

উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি/২০১৯-২০২০

দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন ২০০৬ এবং বঙ্গদেশ প্রণীত পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা ২০০৮ এর বিধান মোতাবেক চলতি ২০১৯-২০২০ অর্থ সালে পিটিসি, নোয়াখালীতে নির্মিত কাজ বাস্তবায়নের লক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিক এবং ইচ্ছুক ঠিকাদার/যোগানদার/বাবকারী/সরবরাহকারী/গ্রন্থকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হইতে নিম্ন প্রকল্পের প্যানেল সীলসম্বন্ধে মুখবন্ধ খামে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে।

০১	মঞ্জুরাদ	৳৫০ মঞ্জুরাদ (জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ)।
০২	সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
০৩	ক্রয়কারী/সম্ভাব্যকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ	কমান্ড্যান্ট (ডিআইজি), পুলিশ ট্রেনিং সেন্টার, নোয়াখালী।
০৪	ক্রয়কারী/সম্ভাব্যকারী স্বত্তার জেলা	নোয়াখালী জেলা।
০৫	দরপত্রের বিষয়	ক্রমিক নং ১৫ এর বর্ণিত লট ক।
০৬	দরপত্র সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।
০৭	বাজেট ও সোর্স অব ফান্ড	রাজস্ব খাত।
০৮	দরপত্রাদাত/যোগানদার/সরবরাহকারীর যোগ্যতা	চলতি অর্থ বছরের নয়ানকৃত ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, আয়কর সনদ, ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ, নাগরিকত্ব সনদ/জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, ব্যাংক স্বল্পলভ্যতা সনদসহ সোনালেনের হালসনের হিসাব বিবরণীসহ সকল কাগজপত্র ১ম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক (সত্যায়নকারীর নামসহ সীলমোহরে প্রদানপূর্বক) সত্যায়িত হইতে হইবে। সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠানকে অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হইবে।
০৯	সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	তারিখঃ ০৭/০৭/২০২০খ্রিঃ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১০	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান	১) কমান্ড্যান্ট (ডিআইজি) এর কার্যালয়, পুলিশ ট্রেনিং সেন্টার, নোয়াখালী। ২) পুলিশ সুপার, নোয়াখালী জেলা। ৩) পুলিশ সুপার, লক্ষীপুর জেলা।
১১	দরপত্র গ্রহণের স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	কমান্ড্যান্ট (ডিআইজি) এর কার্যালয়, পুলিশ ট্রেনিং সেন্টার, নোয়াখালী, তারিখ ০৮/০৭/২০২০, ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১২	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	কমান্ড্যান্ট (ডিআইজি) এর কার্যালয়, পুলিশ ট্রেনিং সেন্টার, নোয়াখালী, তারিখ ০৮/০৭/২০২০, ১২.৩০ ঘটিকায়।
১৩	দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	আগামী ০৯/০৭/২০২০খ্রিঃ ১১.৩০ ঘটিকায়।
১৪	দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম ও পদবী	জনাব এস এম রোকেম উদ্দিন, কমান্ড্যান্ট (ডিআইজি), পুলিশ ট্রেনিং সেন্টার, নোয়াখালী।
১৫	লট নং	কাজের বিবরণ
	ক)	পিটিসি, নোয়াখালীতে ১৯৫১ সালে নির্মিত মসজিদের সীমানা প্রাচীর নির্মাণ কাজ।
		দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য (প্রতিসেট) (অক্ষেরভাষায়)
		১০০০/-
		দরপত্রের জামানতের পরিমাণ (সেহরতযোগ্য)
		উদ্ধৃত মূল্যের ৩%
		কাজের সময়সীমা (কার্যবাহিনী প্রদানের তারিখ হইতে)
		৩০ দিন
১৬	বিশেষ নির্দেশনাঃ	
	ক)	পিটিসি, নোয়াখালীতে ১৯৫১ সালে নির্মিত মসজিদের সীমানা প্রাচীর নির্মাণ কাজ।
	খ)	ক্রয়কারী কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন এবং সর্বমুখ্য দর গ্রহণে বাধ্য নহেন।
	গ)	দরপত্র সিডিউলে অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী বিচারিতভাবে বর্ণিত আছে।
	ঘ)	নির্বাচিত দরপত্রাদাত/যোগানদার/সরবরাহকারীকে কার্যবাহিনী প্রদানের পূর্বে জামানতসহ ৩০০/- টাকার নন-জুডিশিয়াল স্ট্যাম্পে চুক্তিপত্র সম্পাদন করিতে হইবে।
	ঙ)	পুলিশ হেভকোয়ার্টার্স হইতে অর্থ বরাদ্দ প্রাপ্তির প্রেক্ষিতে বিল পরিশোধ করা হইবে। এতদসংক্রান্তে ঠিকাদারের কোন আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হইবে না।
	চ)	সংশ্লিষ্ট ঠিকাদার/প্রতিষ্ঠান কোনো তালিকাভুক্ত নহেন মর্মে নিজস্ব প্যানেল সীলসম্বন্ধে যোগানদার/অঙ্গীকারনামা দাখিল করিতে হইবে।
	ছ)	দরপত্রের সহিত কোনরূপ অসভ্য/ভুল/বিকৃত সনদ দাখিল করিলে এবং অনুমোদনকালে তাহা মিথ্যা প্রমাণিত হইলে বাজি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হইবে।

স্বাক্ষরিত

এস এম রোকেম উদ্দিন
বিপি-৬৬৯৫০০৯৭৩১
কমান্ড্যান্ট (ডিআইজি)
পুলিশ ট্রেনিং সেন্টার, নোয়াখালী
ফোনঃ ৬১০৯০, ফ্যাক্সঃ ৬১৮৩০
ই-মেইলঃ cmdptnlcn@police.gov.bd

জিডি-১০১৬

Recovery rate

FROM PAGE 3

TREATMENT FACILITIES

According to officials, the Central Police Hospital (CPH) has a capacity of around 250 beds, 15 Incentive Care Unit (ICU) beds, and 14 high dependency units.

Additionally, there are 120 doctors, 130 nurses, and 80 ward staff at the hospital, said Saif Shantu, additional superintendent (admin) of the hospital.

Even a month back, the hospital had no room for new admissions and the authorities had to contract private hospital "Impulse Hospital" for treating officials who were left out of CPH.

However, as the recovery rate improved, pressure at the hospital has reduced, with only 126 patients currently admitted.

The police authorities also set up a 350-bed temporary hospital at Traffic Police Barrack-One, a 300-bed hospital at Traffic Police Barrack-Two, and another 110-bed hospital at the Detective Training School.

Currently, the Traffic Police Barrack-One hospital has 160 patients, Traffic Police Barrack-Two hospital has 219 patients, and DTS has 35 patients, according to hospital officials.

TREATMENT METHOD

SP Saif Shantu of the Central Police Hospital said they are treating Covid-19 patients following the guidelines issued by World Health Organization and the health ministry,

but also with some customisation, focusing on diet and psychological strength.

"We have provided an electric tea pot and steam machine to every patient at these hospitals so that they can frequently use hot water to drink tea," he said.

Besides, the hospital is providing patients with a protein, zinc, vitamin C, and mineral rich diet, which includes seasonal fruit, lemon, and ginger, he said. The hospital premises and washrooms are also being cleaned regularly to ensure hygiene.

"We are not leaving any patient alone for long. Every hour, a specialised team are visiting the patients," he said.

This is part of a strategy to mentally strengthen the patients, Shantu explained. The hospital has arranged for video calling facilities even at ICU and HDU units, so that patients get to talk to family members.

"Our doctors and medical staff are making sure that patients don't feel neglected," he said.

But this has not come without a price. "Around 60 medical staff got infected implementing this strategy, but we did not back out of it. Instead, we recruited more nurses and ward boys through outsourcing," Shantu told this correspondent.

Requesting anonymity, an official of CPH said the medical team was initially at a loss about how to treat the infection, but they have figured out some methods over the last few

months. This shows in the recovery rate, which stood at 38 percent just a month back but is now almost 56 percent, he said.

INFECTIONS RISING AGAIN

CPH received its first Covid-19 patient on March 24, an official told this correspondent. From that day to May 22, there was a continuous stream of a big number of new patients each day, except for a day or two.

However, the number of admissions started stabilising around the last week of May and continued up to the second week of this month, said the official.

"For the last couple of days, we are witnessing another rise in the infection rate, in line with the rising rate of infection in the country," he said.

"We suspect this is because of increased public movement on the streets after the government lifted the shutdown for a while. This meant police personnel could not carry out their duties without coming into contact with people," the official added.

According to PHQ database, the total number of infections in the police force was 6,612 on June 8, which rose to 7,317 in June 14, which means 705 officials got infected over six days.

But for the next five days, 1,203 officials got infected, at an average of 240 new cases daily, the database reported.

Living with

FROM PAGE 3

His family members make him meal packets and leave it near the door after receiving a call from Sikandar. A man has been tasked with bringing them to Sikandar every day.

"I can go and collect the food. But if my grandchildren somehow end up

seeing me, they will definitely rush towards me and I won't be able to keep them away," Sikandar said.

Sikandar was appointed a morgue assistant at the age of 18. He has assisted in autopsies on thousands of bodies at the forensic medicine department at Dhaka Medical

College.

Working at the morgue for almost four decades, blood, gore and mutilated bodies do not scare him. But this pandemic has gotten the better of Sikandar and he eagerly awaits the day when he can reunite with his family.

Tk 5k grant

FROM PAGE 12

forwarded the proposal to the finance ministry.

“The finance ministry has approved in principal the incentive proposal,” Deputy Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

Finance ministry officials said they are likely to give a one-time grant of Tk 5,000 to each non-MPO teacher and Tk 2,500 to each staffer.

A ministry official said, “Money will not be a problem. The money will be disbursed among teachers and staffers of educational institutions which remain outside the purview of the MPO facilities.”

Those listed under MPO get 100 percent basic salary from the national exchequer. “But the process will be finalised only after the final approval by the Prime Minister’s Office,” the official added.

According to education ministry statistics, 151,325 teachers and 85,217 staffers of non-government schools, colleges, madrasas, and technical institutions are not covered under the MPO scheme.

For providing the financial assistance, the government will require around Tk 97 crore.

Top education ministry officials said they have prepared two alternative proposals. Under the first one, each non-MPO teacher would get a one-time grant of Tk 8,000 and each staffer Tk 4,000. The amounts would be Tk 5,000 and Tk 2,500 respectively under the second proposal.

INTERIM MECHANISM NOT ENOUGH

Binoy Bhushan Roy, general secretary of the Non-MPO Educational Institutions’ Teachers and Employees Federation, and Nazrul Islam Rony, spokesperson of MPO Bhukto Shikha Protisthan Jatiyakoron Liaison Forum, said teachers’ backs were against the wall.

They said non-MPO teachers are making ends meet. They are usually ill-paid which is as low as Tk 4,000 a month. They give private tuition to enhance their earnings. Now with schools closed and students mostly staying at home, they lost both the means of earning.

Although the pandemic-induced general holiday ended on May 31, all educational institutions will remain closed until August 6.

However, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 27 said all educational institutions might stay closed until September if the coronavirus situation did not improve.

Authorities of non-government educational institutions argue that they could not pay the salaries of their employees as the tuition fees of students, the only source of income for a lot of institutions, could not be collected.

Only a few renowned schools in the capital could pay the salaries of their employees from school savings.

Rony, also the president of Bangladesh Teachers Association, said the non-MPO teachers were going through sufferings as they were not getting salaries.

The situation would be catastrophic for them if the educational institutions remain closed for long, he added.

Both the teacher leaders said an interim arrangement from the government to ease the teachers’ sufferings was appreciable, but it would be not enough to end the sufferings.

They demanded binging all educational institutions, teachers, and staffers under the coverage of the MPO scheme.

State Minister Mohibul said the government would include new educational institutions in the MPO list once they fulfil the criteria.

The prime minister has so far announced 18 stimulus packages worth around Tk 1,01,117 crore, which is around 3.5 percent of Bangladesh’s GDP, to offset the shock of Covid-19 pandemic on various sectors of the country.

Belarus detains dozens ahead of polls as tensions mount

AFP, Minsk

Belarus strongman Alexander Lukashenko said yesterday the country’s sovereignty was under threat as police detained around 140 people during protests against his rule ahead of August 9 polls.

Lukashenko, who has dismissed the coronavirus epidemic as a hoax, is seeking a sixth term, having brooked no dissent during his nearly three decades in power.

Many of his critics have been jailed in recent weeks and yesterday he said Belarus faced a major risk to its sovereignty and independence.

“I never thought there would be people in Belarus who would like to destroy the country,” he said as he unveiled a monument in the country’s east.

“No one will be allowed to betray or destroy what you and me have been building for a quarter of a century.”

BRTA allows registered cars to run

FROM PAGE 12

after Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Ahmad Kaikaus yesterday held an online meeting over the issue.

Road Transport and Highway Division Secretary Nazrul Islam, BRTA’s acting Chairman and officials from Uber Bangladesh Ltd, among others, took part in the meeting, meeting sources said.

Although bus and other public transport hit the streets on June 1, operations of ride-sharing services remained suspended.

Major ride-hailing companies, including Uber and Pathao, recently wrote to BRTA, requesting it to allow them to resume operations.

BRTA, however, did not accept their request and instead took a hard line on vehicles that had been providing the popular service without being enlisted.

Enlistment with the BRTA is a necessity for both companies and their vehicles to provide ride-sharing services.

Uber Bangladesh Ltd has sought intervention from the Prime Minister’s Office to be able to resume operations in Dhaka and other cities.

At the meeting, Uber officials requested for permission to resume operation and sought time to enlist the vehicles that operated under their service, a participant of the meeting said.

The meeting decided to allow only enlisted cars and microbuses and not to allow any motorcycles since it is not easy to maintain health safety guidelines on motorbikes, the official said, wishing anonymity.

“VERY FEW VEHICLES TO PROVIDE SERVICES”

According to a BRTA document, there are some 1.23 lakh vehicles registered with different ride-hailing companies, of which 1.04 lakh are motorcycles

while the rest are cars, microbuses and ambulances.

Of the total vehicles, only around 1,300 were enlisted with BRTA under 12 companies, and most of them are motorcycles, BRTA officials said.

For example, only 126 vehicles (15 cars and 111 motorcycles) under Uber have enlistment certificates, while 118 (two cars and 116 motorcycles) under Pathao have them, shows BRTA document.

“So, only very few vehicles would actually get permission to provide the service. The number of enlisted cars and microbuses would be around 250,” a BRTA official said.

OFF-LINE SERVICE INCREASING

In the meantime, many motorcycle riders are taking passengers after manually fixing fares and the number of passengers have been increasing as many people find bike services more affordable and safer than buses.

“In the absence of formal ride-sharing services, many motorcycles are giving off-line services, which is riskier, because, if any accident occurs, no company would take responsibility,” said Maliha M Quadir, founder and managing director of Shohoz, a ride-sharing service provider.

About BRTA’s decision, she said in that case, only very few vehicles would get permission to provide the services and a majority of service-seekers would be deprived of it.

She said the authorities concerned should give permission for motorcycles to provide the service as it’s relatively cheaper.

About safety issues, Maliha said, “Are health safety guidelines maintained on public buses properly? If not, then why should ride-sharing services bear the brunt?”

She said they have requested BRTA to give more time to enlist vehicles

running under their service as there were some technical limitations in the BRTA enlistment portal and the process is time consuming.

But BRTA officials said when they started enlisting ride-hailing companies in July last year, it made the enlistment of at least 100 vehicles mandatory for the companies.

BRTA, on several occasions, asked those companies to enlist their vehicles, but they did not comply, officials said.

Contacted, Sayeda Nabila Mahabub, director (marketing and public relations) at Pathao, said, “While we still await a formal notification, we are surprised to learn BRTA’s decision to continue the ride-sharing suspension and allow only four-wheelers with enlistment certificates to operate.

“We are also disappointed that this decision was reached upon after consultation with only one ride-sharing company and without involving any of the remaining 11 enlisted companies, including Pathao.”

She added, “Based on this decision, only 17 four-wheelers that have enlistment certificates can offer ride-sharing services on two of the largest [ride-sharing service] platforms. How can the ride-sharing industry provide reliable service to our users with such a limited pool of vehicles?”

Pathao urged the authority to reconsider its decision, taking into account the plight of the users and service-seekers who are being denied access to safe transportation and the livelihood of the drivers that are unable to support their families during the ongoing shutdown, said Nabila.

The Daily Star could not reach Uber for comments.

He got his first job as a journalist at the Daily Millat in 1955. In 1962, he joined Chhayanaut as its secretary.

Lohani was also the first president of Bangladesh Shangkadik Union. He served as the director of Bangladesh Press Institute and the director general of the Shilpakala Academy from April 2009 to April 2011. He was awarded the Ekushey Padak for journalism in 2015.

In 1954 he worked for the Jukto Front. He had a disagreement with his family and came to Dhaka with only Tk 15, taken from his uncle Tasadduk Lohani.

By this time, he also became a follower of the Marxist ideology. Kamal Lohani married his cousin Deepti Lohani in 1960. The couple have one son and two daughters.

During the Liberation War, Lohani was in charge of the news department of Swadhin Bangla Betar. On December 25, 1971, he took charge of Dhaka Betar. In 1981, when he had a disagreement with the then information minister, he left ‘Dainik Barta’ and joined Press Institute of Bangladesh. In 1991, he became the director general of Shilpakala Academy. In 2008, he again served as the director general of Shilpakala Academy for two years.

Kamal Lohani was buried at the family graveyard at Ullapara, said his son.

such as precision agriculture.

Cameras in the robot could detect crop diseases, humidity changes, and insect infestation.

“The most exciting goal we’ll demonstrate with SlothBot is the union of robotics and technology with conservation,” said Emily Coffey, vice president for conservation and research at the Garden.

“We do conservation research on imperilled plants and ecosystems around the world, and SlothBot will help us find new and exciting ways to advance our research and conservation goals.”

13 ICU

FROM PAGE 12

Additionally, 455 beds were readied in isolation wards in the other 50 upazilas of Rangpur division.

COVID-19 CASES RISING

All these districts continue to see a rise in Covid-19 patients. The highest number of patients, 740, are in Rangpur with the lowest, 70, in Lalmonirhat.

As of yesterday, 2,215 people tested positive for coronavirus in these eight districts since March 10.

So far, 38 people have died of Covid-19 and 1,009 have since recovered.

Till yesterday, 170 coronavirus patients have been admitted to hospitals in Rangpur.

According to the DGHS divisional office, there are 60 doctors available in these eight districts to treat Covid-19 patients.

Dr SM Nurunabi, superintendent of the Rangpur Dedicated Corona Isolation Hospital -- which has 10 ICU beds -- said his hospital treated 205

Covid-19 patients as of Friday.

Of these, 111 patients have been released and six have died, he added.

A several doctors in Rangpur division, seeking anonymity, said ICU facilities need to be extended to deal with the rising number of patients.

Rezaur Rahman Rezu, member secretary of the private Dinajpur Coronavirus Protirodh Committee, said it is urgent to increase the number of ICU beds at M Abdur Rahim Medical College and Hospital in Dinajpur Sadar.

“Three ICU beds are not enough to deal with the crisis,” he said.

Two other ICU beds at the hospital stand reserved for doctors affected by coronavirus.

Dr Amin Ahmed Khan, Rangpur divisional director of DGHS, said he does not have a definite number of ICU beds in private hospitals.

If needed, private ICU beds and other facilities can also be used to treat coronavirus patients, he added.

Bangladesh is not a small

FROM PAGE 12

Bangabandhu shares, “Bangladesh is not a small country. It is a country of 70 million people. All the big powers have already accorded recognition to Bangladesh and the country is now a member of several international organisations including the UN and the Commonwealth. Middle Eastern countries still abstain from recognising Bangladesh due to the incessant persuasion and propaganda by the Pakistan government. However, Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population in the world, has already recognised Bangladesh.”

The prime minister expresses his hope that Middle Eastern countries will rethink their decision and accord recognition to Bangladesh soon.

When asked about the internal law and order situation, the prime minister says although certain quarters are yet to surrender their arms, the

government is in full control of the country and he can take any measures he feels necessary. Bangabandhu reiterates, “The people of Bangladesh love me, they listen to me, they will not do anything that will harm the prospect of the country.”

CABINET MEETS

The Cabinet today meets for about six hours in two sessions. The cabinet meeting presided over by Bangabandhu is understood to have discussed the outline and content of the development plan for FY1972-73.

UN SANCTIONS \$18 CRORE

The UN has sanctioned 18 crore dollars for war-torn Bangladesh as part of its regular development programme. The decision is taken at a conference of donors held in Geneva today.

SOURCES: June 22, 1972 issue of Purbodsh

Flash floods

FROM PAGE 12

Over one lakh people in the Teesta shoal have been worried about the flood.

Mozammel Haque, a farmer at Char Gaddimari, said when he woke up to see his home flooding.

He took his family and rushed to a safe place with the necessary furniture and his cattle, he said.

Moslema Begum, from Bagdora area in Lalmonirhat Sadar, said her bed and tube-well were submerged.

She said her family took shelter on a road.

In Mymensingh, some 22,000 people of 20 villages were affected by flash floods in Dhobaura upazila.

Anwar Hossain Khan, chairman of Gamaritola union parishad, said there was heavy rainfall in his area over the last couple of days.

He said water entered some areas because a dam on the Netari river collapsed on Thursday, addin that mainly, fisheries and Aman seedbeds were affected.

Swapon Talukder, chairman of Purakandulia union parishad, said water started to recede in some areas since Friday afternoon but rainfall continued.

Both chairmen said they urged their local administrations to take immediate steps and help the people living in those areas.

Dhobaura Upazila Fishery Officer Zakir Hossain said around 500 ponds were affected.

“We are assessing the total loss at the field level,” he said.

Dhobaura Upazila Nirbahi Officer Rafiquzzaman said he already visited the affected villages and that a list of affected people was being prepared.

Meanwhile, farmers of Pashchimchak in Pabna’s Sujanagar said they used to grow paddy, onion and jute on their land but could not in

Kamal Lohani no more

FROM PAGE 1

Lohani’s daughter Urmi Lohani said her father was admitted to Health and Hope Hospital on Wednesday for kidney and lungs-related complications, and was on life support at the intensive care unit (ICU) of the hospital. He later tested positive for the highly transmissible virus.

Lohani, whose words and activism inspired millions to survive and emerge victorious against the genocide of 1971, was then shifted to Sikder Medical College in Gulshan as his condition deteriorated.

He was later taken to Sheikh Russel Gastro Liver Institute and Hospital. In mid-May, Kamal was admitted to Health and Hope hospital with kidney and lung problems.

President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, ministers, distinguished personalities, top leaders of different political, socio-cultural, and economic organisations expressed deep shock at the demise of Kamal Lohani who played a crucial role in different socio-political and democratic movements including the 1952 Language Movement and the Liberation War.

In a message of condolence, the prime minister said Kamal Lohani’s loss is akin to losing someone with a progressive mind and an extraordinary fighter of non-communal spirit.

Popularly known as Kamal Lohani,

Robotic sloth

FROM PAGE 12

In larger environments, Salothbot will be able to switch between cables to cover more ground.

“SlothBot embraces slowness as a design principle,” the Georgia Tech “That’s not how robots are typically designed today, but being slow and hyper-energy efficient will allow SlothBot to linger in the environment to observe things we can only see by being present continuously for months, or even years.”

The design of Slothbot’s 3D-printed body is to protect the motors, gears, and batteries, and sensors in the robot.

his full name was Abu Naeem Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Khan Lohani. He got involved in politics in 1952 as a final year student of Pabna District School during the Language Movement.

Kamal Lohani and his associates including the principal of Pabna Edward College were arrested in 1953 for resisting the arrival of Muslim League leaders.

At 19, he first went to jail. He was arrested again in 1954 and was released in July 1955. During the time of his imprisonment, he became an admirer of the communist ideology and remained steadfast in that ideology for the rest of his life, noted cultural activist Nasir Uddin Yousuff said.

When he was arrested in 1955, he was imprisoned in the same jail as Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Tajuddin Ahmed and others. During that time, he came in close contact with Bangabandhu and was deeply respectful of him, added Yousuff.

He, along with many others, had a strong role in celebrating Rabindranath Tagore’s birth centenary in 1961.

Born in Shantala village of Ullahpara upazila in Sirajganj on June 26, 1934, Kamal Lohani grew up witnessing India’s independence movement and the partition.

It was inspired when professor Magnus Egerstedt saw two-toed sloths creeping on overhead wires in Costa Rica. “It turns out that they were strategically slow, which is what we need if we want to deploy robots for long periods of time,” he said.

“That’s not how robots are typically designed today, but being slow and hyper-energy efficient will allow SlothBot to linger in the environment to observe things we can only see by being present continuously for months, or even years.”

Slothbot could be used for multiple purposes aside from conservation,

‘MP Shahid linked to 2 lawmakers’

FROM PAGE 1

a three-man racket whose other members include another Bangladeshi MP, whose wife is also an MP from the seats reserved for women.

It added that the trio occupied sensitive positions in three major companies that brought over 20,000 Bangladeshi workers into the country in exchange for large sums of money believed to be in excess of 50 million dinars (\$163 million).

The MP reportedly channelled the money to the US to set up a company in partnership with an American national, according to the report.

Sources said that, the number of those under investigation in Kuwait had increased to nine. Four new officials, who are being interrogated by the Kuwaiti public prosecution, include two directors of the Public Manpower Authority, a colonel in the Ministry of Interior, and a businesswoman.

The number is expected to increase as the investigation progresses. There is new information and evidence for the prosecution, they added.

Shahid pleaded innocent after he was arrested by the Criminal Investigation Department in Kuwait on June 6, but he gradually confessed to the charges.

The nine were interrogated based on the information that he paid large sums of money to high-placed officials, including a security official, former and serving Kuwaiti lawmakers.

He told the investigators that certain Kuwaiti quarters within the government were involved in residency trade which paved the entry of Bangladeshi workers to the Arab country in exchange for money.

Shahid and a Kuwaiti citizen co-own a big recruitment company named Marafie Kuwaitia.

Bangladeshi witnesses had earlier given a rare glimpse of the grip of the Bangladeshi MP on his compatriot workers.

The witnesses said the MP was like a mafia boss who demanded ‘taxes’ from poor, low-income workers, who obeyed and paid payments to him, Al Rai reported.

“The accused’s men were imposing a ‘royalty’ on workers, at a value of 8 dinars per day,” a witness said. Shahid is held in custody pending trial.

During interrogation, Shahid reportedly confessed to have provided 1.1 million dinars (\$3.58 million) by check to an official at the Ministry of Interior, one million dinars (\$3.25 million) in cash to another official, in addition to “bags” of millions of dinars in cash to a third official, Kuwaiti media reported.

Brazil, Europe pass

FROM PAGE 12

The health ministry said the jump was caused by “instability” in its reporting system, which delayed previous days’ figures for some states.

Brazil’s death toll now stands at nearly 49,000, and has risen by more than 1,000 each of the past four days -- although its curve finally appears to be starting to flatten.

Authorities in Mexico City meanwhile pushed back a planned reopening of the economy from next week to the following week, saying the rate of infection was still too high.

Argentina, which is reeling from the economic impact of the health crisis, bought more time to negotiate a \$66 billion debt restructuring with creditors, who agreed to extend the deadline once again, to July 24.

L

BED

Apartments

Single Apartment Per Floor

At the best locations of

Uttara & Bashundhara


Residential Areas

Please feel free to

Call on 16687

Or Mobile: 01714 039846, 01713 367846

01714 016717



Asset Developments & Holdings Ltd

91 Gulshan Avenue

Trump signals new effort to end 'Dreamers' program

President Donald Trump on Friday signaled he could try again to end the program that has protected so-called Dreamer immigrants who are in the United States illegally but entered as children, following a loss in the US Supreme Court. Trump wrote on Twitter, referring to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy that "The Supreme Court asked us to resubmit on DACA, nothing was lost or won. They 'punted', much like in a football game (where hopefully they would stand for our great American Flag). We will be submitting enhanced papers shortly in order to properly fulfil the Supreme Court's ruling & request of yesterday." The 5-4 court ruling found that the administration had erred in the way that it decided to end the program in 2017. DACA was put in place by the previous administration of President Barack Obama and currently some 649,000 immigrants are enrolled.

North Korea prepares anti-South leaflets

North Korea is gearing up to send propaganda leaflets over its southern border, denouncing North Korean defectors and South Korea, its state media said yesterday, the latest retaliation for leaflets from the South as bilateral tensions rise. Enraged North Korean people across the country "are actively pushing forward with the preparations for launching a large-scale distribution of leaflets," which are piled as high as a mountain, said state news agency KCNA. "Every action should be met with proper reaction and only when one experiences it oneself, one can feel how offending it is," KCNA said. North Korea has blamed North Korean defectors for launching leaflets across the border and threatened military action. On Tuesday, Pyongyang blew up an inter-Korean liaison office to show its displeasure against the defectors and South Korea for not stopping them launching leaflets.

Rare 'ring of fire' solar eclipse to dim Africa, Asia



Skywatchers along a narrow band from west Africa to the Arabian Peninsula, India and southern China will witness the most dramatic "ring of fire" solar eclipse to shadow the Earth in years today. Annular eclipses occur when the Moon - passing between Earth and the Sun - is not quite close enough to our planet to completely obscure sunlight, leaving a thin ring of the solar disc visible. They occur every year or two, and can only be seen from a narrow pathway across the planet. Remarkably, the eclipse on Sunday arrives on the northern hemisphere's longest day of the year - the summer solstice - when Earth's north pole is tilted most directly towards the Sun. A solar eclipse always occurs about two weeks before or after a lunar eclipse, when the Moon moves into Earth's shadow. Lunar eclipses are visible from about half of Earth's surface.

SOURCE: REUTERS, AFP



WHAT IS HOME?

Syrian displaced children pose for photo at Atmeh camp, near the Turkish border, Syria, on Friday. On World Refugee Day, Reuters photographer Khalil Ashawi went to the Atmeh camp in Syria, where families have been sheltering since 2011 from a conflict that has made half of Syrians homeless, to ask children born in the camp a simple question: what is home? They all gave him different answers on their daily ordeals and they each have their unique story of the war. But they have no idea what a home is. "These kids don't know the meaning of a home, some don't know or have forgotten that a house has a wall and a door," Ashawi said. The United Nations' refugee agency is marking this year's World Refugee Day with the message that "every action counts", as it faces the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and record numbers of people forced from their homes by war and extreme weather. Conflict, hunger and economic upheaval had displaced nearly 80 million people worldwide, half of them children, by the end of 2019 - nearly twice as many as a decade ago.

PHOTO: REUTERS



India downs Pak drone with weapons

THE STATESMAN/ANN

A drone carrying weapons in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district was shot down by the Indian Border Security Forces on Saturday. It was yet another attempt by Pakistani forces to drop weapons and ammunition for terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir.

A US made M-4 rifle, two magazines, 60 rounds of ammunition and seven grenades have been found after shooting down the US made Hexa Copter Drone.

There were no immediate comment from Pakistan.

The incident comes as Indian authorities stepped up operations against militants in Kashmir valley. More than 100 alleged militants have been killed this year, officials said.

Indian-administered Kashmir has been in turmoil since last August when New Delhi revoked its semi-autonomous status.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since the two became independent and angrily split in 1947. Both claim the whole region which has been the cause of two wars between the neighbours.

China unveils HK security law

City's freedoms in doubt as Beijing to set up 'national security agency'

REUTERS, Beijing/Hong Kong

Beijing unveiled details of its new national security law for Hong Kong yesterday, paving the way for the most profound change to the city's way of life since it returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

The much-anticipated legislation, which has provoked deep concerns in Washington and Europe, includes a national security office for Hong Kong to collect intelligence and handle crimes against national security, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

It said Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam could also appoint specific judges to hear national security cases, a move likely to unnerv some investors, diplomats and business leaders in the global financial hub.

National security activities would protect human rights and freedom of speech and assembly, it added, without providing details.

China says the draft law is aimed at

tackling separatist activity, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces, but critics fear it will crush wide-ranging freedoms that are seen as key to Hong Kong's status as a global financial centre.



The details of the law were unveiled following a three-day meeting of the top decision-making body of China's parliament.

The exact time frame for enacting the law was unclear, although political analysts expect it will take effect ahead of key Legislative Council elections in Hong Kong on Sept 6.

China's move to impose the law

directly on Hong Kong, bypassing the city's legislature, comes after a year of sometimes violent anti-government and anti-Beijing protests that mainland and local authorities blame "foreign forces" for fomenting.

When Britain handed over Hong Kong to China in 1997, China promised to allow the city a high degree of autonomy for 50 years under what is known as the "one country two systems" formula of governance.

On Friday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington would in future treat Hong Kong as a Chinese city, rather than a semi-autonomous one, and the United States was working its way through a decision-making process over who would be held accountable over curbs to Hong Kong's freedoms.

Underscoring global concerns over the move, the European Parliament on Friday voted in favour of taking China to the International Court of Justice in The Hague if Beijing imposes the security law on Hong Kong.

We won't back unilateral Iran sanctions snapback

Europe tells US as it tries to save nuke deal

REUTERS, Paris

Britain, France and Germany said they would not back US efforts to unilaterally trigger the reimposition of United Nations sanctions on Iran, but said they wanted talks with Tehran over its ongoing violations of a 2015 nuclear accord.

Under Iran's 2015 deal with world powers to accept limits to its nuclear programme in return for the lifting of sanctions, a UN weapons embargo is due to expire in October. The United States, which exited the deal in 2018, says it wants to extend the embargo.

If the UN Security Council does not extend the embargo, Washington has threatened to trigger a so-called snapback of all UN sanctions on Iran, using a process outlined in the nuclear deal.

Such a move would be likely to kill the nuclear accord. "We firmly believe that any unilateral attempt to trigger UN sanctions snapback would have serious adverse consequences in the UN Security Council," the foreign ministers of the three European countries (E3) said in a statement.

"We would not support such a decision, which would be incompatible with our current efforts to preserve the JCPOA (Iran nuclear deal)," they said after discussing Iran in Berlin.

European diplomats are working on a compromise, but it is unclear whether they will be able to satisfy the United States as well as Russia and China, which like the E3 remain in the deal.

'I have not resigned'

US prosecutor who probed Giuliani refuses to quit

REUTERS, Washington

A top US federal prosecutor whose office has been investigating President Donald Trump's personal lawyer, Rudolph Giuliani, on Friday refused to step down after the administration abruptly said it was replacing him.

The dramatic standoff marks the latest in series of unusual actions by Attorney General William Barr that critics say are meant to benefit Trump politically and undermine the independence of the Justice Department. It also comes as Trump seeks to purge officials perceived as not fully supporting him.

Barr, in a surprise late-night announcement, said the US Attorney in Manhattan, Geoffrey Berman, was stepping down.

Berman, who leads a powerful office known for prosecuting high-profile terrorism cases, Wall Street financial crimes and government corruption, said he first learned of the move from Barr's press release and would not go quietly.

"I have not resigned, and have no intention of resigning my position," Berman said in a statement. "I will step down when a presidentially appointed nominee is confirmed by the Senate. Until



then, our investigations will move forward without delay or interruption."

Since being appointed in January 2018, Berman has not shied from taking on figures in Trump's orbit. His office oversaw the prosecution of Michael Cohen, Trump's former personal lawyer, indicted two Giuliani associates and launched a probe into Giuliani in connection with his efforts to dig up dirt on Trump's political adversaries in Ukraine. Prosecutors have not accused Giuliani of wrongdoing.

Berman's abrupt attempted dismissal came as the Justice Department asks a federal court to block publication of a book by former National Security Adviser John Bolton, whose claims include an allegation Trump tried to interfere with a probe overseen by Berman's office.

Society at 'tipping point'

Says Greta over anti-racism protests

AFP, London

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg yesterday said the Black Lives Matter protests showed society had reached a "tipping point" at which injustices are finally addressed.

"It feels like we have passed some kind of social tipping point where people are starting to realise that we cannot keep looking away from these things," the 17-year-old said in an interview with the BBC.

"We cannot keep sweeping these things under the carpet, these injustices."

Thunberg's interview aired as global capitals braced for another weekend of anti-racism protests in the wake of the death of a white policeman at the hands of a white policeman of the unarmed African American George Floyd.

British protesters have toppled the statue of a 17th century slave trader and the Church of England and the Bank of England have expressed remorse for profiting from the sale of Africans to the Americas.

Thunberg said "people are starting to find their voice, to sort of understand that they can actually have an impact."

She also described being stunned by the depth of US poverty she discovered while travelling with her father in an electric car they borrowed from the former California governor and actor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"It was very shocking to hear people talk about that they can't afford to put food on the table," she said.

More protests were scheduled for yesterday in London and the Scottish capital Edinburgh.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Protesters attempt to topple a statue of Confederate General Albert Pike during an event to mark Juneteenth, which commemorates the end of slavery in Texas, two years after the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves elsewhere in the United States, amid nationwide protests against racial inequality, in Washington, DC, on Friday.

'Civil rights isn't over'

Americans mark Juneteenth coast to coast; UN sets up probe into racism

REUTERS, Atlanta

Thousands marched through US cities on Friday in Juneteenth observances marking the abolition of slavery more than a century and a half ago, an occasion freighted with special resonance this year amid America's reckoning with its legacy of racism.

Capping nearly four weeks of protests and national soul-searching aroused by the death of a Black man, George Floyd, under the knee of a white police officer, demonstrators took to the streets from Atlanta to Oakland, California, blending the Juneteenth holiday with calls for racial justice.

While the gatherings were largely festive in mood, in keeping with Juneteenth traditions, they were also animated by demands for reforms to end brutality and discrimination in US law enforcement.

Late on Friday a statue of Confederate general Albert Pike was torn down by demonstrators in the capital and set on fire, in an act labeled

a "disgrace" by US President Trump.

Juneteenth, a portmanteau of June and 19th, commemorates the US abolition of slavery under President Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, belatedly announced by a Union army in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, after the Civil War ended.

Texas made it a holiday in 1980, and 45 more states and the District of Columbia have since followed suit.

Emotions were running high in Atlanta, where Rayshard Brooks, an African American, was fatally shot in the back by a white policeman in the parking lot of a restaurant June 12, reigniting outrage still simmering from Floyd's death on May 25 in Minneapolis. The Atlanta policeman was dismissed from the department and charged with murder, although his arrest came more quickly than that of the officer ultimately charged with murder in the Floyd case.

Marcher Antonio Jeremiah Parks, 27, of Atlanta said the civil rights

movement had not yet fulfilled its promises.

"Civil rights isn't over," said Parks, who is Black and works at a homeless shelter. "We still feel the pain of slavery. It's not healed, and won't be until we're treated the same."

Earlier, the UN Human Rights Council on Friday condemned discriminatory and violent policing after the death of Floyd last month and ordered a report on "systemic racism" against people of African descent.

The 47-member-state forum unanimously adopted a resolution brought by African countries. The mandate also asks UN Rights chief Michelle Bachelet to examine government responses to peaceful protests, including alleged use of excessive force, and deliver findings in a year's time. The text was watered down during closed-door negotiations from an initial draft explicitly calling for a UN commission of inquiry on racism in the United States and elsewhere.



Indian activists along with Tibetans living in exile shout anti-Chinese slogans during an anti-China demonstration in Siliguri, India yesterday. India and China yesterday each traded accusations that the other had violated their shared de facto border, an area that this week became the site of the deadliest clash in half a century between the two nuclear-armed giants.

PHOTO: AFP

Long-term care for recovered COVID-19 patients

MD EKHTEAR MAHMUD

The COVID-19 is an ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). As per the COVID-19 dashboard by the Centre for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University, as of 20 June 2020, above 8,685,046 cases have been reported in 188 countries and territories, resulting in more than 460,506 deaths; more than 4,270,000 people have recovered.

SARS-CoV-2 is a novel infectious agent and recovery from it has a steep learning curve since patients who have survived the COVID-19 infection continue to experience feelings of fatigue, shortness of breath and reduced exercise tolerance.

Small-scale studies conducted in Hong Kong and Wuhan, China, show that survivors face poorer functioning in their lungs, heart and liver.

The hospital authority of Hong Kong has been observing a group of COVID-19 patients for up to two months since they were released. They found about 50% of the 20 survivors had lung function below the normal range. Moreover, a



study of blood samples from 25 patients, who recovered from COVID-19 in Wuhan, found that they had not fully recovered normal functioning regardless of the severity of their coronavirus symptoms.

According to the doctors at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre in Los Angeles, chronic cardiac complications could arise in patients even after recovery as a result of persistent inflammation.

Since there is not sufficient data regarding the after-effects of novel coronavirus infection, for clues on how COVID-19

may leave its mark, doctors and researchers are looking to the experience of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) which is part of the same family as the new coronavirus. Some survivors of the SARS suffered long-term effects years after they first got the disease.

Researchers in China analysed 25 SARS patients 12 years after they contracted the virus, contrasting their results with a control group not infected with SARS. They found that more than 50% of the recovered patients suffered another lung infection

since their session with SARS and also had higher cholesterol levels. Also, half the patients had at least five colds in the previous year — a characteristic no one in the control group shared.

These data proved that the recovered SARS patients had a poor quality of life 12 years after recovery, and were susceptible to inflammation, tumours, glucose and lipid metabolic disorders as researchers wrote. A similar scenario might be seen in the case of COVID-19 recovered patients if precautionary measures are not taken.

Many experts suggest that breathing exercises can probably be advised to COVID-19 recovered patients in the hope of producing a short term benefit in the improvement of their breathing. As for nutritional support, consumption of fruits and vegetables every day should be advised, along with increased intake of high-quality protein to provide resources for the repair of muscles which will have been challenged considerably during the COVID-19 symptoms.

To improve the patient's respiratory function, termination of smoking should be encouraged.

To improve mental health conditions, COVID-19 recovered patients should be advised to actively engage with mental health services, whether directly or via home-based approaches. Additionally, a person just recovered should continue with the hygiene practices undertaken while s/he was in quarantine. Distance must be maintained from people around and immediate mingling is not advisable.

The writer works at Eskayef Pharmaceuticals Limited.
E-mail: ekhtearup@gmail.com

INITIATIVE

AMADER PROCHESTA: Creating awareness on COVID-19 and Diabetes

A project titled 'Amader Prochesta' was launched recently in the capital to create social awareness on COVID-19 and diabetes, says a press release. The project will help healthcare professionals in identifying the unmet needs in diabetes management for patients, who are suffering from COVID-19, and the preparedness required in the healthcare system.

The project is a joint initiative of the Diabetic Association of Bangladesh (BADAS), Non-Communicable Diseases Control (NCDC) Programme of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Novo Nordisk and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

A guideline on 'COVID-19 and diabetes for healthcare professional' has been prepared and published and a dedicated website: www.diabetes-covid19.org has been introduced under this project. 200,000 people will be tested for random blood sugar, and educational materials, videos, leaflets, and posters have been prepared and distributed on the prevention of COVID-19 and diabetes.

Professor A K Azad Khan, President of BADAS, said, "Diabetes patients are at higher risk and they need to be very careful amidst this pandemic and social awareness is the key to prevent this deadly disease including other non communicable diseases (NCDs)."

"This project is an opportunity for Novo Nordisk to demonstrate our social responsibility and commitment to patients and the communities we operate in," said Dr Mihail Briciu, Managing Director of Novo Nordisk.

The new platform will be used effectively to protect health of patients living with diabetes and hypertension, said Yasuhiro Kawazoe, Senior Representative of JICA.

HEALTH bulletin



COVID-19: steroid lowered mortality and potential drug-drug interaction

Low-dose dexamethasone is associated with reduced mortality risk among patients with severe COVID-19, making it the first drug to show such an effect, according to a statement by trial investigators at the University of Oxford. Over 6,000 hospitalised patients were randomised to receive either dexamethasone (6 mg daily) or usual care for 10 days.

Dexamethasone was associated with significantly lower risk for death among ventilated patients (rate ratio, 0.65) and other patients receiving oxygen (RR, 0.80), compared with those given usual care. Patients who did not require respiratory support did not see a benefit. The authors estimate that eight ventilated patients or 25 patients requiring only oxygen would need to be treated with dexamethasone to prevent one death. The results have not been published in a journal yet.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning that remdesivir should not be used alongside hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine as it may result in lower antiviral activity for remdesivir. The announcement was based on lab studies, but the interaction has not been observed in the clinical setting. The FDA recently pulled the emergency use authorisation for hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine for COVID-19.

Diabetes care during COVID-19

DR PRONAB CHOUDHURY

People with diabetes are not more likely to get COVID-19 than the general population. The risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 is likely to be lower if diabetes is well-managed.

COVID-19 is usually a mild disease and around 98% of people affected survive. Most cases (80%) are mild (showing only minimal flu-like symptoms) and people can recover at home. Some cases (around 14%) are severe and very few (around 5%) can result in critical illness. Some people have no symptoms or only mild symptoms of a common cold. In others, COVID-19 can lead to serious problems, like pneumonia or even death. This is more common in people who have other health problems, those with cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease and hypertension. People with diabetes are among those high-risk categories that can have serious illness if they get the virus.

Everyone with diabetes, including those with type 1, type 2 and gestational (diabetes in pregnancy), is at risk of developing a severe illness if they get coronavirus, but the way it affects can vary from person to person. So, when you have diabetes, being ill can make your blood sugar go all over the place. Your body tries to fight the illness by releasing stored glucose (sugar) into your bloodstream to give you energy. But your body cannot produce insulin to cope with this, so your blood sugars rise. Your body is working overtime to fight the illness, making it harder to manage your diabetes (high sugar). This

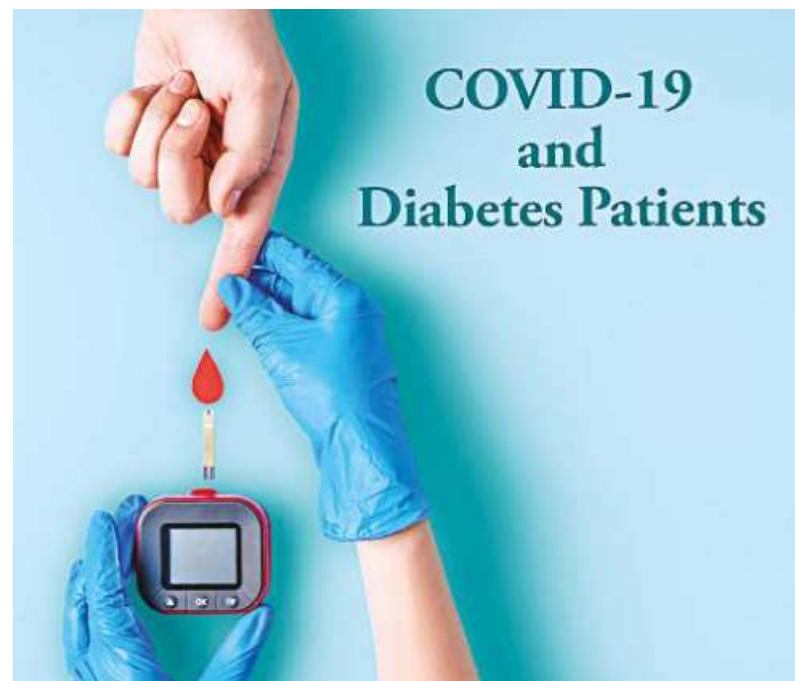
means you are more at risk of having serious blood sugar highs and lows, as well as longer-term problems with your eyes, feet and other areas of your body.

It is recommended that people with diabetes plan ahead of time what to do before they get ill. This includes having the contact information of their doctor at hand and making sure to have an adequate stock of medications (tablets and/or insulin, or both) and supplies (as glucometer) for monitoring blood glucose at home, so that they do not need to leave the house if they fall ill. Diabetic patients should practice the 'sick day rules' recommended for any stressful situation to improve their diabetes decompensation. Sick day rules

for people with diabetes include keeping hydrated, monitoring blood glucose and temperature, and if you are on insulin, also monitoring ketone bodies and follow the doctor's recommendations.

Finally, in response to the COVID-19, governments in many countries including Bangladesh have restricted the movement of their citizens, confining them to their homes. Regular physical activity is of great benefit to the general population and even more for people living with diabetes. Daily light exercise is recommended at home rather than going outside.

The writer is a Consultant, Diabetes, Rheumatology and Family Medicine at Praava Health.
E-mail: dr.pronab@yahoo.com



Refugee camps vulnerable to COVID-19 outbreaks

A COVID-19 outbreak in a refugee settlement will likely overwhelm the available healthcare capacity and infrastructure and spread through nearly the entire settlement population if left unchecked, according to a new study published recently in PLOS Medicine by Paul Spiegel of Johns Hopkins University, United States, and colleagues.

Spiegel and colleagues used a dynamic model of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) transmission to simulate how a COVID-19 outbreak could spread through a such a setting, the Kutupalong-Balukhali Expansion Site in the Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh. Approximately 600,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar reside at the settlement.

The researchers simulated high, moderate, and low transmission scenarios and estimated the hospitalisations, deaths, and healthcare needs expected, adjusting for the age distribution of the population at the Kutupalong-Balukhali. The model predicts the number of people infected in the first year will reach 421,500 (95% PI, 376,300-463,500), 546,800 (95% PI, 499,300-567,000), and 589,800 (95% PI, 578,800-595,600) in the low, moderate, and high transmission scenarios, respectively, should no effective interventions to prevent spread of the virus be put into place.

Spiegel and colleagues estimate the hospitalisation needs would exceed the current capacity 55-136 days after introduction, and the outbreak would lead to 2,040 (95% PI, 1,660-2,500), 2,650 (95% PI, 2,030-3,380), and 2,880 (95% PI, 2,090-3,830) deaths in the three scenarios.

The spread of disease through the densely populated refugee settlement is likely to be faster, not slower, than in populations with easier access to the tools (social distancing, basic hygiene, contact tracing and isolation) used to limit spread of disease. The authors emphasise that in this setting, innovative responses and intervention from health agencies and local governments will be necessary to quell the spread and treat the infected population.

f b /StarHealthBD

HOW TO HOME QUARANTINE

The home quarantined person should:



Stay in a well-ventilated single-room preferably with an attached toilet



Needs to stay away from elderly people, pregnant women, children



Restrict his/her movement within the house



Under no circumstances attend any social/religious gathering



Wash hand frequently with soap and water or with alcohol-based sanitizer



Avoid sharing household items like dishes, glasses, cups, utensils, towels, bedding



Wear a surgical mask at all time. The mask should be changed every 8-8 hours

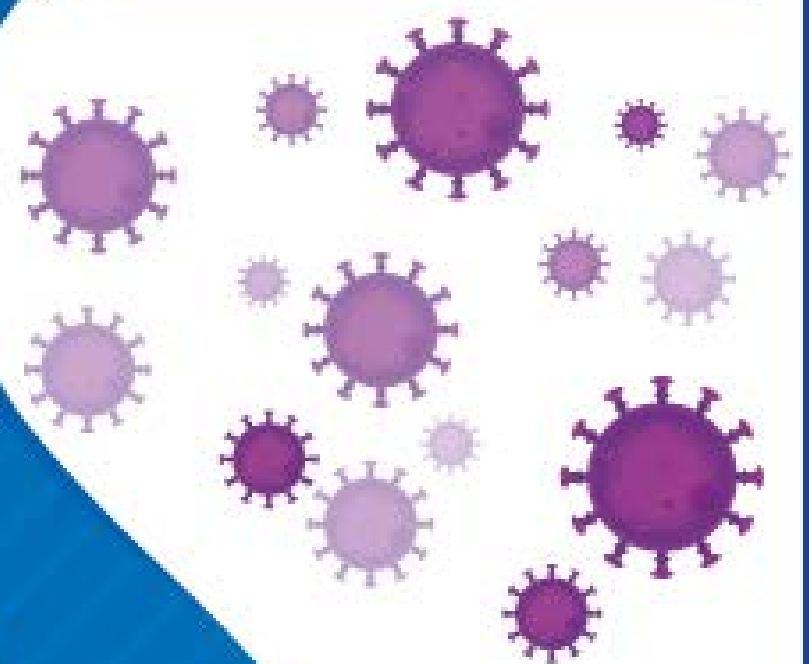


Dispose off used mask in a closed bin and bin should also be handled responsibly



If symptoms appear, he/she should immediately inform the nearest health centre

COVID-19 OUTBREAK



ORION
Pharma Ltd.

In Search of Excellence

A giant who walked amongst us

Kamal Lohani has left an irreplaceable void in our moral landscape

WE are deeply saddened by the news of the passing of eminent cultural activist and journalist Kamal Lohani on Saturday. Mr Lohani was undergoing treatment at the intensive care unit of a private hospital in Dhaka. According to reports, he tested positive for coronavirus and was already suffering from several pre-existing conditions including heart disease and diabetes along with lung and kidney complications. This is, undoubtedly, a sad day for all of us at the journalist community, and the wider society in general, who benefitted from his wisdom, leadership and public service. His death, just six days short of his eighty-seventh birthday, also gives us pause to take stock of his rich legacy as a conscience-keeper of the nation since as far back as the 1950s.

Kamal Lohani played a significant role in different socio-political and democratic movements of our history, including the 1952 Language Movement and the Liberation War. He was jailed and tortured several times for his political activism in the lead-up to the war. In 1971, he worked at the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra as its news editor. In an interview with *The Daily Star* in 2015, he explained how his role as a *shobdo shoinik*—collecting and broadcasting news—was, for him, an instrument to be used in the service of the nation. “I am fortunate that I was entitled with the responsibility of writing and reading the news bulletin on our victory,” he said. In the post-war period, he served in important posts of many unions for journalists and relentlessly worked for establishing their rights and demands. In his long life, he also served as the director of Bangladesh Press Institute and the director general of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Furthermore, he was a president of Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigosthi, and was also involved with Ektatorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee. In 2015, he was awarded the Ekushey Padak.

Mr Lohani was a giant who walked amongst us, and today the country is left poorer by his death—coming as it did on the heels of an already long list of prominent individuals succumbing to the coronavirus. He deserves a hero’s farewell, by the people who he served and who looked up to him for guidance but, unfortunately, that may not be possible because of social distancing restrictions imposed by Covid-19. But he will live on in the memory of the people and his legacy will continue to guide us in the future. May his soul rest in peace.

Donor countries must continue their support for Rohingyas

Bangladesh alone cannot bear the burden during this pandemic

IT is concerning to learn that out of USD 308.7 million sought from the international community for the Rohingyas for 2020, only USD 87 million or 27 percent of that has been given as of May, according to the UN Refugee Agency. And as countries around the world struggle to deal with the economic fall-out of the pandemic, there might also be shortage of funding in the future. Another reason for the likely shortage of funding may be that the activities of the non-government organisations have decreased drastically amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Meanwhile, over one million Rohingya refugees are living in camps in Cox’s Bazar in cramped conditions with limited access to adequate hygiene and health facilities. Until June 18, a total of 42 Rohingyas have tested positive and three have succumbed to the disease. Only recently, at least 32 Rohingyas died on a drifting boat at sea while desperately trying to get to the Malaysian coast but could not find refuge there. Our coast guards rescued 396 of them who were at sea for nearly two months. It is likely that the situation of the Rohingyas will be more complicated in the coming days due to the pandemic-induced economic crisis. Experts also fear that the ongoing armed conflict in western Myanmar could be used by the Myanmar government as a pretext for not repatriating the Rohingyas.

While our government has included the Rohingya refugees in its national action plan to respond to Covid-19, the humanitarian agencies have also been working hard to respond to the situation. However, all the response plans may be interrupted due to the fund shortage which is likely to happen in the coming days.

While it is understandable that the donor countries would focus on rebuilding their own economy after the pandemic, it is also expected that they would continue to support the Rohingyas at a time when they need their assistance more than ever. Additionally, the international community should continue to exert pressure on the Myanmar government to start the repatriation process as soon as possible. It must intervene by deploying forces to stop the fighting and improve the conditions in Rakhine for the Rohingyas’ safe return. The Bangladesh government has been continuing to shelter the Rohingyas for many years, but with a large portion of its own population living in poverty, it cannot continue to feed over one million Rohingyas in the refugee camps and ensure their basic rights if the international community decreases their funding.

The curious disconnect between reality and the world of politics



AN OPEN DIALOGUE

ABDULLAH SHIBLI

THE national budget announced by the Bangladesh government is another example of the curious disconnect between reality and the world of politics. National leaders and NGOs have voiced their disbelief over the goals and the numbers enunciated by the finance minister (FM) a few days ago, including the GDP growth rate which is set to bounce back to the 8.2 percent target set for last year.

In sharp contrast, a World Bank forecast released on June 8 expects the world economy to experience a 5.2 percent decline in GDP in 2020. The bank’s projections, provided in its June 2020 Global Economic Prospects, warns that, if this dark scenario materialises, “That would represent the deepest recession since the Second World War, with the largest fraction of economies experiencing declines in per capita output since 1870.”

Against this backdrop, and in sharp contrast to the pessimistic global outlook, the FM’s proposed budget for the next 2020-21 fiscal year (July 2020-June 2021) targets an economic growth rate of 8.2 percent which is exactly equal to last year’s (FY20). This optimistic plan is based on the government’s faith in a quick recovery following the Covid-19 reopening which started after the Eid holidays and a hope that the economy will experience a sharp “V-shaped” rebound. While many economists, including myself have put our bets on a more gradual “U-shaped” restart of the Bangladesh economy and suggested a gradual three-phase reopening, the government is counting on alternative counsel, demonstrating its impatience with the mounting toll of Covid-19 on the health of the people and its economy.

In an op-ed in *The Daily Star* on May 26, I voiced my concern over a hasty unplanned reopening following the Eid holidays. Prior to that, on March 18, in a piece entitled “Tough Times Ahead in the Wake of Coronavirus”, we expressed the view that the indirect effects of the Covid-19 pandemic will be felt by every country since it has already slowed down global economic recovery. This group includes Bangladesh which will feel the impact of the slowdown in global trade, lack of jobs for Bangladeshis in the Middle East, and a slow recovery of

international trade. We expressed our belief that the coronavirus onslaught will weigh in on the global economy and will last even after the epidemic has been brought under control, and “it won’t end with a sudden burst of blue skies”.

It is not clear what calculations went into the government’s GDP targeting, in view of the fact that the government offices were shut down for over two months. Interministerial discussions and information exchanges between various departments have been at a standstill. According to various sources, the banking, inflation and balance of payment data have not been compiled during the shutdown period. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and the Bangladesh

party was planning to hold many rounds of rallies, national events, and publicly-financed rounds of Centennial and Bicentennial celebrations to grab international attention, and showcase our economic growth, i.e. our journey over the last decade on the “Road to Prosperity”. In this day of pain and suffering witnessed by the people during the three months of lockdown, it is worthwhile to remind ourselves of the mood that prevailed as late as March 2020.

The AL election manifesto set very ambitious economic goals, including an increase in the GDP growth rate, rapid growth in per capita income, and a significant jump in the rate of investment

income of Tk 3,780 billion and a deficit of Tk 1,900 billion. However, targeting a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of 8.2 percent for FY21 indicates that economic growth has been expected to pick up speed and the economy will experience a strong rebound. There is only one word to describe this whole exercise, “Unbelievable”!

One only has to contrast the FM’s overall plan with two pieces of evidence presented below to understand the scepticism voiced all around. First, let us consider the pessimistic global GDP projections from all international institutions. Ceyla Pazarbasoglu, a World Bank vice president, cautioned in an interview about the grim global picture. “This is a deeply sobering outlook, with the crisis likely to leave long-lasting scars and pose major global challenges.” The World Bank forecast of -5.2 percent is more dire than the 3.3 percent contraction that IMF predicted in April. And it warns, a protracted pandemic that leads to a breakdown in financial markets and global trade could darken the outlook.

Secondly, Oxford University has been tracking government measures in response to Covid-19 in real-time and in about 160 countries. The Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT) project collects data on 17 indicators which represent the level of strictness of each policy in three categories: a) containment and closure policies; b) economic policies; and c) health system policies. The policies selected include school closures, travel bans, emergency investment in healthcare, fiscal measures, and investment in vaccines by the governments. The latest ratings published for four South Asian countries show that while Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan scored a perfect 100, Bangladesh’s Stringency Index measure is 95.24. In other words, Bangladesh has a few things to learn from our neighbours in terms of enforcement of proactive measures to limit the spread of Covid-19: strictly screen and quarantine international travellers, monitor commercial establishments to prevent virus spread, upgrade the healthcare infrastructure (the ratio of the number of hospital beds, ICU beds and ventilators to the population), and prioritise greater availability of healthcare professionals—doctors, hospital staff, paramedics and well-trained social workers.

Dr Abdullah Shibli is an economist and works in information technology. He is Senior Research Fellow, International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI), a think-tank in Boston, USA.



Bank (BB), the two major agencies tasked with aiding the government’s budgetary and contingency plans had been in operational limbo during the lockdown period.

It is understandable that the government and the ruling party are still struggling to come to terms with the damage to the economy and the year-long celebration plans upended by Covid-19. This year the PM and her allies had planned major events that would have showcased our 10 years of sustained growth and a booming economy as we entered the new decade. However, there has been an over-reliance on GDP growth and other targets dependent on GDP-growth rates.

One only has to look back only one year to jog our memory. The ruling

party in the country. In the manifesto, the most important and tangible target aimed by the government is the commitment to push the growth of GDP to double digits by the end of its term in 2023-24.

The Asian Development Bank’s rosy recent outlook (ADO) for the Bangladesh economy seems to have unduly influenced the government’s projection of GDP growth and minimised the importance of the economic loss, for the eight months from March to December 2020 and beyond. “A planned rise in public investment in large projects should help expansion in domestic demand,” said the ADO and added, “improvement in global growth with expected government policy support will help the industrial activities expand.” The FY21 total budget is Tk 5,680 billion with an

Bangladesh should listen to its health workers

MEENAKSHI GANGULY

NINE-months pregnant, Fatema Akhter Mukta, 30, died on June 10 after her family struggled for five days to find a hospital in Bangladesh willing to admit her when she began having trouble breathing. When, finally, a hospital admitted her and referred her to Chittagong Medical College for its intensive care facilities, it was too late. “Every hospital refused to admit her when they learned my wife was having trouble breathing, suspecting it to be Covid symptoms,” said Towhidul Arzu, Fatema’s husband. “When I begged them to help her, one doctor showed me a long waiting list of patients.”

As governments around the world struggle to contain the pandemic, Human Rights Watch has called to uphold rights including access to health and education, protection of vulnerable communities, migrant workers, religious minorities and medical personnel.

Fatema’s experience has become tragically common right now in Bangladesh, with the healthcare system overwhelmed by the pandemic. As the recorded deaths from Covid-19 passes 1,300 and with nearly 100,000 testing positive, the Bangladesh government needs to step up its efforts.

The rate of infections is likely much higher given Bangladesh’s low levels of testing—Bangladesh has tested about 554,000 people in a country of nearly 165 million, with a rate of positive tests hovering around 20 percent. The World Health Organization has suggested that until positive tests come in at about 10 percent, more testing is needed to understand the actual prevalence of Covid-19 in the population.

Some of my Bangladeshi friends worry they might have symptoms, while others are slowly recovering. Several have relatives and friends who have tested positive. Some who have lost loved ones believe prompt medical care could have saved them.

Government hospitals across the country have only 733 intensive care unit (ICU) beds and fewer than 1,800 ventilators, meaning too few of those who test positive could potentially access care facilities. Those with symptoms consistent with Covid-19 increasingly report being turned away from both public and private hospitals. There are

massive disparities in health access throughout the country. Only about 25 percent of the country’s limited number of health workers are in rural areas, where about 70 percent of the population lives. And while most of the country’s doctors, ICUs, and ventilators are in Dhaka, for the millions of people living in the city’s slums, these services remain difficult to access.

Two doctors currently serving in Covid-19-dedicated hospitals, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they were overwhelmed, and that limited

medical services and said that the authorities “will not hesitate to take action against those who fail to do so.” But doctors aren’t turning people away because they are cold-hearted or incapable. They simply don’t have the resources they need to care for patients, or even to protect themselves. Hospitals are full and even ailing doctors are reportedly being turned away.

Nor do health workers have sufficient personal protective equipment to safely provide medical care. A Bangladesh Doctors’ Foundation survey conducted

to the Bangladesh Medical Association, 31 health workers had died from the virus and over 3,164 more had been infected. The Doctors’ Association of Bangladesh has called for more tests, more facilities for Covid-19 patients, adequate personal protective equipment for all health workers, and social services for the poor.

Instead of listening to health workers and addressing their concerns, the authorities have cracked down on those who speak out, including with the draconian Digital Security Act, and issued blanket gag orders to doctors and nurses.



Doctors aren’t turning people away because they are cold-hearted or incapable. They simply don’t have the resources they need to care for patients, or even to protect themselves.

PHOTO: STAR

facilities mean patients without clout are being denied treatment. “Thousands are coming to the hospital with Covid symptoms,” one of them said. “We have to accept patients if they are referred to us by higher ups and end up refusing others because there are no beds available.”

In response to reports of hospitals turning people away, Health Minister Zahid Malik warned doctors to provide

in April found over one third of 826 doctors from private hospitals did not have sufficient protection. Conditions are most likely worse in public hospitals, where more doctors have reportedly contracted the virus. According to media reports, some doctors are wearing raincoats in place of adequate personal protective equipment.

Health workers are paying painfully for this deficit. As of June 14, according

The government hates criticism. But when dealing with such a massive global crisis, it needs to at least be willing to listen to healthcare professionals, journalists, and others so that it can effectively protect public health and provide resources where they are most urgently needed.

Meenakshi Ganguly is South Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

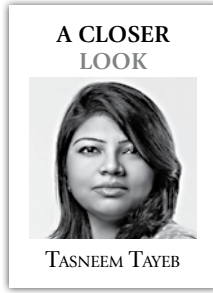
Stop creating more refugees

I strongly believe that if the world unites effectively in tackling the reasons that cause people to flee their home countries, then recurring incidents of migrants dying at sea will eventually come to an end. Conflicts and persecutions force thousands of human beings to cross the Mediterranean in ramshackle vessels. Many drown.

Human rights abuses and persecution are contributing to the huge wave of refugees. Factors that trigger this continuous displacement of people from their home countries should be exposed, challenged and eradicated once and for all.

Handsen Chikowore, by email

In search of refuge



A CLOSER LOOK
TASNEEM TAYEB

HUNDREDS and thousands of refugees and migrants are preyed upon every year by human traffickers with false promises of a better

future, a home. And with nowhere to go, no roof over their heads, no land to call home, the refugees easily fall for the trap. Sometimes knowingly. For instance, desperate Rohingya families often rely on traffickers to send their daughters to Malaysia, Indonesia and other countries, to get married to suitors through traffickers, paying a hefty sum for the privilege. Despite the uncertainties of the journey and in the intention of these unreliable men, the despairing refugee families have no recourse but to entrust the safety of their daughters with them. A column titled, "Trafficking in Rohingya: Exploiting the desperate", written late last year by me documents in detail the vulnerabilities of the Rohingya refugees to trafficking, especially women and girls, who are often sold into sex slavery.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates, human trafficking business generates a profit of around USD 150 billion a year globally. The number of human trafficking victims as per ILO data is around 25 million. And the victims are mostly the poor, the destitute and of course the refugees.

Covid-19, unfortunately, has only made it easier for traffickers to entrap the homeless. The number of refugees in the world, as per UNHCR estimates currently stands at 25.9 million, half of them under the age of 18. A decade ago the number of refugees was 15.2. In the

last 10 years, the number of refugees has increased by 10.2 million people—on average a million a year.

With the fast-spreading pandemic bringing a halt to nations around the world and drastically slowing down economic activities, many refugees—who used to earn their living with menial jobs—have had to take the hit. With the jobs gone, and with their means of living, many are now being forced to seek alternative ways of earning their subsistence.

And the ones who are living inside the controlled refugee camps are also feeling the brunt of this pandemic. For one, with governments stretching their resources to help their citizens in the fight against this global health emergency, the refugees are not often making it to the top of the priority lists.

For instance, the Covid-19 outbreak has pushed the Syrian refugees into further desperation. According to the UNHCR, "The number of vulnerable refugees who lack the basic resources to survive in exile has dramatically surged as a result of the public health emergency. The refugee hosting communities in countries in Syria's neighbourhood experience similar hardships. Many refugees have lost what were already meagre incomes, forcing them to cut down on the most basic needs, including food and medication... Refugee households are taking on additional debt and are not able to pay their rent anymore. Serious protection risks are growing, including risks of child labour, gender-based violence, early marriage and other forms of exploitation."

Driven by poverty, hunger, neglect and helplessness, refugees are resorting to taking desperate measures to better their lives, often relying on the false promises of human traffickers. According to a report by the University of Birmingham, as published by *The Guardian* newspaper, "in some

countries there had been increased targeting by traffickers as well as pressure put on children to enter into marriages."

The situation in the Palestinian camps are also dire. According to a report by Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE), an umbrella organisation for Catholic development agencies from Europe and North America, Gaza's healthcare system is "particularly ill-equipped to handle a Covid-19

million forcibly displaced population—that has increased by 27.5 million in the last 10 years—is more or less the same if not worse. From Ethiopia and Uganda to Jordan and Bangladesh, refugees around the world are now being pushed against the wall by the Covid-19 pandemic.

With the spread of the disease, what has taken a turn for the worse is the risk of human trafficking. INTERPOL suggests that, "COVID-19, and measures being taken by countries

increase."

Unfortunately, with borders closed, the traffickers have become more sinister in their handling of the trafficking victims. According to an INTERPOL report, in March this year, 68 male migrants died inside a shipping container loaded on the back of a lorry while crossing into Mozambique from Malawi. The most likely cause of death was asphyxia.

The very recent case of the Rohingya refugees stranded at sea, with the traffickers demanding money from their relatives for their release is known to us all. The refugees had embarked on a desperate journey in search of a better future in a different land. Now they are stuck in the middle of the sea at the mercy of their captors, with nowhere to go. And where would the refugees go, they don't even have a home.

The world today is filled with refugees. Home is what the world owes them—but we have failed miserably at it. Those that are fortunate find refuge in cramped camps and no-man's land. There they live without the rights we have learnt to take for granted—right to a basic livelihood, a life that is not constantly under threat, a place that one can call home, a right to a life with dignity.

Part of the problem is the term "refugee" itself—it obfuscates the sickness with the symptom. But having lost their homes, the very thing that anchors our identity, they have no defence against spurious labels. The vicious geo-politics that have held millions of lives in its merciless sway generation after generation, should not distract us from the plain fact—these men, women and children are not refugees looking for refuge, they are the homeless in search of homes.

In failing to protect the dignity of these rootless communities, we are eroding our own right to it, bit by bit.

Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for *The Daily Star*. Her Twitter handle is: @TayebTasneem



Children sleep on a migrant woman's lap as they wait at the main bus station in Istanbul, Turkey, September 15, 2015. PHOTO: MURAD SEZER/REUTERS

outbreak and cater to the needs of its nearly 2 million inhabitants in view of serious shortage of staff, infrastructure, equipment and medicine crucial for containment and treatment of Covid-19 cases... Mental and psychological effects as well as a risk of increased domestic violence are equally alarming."

Unfortunately, the fate of the 70.8

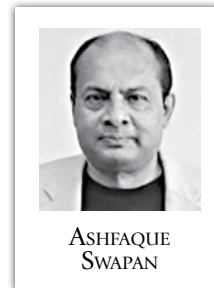
to control its spread, are impacting crime around the world, including migrant smuggling and human trafficking." The agency further added that, "The economic consequences will significantly impact peoples' desire and ability to migrate, as well as the incentive and opportunities for criminals to profit from illegal migration which is also expected to

Crisis not Trump's fault alone

Party, rabid supporters deeply complicit

"Somoza may be a SOB, but he's our SOB."

—Apocryphal remark attributed to US President Franklin D Roosevelt regarding Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza Garcia



SOMETIMES you wonder in bafflement. Is there anything on earth—anything—that will shake up the overwhelming Republican support for US

President Donald Trump?

Thanks to Trump's bungling, the US has the worst outcome—by far—in an economically crippling global pandemic. Mass nationwide protests rage against systemic racism, triggered by a horrific racist police murder.

Trump's delays cost tens of thousands of lives more. Then things got surreal. He suggested injecting disinfectant into patients—a fatal measure—so that it could "do a number" on the virus.

He responded to protesters' anguish with a crass, thuggish statement: "When the looting starts, the shooting starts."

One of the richest, most developed countries in the world has the largest number of Covid-19 deaths and about one fourth of the world's Covid-19 cases. What's more, numbers in the US are going up again.

Ten states saw a record number of new Covid-19 cases this week, and one of them could be the next epicentre of the national health crisis," CNN reported on its website, based on its analysis of data from Johns Hopkins University.

"As coronavirus cases surge in states across the South and West of the United States, health experts in countries with falling case numbers are watching with a growing sense of alarm and disbelief, with many wondering why virus-stricken US states continue to reopen and why the advice of scientists is often ignored," the *Washington Post* reports.

Amidst all this, Trump is focused on a huge public rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Public health experts are terrified. This is the first ever rally by a US president where attendees have to sign a waiver releasing the Trump campaign of any liability should they get infected by COVID-19.

How does Trump keep getting away with this?

A big reason is that the Republican rank-and-file remain in complete thrall,

essentially giving him *carte blanche*.

The Republican Party establishment is also knowingly complicit. Republican leaders know how awful Trump is. Some of them have said as much.

Republican leader #1 in July 2015: "He offers a barking carnival act that can be best described as Trumpism: a toxic mix of demagoguery, mean-spiritedness and nonsense that will lead the Republican Party to perdition if pursued."

Republican leader #2 in 2015: "He's a race baiting, xenophobic religious bigot... You know how you make America great again? Tell Donald Trump to go to Hell."

What followed is a sorry supplication to power.

Republican #1, former Texas Governor Rick Perry, went on to serve a stint as Trump's energy secretary.



Republican leaders are scared to take on Trump, whose fury can be the kiss of death in electoral politics. PHOTO: MURAD SEZER/REUTERS

Republican #2, US Senator Lindsey Graham, is an embarrassment today for a man he once wanted to go to hell.

Republican leaders are scared to take on Trump, whose fury can be the kiss of death in electoral politics.

The key to the whole mess is the cult-like support of Trump among Republicans.

Gallup polling reveals that right from his inauguration his support among Republicans has seldom dipped beyond a whopping 85 percent. This year it has been 90 percent most of the time.

Trump supporters made a Faustian bargain. Trump provides conservative judges for evangelicals, obscene tax breaks to plutocrats, and a racist and draconian immigration clampdown for the Republican masses, and his supporters back him blindly. Trump once quipped he could shoot someone on New York City's Fifth Avenue, and his core supporters wouldn't care. Count in the Republican Party, lock, stock, and barrel. They're all part of the Fifth Avenue crowd.

There is a silver lining in all of this. Slowly but surely, the nation as a whole is beginning to recoil. Recent polling shows putative Democratic nominee former US Senator Joe Biden coasting to victory. The electoral college that elects the US president favours Republicans, but Trump is trailing in enough battleground states to make his re-election prospects precarious.

Come November, if Trump loses, it will be a fate that the Republican Party courted. Trump's mendacity, his penchant for appeasing white prejudice, and inciting an ignorant contempt for science and reason are the logical conclusion of what the Republican Party started years, even decades ago. Examples abound.

President George W Bush's phony Iraq War, Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin's mixture of slick talk, ignorance and bald-faced lies. Palin once said she knew about Russia because Putin's planes flew near Alaska, and made the completely false accusation that Obamacare "death panels" would put old folks to death. The Republican Party is the only conservative party in the industrialised world that denies climate change.

Let's also give credit—if you can call it that—where it is due. Roger Ailes' Fox News Network was a vital player in this long, sordid descent. Under the ruse of reporting news, the network pushed a conservative agenda with an ugly, frequently dissembling, incendiary edge. Former Fox News producer Joe Muto said they had a catchy term for the network's style, the stories they favoured and the edict they were given from on high. "We used to call it 'Riling up the crazies,'" he says in the documentary *Divide and Conquer: The Story of Roger Ailes*.

Congratulations, Fox News Network. The crazies have been well and truly riled up. Now the inmates are running the asylum.

Come November, there could well be a reckoning. Peddling in xenophobia, an antipathy to science and reason and a virulent tribalism may have paid rich political dividends until now. In the longer run, however, when courting an increasingly diverse, tolerant and humane polity, the Republican Party's shrill, meanspirited political ethos may cost it dearly. What seemed, until now, to be political wizardry, may yet turn out to be a poisoned chalice.

Ashfaq Swapan is a contributing editor for *Silliconeer*, a digital daily for South Asians in the United States.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY



JAPANESE DEFENSES DESTROYED ON OKINAWA

June 21, 1945

Japanese resistance on Okinawa was finally crushed this day in 1945, less than three months after US troops had landed there—their last stepping-stone before the assault on Japan's main islands in World War II.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Ballpark feat
- 6 Got wind of
- 11 Tickle
- 12 Western, in slang
- 13 Prince song
- 15 Wisdom bringer
- 16 Noah's boat
- 17 "—appetit!"
- 18 Riding needs
- 20 Low number
- 21 "You betcha!"
- 22 Diner desserts
- 23 Karaoke needs
- 26 Desolate areas
- 27 Pub pints
- 28 Massive
- 29 Shrewd
- 30 Sailor

DOWN

- 1 NFL pioneer
- 2 Last Greek letter
- 3 Toned down
- 4 Slalom
- 5 maneuver
- 5 Wines and dines
- 6 Pawns
- 7 Corn unit

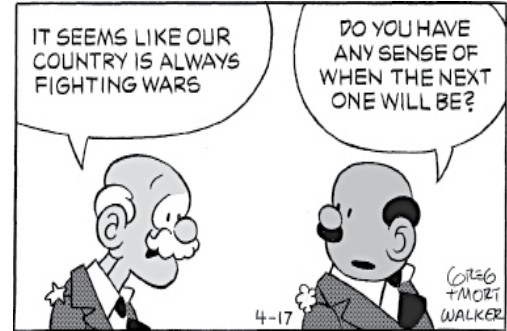
- 8 Seething
- 9 Designated a new use for
- 10 Aridity
- 14 Metal sources
- 19 Salon jobs
- 22 Farm litter
- 23 Combinations of two songs
- 24 Criminal
- 25 Convention speech
- 26 Gizmos
- 28 Humdrum
- 30 Leading
- 31 By the side
- 32 Unfettered
- 33 Confiscates
- 38 Men's store buy
- 39 Grazing spot



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



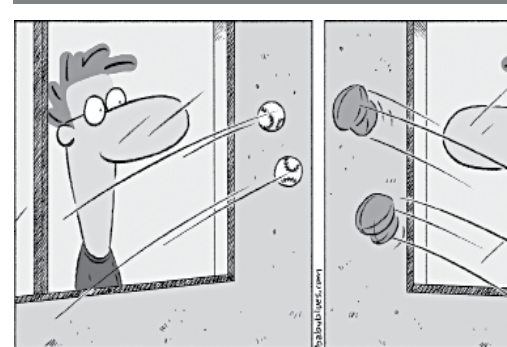
BETLE BAILEY



BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES



BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.



Ducks roam around a puddle at a spot of the potholed road from Ghukarna to Chandalkhil area of Brahmanbaria municipality. Inset, another scene of the two-km-long road.

PHOTO: STAR

Town dwellers suffer as road condition awful

MASUK HRIDOY, Brahmanbaria

With numerous potholes and cracks, the two-km-long road from Ghukarna to Chandalkhil area of Brahmanbaria town remains virtually off-limits to vehicles, thanks to the negligence of the authorities of the 'A' category municipality.

Around five thousand people of Chandalkhil, Chhoto-Ghukarna and Aminpur villages including students of a government primary school, a kindergarten, two madrasas and two nearby high schools regularly use the road, said

locals and municipality officials.

This correspondent during his recent visit saw a number of potholes on the road while the bricks-soling was badly damaged, even non-existent at places.

A few ducks were moving as rainwater gathered in potholes created puddles.

"First made as a dirt road 30 years ago, it got brick-soling 12 years ago. But it became unfit for vehicular movement after a few years as large cracks and potholes appeared all over due to lack of repair," said Nasir Mia, a distinguished dweller of

Chandalkhil village.

"It is difficult to take any patient to a town hospital through the badly damaged road. Our sufferings mount during the monsoon. In spite of repeated assurance, the authorities did not come forward to develop the road," Mufti Obaidullah Ashraf, principal of Chandalkhil Sirajbag Madrasa, told this correspondent.

Enamul Hasan, a college student of the area, said, "We have to take a troublesome walk on the damaged road for moving up to the main road to go to college as vehicles can't ply this road.

Before elections, the aspirants give assurance of repairing the road, but they forget it afterwards."

Contacted, Kawser Ahmed, assistant engineer of the municipality, said, "Repairing the road is an urgent need but at the moment the authority has no budget for it. The matter will be discussed in the next monthly meeting."

Municipality Mayor Nayar Kabir, said, "I will get an estimate made by our engineers and arrange tender for repairing the road after the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic eases."

'Stop illegal toll collection from easy-bikes'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Three-wheeler and battery-run easy-bike drivers of the town have demanded cancellation of tender bid for 'illegally' collecting toll from the vehicles.

They held different programmes in the town for the last several days to realise the demand. They also placed memorandum to the authorities concerned in this regard.

The drivers said more than two months of complete lockdown due to coronavirus outbreak have affected them a lot. Many have borrowed money to run their family. In this situation, they are forced to pay illegal toll in the name of 'Pouro Kar' (municipality tax), which is greater burden for them.

A driver said as their income has dropped sharply due to coronavirus outbreak, it has become difficult for them to pay toll every day to the lessee of the municipality after paying the easy bike owner Tk 300 daily.

He has to pay Tk 10 to the men of the lessee every day, said easy bike driver Khairul Alam.

A section of people blessed by several leaders of the ruling party have been collecting illegal toll from the drivers in the name of 'Pouro Kar' (municipality tax) for the last one year, said Mahbubur Rahman Rubel, president of Thakurgaon District Easy-bike Workers' Union.

Thakurgaon municipality authority on June 1 floated a tender to collect toll from

easy bikes for the next financial year 2020-2021 and since then the drivers have been demanding cancellation of the tender bid, he said.

Mahbubur further said in the last fiscal year, the lessee won only a Tk 3.33 lakh tender bid through a syndicate. But they collected Tk 10 from around 4,000 easy-bikes every day. The amount stood about Tk 1.44 crore yearly.

The extortionists are also collecting Tk 50 from each of the good-laden trucks, tank-lorries and tractors plying through the municipality daily, he alleged.

Lessee Abu Bakkar Siddique said they are collecting toll from easy-bikes and other vehicles following instruction from the municipality.

Mayor of the municipality Mirza Faisal Amin said the municipality floats a tender every year to give lease for collection of toll from the vehicles plying on the roads in the municipality. There is no chance to stop toll collection.

However, in the crisis time, the matter will be considered if the easy-bike drivers submit an application to get relief from the toll collection, said the mayor.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Md Moniruzzaman said there is no scope to collect illegal toll from the vehicles on roads.

Strict action will be taken against those responsible for the offence after getting complaint in this regard, said the SP.



FILE PHOTO

ROUNDTABLE

COVID-19 EFFECTS ON URBAN HEALTH

The Daily Star in association with CARE Bangladesh organised an online discussion titled "COVID-19 effects on urban health" on May 20, 2020. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.

Muhammad Zahidul Islam, Senior Business Correspondent, The Daily Star and the Moderator of the session

In this discussion, we will try to determine where the urban health situation of Bangladesh currently stands in terms of the COVID-19 situation. We will refer to a rapid assessment on urban health situation in Gazipur, conducted by CARE Bangladesh.

Prabodh Devkota, Deputy Country Director - Programme, CARE Bangladesh

COVID-19 has adversely affected our health system as well as our socio-economic development. Given the evolving nature of the pandemic, the humanitarian and developmental organisations, private sectors, and the government must come together for collective action. CARE Bangladesh's health team has conducted a study in Gazipur assess the challenges and issues surrounding urban health systems in the context of the current pandemic. The study sheds light on the critical challenges in the context of urban health with a particular focus on women. It also highlights the immediate and mid-term needs which will be essential for recovery in the long run.

Dr Md Jahirul Alam Azad, Head of Urban Health, CARE Bangladesh

Compared to February, Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) performances have dropped by ten percent in March. If EPI is hampered, there is a possibility for communicable diseases to increase among children, which was revealed in the rapid assessment conducted in Gazipur. There has been an overall reduction in maternal and childcare services which can lead to morbidity and mortality rates rising. We have also observed a 50 percent decrease in the number of patients in upazila health complexes; instead, patient flow has increased in the community clinics, family welfare centres, and union sub-centres in Gazipur.

41 percent of the participants were found to be aware of the key symptoms of COVID-19 and 11 percent were found to be aware of the main modes of transmission. However, due to their housing conditions, low-income groups are facing difficulties to stay at home.

Most daily wage earners have lost their jobs. The reduction in family income has caused a decrease in their daily dietary intake. Women and girls are also facing shortages of sanitary napkins in the markets or are unable to afford them now. 100 percent of the female respondents also mentioned increased mental pressure due to reduced income.

Though our report shows 80 percent of the respondents did not get any relief, this percentage has reduced recently since there are now many individual relief distribution initiatives in different communities besides government initiatives. Home delivery services and distribution close to the affected communities can help reduce the spread of the virus.

Meeting the supply and demand for personal protective gears and ensuring consistent service in the service sector with a shortage of human resources have proven challenging. Healthcare costs may rise soon



since those with non-communicable diseases need routine check-ups, but patients are unable to obtain them smoothly.

One positive aspect is that hospitals will be better equipped with ICUs and other crisis management facilities, which will help Bangladesh's healthcare system in the future.

Dr Dipak Kumar Mitra, Chairman, Public Health Department, North South University Public health is a multi-sectoral area where everyone has a scope to contribute. We have to work in levels here, including individual, family, community, national and global levels.

As long as we do not have a vaccine or proper medicines against the virus, we have to rely on our behavioural changes to protect ourselves. Scientific evidence is available in other countries, but we need to customise it by engaging all the sectors. We need to undertake preventative measures and build up the capacities of our hospitals.

The mindset that only doctors will help us when we fall sick is wrong. Majority of the public health work and preventative measures must be undertaken at individual and community levels. We must normalise taking care of our mental health besides public health to deal with other diseases and crises in a better manner.

Shovon Islam, Managing Director, Crown Wears (Pvt) Ltd.

BCMEA, Better Work Bangladesh, ILO and the health ministry have helped us prepare safety guidelines by implementing which, we have resumed work in our garment factories. We did regular follow-ups on our workers and asked them to stay in home quarantine for at least 10 days, when the factories had reopened.

The working-class people involved here are in a vulnerable situation, harbouring a constant fear of losing their jobs. Consequently, they are

unable to grasp the idea of home quarantine fully and require constant reassurance that they will not lose their jobs and obtain their salaries as well. Moreover, some labour unions and journalists constantly instigate them. Therefore, we must all act together and not instigate each other.

Farid Ahmed Shariff, Secretary General, Ward 37, Ward Health Development Committee

The number of doctors and nurses, compared to the huge population in this country, is very low. Moreover, many of these doctors and nurses are being attacked for treating COVID-19 patients. Our mayor, Jahangir Alam, has done a remarkable job of providing adequate PPEs to the doctors and nurses in our hospital in Gazipur.

Parvir Akter, Vice President, Kumia Community Support Group

We have been implementing and raising awareness on safety measures such as washing hands properly, even before the coronavirus crisis. We have volunteer teams ready and we also go door-to-door to raise awareness about hygiene among mothers and children, particularly pregnant women. So far, we have not found any coronavirus patient in our group.

Akhi Akter, Member, Ward 12, Community Support Group

We need to work on women's issues. Besides, violence against women has increased recently so, we need to tackle this.

Nusrat Amin, General Secretary, Kunia, Ward 37, Community Support Group

The supply of women's sanitation products has stopped during this coronavirus crisis. Besides, the women health workers, including Family Welfare Assistants (FWAs), field level workers, are also suffering due to a lack of proper distribution of sanitation products,

etc. The worsening economic crisis is also giving rise to family tensions, gap in children's EPI, food shortages, etc.

Abbas Uddin Khokon, Councillor, Ward 12, Gazipur City Corporation

We have mobilised our ward volunteer force in every neighbourhood to raise awareness about the pandemic and ensure people are following the health safety guidelines.

As per the instructions of the mayor of Gazipur City Corporation, handwashing stations have been installed throughout the entire ward. Liquid hand soap is refilled at the stations daily.

We have distributed relief to the impoverished dwellers of the ward through the local relief committee. A control room has been established in the ward, which is run by the Gazipur City Corporation volunteer force. Any resident facing food shortages can contact the control room, and volunteers will provide them with sustenance. The volunteers are also spraying disinfectant on the streets of the ward.

Dr Md Khairuzzaman, Civil Surgeon, Gazipur Around 106 health workers, including doctors, nurses, health assistants (HAs), and family planning representatives, have been affected by the pandemic in Gazipur. We are compensating for this by appointing 25 doctors from the 39th BCS.

We have a control room, and the contact numbers of doctors have been made available to the public. A large number of people are

Due to COVID-19 being a new and unfamiliar virus, it was more challenging to protect against infection during the first few months. Hence, the number of positive cases among health workers was quite high. Hopefully, the numbers will decrease as better safety measures are now available.

The government has been taking the right measures to tackle the pandemic, such as raising awareness among people, increasing testing by establishing 40 times the number of labs we previously had, and multiplying the number of PCR labs. Soon, all medical college hospitals at the district level will have suitable PCR labs.

Telemedicine and teleconsultations have become vital now since they are easy to use by both doctors and patients.

Md Abdul Hakim Majumder, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives (MOGRD&Co) and Project Director, Urban Primary Health Care Project

Public and private clinics have not been meeting the demands of people in providing treatment. Adequate PPEs are now available for the doctors; hence there should be no fear in providing medical services. A monitoring system must be set up to ensure patients are not denied treatment.

The RMG sector should establish isolation centres where COVID-19 infected workers can avail treatment.

Ward committees must be reformed and strengthened. Multi-level volunteer groups can be linked with these committees.

Central points are required, based on wards, where the public can gain primary information about health services related to COVID-19.

A national database of COVID-19 infected people and a database of public and private health clinics in Bangladesh need to be developed.

Advocate Jahangir Alam, Mayor, Gazipur City Corporation

If garment factories had remained closed for 15 to 21 days, the situation would have been better now. All garment factory owners should instruct workers daily about the safety guidelines: how to wear masks properly, how to enter and exit factories, how to maintain social distancing within workplaces, etc.

Public health complexes have proven useful, but their numbers are limited compared to our large population. Doctors and civil surgeons should inform us of what health information to disseminate among the people of all wards.

We must maintain a complete lockdown for 10 to 15 days, enforced by the police and military, and ensure nobody leaves their homes. If anyone exhibits symptoms, they can be tested at their homes. These measures could lead to the eradication of COVID-19 from Gazipur.

Dr Ikhtiar Uddin Khandaker, Director-Health Programme, CARE Bangladesh

Everyone's participation today proves that people are enthusiastic about finding ways to tackle the current situation at a national level. Both the public and private spheres must work together to help us recover from the significant challenges we are facing today due to the pandemic. I thank all participants for their time and productive contributions in the discussion.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Establish central points based on wards, where the public can gain primary information about health services related to COVID-19.
2. Ensure consistent supply of safety materials for the low-income communities.
3. Ensure consistent supply of protective gears for all levels of health service providers.
4. Provide women with an adequate amount of hygiene products, such as sanitary napkins, pills, etc.
5. The RMG sector should establish isolation centres where COVID-19 infected workers can avail treatment.
6. Engage communities to refunction Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) to prevent the increase of communicable diseases among children.
7. Refunction satellite clinics for maternal and family planning services to prevent the increase of unwanted pregnancy and maternal and child health morbidity and mortality.

availing these telemedicine services.

The number of COVID-19 positive cases in Gazipur soared after garment factories were reopened. The health sector must be informed if any worker shows COVID-19 symptoms. Many factory owners are asking us to carry out sample collections far away from the factories. These factories must cooperate with the health sector.

Dr Md Muhiuddin Osmani, Joint Chief Planning, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare



A tradition that has defined Bangladesh cricket

MAZHAR UDDIN



Ramchand Goala, regarded as the pioneer of left-arm orthodox spin in Bangladesh, breathed his last on Friday, reminding of the rich legacy of left-arm spinners – finger spinner to be more specific -- in the country's history. There is no doubt that Bangladesh has produced some of the finest left-arm spinners over the years and that they have played leading roles for the Tigers.

Goala was a notable performer in the domestic circuit before liberation and continued to be a regular fixture for Abahani in the 12 years from 1981 to 1993, but never represented East Pakistan.

Even in his forties, Goala continued getting wickets but mostly opted to bowl his quota and return to the dressing room, with rules back then not as strict. He eventually retired from competitive cricket at the age of 53.

Nazrul Kader Lintu was another left-armed and one of the few unorthodox spinners Bangladesh have produced.

The introduction of turf wickets in the mid-eighties raised the demand for left-arm spinners and they began to flourish at the club level.

The likes of Enamul Haque Moni and, later on, Mohammad Rafique were inspired by the trend and, although they were initially pacers, the duo would go on to



MOHAMMAD RAFIQUE

become legendary left-armers in Bangladesh.

"Goala was the first notable orthodox left-arm spinner before liberation and was among very few cricketers outside Dhaka to play in the Dhaka leagues with authority. There was Lintu but he was a chinaman, which I think is still very exceptional in Bangladesh cricket. But if you talk about left-arm orthodox spinners, you also have to mention the emergence of Enamul Haque Moni and Rafique," prominent cricket writer and former coach Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

By the early nineties, having left-arm spinners in the side had become a symbol of strength among the clubs which was also courtesy of low and turning wickets in the domestic circuit.

The role of a left-arm spinner was mainly to contain runs and there were clubs who even opted for three left-arm orthodox spinners in their playing eleven, which reflected the authority that



ABDUR RAZZAK

left-armers had in Bangladesh cricket.

"Over-dependency on left-arm orthodox spinners mainly started due to the slow and low tracks during the late eighties. It was always difficult to hit away the left-arm spinners, who mainly looked to contain runs and tease batsmen," said experienced journalist Saydur Rahman Shamim, who is currently the chief of sports of a local TV channel.

Rafique would go on to raise the bar for slow left-arm orthodox spinners as he went on to become the first Bangladeshi to take 100 wickets in Tests.

That legacy was continued by the likes of Atique Khan, Mustadir Litu, Saifullah Jem and Ahsanullah, who were all among the top performers in the domestic leagues in the late nineties and early noughties but never featured for the national team.

The emergence of a sixteen-year old left-arm finger spinner in the form of Enamul Haque Jr during



SHAKIB AL HASAN

the early 2000s alongside Rafique once again highlighted the lefty dominance in the Bangladesh team. Manjural Islam Rana also looked a prospect, but he tragically passed away in a road accident while the Tigers were in the Caribbean for the 2007 World Cup.

In the meantime, another left-arm orthodox spinner was waiting to announce himself and once Abdur Razzak emerged, Bangladesh found themselves flooded by quality left-armers.

After playing 33 Tests and 125 ODIs, Rafique handed over the baton in the late 2000s to Enamul and Razzak, who would become essential components in the Bangladesh team.

Shakib Al Hasan's introduction was perhaps the best thing to happen to Bangladesh cricket, as he raised the bar to new heights across all formats both home and away.

"Left-arm finger spin is something you don't need special talent for. Anyone can roll their arm for a finger spin. As left-arm spin has been a handy utility,



TAIJUL ISLAM

players often tend to have a go. But when it comes to wrist spinners, you won't find many leg spinners or chinaman bowlers compared to left-arm orthodox. In that regard, Shakib has set a new benchmark," Jalal said.

The latest among the successful lot of left-arm spinners is Taijul Islam, who has also set a high standard over the past few years and is only the third Bangladesh bowler -- after Rafique and Shakib -- to take a hundred Test wickets.

"Honestly, I also started as a pacer during the under-13 trials before one of my uncles insisted that I become a left-arm spinner. I used to copy the bowling action of Rafique bhai as he was one of my role models," Taijul said.

The likes of Arafat Sunny, Nabil Samad, Elias Sunny, Sunjamul Islam, Sohrawardi Shuvo, Nazmul Islam Apu, Saqlain Sajib, Mosharrif Hossain and many more left-arm spinners were also part of that proud tradition in Bangladesh, which looks set to continue in the coming days.

Pique gives up but Setien still positive

AFP, MADRID



LaLiga

Gerard Pique said La Liga's title race is Real Madrid's to lose after Barcelona were held to a goalless draw against Sevilla on Friday. Barca's first slip-up since returning from the three-month hiatus hands Madrid the chance to regain top spot this weekend.

"Seeing what we've done in the last two rounds, it's going to be very difficult to win this league," said a despondent Pique afterwards. "From what I've seen, it's very hard to see Real Madrid dropping points."

Sevilla, in third, and Valencia, in eighth, always looked capable of shifting the dynamic at the top of the table, with Madrid capitalising to climb back to the summit for the first time since they beat Barcelona on March 1.

Asked about Pique's analysis, Barcelona coach Quique Setien said: "I think it comes from frustration. I am optimistic. I think it will be tough for anyone to take maximum points."



Alex Zanardi fighting for life

REUTERS, ROME

Former Formula One driver and twice Champ Car champion Alex Zanardi remained in serious condition in intensive care on Saturday after suffering severe head injuries in a road accident while racing his handbike in Italy.

The 53-year-old Italian, who lost both legs and nearly his life in a 2001 Champ Car crash in Germany, was in a drug-induced coma, said Giuseppe Oliveri, neurosurgeon at the Santa Maria alle Scotte hospital in Siena where Zanardi was taken after the accident on Friday.

His condition was described as serious but stable. He had been competing in the "Obiettivo Tricolore" road race for Italian paralympic athletes at the time.

Zanardi is an inspirational figure in the worlds of motorsport and paralympic endeavour, a hugely popular and positive competitor who returned from life-changing injuries with a smile.

AFP, LONDON



Liverpool can move within touching distance of the Premier League title when the runaway leaders face Everton tonight, while the relegation battle will be in the spotlight in the first full weekend of top-flight action since the coronavirus outbreak.

Jürgen Klopp's side will play for the first time since the Premier League was suspended in March over the COVID-19 pandemic as the title chasers make the short trip to Merseyside rivals Everton on Sunday.

Liverpool, 22 points clear of second placed Manchester City, need two wins from their remaining nine games to end their 30-year wait to be crowned English champions.

If the Reds beat Everton, they can wrap up the title with another victory against Crystal Palace at Anfield on Wednesday.

Klopp's men have not been in action for 106 days and the Liverpool boss is relieved to return after talk the season might be declared null and void, which would have deprived his team of the title their superb season deserves.

Liverpool had been on course to

Klopp ready for title push



Things at Liverpool were relaxed ahead of their trip to Goodison Park for the Merseyside derby today. Mohamed Salah and James Milner share a light moment, knowing the champions-elect need just two wins to wrap up their first Premier League title in three decades.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

become the first English champions to be crowned in March after recording 27 wins from 29 matches.

However, Liverpool's inevitable title will now come with an asterisk according to some pundits, who claim the Premier League's new

normal of matches behind closed doors with more substitutes allowed has taken the shine off the leaders' achievements.

Klopp doesn't care about those critics and, on the eve of Liverpool's return, the German hit back.

"Now I have had a lot of time to read. I had to Google the word 'asterisk'. I only knew the word from a comic!" Klopp said. "This is the most difficult year and season to become champions, 100 percent. It is an interrupted season, like has never

happened before. "Whoever will be champions, it will be historic because it is a year that we will never forget.

"Give us an asterisk, yes. We cannot do a lot of things that we usually can do but in this specific case at least we can say this is really special. That's why we enjoy the little asterisk there."

Liverpool's derby clash comes at the conclusion of a busy weekend that confirms the Premier League is back in full swing.

Following midweek matches on Wednesday and Friday, this is the first Saturday since March 7 that top-flight games have been played in England.

There will be four games stretched across Saturday and a further three on Sunday, with relegation and Champions League qualification on the agenda in the eerily empty stadiums while fans watch from home.

Watford, out of the relegation zone only on goal difference, host third-placed Leicester in desperate need of points to boost their survival bid.

Brighton were one of the most vocal critics of plans to play at neutral venues, which was initially suggested to keep fans away.



Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer welcomed Paul Pogba back to his side after months out with injury in their Premier League encounter with Tottenham and the Frenchman did not disappoint, showing some incredible skill to win the penalty that led to the equalizer in their 1-1 draw. PHOTO: REUTERS

From nightmare to new dawn

AFP, BERGAMO



Bergamo's Atalanta return to action on Sunday, hoping that a resumption of their incredible football success will signal the historic Italian city's return to normality after being devastated by coronavirus.

"These have been extremely difficult months," said Mayor Giorgio Gori, remembering the dozens of coffins lined up for burial and the macabre images of the military convoys that carried them which were beamed around the world. "March was a series of mournings, each bit of news more sad than the last. Now there's relief, we've returned to a relatively normal situation," he told journalists.

The province suffered 6,000 more deaths than usual during the COVID-19 outbreak, including 670 in Bergamo city which has a population of around 122,000. Almost everyone there has lost a relative, friend, colleague or neighbour.

It is now known that the Champions League match between Atalanta and Valencia on February 19 played a significant role in spreading the deadly virus.

Around 46,000 spectators gathered at Milan's San Siro to watch Atalanta crush the Spanish team 4-1. With every goal, local fans fell into each other's arms, at the stadium and in bars.

The coronavirus was already known in China

but seemed far away from northern Italy.

But that soon changed, and from March 4 the number of cases in Bergamo rose sharply, leading some doctors to label the football match a "biological bomb" which had exploded.

After the second leg was played and also won, 4-3, on March 10 in Valencia, Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini called for a big party



to be held "later" as the team made it to the Champions League quarter-finals.

There followed over two months of lockdown in Italy, and tourists are yet to return to this pretty UNESCO World Heritage Site city. On Sunday, Atalanta take on Sassuolo in their first post-virus Italian Serie A match, to be held without fans present, but with the team known as "La Dea" resuming what was far and away their

best season ever. "This match represents a small return to normality," said Atalanta supporter Andrea Sigorini, 36. "But as the staff and players have said, our thoughts will be with those who have been through such difficult times," he said.

"We're in a hurry to see Atalanta play again, given the level they're playing at," he told AFP.

"Counting friends and others I know, I lost 40 people. Football helps us, not to forget, because we don't forget, but to enjoy ourselves," said the 71-year-old Marino Lazzarini, who has been going to the stadium since he was four.

Atalanta's captain, Argentine Alejandro "Papu" Gomez, has also called for football to resume, despite the opposition of some hardcore "Ultra" fans. "If you asked me two months ago I would have been against," he told sports newspaper Corriere dello Sport.

"But now it's safer. Bergamo lives for football, breathes football. But Bergamo won't forget."

Those who are rejoicing at the resumption of football, even behind closed doors, are desperate to know how their so-far incredible season ends.

Atalanta occupy the fourth and final Champions League qualifying spot in Serie A and sit three points clear of fifth-placed Roma with a game in hand. "We hope that the dream can resume," said Lazzarini.

After their historic victory in Valencia, players showed off a T-shirt written in the local dialect: "Bergamo, Mola MiFra" or "Never Give Up, Bergamo".

WHAT TO WATCH

FACEBOOK

LA LIGA

Celta Vigo v Alaves
Live from 6:00pm
Valencia v Osasuna
Live from 11:30pm
Real Sociedad v Real Madrid
Live from 2:00am (Monday)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Star Sports Select 1
Newcastle v Sheffield Utd
Live from 7:00pm
Aston Villa v Chelsea
Live from 9:15pm
Everton v Liverpool
Live from 12:00am (Monday)

SERIE A

Ten 2

Atalanta v Sassuolo
Live from 11:30pm
Inter Milan v Sampdoria
Live from 1:45am (Monday)



PADMA BRIDGE RAIL LINK PROJECT IS BEING BUILT WITH BSRM
COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT **BSRM** building a safer nation

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS RECOGNIZES
World's Largest VRM
SHAH CEMENT

Flash floods inundate parts of Mymensingh

Teesta flowing above danger level; Brahmaputra-Jamuna, Ganges-Padma rising

STAR REPORT

The water level of the Teesta was above danger-level in Lalmonirhat yesterday while flash floods hit low-lying areas in Mymensingh, submerging acres of land and villages, and affecting the lives of thousands of people.

An onrush of upstream water from India, together with heavy rain caused the water level to rise in these districts, officials said.

Meanwhile, water-logging due to lack of dredging disrupted crop cultivation in over 1,000 acres of land in Pabna's Sujanagar, said locals.

In a bulletin, the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre said water levels of the country's main rivers -- Brahmaputra-Jamuna and Ganges-Padma -- were increasing and might continue to rise for the next 72 hours.

Teesta's water level at the Teesta Barrage Point in Hatibandha upazila was flowing 20 cm above the danger-level (52.60 metre) since morning, said officials.

It rose due to heavy rain and upstream water from India, said Muhibul Islam, sub-divisional engineer of Lalmonirhat Water Development Board.

"There is a fear of an untimely flood as the Teesta water level is continuing to rise," he added.

Chars and low-lying areas along the river were inundated while Aman seedbeds and other crops were submerged in many areas.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS RECOGNIZES
World's Largest VRM
SHAH CEMENT

Water rushes through the Teesta Barrage over the danger level at Hatibandha upazila of Lalmonirhat yesterday. Water levels of several other rivers in the country are also rising.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

RIDE-HAILING SERVICES BRTA allows registered cars to run

Restricts bike due to pandemic

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has decided to allow only enlisted motor cars and microbuses to operate under ride-sharing service providers.

However, no motorcycle would be allowed to operate under the service for now due to health safety reasons, officials said.

If the decision is implemented, only a few vehicles would be able to provide ride-sharing services as the number of cars and microbuses that were enlisted is below 300, officials of BRTA and service providing companies said.

"We will send letters to all ride-sharing service providers in this regard within tomorrow [Sunday]," Lokman Hossain Mollah, director (engineering) of BRTA, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The development came

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

COVID-19 TREATMENT

13 ICU beds for eight districts!

Rangpur division needs more

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Only 13 ICU beds have been allocated in Rangpur division to treat critical Covid-19 patients -- three in Dinajpur and 10 in Rangpur -- leaving the six remaining districts to do without.

Two additional ICU beds are reserved for doctors affected by Covid-19 in the division, while 20 others have been kept for non-Covid-19 patients. All these beds are in public hospitals.

There are no ICU facilities at all in government-run hospitals in the other six districts -- Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, and Gaibandha -- let alone those dedicated for critical Covid-19 patients who may require ICU support.

In total, 1,292 hospital beds are available in 58 upazilas of these eight districts. Of these, 837 are dedicated for Covid-19 patients in isolation wards.

According to the data of the Rangpur divisional office of the Directorate General of Health Services, the 837 beds include 251 in Rangpur, 50 in Kurigram, 96 in Lalmonirhat, 110 in Dinajpur, 50 in Panchagarh, 100 in Thakurgaon, 80 in Gaibandha, and 100 in Nilphamari.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

'Bangladesh is not a small country'



Bangabandhu receives salute from Jatiyo Rakkhi Bahini on June 21, 1972.

June 21, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU'S INTERVIEW WITH THE TELEGRAPH

In an interview with London-based newspaper The Telegraph, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman says that Bangladesh is now a reality and Pakistan should accept this reality for its own sake. He further says that it does not matter to him whether Pakistan recognises Bangladesh or not. Pakistan is no less eager to get recognition from Bangladesh, adds the PM.

SEE PAGE 5 COL COL 5



NON-MPO TEACHERS

Tk 5k grant for each of them likely

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

The government is going to provide financial assistance to over two lakh non-government school and college teachers and staffers, who are outside the purview of the Monthly Pay Order (MPO) scheme, aiming to minimise their financial hardship caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many non-MPO teachers and staffers have not received any salary since the government closed down all educational institutions on March 17 to stem the novel coronavirus contagion.

Considering their hardship, the education ministry sent a proposal to the Prime Minister's Office last month seeking an allocation for providing a one-time grant to the non-MPO teachers and staffers within June. The PMO

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Robotic sloth to play role of conservationist



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The Atlanta Botanical Garden will be using a robotic sloth to save some of the world's most endangered species.

The sloth robot, called Slothbot, hangs in trees to monitor animals, plants, and the environment. It's capable of monitoring temperature, weather, and carbon dioxide levels.

It was built by the robotics engineers at the Georgia Institute of Technology and uses solar panels to power itself.

Much like the slovenly actions of the real animals, Slothbot moves slowly along a 100-foot cable strung between two trees.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

Over 4,000 armed forces men, family members infected

BSS, Dhaka

A total of 4,253 armed forces members and their families have tested positive for Covid-19, an Inter Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) press release said yesterday.

Last week, 713 members of the forces tested positive for the novel coronavirus and eight retired armed forces members died of the

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6



PRAYER TIMING JUNE 21

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-05 12-45 5-00 6-52 8-17
JAMAAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-55 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Man killed in 'gunfight' with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A suspected drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab in EPZ area of Chattogram city early yesterday.

The identity of the 25-year-old deceased could not be known immediately.

Sohel Mahmud, senior assistant director of Rab-7, said one of their teams went to the area on information that a consignment of yaba was being smuggled there.

Rab members spotted five youths getting up from the sea and asked them to stop. Sensing Rab presence, the youths opened fire, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate, he claimed.

After the "gunfight" ended, a body was found lying on the ground.

Rab also claimed to have recovered 1 lakh pieces of yaba pills, one foreign pistol, a light gun (LG) and six round of cartridges from the spot.

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

The body and evidences were later handed over to police, the Rab official said.



Vehicles clog the Rokeya Sarani in the capital yesterday as metro rail construction work resulted in almost halving of the road width there.

PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

Brazil, Europe pass bleak milestones

WHO warns of 'new and dangerous phase' as virus spreading fast

AGENCIES

The coronavirus pandemic has passed grim milestones as Brazil confirmed one million infections and Europe chalked up more than 2.5 million cases yesterday as the World Health Organization warned of a "new and dangerous phase".

Death tolls in Colombia and Mexico also made grim reading -- passing 2,000 and 20,000, respectively -- as the virus tightened its grip in the Americas.

Although the spread has slowed in Europe, it is still the worst-affected continent -- almost half of its 2.5 million cases being registered in Russia, Britain, Spain and Italy, according to an AFP tally yesterday.

The continent is easing its way out of strict lockdowns that have caused crippling economic damage, but the WHO warned against giving in to isolation fatigue.

The virus has now killed more than 460,000 people and infected 8.6 million worldwide.

A vaccine remains months off at best despite several trials, and scientists are still making daily discoveries about the virus, its symptoms and the extent to which it may spread before being identified.

'STILL SPREADING FAST'

Brazil reported a one-day record of nearly 55,000 infections on Friday, becoming the second country to pass one million cases after the United States -- the only country with higher numbers of deaths and cases.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3