### **400M JOBS LOST**

**UN report shows deepening** employment crisis as coronavirus pandemic accelerates

**SEE PAGE 6** 





Your Right to Know

Zilqad 10, 1441 Hijri

have a huge responsibility beyond just

LATIFUR RAHMAN 1945-2020

## LIGHT of ethical business goes out

WASIM BIN HABIB

He was a paragon of business ethics. business ethics.
His business acumen,
his leadership and
integrity, his advocacy
for high standards,
and his vision to serve
the people made him
a role model for the
new generation of
entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs and encouraged them to make meaningful contributions to the

society. A respected figure in SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



## TRIBUTE TO LATIFUR RAHMAN Two independent newspapers were his gifts to Bangladesh

MAHFUZ ANAM

He was an editor's dream of an investor. But he turned out to be so much more. Yes, Matiur Rahman and I run the two papers -- Prothom Alo and The Daily Star respectively -- but it was he who made them happen, with his principles, integrity, courage, steadfastness, strength of character, and unswerving faith in independent media without which, he intuitively knew, that democracy could not flourish.

The Daily Star started when Ershad fell and like the rest of the nation, he also dreamt of a democratic Bangladesh and decided to team up with some other visionary investors and two journalists (SM Ali and myself) to help start an

independent newspaper, of which he later became a driving force. Through his unstinting belief and support for freedom of the press, unrelenting focus on management and fanatical emphasis on strict financial discipline, he helped the creation of two independent newspapers which I consider to be his gifts to Bangladesh.

The cornerstone of the ethos that he -- and the rest of the board of directors who appreciated his stance represented was total editorial independence for the newspapers. In the nearly 29 years of The Daily Star and almost 21 years of Prothom Alo, for whose first 10 years I was its publisher, never did we receive any advice, suggestion or even a remote SEE PAGE 2 COL 2











Aus, Aman Production

# Thrust renewed to boost yield

Amid pandemic worries, govt aims to expand rice cultivation areas, replace old varieties with new ones

With the Covid-19 pandemic wrecking lives and livelihoods, the government has renewed its focus and stepped up thrust on boosting production of Aus and Aman rice to ensure adequate availability of staple food in the country and slash dependence on the global market.

The agriculture ministry targets increasing rice planting area to 13.29 lakh hectares during the current Aus season, 17 percent more than that a year ago. And the coverage of Aus crop, which is harvested in July-August, has already exceeded 13 lakh hectares, the highest in two decades, officials said. The ministry also targets 36 lakh tonnes of Aus output this season, 20

percent higher than the output in the previous season.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

## 43.27pc of dead aged over 60

3,775 more infected; 41 die

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty-one people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 2:30pm yesterday, said the Directorate General of Health Services.

The death toll from the deadly and highly transmissible virus now stands at 1,888 -- 1.26 percent of all confirmed cases.

Besides, 3,775 more people tested positive for the coronavirus, taking the number of confirmed cases to 1,49,258, said Prof Nasima Sultana, additional director general of DGHS, during yesterday's briefing.

Over the same period, 2,484 more Covid-19 patients recovered and tested

The total number of recovered patients has now reached 62,108 -- 41.61 percent of all confirmed cases in the country.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



A woman paying the coronavirus test fee from outside the gate of Mugda General Hospital in the capital yesterday. The government started charging people for the tests since Sunday despite the risks of deterring poor people from getting tested.

#### 4YRS OF CAFE ATTACK Lost friends remembered

DMP chief says militants no longer capable of big attacks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country yesterday observed the fourth anniversary of militant attack on Holey Artisan Bakery in the capital's Gulshan, paying tribute to the victims in the gruesome attack.

Unlike previous years, only officials of law enforcement agencies and some foreign diplomats went to the place between

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

#### Laid to rest next to his daughter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Latifur Rahman was laid to rest at the capital's Banani Graveyard last night. Earlier in the day, his

body was brought from Cumilla and taken to his Gulshan residence in the capital around 8:30pm.

The namaz-e-janaza was held at Azad Masjid in Gulshan around 9:30pm after Esha prayers. Later, he was laid to eternal rest beside his daughter Shazneen Rahman, who was buried next to his grandson Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain. Faraaz was brutally killed by terrorists during the July 1 terror attack at the Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan in 2016. Relatives, friends and

well-wishers went to the

## Condolences keep pouring in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the death of founding chairman and CEO of Transcom Group Latifur Rahman, the country has lost a business leader who lived by the highest standards of integrity and was a protector of professional and independent media. Eminent citizens said Latifur was a remarkable

Latifur, 75, breathed his last, in his sleep around 11:00am yesterday at his ancestral home in Cumilla.

gentleman who believed that the country's future was

Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh in a condolence message said Latifur set an unique example by running business with honesty and ethics. With his investment, he made immense contributions to the creation of employment opportunities.

Besides, Latifur assisted many social movements. His contribution to ensuring freedom of speech and media will remain everlasting, said the platform.

"With the death of Latifur, we lost a well wisher of Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. He also patronised many associate organisations of the citizen platform," said a letter signed by its convenor economist Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya and coordinator Anisatul Fatema Yousuf.

Other members of the platform, including rights SEE PAGE 2 COL 1 MORE ON STAR BUSINESS SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

#### 'We've not spent any money'

DMCH chief clarifies about probe into

spending STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Medical College authorities yesterday sought to clear confusion about their request for Tk 20 crore from the government for food and accommodation of their healthcare workers, just a couple of days after the prime minister expressed

doubt in this regard. **DMCH Director Brig** Gen AKM Nasir Uddin held a press conference in the hospital to share the expenditure details and clarify any confusion.

On June 29, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in parliament said Tk 20 crore for hotel rent and food for SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

## LATIFUR RAHMAN

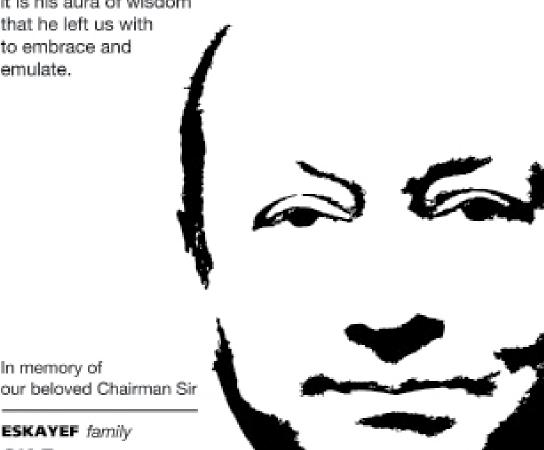
August 28, 1945 - July 1, 2020

## THE LIGHT **LEFT US FOREVER LEAVING A TRAIL** TO FOLLOW.

We mourn, and we are at a loss for words. We don't know how to come to terms with this. Yet, we very well know it is his aura of wisdom that he left us with to embrace and emulate.

In memory of

SK·F





The scorching midday sun is not enough to keep the young men from playing football on Kuakata beach that reopened yesterday after over three months. More tourists will gradually throng the beach, local business poeple hope.

PHOTO:

Catalysts of Commerce and Industry

for setting a "rare example" of doing

business by upholding moral values while also fulfilling the organisation's

national bodies in various capacities,

including the president of Bangladesh

Employers' Federation (BEF) for

two terms and member of the

Executive Committee of Federation of

Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce

& Industry (FBBCI), Bangladesh Jute

Mills Association and Bangladesh Tea

Executive Board of Bangladesh Bank

and was closely involved in fiscal and

trade policy making bodies of the

government as chairman, Trade-body

Reforms Committee and member,

He was re-elected as a member of the

The business icon believed that

Executive Board of the Paris-based ICC

for a second three-year term from July

Bangladesh has an extremely bright

future on the global stage and that there

are huge opportunities for entrepreneurs

oung entrepreneurs will have to keep

their eyes open and work on them [ideas]

to become successful," he once said.

COVID-19 VACCINE

Sign pledge

to declare it

Prof Yunus urges all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

common good.

be excluded.

and institutions.

Muhammad Yunus,

common good

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad

Yunus has issued an open call to the

people of all strata to sign a pledge

declaring the Covid-19 vaccine to be a

The pledge can be made at www.

accinecommongood.org, said a press

release circulated by the Yunus Centre

The Covid-19 vaccine, being a

common good, would ensure that it

is available to all globally, and that

those who cannot pay for it, will not

Those who sign this pledge will

also agree that results of vaccine

research done by the private sector

should be in the public domain,

making it available to any production

facility, as long as it operates under an

This pledge has already been

signed by 105 world leaders, including

18 Nobel laureates, 32 former heads

of state and government, political

leaders, artistes, international NGOs

Karman, Shirin Ebadi, Mikhail

Gorbachev, Nadia Murad, Malala

Yousafzai, Mairead Maguire, and

Archbishop Desmond Tutu among

The former heads of state who signed this unified appeal include

former Pakistan prime minister

Shaukat Aziz, former New Zealand

PM Helen Clark, former PM of Italy

Romano Prodi, former Brazilian

president Luiz Inacio, former president

of Mauritius Ameenah Gurib-Fakim.

Other signatories include former

presidents and prime ministers

of Romania, Finland, Bosnia and

Herzegovina, North Macedonia,

Croatia, Poland, Moldova, Albania,

Bulgaria, Mexico, Ireland, Ecuador,

Latvia, Montenegro, Serbia, Belgium,

and former UK PM Gordon Brown.

They include Nobel laureates

Tawakkol

Kyrgyzstan,

international regulatory supervision.

"There aré ideas all around us. So,

Advisory Committee on WTO.

Besides, he was the member of the

Latifur served in many important

social responsibilities.

Association.

in the country.

FROM PAGE 1 activist Sultana Kamal, Executive Manusher Jonno Foundation Shaheen Anam, Executive Director of Campaign for Popular Education Rasheda K Choudhury, Vice Chairperson of BRAC Dr Mushtaque Raza Chowdhury, Chairman of Business Leading Development Asif Ibrahim, Executive Director of Transparency International Bangladesh Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of Centre for Policy Dialogue Professor Mustafizur Rahman, and Chairman of Landmark Footwear Ltd Syed Nasim Manzur also sent condolence messages.

In a condolence message, Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan said Latifur made an outstanding contribution to the development of the country's economy, business, industries and investments.

"He will live in the heart of the new generation entrepreneurs as an inspiration," said the message, adding that the Bashundhara chairman was praying for the eternal salvation of the departed soul and was extending his sympathies to the bereaved family members.

Debapriya Economist Bhattacharya told The Daily Star last night that Latifur will be remembered as an entrepreneur who made remarkable contributions to building the national capital base of the country. He has done that not only by reinvesting his profit in the country, but also through acquisition of foreign farms.

"The conglomerate he has built ranging from tea estates to pharmaceuticals, fast food to media houses, is an extraordinary feat in a country where we see rampant capital

flight," Debapriya added.

Latifur proved that enlightened ownership can ensure professional independence of the media, he said. "I remember him telling me that if

one takes financial and commercial benefits from the government, then one cannot really protect the independence of the media.

"That is probably why he did not do business with the government... Many governments tried to harass him with tax-related cases and administrative measures, but to no avail," Debapriya

Everybody knows what a remarkable gentleman he was, Debapriya added.

"I had the privilege of observing him over the last three decades. He highly valued his employees and had an extraordinary belief in the bright future of the country.

"In his death, the country has lost a great citizen. The industries have lost a unique leader, and many of us lost a wise and sensitive guardian to go to."

Iftekharuzzaman said Latifur will be remembered as a modest, unassuming and exceptional example of the rare category of business leaders who practice the highest standards of business integrity.

"Unlike many of his peers, he not only refrained from capitalising the loan default culture, but also successfully stayed away from linking his business success with advantages of partisan political patronage.

"Rather, he credibly survived the adversities of attempted political victimisation for being a top raking promoter of free media," Iftekharuzzaman said.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Planning Minsiter Kamal, MA Mannan, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, Information Mohammad Minister Hasan Mahmud, Expatriates' Welfare And Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad, Environment and Climate Change Minister Shahab Uddin, State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Enamur Rahman, State Minister for Information Murad Hassan and Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam expressed shock at his

BNP top leaders in a condolence message said the death was an irreparable loss.

Former information minister Hasanul Haque Inu and AK Azad, president of the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh, expressed their shock.

Latifur was the founding director of Mediaworld, the company owning The Daily Star, and chairman of Mediastar, the company owning Prothom Alo, both leading English and Bangla newspapers of the country. He was the driving spirit behind the establishment of The Daily Star.

He was an honouree of "Oslo Business for Peace Award 2012" for his recognition of business ethics and social responsibilities. He was awarded Business Executive of the Year 2001 by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh. He was also president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka for seven terms.

Trustees of Liberation War Museum in their message said that they will remember the contribution of Latifur Rahman and Transcom Group in building the museum.

#### Laid to rest

graveyard to have the last glimpse of

Before the namaz-e-janaza, Zaraif Ayaat Hossain, another grandson of Latifur Rahman, stood in silence. On behalf of his family members, he urged all to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Mentioning his brother died exactly four years ago, an emotional Zaraif said, "Our grandfather has left us on

the same day ... Please pray for him." A munajat was offered there.

## Light of ethical business

the global business community and a recipient of many prestigious global awards, Latifur Rahman singlehandedly built one of the biggest business conglomerates in the country with his hard work, perseverance, and entrepreneurial skills

And truly he reached the pinnacle of success by setting up numerous prosperous enterprises. new Simultaneously he maintained a vocal stance against unethical business practices and never entertained any unfair means, not even in the early seventies when the country's atmosphere was not congenial to business.

Soft-spoken and humble, this visionary, who with his elegant

Prothom Alo -- both leading English and Bangla newspapers of the country.

His demise prompted a number of cabinet members to express profound shock and sorrow. As the news of his death spread, condolences and memories of working with the corporate giant poured in also from his friends

and colleagues.

Latifur Rahman was married to Shahnaz Rahman. Together they have three daughters Simeen Hossain, Shahzreh Huq, (late) Shazneen Rahman, and a son, Arshad Waliur

His passing coincided with the death anniversary of his grandson Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain. Faraaz, a student of Emory University in Atlanta, US, was

when the government nationalised industries in 1972, Latifur found himself in a very difficult situation.

The family also owned some tea estates in north-eastern Bangladesh. But after the independence of Bangladesh, the price of the produce was less than the production costs.

But he did not give up hope. The same year, Latifur came across a Swiss company and started a trading

Latifur's enterprises immaculate tax and bank loan records and are also among the highest-payers of corporate tax, VAT, and import duties in a country where many top companies are wilful defaulters.

In 2012, he won the prestigious Oslo Business for Peace Award for keeping commitment to social responsibility and ethical values. The award is considered the most celebrated recognition in the business world, and

In 2012, Latifur Rahman won the prestigious Oslo Business for Peace Award for maintaining commitment to social responsibility and ethical values. The award is considered the most celebrated recognition in the business world.



As if to make it a reunion, Latifur Rahman leaves this mortal world on July 1, the day his favourite grandson Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain was brutally killed in a terrorist attack.

(now Kolkata).

There was no looking back after that. As his business activities branched out into different sectors, he established Transcom Group in 1981. It is now one of the country's largest conglomerates, with operations in the areas of pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, electronics, beverages, media, consumer, food, and insurance.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

The group has an annual turnover of more than \$600 million, employing over 14,000 people. Its pharmaceutical products are exported to 27 countries.

Transcom Group has won multiple global accolades for its excellence and ethically strong business practices.

Prize winners in peace and economics chooses the award's recipients.

the group of exceptional business personalities like Ratan Tata, chairman of India's Tata Group, who got the award in 2010, and Jeffrey R Immelt, CEO of the US's General Electric, who received it in 2009.

He always believed in providing with employees appropriate compensation, training, position, and more importantly "empowerment".

"Respect for the individual is of utmost importance. People may make mistakes, and of course they need to be taken to task for that, if required, but upholding an employee's self-esteem is vital. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect," he once said.

"We are as good as any professionals in the world. We have quality people. It is a question of providing them the right opportunities, atmosphere, and guidance," he said.

He urged young students not to be disheartened in times of difficulties as adversity is a part of natural progression.

'You should continue fighting. You should live up to your values, courage, and character."

Latifur was a member of the executive board of ICC-Paris, vice-president of ICC-Bangladesh and member of Brac's governing body. He was a member of Bangladesh Better Business Forum and the Advisory Committee on World Trade Organization (WTO).

He was also president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka, for seven terms and of Bangladesh Employers' Federation. Besides, he was the chairman of the Bangladesh government's Trade Body

"SAARC Outstanding Leader" award and Lifetime Achievement Award which was presented by the UK Bangladesh

## an independent committee of Nobel

The recognition put Latifur in

He used to reject a popular perception that there are no qualified people in Bangladesh.

He was awarded Business Executive of the Year 2001 by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh.

He was also honoured with the

## Two independent newspapers were his gifts to Bangladesh

long time.

legacy

He was 75.

industrialisation.

hint as to what should or should not be published, or how a news should be treated. Like everybody else he would read the newspaper in the morning. In this long journey it is quite possible that he may have disagreed with what we did but he never, even once, allow his

personality would light up people

around him, passed away in his sleep

around 11:00am yesterday at his

paternal home in Cumilla. He had been

suffering from lung-related illness for a

The founder chairman and CEO of

Transcom Group, a well-known and highly respected business house in the

country, left behind an unmatched

He was the founding director of

Mediaworld, the owning company

of The Daily Star, and chairman of

Mediastar, the owning company of

entrepreneurship and

views to override ours. Even when he faced the wrath of the powers that be, simply because of what the two newspapers published, he would never allow that to affect our daily work. In fact, he would never even tell us that he lost certain contracts, or that his factories' permissions were delayed or denied, or that his expansion plans got derailed because of the way we were reporting, taking editorial positions or writing commentaries. There was never a word but that of standing steadfast

behind the two newspapers. An anecdote from the very first year of my editorship perhaps makes the point beautifully. The boss of a certain big business house asked Latifur Rahman why The Daily Star was publishing certain findings of the Bangladesh Bank, to which he said, "Why don't you talk to the editor, he runs the paper." To which the businessman replied with disbelief, "You are financing the paper that be?" Well that is how it was and has open up but once he would his is both personal and professional been all along, and that is what made The Daily Star what it is today.

brutally killed by terrorists during the

July 1 terror attack at the Holey Artisan

Latifur lived at the capital's Gendaria.

Born in Jalpaiguri on August 28, 1945,

He began his education at St Francis

School and then went to St Edmund's

School, Shillong, in 1956. He also studied at St Xavier's College in Calcutta

career as a trainee at his family-owned

jute mills -- W Rahman Jute Mills --

in Chandpur in 1966. It was the first

jute mill owned by a Bangalee in the

erstwhile Pakistan. He worked there as

After coming to Dhaka, he started his

Bakery in Gulshan in 2016.

The other fundamental belief he held most firmly was the need for democracy for Bangladesh to prosper. These two beliefs -- democracy and the need for a free and independent press -- fed into one another, making a symbiotic whole that formed the totality of his life's philosophy. That later turned into his life's passion - and it was my honour to be a humble part of the fulfilment of that passion.

He was a gentleman par excellence. With impeccable manners and immaculate courtesy, his was a personality that immediately drew the attention of any gathering both for his insightful observations and strongly held opinions. He would not invite controversy in a conversation but would not shy away from it if the situation so unfolded. He was a man of firm beliefs but always open to counter positions if they were well argued and supported by facts and logic. But challengers would soon become aware that he had his own arsenal of facts and logic which were formidable to say the

There was a hidden humour in and the editor runs the paper. How can his personality. He would not easily

hearty laughter would brighten up the occasion and enjoin everybody else in a merriment that was unforgettable.

Another unique aspect of his personality was the sense of dignity with which he always conducted himself. Even at his most tragic moments -- when he lost his daughter and years later, his grandson -- he bore these two incalculable losses with an inner strength and dignity that seemed to most of us as superhuman. In a strange coincidence, he passed away on the day of his grandson -Faraaz - falling victim to the dastardly act of cowardice by some beastly terrorists in Dhaka

In the world in which he spent his whole life -- the world of business -- he was an iconic figure. He was respected by all, even those with whom he was not too popular. His honesty was awe striking and adherence to ethical business practice almost legendary. He was known to have given up many business opportunities because the deals were not cent percent above board. His reputation for honesty and integrity were unrivalled and he was universally respected for upholding the highest ethical standards in business.

At his untimely demise, my loss

and to say the least, incalculable. On a personal level he was a friend, a brother, a mentor, a source of strength when I felt weak, a support when I was not sure, a guide when options before me were not obvious. He became a brother when I lost all four of mine in quick succession and greatly helped fill a vacuum that would otherwise have remained with me forever. He was ever the fountain of courage for me whenever obstacles seemed too formidable. I often looked upon him in wonder as to how, a lifelong businessman, with no history of involvement in the media, could have such a strong, deep, and unshakeable faith in the virtues of a free press and such an ironclad commitment for its independence that played such a crucial part in fulfilling my personal dream of setting up an independent newspaper in Bangladesh. What began as a partnership in building an independent newspaper ended with friendship that transcended into a spiritual bond of mutual love and

with an unfathomable emptiness in my heart that I pay this humble tribute to the man to whom I

#### Andorra, and Georgia. 43.27pc of dead FROM PAGE 1 Including yesterday's 17,875 RT-PCR tests for Covid-19, some 7,84,335

Hungary, Malaysia,

virus. Of them, 19.03 percent tested positive for Covid-19. Yesterday, the rate vas 21.12 percent.

people have so far been tested for the

Among yesterday's deceased, 38 were male and three were female, while 23 died at hospital and 18 at their houses, said the DGHS.

Four were aged between 31 and 40, five between 41 and 50, 12 between 51 and 60, 11 between 61 and 70, and seven between 71 and 80, and one was between 81 and 90. Another was over 100 years old.

Division-wise, 13 of yesterday's deceased were from Dhaka, 17 from Chattogram, five from Khulna, three from Barishal, and two from Sylhet, while information of the other deceased was unavailable from the DGHS.

According to the DGHS data, 43.27 percent of all 1,888 deceased were over 60 years old, while 28.81 percent were aged between 51 and 60, 14.99 percent between 41 and 50, while others were from under 10 to 40 years old.

Prof Nasima added that there were 6,075 general beds and 139 ICU beds for Covid-19 patients in Dhaka city's Covid-19 hospitals or hospital units.

In the country, there were 14,784 general beds and 381 ICU beds for Covid-19 patients in Covid-19 hospitals or hospital units.

Besides, there were 11,144 oxygen cylinders, 204 high-flow nasal cannulas, 98 oxygen concentrators in the Covid-19 hospitals across the country. As of yesterday noon, 4,873 Covid-19

patients were admitted to general beds of hospitals while 216 were to ICUs. In the same 24 hours, 538 patients

were admitted to Covid-19 hospitals or hospital units while 497 were released.

## Lost friends remembered

FROM PAGE 1

9:00am to 12:00 noon and placed flowers at a makeshift stage. General people were not allowed there amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

On the night of July 1, 2016, five armed militants stormed the cafe in Gulshan diplomatic zone and held the diners hostage. By the end of the night, they had murdered nine Italians, seven Japanese, one Indian, and three Bangladeshis. Twenty-year-old Faraaz Ayaaz

Hossain, a student of Emory University in the US, was one of the three Bangladeshis killed there. He was given the choice of walking out of the cafe.

But he refused to leave his friends Abinta Kabir, a Bangladesh-born US citizen, and Tarishi Jain, an Indian student of the University of California. He was killed along with his friends.

Two police officers also lost their lives as groups of law enforcers tried to close in on the place. The five militants and a chef of the cafe were killed in a commando operation the next morning. Another staffer died in hospital while in custody.

Around six months after the attack,

the cafe reopened a few blocks from its original location. Currently, the twostorey building, that was once the Holey Artisan Bakery, is being used as home by the land owners.

Rab Director General Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Shafiqul Islam, US, Italy, and Japan ambassadors to Bangladesh paid tribute to the victims.

Talking to reporters, Shafiqul said militants have no capability to carry out big attacks as the law enforcement agencies have destroyed their dens after the cafe attack, reports UNB. "For this, the capability of militants

came down to minimum level. Even they have no expert to make improvised bombs," he claimed. "Many of the militants are now in jail or were killed in various anti-militant

occur big incident," he said. All the militants who directly took part in the cafe attack were killed in a military commando operation, he said, adding that other militants who were involved in the attack were given punishment by court.



Top police officials paying their tributes to the lives lost in the militant attack at Holey Artisan Bakery at the capital's Gulshan as the country yesterday observed the fourth anniversary of the gruesome murders. Diplomats and other law enforcement officials also visited the site.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

# Keeping the flame alive

Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain's legacy carried forward by foundation

His bravery epitomised what a human being should demonstrate at a grim moment of truth.

Faraaz Avaaz Hossain, at the young age of 20, stood up during the bloody militant attack at Holey Artisan Bakery on July 1, 2016 to save his friends.

He was given choice to walk free from the eatery after he recited verses from the Holy Quran as per demand from terrorists, but refused to abandon his friends, embracing death as a hero.

His friends -- Abinta Kabir and Indian citizen Tarishi Jain -- were also killed along with 19 others, mostly foreigners, during the gruesome

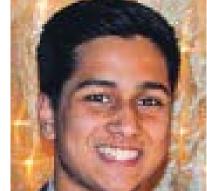
What Faraaz left behind is legacy and inspiration for generations.

To uphold his legacy, his family established the Faraaz Hossain Foundation, initiatives undertaken by which reflect Faraaz's dreams.

During the trying time of the coronavirus pandemic, the foundation has come forward to stand beside people in hardship, especially lowermiddle income groups.

support from Jaago Faraaz Foundation has already reached to over 6,000 people with daily essentials including rice, flour, lentils, and edible oil.

Besides, the foundation supplied



medical equipment like oxygen concentrators to rural areas.

Faraaz Hossain Foundation, along with Jaago Foundation, launched a fellowship programme to uphold Faraaz's legacy. Under the programme, 20 youths have been selected, who will be trained with leadership skills and given the chance for internship at different companies under Transcom Group, so they can learn corporate ethics and behaviourism.

Hossain Foundation, with support from US-based Distressed Children

and Infants International, has been arranging eye camps, which provided treatment to more than 8,000 people all across the country.

At one such eye camp in Rajshahi in January, the foundation provided treatment including check-up and cataract surgeries to some 900 people.

Pharmaceutical giant Eskayef has named its new factory building in Tongi "Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain Bhaban".

Faraaz Hossain Foundation also provided various kinds of support to more than 20,000 Rohingya refugees who fled persecution in Myanmar.

Faraaz, son of Simeen Hossain and Muhammad Waquer bin Hossain, was a student of Economics at Emory University in Atlanta, US. Before going to the US, he studied at Sir John Wilson School and American International School in Dhaka.

Faraaz was honoured with a place in the Garden of the Righteous at the Italian embassy in the Tunisian capital Tunis. Milan-based non-profit organisation Garden of the Righteous Worldwide (GARIWO), with help from the Italian foreign ministry, took the initiative to set up the first Garden of the Righteous in an Arab country on July 15, 2016.

It hosts trees and memorial stones dedicated to five righteous Arab and Over the past few years, Faraaz non-Arab Muslims, one of whom is

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

# A heart of gold

Abinta Kabir's love for her country shines through

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abinta Kabir had always dreamed of helping the disadvantaged. Her heart cried for the common people rickshaw pullers, workers and children on the streets of Dhaka. And she carried those memories of her city when she travelled to study at Emory University in Atlanta, USA.

That sense of belonging brought her back to the country during her summer break in 2016, only to meet a tragic end in a brutal terrorist attack.

Abinta (19), and her friends Tarishi Jain and Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain were killed by fanatics on the dark night of July 1, 2016 at Holey Artisan Bakery

Born to Ruba Ahmed and Md Ehsanul Kabir, Abinta was nurtured in an atmosphere of love and care, and brought up with a strong, unwavering

"My parents are the main authors of my story," Abinta once wrote.

She had grown up to be an exceptional person. Through her eyes, she sought out the best for her country and all those she loved. She was a peacemaker among friends and

"To Abinta, Bangladesh was always home. She had a steadfast sense of responsibility to the country she was born in, the country where she lived a significant portion of her life," her bio at Abinta Foundation's website reads.

Today, even though Abinta is no more, her patriotism is being carried

Kabir Foundation Abinta was launched in 2017 to help underprivileged children education, and the Abinta Kabir Foundation School was established to help materialise her dream.

Initially, 36 children enrolled, but eventually the number of students at the school at the city's Madani Avenue of Baridhara stood at 90.

3,000 books and a computer lab.

Students are charged a minimal fee, which is deposited in their names and will be refunded once they complete

schooling. "The supreme aim [of the school] is to empower the students with necessary skills to break out the cycle of poverty for leading a life of dignity in future," according to the website of

the Abinta Kabir Foundation. The foundation has a programme called "Little Arts" that organises painting exhibition for underprivileged children. So far, 28 schools have

participated in the programme. The foundation also helped establish "Abinta Cyber Centre and Archive" at the Institute of Fine Arts of

Dhaka University. Abinta always dreamed that parents would have the chance to live with their children in their last days. The foundation built houses for 12 homeless people at Kaliakoir in

Gazipur, to honour that wish. Besides, Abinta Kabir Foundation donated special "pressure garments" clothing to the Acid Survivors' Foundation, that is used to protect skin even after facing acid burns.

The foundation initiated the "Abinta Young Change Leader" programme, involving 15 universities, to nurture

ideas of the students. Those coming up with best ideas are

The school has a library of about recognised through this programme

VIRTUAL FUNCTIONS

#### Lower courts to also deal with civil cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain vesterday asked the lower courts concerned to deal with the civil cases along with criminal cases through virtual system using information and communication technology in order to contain the coronavirus outbreak.

The chief justice took the decision after discussing with senior judges of the Supreme Court, according a circular issued by the Supreme Court administration.

SC Registrar Md Ali Akbar signed the circular saying that the civil cases and appeals will have to be filed with the offices concerned, keeping physical distance and strictly following the health

The subordinate courts concerned will fix necessary process for filing the cases and appeals and issue the summons, the SC notification said.

The virtual court functions started on May 11 after a gap of 46 days in order to deal with the urgent criminal cases particularly the bail petitions.

The regular activities of courts remained closed since March 26 due to ongoing coronavirus outbreak.



Montu Mia lives in the Old Dhaka's Mill Barrack area near the river Buriganga, and makes a living from the river as well. He sets out on his small dinghi every day to collect plastic waste from the river, and on a good day, makes Tk 400-500 from selling those. Aside from being his bread and butter, his job gives him some mental peace as well, of doing a small part in helping the environment, Montu told this photographer.

## Plant more trees for environment, food security: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged all, including his party leaders and workers, to plant more trees to protect the country's environment and ensure food security of the people.

She was inaugurating a tree plantation campaign through videoconference from her official residence Gono Bhaban.

Bangladesh Krishak League (BKL) has undertaken the three-month long tree plantation drive for the Bangla year 1427. Sheikh Hasina said, "On Mujib year, a programme was drawn up to

plant one crore trees across the country. The prime minister spoke about erecting a green belt in the coastal region

for protection from natural disasters like cyclone, tidal surge and storm. She stressed the need for planting at least three trees - wood, fruit and

herbal - by every person in the country. "We've declared a separate Taka 5,000 crore incentive package for the agriculture sector, from which farmers could take loan at only four percent

interest," she said. "Besides, we're giving Tk 9,500 crore subsidy in the sector... we've undertaken many programmes so that people don't experience any food

crisis," she said. The PM later planted a sapling on Gono Bhaban premises. AL Presidium Member Matia Chowdhury addressed the function from Ganabhaban, while Agriculture Minister and AL Presidium Member Dr Abdur Razzaque spoke from AL's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue.

BKL President Krishibid Samir Chanda presided over the function, while General Secretary Advocate Umme Kulsum Smiriti delivered the welcome address from the AL central office.

BKL has been arranging the tree plantation campaign since 1984.

## Online service launched | An integral part for mosquito control

Residents can apply to seek DSCC's help for killing mosquitoes, larvae

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday introduced a new online system which will enable residents to play a part in eradicating the mosquito menace.

Through a link at DSCC's web portal (dscc.gov.bd), residents of homes, and owners of commercial buildings or institutions can apply to seek help from the corporation for killing mosquitoes and its larvae.

Applicants will have to pay a certain amount for the service. "There are many hidden mosquito breeding sources, especially of Aedes mosquitoes... If a resident applies through their holding number, DSCC will take necessary actions withing three days," said Taposh, while inaugurating the service at Nagar Bhaban.

The mayor said residents will have to provide feedback after receiving the service. Mobile courts occasionally conduct drives and impose fines if they find mosquito larvae, but compared to that fine, the service charge is much lower, he added. Taposh said the new service will make residents more accountable and

speed up mosquito control activities. SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

# of nation's history

99th anniv of DU observed

DU CORRESPONDENT

The 99th anniversary of Dhaka University was observed yesterday with a vow to ensure quality education and research.

This year's celebration -- which was curtailed considering the Covid-19 situation -- began with hoisting the national and university flags and releasing balloons on Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury senate building premises.

A virtual discussion was held on this year's celebration theme: "Dhaka University in its centenary. Context: Movement and struggle", attended by the vice-chancellor, two pro-VCs, three former VCs and senior teachers.

A one-minute silence in remembrance of teachers and staffers of the university who sacrificed their lives during democratic movements and frontliners of the Covid-19 pandemic was also observed. ROOPPUR POWER PLANT GRAFT CASE

## SC stays contractor's bail order

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed for 16 weeks a High Court order that granted bail to contractor Asif Hossain in a case filed over corruption in purchasing furniture and household items for the officials of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Pabna. Chamber judge of the Appellate Division of Supreme Court Justice Md Nuruzzaman passed the order after virtually hearing a petition filed

by the Anti-Corruption Commission, seeking a stay on the HC order.

ACC lawyer Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that Asif Hossain, managing director of construction company -- Mujib and Sons -- cannot get release from jail following the SC stay order. The apex court stayed the HC bail order, considering the gravity of the offence allegedly committed by Asif, he added.

Barrister FM Kamal appeared for Asif during the hearing on ACC's petition.

Following a bail petition filed by Asif, the HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder on June 29 granted adinterim bail to him in the case.

The same day, ACC filed the petition with the SC, seeking stay on the HC bail order.

The ACC filed the case with its Pabna district office against Asif and several others on December 12 last year on charges of irregularities involving Tk 26 crore in supplying SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

#### DIGITAL SECURITY ACT CASE Cartoonist Kishore,

three others quizzed for 2 days at jail gate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cartoonist Ahmed Kabir Kishore and three others were interrogated by the investigation officer for two working days at jail gate in connection with a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Sub-inspector of Ramna Police Station Md Jamshedul Alam, also the investigation officer of the case, quizzed Kishore and three others and sent a forwarding report to the court yesterday.

In the forwarding report, the IO said the four accused gave important information about the incident, which was being verified. The four should be confined until the investigation is completed, the IO

The three other accused are -- writer Mushtaq Ahmed, Didarul Islam Bhuiyan, an activist of a platform called 'Rastrachinta', and businessman Minhaj Mannan Emon.

Earlier on June 16, another virtual court SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Armed police battalions take charge of Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar

Two special police battalions, formed to ensure security of Rohingyas, have finally taken over the responsibility to ensure law and order inside the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. From now on, officials of the special battalions -- APBn 14 and APBn

16 -- will be on duty inside the 34 refugee camps in Teknaf and Ukhia. The Cox's Bazar District police officials have already handed over the duties and left the camps, according to officials.

However, the responsibility of filing cases and investigation will be still under the jurisdiction of district police. Confirming the development, Mahbub Alam Talukder, refugee relief and repatriation commissioner (RRRC), told The Daily Star that the

special battalions have taken charge yesterday.

APBn (Armed Police Battalion) 14 will ensure security measures of the Ukhia camp while APBn 16 will take care of security measures of a portion of Ukhia and Teknaf camps, he said.

"The overall cases and investigation measures will be taken care of by the local police stations," added the RRRC commissioner.

Members of the Rohingya community first started coming to Bangladesh from the Rakhine State of Myanmar in 1978. While they mostly came in sporadic numbers over the next few decades, a mass exodus happened since August 25, 2016, as hundreds of thousands fled persecution there.



## **Condolence Message** MR.LATIFUR RAHMAN

Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) is deeply saddened by the passing of Mr. Latifur Rahman, the renowned industrialist and business icon of the country and former distinguished President of MCCI. Mr. Rahman breathed his last at around 11 am at his village home in Cumilla on 1 July 2020. Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajeun.

Mr. Rahman was the Chairman and CEO of Transcom Group, one of the largest conglomerates of the country employing over 10,000 persons and having more than 12 companies in the group. He was also founding director of Mediaworld Ltd., the owning

company of The Daily Star, and Chairman of Mediastar, the owning company of the Prothom Alo, both leading English and Bangla newspapers in the country. As recognition for his business ethics and social responsibility, he had received the Oslo Business for Peace Award in 2012.

A visionary business luminary, Mr. Rahman served as the President of MCCI for a total of seven years in three different tenures. He also served as the President of Bangladesh Employers' Association. He was one of the pioneers in advocating for regulatory reforms and modernizing business process systems in Bangladesh. Mr. Rahman was the Vice-President of the International Chamber of Commerce, Bangladesh. He was also the chairman of several multinational companies in the country.

MCCI expresses its deepest condolences to the bereaved family.

He left behind his wife Shahnaz Rahman, his daughters Simeen Rahman, Shahzreh Huq, and son, Arshad Waliur Rahman. His third daughter (late) Shazneen Rahman passed away several years ago.

MCCI humbly requests all to pray for Mr. Rahman's departed soul and his family.

The tree dedicated to Faraaz bears the inscription: "In Dhaka, he chose not to leave his friends and was murdered

by the terrorists. In March 2018, students of Rummo High School in Benevento of Italy planted a tree honouring Faraaz.

He was awarded Mother Teresa Memorial International Award for Social Justice in November 2016. Faraaz's mother Simeen and elder brother Zaraif Ayaat Hossain received the award in Mumbai.

Some of the past recipients of the award are Médecins Sans Frontières, the Dalai Lama, Malala Yousafzai, Mahathir Mohammad and Baroness Caroline Cox.

In recognition of his courageous act, PepsiCo Global launched the annual Faraaz Hossain Courage Award in 2016, setting up a fund of \$200,000. The money would allow a \$10,000 prize to be awarded every year for the next

The purpose of the award is to recognise individuals for their acts of exceptional courage and empathy, the very spirit Faraaz showed.

Faraaz was recognised as a graduate by Goizueta Business School of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Apart from this, the university also introduced the Faraaz Hossain Core Value Award, the first of which went to Gurbani Singh, a student of the university.

Emory University also established "Hossain-Kabir Room" at its Oxford College campus in memory of Faraaz Hossain and Abinta Kabir.

#### A heart

in a bid to promote innovation and leadership.

Emory University in Atlanta established "Hossain-Kabir Room" at the Oxford College Campus in memory of Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain and Abinta Kabir.

The Oxford College also introduced a scholarship in the

Abinta Kabir Foundation makes contribution to the scholarship for bright students in providing students' cost, including tuition fees and accommodation.

### **Prof Fayyaz** Khan new VC of BUBT

CITY DESK

City

Prof Muhammed Fayyaz Khan joined Bangladesh University of Business and

Technology (BUBT) as its vice chancellor yesterday,

ays a press release. President Abdul Hamid appointed him in the post.

Prior to joining BUBT as rice chancellor, Dr Fayyaz was dean (in-charge), Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences of the university and a professor of electrical and electronic engineering.

In 1974, he graduated from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and joined its electrical engineering department as a lecturer. He completed MSc in 1977, and obtained PhD in 2008 from Buet.

He served various national and international organisations as advisor and received awards including "IEEE Best Paper (USA, 1994)". Prof Fayyaz was also the pro-VC of Green University of Bangladesh.

## An integral

Addressing the session, DU VC Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman said ensuring research work and quality education will be the pledge of this celebration, and urged all concerned to work diligently to that end.

Terming DU an integral part of the nation's history, National Professor Rafiqul Islam said, "Dhaka University has led all the democratic movements. Teachers, students and staffers of the university sacrificed their lives in these movements.'

"The university has been playing an important role not only in the pursuit of knowledge and science but also in the socio-economic development of the country," Prof Rafiqul Islam added.

DU commenced its academic activities on July 1 of 1921 with a campus on 600 acres of land, three faculties, 12 departments, 60 teachers, 877 students and three dormitories.

## Cartoonist Kishore

FROM PAGE 3

rejected the remand and bail petitions of Kishore and three others in the case.

The IO submitted two remand prayers for 14 days to quiz the four on May 7.

The court, however, allowed police to interrogate the accused at jail gate for two days, within seven working

The four were arrested from different places of the capital on different dates and produced before the courts on May 6 and 7 respectively.

Eleven people -- including the four arrestees -- were charged with "spreading rumours and carrying out antigovernment activities" under the Digital Security Act on

Swedish-Bangladeshi journalist Tasneem Khalil, who runs Netra News; US-based journalist Shahed Alam, and blogger Asif Mohiuddin are also among those named in

FROM PAGE 3 Currently, DSCC is spraying

insecticides from morning to evening every day, under a comprehensive plan, since June 1.

To avail the new service, one must pay from Tk 2,000-8,000, depending on the number of floors, plot size and nature (residential or commercial) of the building.

#### SC stays

FROM PAGE 3 furniture and household items to the officials of the power plant, said Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan. Asif was also arrested

that day.

According to several reports, the prices of the various items used to furnish the project's 966 flats for the Russian engineers and others were abnormally higher than market prices.

The reports claimed that each pillow was bought for Tk 5,957, and the cost of carrying it to a flat was Tk 760. An electric stove cost Tk 7,747 and the cost of carrying it from the ground floor to the top floor was Tk 6,650. The price of an electric iron was Tk 4,154 and the carrying cost was Tk 2,945.

## Online services | Armed police

Around 11 lakh Rohingya refugees, including newcomers, were settled into 34 camps in Ukhia and Teknaf of the district

Bangladesh Army, Border Guard Bangladesh and Rapid Action Battalion members remain on duty to ensure overall security of these camps. The district police were responsible for security inside the camps, which now APBn will ensure. Hemayetul Islam, commanding officer of APBn-16,

said, "We will conduct drives and ensure security inside the camps. But a sub-inspector rank official from district police will be present with us as a liaison officer to file and investigate cases."

The district police can also avail support of APBn for conducting drives, he said.

The government formed APBn 14 in 2018 and APBn 16 in 2019 to ensure law and order of the district and security of Rohingya refugees.

Two superintendents of police rank officials were posted as the commanding officers of the battalions, which have a manpower of 1,176.

Hemayetul Islam said APBn 16 will be in charge of security in 15 camps in Teknaf and Ukhia and APBn 14 will ensure security of 19 camps in Ukhia.

On an average, 25 to 30 APBn members will be on duty in each camp.

Earlier, the inspector general of police directed the APBn officials to take the charge of Rohingya camps within June 30, according to officials.

ABM Masud Hossain, superintendent of Cox's Bazar district police, said the special battalions were formed to take care of Rohingya camps and they have already started

APBn will take care of daily activities including check posts, patrolling and conducting drives inside camps, he

"If any specific information reaches us, we will also conduct drives along with APBn members," Masud added. Since August 25, 2017 to June this year, around 668 cases including 52 on murder charges were filed in 34 Rohingya camps against 1,561 persons.

#### Trials shall

FROM PAGE 12 Kushtia he says, "Mr Bhutto, you may hold as many conferences as you like but be sure that the war criminals will be tried on the soil of Bangladesh.

Referring to the recent Lahore speech of Bhutto in which he defended the Pakistani army which committed genocide in Bangladesh, Bangabandhu wonders how Bhutto could issue such a certificate to

"Are you not ashamed of what they have done?" he asks Bhutto. Bangabandhu says that the people of Pakistan would certainly feel guilty if they could come to know what kind of atrocities and genocide the Pakistani army had perpetrated in Bangladesh BANGABANDHU'S CALL FOR AGRICULTURAL

REVOLUTION Bangabandhu today calls for launching agricultural revolution in the country. He calls upon the farmers to work hard to increase food production. Addressing a mammoth public meeting in Kushtia, the prime minister observes that the peasants constitute the backbone of the nation. Mentioning that the new budget has maximum allocation for the agricultural sector, Bangabandhu declares that he would do everything possible for the development of rural areas. He regrets that in the past, all efforts were directed towards developing the towns. We have done away with this concept of development, he adds.

SOURCES: Iulv 3, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

ফ্ল্যুট বিক্ৰয় সুন্ধরা, স্বামীবাগু, মধুবাগু, এ্যলিফ্যান্ট রোড এলাকায় বি.এস. অর.এম রড, সুপারক্রিট সিমেন্ট, মেশিনমেড ইট, বেস্ট কোয়ালিটি বাল/পাথর++ দিয়ে নির্মানাধীন ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয় চলছে। ०১१৫৫৫৫৮৫১৮, ०১१৫৫৫৫৮৫২৪

## Divers stretched

In the last letter sent in 2018, the fire service requested the ministry to appoint at least 215 new divers.

In response, the government has appointed only 25 divers in the last two years, said Md Abdul Halim, assistant director (operation) of fire service.

After completing a year's primary training, a newly recruited diver has to undergo a professional training for another year, he added.

He said the 25 new divers have joined work, but they are not allowed to go in deep water as they are yet to complete their professional training.

"The number of divers has now gone up to 50, but they are frequently called for conducting rescue operations. We often face serious problems when three to four incidents happen within a very short time. In such a situation, we need to deploy divers by distributing the work.

For this reason, the divers are often overburdened with work, Halim told this newspaper.

Although the number of divers did not increase significantly over the years, the number of water vessels has gone up rapidly every year.

The Department of Shipping data shows that the number of registered water vessels was 9,367 in 2013. The figure went up to 12,959 last year. ACCIDENTS IN WATERWAYS

According to data of the shipping department, at least 3,654 people were killed, 516 injured, and 489 went missing in 570 accidents in the country's inland waterways from 1991 to 2019.

In the latest accident on Monday, 34 people died after a launch named Morning Bird capsized in the Buriganga in the capital's Sadarghat area. The vessel sank in the river after being hit by another one named Moyur-2. Officials said 33 divers, including 11 from the fire service, joined the

rescue operation. Abdul Halim, fire service assistant director, said their divers are supposed to carry out operations in shallow waters and help rescue people as first responders.

"But our divers have to go deep-water diving. Besides, they also work to salvage sunken vessels," he said.

Data compiled by the fire service control room shows that its diving unit has attended around 2,701 waterways incidents and recovered around 2,101 bodies from January 2015 to December 2019.

Analysing the data, it was found that the highest number of incidents were reported last year. The fire service diving unit attended 820 incidents alone in that year and recovered 668 hodies Khayer, who has been working as a diver for 30 years,

said although their manpower has increased recently, but it is still inadequate. Besides, they also need some modern equipment to carry out rescue operations smoothly. 'FOUR DIVERS FOR EACH DISTRICT' According to officials, the fire service now has 20 divers in

Dhaka division, nine in Chattogram, six in Mymensingh, six in Sylhet, and three divers each in Rajshahi, Barishal, and Khulna divisions. Brig Gen Sazzad Hussain, director general of fire service,

said they were trying their best to address the manpower crisis in the diving unit. "We had asked for four divers in each district to ensure smooth rescue operations. But the home ministry appointed only three divers in each division which is quite

inadequate," he told The Daily Star. He said they have written to the ministry again regarding the issue.

Mallick Sayeed Mahbub, joint secretary (fire wing) of the home ministry's Security Services Division, yesterday said they were yet to receive any letter from the fire service regarding shortage of divers.

## 10 more die

hospital at the time this report was filed. Of them, 22 new patients admitted vesterday. Some 24 more were discharged yesterday,

she said. Since April, a total of 153 patients died at the isolation unit. Of them, 127 died with coronavirus symptoms and 26 more died after testing positive for the virus.

#### A deadly

FROM PAGE 12 Saiful, poured from a bottle and gave the glass to the Meftaul, who fell sick after drinking from it.

She died on the way to Nawabganj Upazila Health Complex.

Ashok Kumar Chowhan, officer-in-charge of Nawabganj Police Station, said the body of the girl was sent to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital for autopsy. He added that Saiful was arrested.

Speaking to The Daily Star over phone, Meftaul's grandmother said they were going to file a case in this regard.

Dr Shahjahan Ali Upazila Health Officer of Nawabgani said that the girl seemed to have ingested "some poisonous liquid".

#### Japan city FROM PAGE 12

There is no punishment for those unable to tear themselves away from their screens in the street but the suburb of 240,000 wants to use the ordinance to highlight the dangers of scrolling while strolling.

The unusual move appeared to have broad support from citizens both young and old, with verv few people on the streets of Yamato spotted breaching the new rule.

## Hundreds of protesters arrested

terrorism and collusion with foreign forces with up to life in prison, will see mainland security agencies in Hong Kong for the first time and allows extradition to the mainland for trial.

China's parliament adopted the law in response to protests last year triggered by fears that Beijing was stifling the city's freedoms, guaranteed by a "one country, two systems" formula agreed when it returned to Chinese rule. Beijing denies the accusation.

Hong Kong police cited the law in confronting protesters.

"You are displaying flags or banners/chanting slogans/or conducting yourselves with an intent such as secession or subversion, which may constitute offences under the ... word and offer all those in Hong Kong re-emerge elsewhere.

national security law," police said in a with British National Overseas status message displayed on a purple banner.

Authorities in Beijing and Hong Kong have repeatedly said the legislation is aimed at a few "troublemakers" and will not affect rights and freedoms, nor investors' interests. But critics fear it will end the pro-

democracy opposition and crush freedoms, including an independent legal system and right to protest, that are seen as key to Hong Kong's success as a financial centre. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the new law was an affront to

all nations and Washington would continue to implement President Donald Trump's directive to end the territory's special status.

a "bespoke" immigration route.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab described yesterday's protests as heartbreaking and reprimanded HSBC and other banks for supporting the new law, saying the rights of Hong Kong should not be sacrificed for bankers' bonuses.

Britain and Canada also updated their travel advisories for Hong Kong, saying there was an increased risk of

Police fired water cannon to try to disperse the protesters. A game of cat and mouse reminiscent of last year's often violent demonstrations followed, with protesters blocking roads before running away from riot Britain said it would stand by its police charging with batons, only to

## Miseries pile up for flood- hit people

With the Surma, the Jadukata and the Old Surma rivers water exceeding above danger level, all eleven upazilas of the district were affected, including the district town.

So far, from the flooded ponds in the district, estimated 1,267 tonnes of fish and 122 tonnes of fish fries were washed away by the floodwaters, Md AbulKalam Azad, Sunamganj district fisheries officer.

Dijendra Das, a fish farmer of Shorishpur village in Chhatak upazila said, "I only have one pond where I farm fish. But my all fishes have been washed away.

Like him, hundreds of fish farmers

are facing similar troubles. Fisheries Officer Abul Kalam Azad said the government had no initiative to provide financial assistance to the fish farmers

Meanwhile in Sylhet district, 672 ponds in four upazilas washed away with 261 tonnes of fish which estimated a loss of around Tk 3.31 crore, according to the district fisheries

In Jamalpur, over three lakh people of 42 unions in six upazilas and eight municipalities remained waterlogged.

Four people have drowned in flood waters and another one died from snake bite in the district so far, said Nayeb Ali, district relief and

rehabilitation officer (DRRO). Around seven thousand hectares

of croplands in the district have been inundated. The crops includejute, Aush, seedbeds of Aman paddy, vegetables, Teel and maize, said Aminul Islam, deputy director of department of agriculture extension.

The vegetable fields and seedbeds may get damaged if water stays longer, he added.

Officials of the education department said, 17 educational institutions have been affected by the flood.

In Lalmonirhat, most of the flood victims are still deprived of government relief and passing days with almost starvation. Nur Hossain, 66, a flood victim of Rajpur village in Lalmonirhat Sadar

upazila, said, "We have been passing days with severe shortage of food. We didn't get any relief or food from the government. Contacted, Idris Ali, District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DRRO)

in Lalmonirhat, said relief would be distributed among the flood-hit people soon. Meanwhile, a sand dyke on the Teesta river is under threat in

Gobordhan area of Teesta shoal at Mahishkhocha union of Aditmari upazila of Lalmonirhat. The villagers are trying to protect the

dyke by throwing bamboos and trees. Local villagers built a 400-foot

sand dyke with their own donations and voluntarily labobur. Local farmer Sekendar Ali, 65, said the dyke act as shield to protect the village, houses, croplands and

livestock. If it collapse, everything will be washed away Local Union Parishad member Matiar Rahman Mati said he had

appealed to the government for repairing the dyke. In Kurigram, many flood-hit people are yet to get relief from the

government. "Almost all the people of our village are poor. Their households, livestock and other valuables have been washed away. We are passing tough days. But, we are yet to get any assistance from the government," said Azaharul Islam, 62, a flood hit farmer in Rowmari

upazila's Char Kartimari area. In Sirajganj, several hundred houses of a village in Suvagacha area in Kazipur upazila washed away after an embankment was breached by

floodwater yesterday. Many people were seen shifting to higher place, road, flood centres or

other safe places for survival. Our Sylhet, Lalmonirhat, Jamalpur and Pabna correspondents contributed to this report.

## Giving it all to others

father could not afford the child's medical treatment, which, he said, would cost about Tk 2 lakh

When Ali shared this incident on

Facebook urging people to help with the

boy's treatment, many responded. A total of Tk 2,65,000 has been raised so far. Once the pandemic mitigates, Ahad's father will start his son's treatment with this money, said Kabya Sumi Sarker, one of

the 100 volunteers who work alongside Ali. Involved in a number of cultural and literary organisations, including Mymensingh Sahitya Sangsad and APEX Club of Brahmaputra, Ali has been known

for his social work for years. "We always respond when he calls for any assistance," said Motiur Rahman Foysal, another volunteer.

Motiur, a lawyer and the Mymensingh divisional convener of environmental organisation BD-Clean, has known Ali's altruistic nature since his boyhood. Trusted and respected, Ali receives

when he seeks blood donation or financial assistance for anyone on his Facebook wall. "I donated blood for a helpless old woman suffering from severe kidney disease during the holy Ramadan and Ali Yusuf organised the blood donation at my

upazila nirbahi officer of Mymensingh sadar.

Praising Ali's philanthropic activities, the UNO said many young people will be inspired by these. Ali is also in the advisory body of

three blood donation groups, including

Brahmaputra Blood Kalyan Society and Roktodane Aamra Mymensingh. He himself donated blood more than 50 times since 1992 on different occasions and also organised blood donation camps, said

Aamra Mymensingh. Ali, a modest altruist, gives the full credit of his philanthropy to his volunteers and family members.

Shahadat Hossain, convener of Roktodane

"I have grown up seeing my father, a truck driver, help his poor relatives with full support from my mother," he said.

Inspired by his late parents, Ali continues his philanthropic work with support from his wife Kohinoor Akter, three children and an orphan nephew, who is part of his family. Though his only earnings come from

printing press he owns, Ali has no complaints.

"I live in a rented house and have to pay Tk 12,000 a month including rent and other bills. But I am very happy as I do not have any wants and can contribute a little to the society," he said.



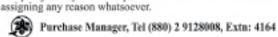
The Oasis of Luxurious Hospitality and Tranquility Invitation for Tender Sealed tenders are invited from bona-fide contractors manufacturers/dealers/distributors/ suppliers for supply the following items. The detail Specifications, terms and

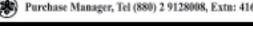
conditions are mentioned in the Tender Schedule Schedule Price Name of the Items/Works Quantity (Non-refundable Professional Building 01 Job Tk.3000/-Exterior Painting Laundry Marking Machine 01 No. Tk.1000/-100 KVA (True) Online UPS Tk.1500/-Modification of RMS Room Tk.1000/-Gas Pipe Line as Turnkey Project Basis (Re-Tender)

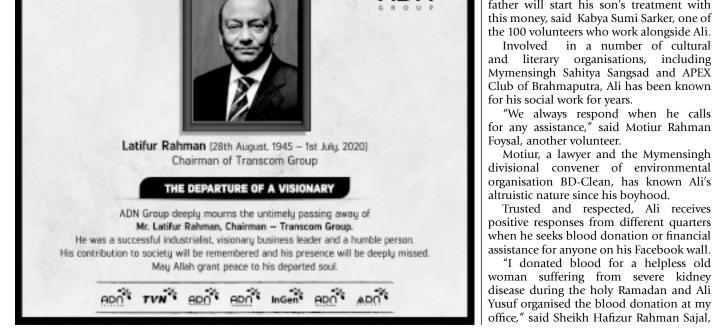
Interested bidders may obtain Tender Schedule from the Purchasing Department on submission of a letter on their respective letterhead up to July 15, 2020 during office hours Tender will be received up to 02:30pm on July 16, 2020 and will be opened on the same day at 03:00pm in presence of bidders, if any.

5% of quoted price in the form of Bank Draft or Pay Order from any Scheduled Bank of Bangladesh in favor of Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka. Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka authority reserves the right to accept/reject any tender in part or in full or all tenders without

Tender must be supported by an Earnest Money amounting to







Treating Salinity in Groundwater

# DPHE now trying out nanofiltration from electrocution in Bagerhat

75 devices to be installed in the district; each device costs a whopping Tk 20.5 lakh

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, Bagerhan

Thousands of people in five upazilas of Bagerhat -- a coastal district where fresh drinking water is scarce due to high salinity in groundwater -- are once again getting their hopes up on a probable solution to their longstanding water crisis.

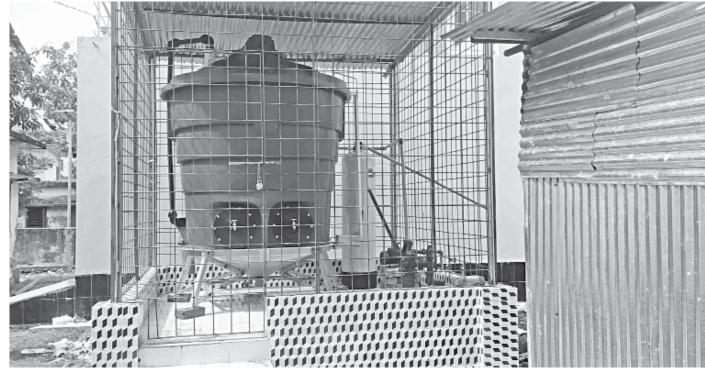
After failures in ensuring safe drinking water for the residents through the application of various methods -- including preserving surface water in conventional water ponds, incorporating sand filtration devices with the ponds and most recently, installation of rainwater harvesting equipment -- the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) this time has come up with nanofiltration technology to treat saline water in the area.

In Morrelganj upazila, Balbhadrapur village resident Shekhar Das said, "The ponds and the sand filters here and in surrounding areas have been out of order for a while. We have been buying a 20-litre water jar for Tk 35 to 40."

Seeing a sign of hope in the new devices, he said excitingly, "We have an acute shortage of drinking water. Installation of these nanofilters will solve our longstanding pure water crisis here.

Under an ambitious pilot project undertaken for Rangamati, Bagerhat and Faridpur, the DPHE, in Bagerhat alone, is installing 75 nanofiltration devices in Sharankhola, Mongla, Chitalmari, Kachua and Morrelganj upazilas where installation of deep tube well is not a viable option.

With an estimated cost of Tk 20.5 lakh, each nanofiltration device is supposed to treat 960 litres of fresh groundwater per hour in four steps, pumped in from a nearby water pond with an electric water pump.



A nanofiltration device awaiting formal inauguration in Morrelganj upazila of Bagerhat.

According to DPHE, out of the total nanofilters in Jaipur and Balabhadrapur nanofiltration devices currently being installed in Bagerhat, 18 are being installed in Sharankhola, 14 in Mongla, 9 in Chitalmari, 9 in Kachua and 25 in

DPHE officials hope that all the devices will be open for public by August 30 this year.

Ripon Das, chairman of Banagram Union Parishad in Morrelganj upazila, said, "Work is underway to install two villages in my union."

He hoped that the new devices will solve the longstanding freshwater crisis for residents in the area.

"Finding fresh drinking water is a severe problem in my area. With the nanofilter being installed here, the water problem in this area will be solved," hoped Selim Sikder, a member of Ward-2 in Badhal Union Parishad under Kachua Upazila.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

FM Ismail Hossain, executive engineer of DPHE in Bagerhat, said the pilot project is being carried out in five out of nine upazilas in Bagerhat, some areas in Faridpur and Rangamati to treat groundwater with high salinity and arsenic contamination.

No chemical is used in the filtration process of nanofiltration technology and impure water is turned into safe drinking water through the use of different types of

# Elderly couple dies

A man and his wife died from electrocution in Kawkhali upazila of the district yesterday.

The deceased are Azahar Ali Khan, 75, and his wife Renu Begum, 60, of Kathaliya village in the upazila.

The elderly couple's two-year-old grandson Yeasin, who also sustained injury during the incident, is now undergoing treatment at hospital.

Yeasin's father Rezaul Karim said his mother first came in contact with a snapped live electric wire at their courtyard

Seeing her, Azahar rushed there and tried to save his wife but he too got injured.

At that time, Yasin, who was playing there, also came in contact with his grandparents and sustain injuries.

Hearing screams, neighbors rescued them and took them to Kawkhali Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared Azahar and Renu dead.

Yeasin was later sent to Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital for better treatment, Kawkahli Upazila Nirbahi Officer Khaleda Khatun Rekha said.

## Missing youth found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Police recovered the body of a youth from Naobhangachar area in Jamalpur municipality yesterday, six days after he went missing on Thursday.

The deceased, Apu Miah, 22, a tractor driver, was son of Suruj Ali of the area.

Officer in Charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station Salemuzzaman quoted victim's family members as saying that Apu went out of his house on Thursday evening and remained missing since then.

The following day, Apu's father Suruj Ali filed a General Diary (GD) with the police station, he added.

Police detained victim's neighbor Al Amin, 24, son of Kalu Miah, from Tangail's Madhupur upazila on Tuesday, for his alleged involvement in connection with the incident, he said.

During primary interrogation, Al Amin confessed that he stabbed Apu to death and dumped the body near his

Doctors and health workers provide services for outdoor patients from inside a four-booth safety chamber at Kalihati Upazila Health Complex in Tangail, maintaining safety measures for all concerned against coronavirus infection.

## 'Risk-free' medical service from safety chamber

Kalihati UZ hospital makes the arrangement as safeguard against Covid-19

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

A specially designed 'safety chamber' in Tangail's Kalihati Upazila Health Complex, set up for ensuring protection from coronavirus infection during treatment of general patients at the outdoor, has received appreciation from all concerned.

On May 5, following detection of the first Covid-19 patient in the upazila, who had received treatment for a common illness at the health complex a day earlier, the doctors and health workers associated with the patient were sent to quarantine and one of the health workers was later tested Covid-19 positive.

Consequently, the upazila administration decided to ensure highest safety of the doctors and health workers at the hospital so that health services for the general patients are not hampered.

Then the upazila health complex set up the four-booth air-conditioned safety chamber with Tk 5 lakh financial support from the upazila parishad and the new chamber started functioning on May 23.

Ticket providers, doctors and pharmacists involved in the services work from inside the chamber, Dr Saidur Rahman, upazila health and family planning officer in Kalihati, told The Daily Star.

"Here the ticket issued with the patient's information from the first chamber is given to the doctor at the chamber next to him. The doctor, wearing gloves, examines

the patient with stethoscope from inside the chamber, measures the temperature with digital thermal scanner, measures the level of oxygen in the patient's body and pulse through digital pulse oximeter.

The doctor then puts the prescription for the patient to the computer, which is printed in the pharmacy section. The pharmacist provides the printed prescription and medicine to the patient after confirmation of the token number of the patient, he said.

The whole process has been designed to ensure safety for doctors, health workers and service recipients from the risk of coronavirus infection, he added.

During a recent visit to the health complex, it was seen that the doctors were providing health care services to the patients, maintaining safety inside the chamber made of glass.

Expressing satisfaction with the arrangement, Saiful Islam, a patient at the outdoor, said, "The doctors, other staff, as well as patients earlier faced the risk of coronavirus infection here. After setting up of the safety chamber, they feel safe

Contacted, Kalihati Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shamim Ara Nipa, said, "The safer healthcare delivery process has been arranged to ensure protection for all concerned. Earlier the upazila administration arranged a special vehicle for the health complex, which moves to the people's doorsteps for collecting

## Patients Suffer: Ambulance drivers sued for murder on the run

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpun

Patients face untold sufferings as all the three ambulance drivers of Pirojpur District Hospital and Pirojpur Mother and Child Welfare Centre (MCWC) in the town have gone into hiding after two of them were sued in separate murder cases. They are Motaleb Sheikh and Kabir Hossain,

drivers of Pirojpur District Hospital and Sumon Sheikh, the only ambulance driver of Pirojpur MCWC. Sumon is the son of Motaleb. Police said on Sunday, Motaleb along with

some men allegedly hacked his neighbour Enayet Mollah, 60, of Khanakuniary village in Pirojpur Sadar following an altercation over a piece of disputed land. Critically injured Enayet was then rushed to

Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH). He ied there early Tuesday. Later, the deceased's son Al Amin filed a case with Sadar Police Station, accusing 11named

and three to four unnamed people. Motaleb is the main accused in the murder case. After filing of the case, Motaleb and his son

Sumon went into hiding. However, Sumon's name was not mentioned in the case. They were raiding different areas to arrest

the accused, said Nurul Islam Badal, officer-incharge (OC) of the police station. On the other hand, another ambulance driver

Kabir Hossain of Pirojpur District Hospital has

gone into hiding since a murder case was filed with Sadar Police Station against him on June 25. The deceased was Tushar Sheikh, 14, a student of Class IX of Pirojpur Town High School. On June 24, relatives took Tushar to Pirojpur

District Hospital after breaking his right leg. After giving primary treatment, the on duty doctor at the hospital referred him to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH).

But on the way to KMCH, ambulance driver Kabir took the victim to a house in Pirojpur town where a group of fake doctors, led by Sachin Roy, a pharmacist of Pirojpur District Hospital,



Patients at Pirojpur District Hospital suffer as the ambulance drivers sued for murder of two persons are on the run. Two ambulances are parked in the garage of the hospital.

treated the patient. Later, the boy died there.

The following day, the deceased's father Shohag Sheikh filed a murder case with the police station, accusing five named and two to three unnamed people. Ambulance driver Kabir is the prime accused in the case.

Police later arrested two accused--- Ali Imam Antu and Ali Hasan Leon--in the murder case. The arrestees are the sons of late Abdus Salam Modhur, former councilor of Ward no 6 of Pirojpur municipality.

Patients coming to the hospitals in Pirojpur for receiving treatment have been facing untold sufferings since the ambulance drivers have gone into hiding.

Pankaj Kumar Mistry from Nazirpur upazila said "I came to Pirojpur District Hospital to treat my pregnant wife on Tuesday morning but fell in trouble in the afternoon when we had to leave the hospital for home as there was no ambulance driver at the hospital."

Contacted, Dr Md Hasnat Yousuf Zaki, civil surgeon in Pirojpur, said he has informed the higher authorities about the matter.

However, an ambulance driver from an upazila health complex in Barguna district joined Pirojpur District Hospital yesterday, said the civil surgeon.



Road communication between Fultola and the upazila headquarter remains suspended since Friday morning after an under construction Bailey bridge on a diversion road collapsed at Kapnapahar in Moulvibazar's Juri upazila.

#### Govt medicines seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Police in a drive seized huge quantity of government medicines from the house of a medicine shop owner in Wireless Colony area of the town on Tuesday.

Earlier on June 25, police detained Sarafat Ali, owner of Town Pharmacy in Puranbazar area, and recovered huge smuggled government medicines from his shop.

According confession, police raided his house on Tuesday and recovered more government medicines from there, Officer in Charge of Sadar Police Station Mahfuz Alam said.

Mentionable, June 23, police arrested Abdur Razzak and his wife Nilufar Yesmin from Driverpara area of the town and recovered smuggled government medicines and medical equipment worth Tk 6 lakh from their possession.

#### **Brazil education minister** resigns over CV 'lies'



Brazil's education minister resigned Tuesday only five days after he was appointed, amid accusations that he lied over his academic record. Carlos Alberto Decotelli was the first black person to be appointed to the government of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, Decotelli had claimed he held a Master's degree from Brazil's Getulio Vargas Foundation, a doctorate from Argentina's University of Rosario and a postdoctorate from Germany's Wuppertal University. As early as Friday, however, Rosario University's rector said Decotelli had not obtained a doctorate there and had never defended his

thesis. On Monday, the minister explained the university jury had asked him to make changes to his thesis, but he had run out of money and had to return to Brazil. Wuppertal University said in a statement that Decotelli had not obtained any academic titles there.

#### PIA suspended in Europe over fake pilot licence scam

Regulators have barred Pakistan International Airlines from the European Union for six months after the state-run carrier grounded nearly a third of its pilots for holding fake or dubious licences, officials said. The EU Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) told PIA "it is still not sure" if all the remaining pilots are properly qualified, and "they have lost their confidence" in the airline, PIA spokesman Abdullah Khan told AFP. The suspension is the latest fallout for PIA after Pakistan's aviation minister told parliament last week that a government review had found 262 of the country's 860 active pilots hold fake licenses or cheated on exams. More than half of them were from PIA, and the airline said it would immediately ground 141 of its 434 pilots. PIA is filing an appeal, Khan said. Flights to Britain, which is no longer in the EU, have also been suspended, Khan said.

#### India deploys chopper, drones to stop fast-spreading locusts

India has deployed a helicopter and a dozen drones spraying insecticide to stop desert locusts that have spread to nine heartland states of the world's second-biggest producer of rice and wheat. The move came after swarms invaded Gurugram, a satellite city of the capital New Delhi, during the weekend, prompting people to criticise authorities for not quickly containing the outbreak. The government has also placed an order for five new helicoptermounted spray systems from Britain to install in Indian Air Force helicopters, Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said. The locust infestation has not caused significant damage so far because it has fallen in the lean season - the gap between the previous harvest and the next planting season. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has warned of a new wave of locusts coming across the Indian Ocean from Somalia just as farmers

Nepal ruling

party leaders

resignation

Nepal Prime Minister K P

made to oust him after his

government redrew Nepal's

political map has backfired,

with top leaders of the

Party demanding his resignation on Tuesday.

Standing Committee

ruling Nepal Communist

As soon as the powerful

meeting of the ruling party

started at the PM's official

residence at Baluwatar on

Dahal 'Prachanda' slammed

Oli for the remarks he made

"The Prime Minister's

remarks that India was

was neither politically

appropriate," he said.

the Prime Minister may

Sunday said that there

conspiring to remove him

correct, nor diplomatically

"Such a statement by

damage our relations with

the neighbour," he warned.

Prime Minister Oli on

have been various kinds of

activities in the "embassies

and hotels" to remove him

from power. He said some

Nepalese leaders were also

involved in the game.

Besides Prachanda,

Kumar Nepal, Jhalanath

Khanal and Narayankaji

Minister Oli to provide

and asked to quit the

power.

Shrestha also asked Prime

evidence of his accusation

senior leaders Madhav

Tuesday, former prime

minister Pushpa Kamal

on Sunday.

that efforts are being

Sharma Oli's recent remarks

PTI, Kathmandu

demand PM's

are planting an array of summer crops.

# 400m jobs lost globally

Says UN as employment crisis deepens; EU reopens border as virus surges in US

The coronavirus crisis has taken a much heavier toll on jobs than previously feared, the UN said Tuesday, warning that the situation in the Americas was particularly dire.

In a fresh study, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that by the mid-year point, global working hours were down 14 percent compared to last December equivalent to some 400 million fulltime jobs.

That is more than double the number forecast by the UN organisation back in April, when it expected 6.7 percent of working hours to be lost by the end of the second three-month period of

#### **CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

More than 47,000 cases announced across US India reports **507** deaths, **18,653** new cases in 24hrs

Airbus plans to axe 5,000 jobs worldwide

It is also far higher than the ILO estimate in late May, when it expected 10.7 percent of global working hours to vanish during the period.

"Things are getting worse. The job crisis is deepening," ILO chief Guy Ryder told AFP in an interview. "We are not through this yet," he warned



Job seekers stand outside a construction site for jobs n Eikenhof, south of Johannesburg, South Africa, yesterday.

The ILO said the new figures reflected the worsening situation in many regions in recent weeks, especially in developing economies.

Its report pointed out that 93 percent of the world's workers live in countries still affected by some sort of workplace closures, with the Americas experiencing the greatest restrictions.

The United States and Latin America are currently the areas hardest-hit by the pandemic, which has killed more than 511,000 people worldwide and infected more than 10 million.

Soaring transmission rates in the United States, which alone accounts for

a quarter of all infections and deaths globally, and in countries like Brazil, which accounts more than 1.3 million cases, have hit the labour market hard.

More than 47,000 cases announced

across US in last 24 hours. The crisis had also hit women

harder, threatening decades of progress, said Ryder. The European Union reopened its borders yesterday to visitors from 15

countries but excluded the United States, where coronavirus deaths are spiking once again.

The final list of nations safe enough to allow residents to enter the EU did not include Russia, Brazil or the US, where the daily death toll passed 1,000 on Tuesday for the first time since June 10.

US infectious diseases expert Anthony Fauci said the United States was heading in the "wrong direction" and warned it could see 100,000 cases a day if the current trend continued, reports AFP.

India recorded 5,85,493 lakh Covid-19 cases in all while the death toll crossed 17,400 mark. In the last 24 hours, 507 deaths and 18,653 new cases were reported across the nation.

The financial world continues to reel from the disease's impact, with travel restrictions tearing through the aviation industry in particular.

European aircraft maker Airbus said was planning to cut around 15,000 jobs worldwide, 11 percent of its total workforce.

Greece, which has suffered fewer than 200 virus deaths, has seen its economy hit hard by lockdowns and travel restrictions -- all but ending its lucrative tourism season before it began.

The German state of North Rhine-Westphalia has extended a lockdown on a district hit by a outbreak at a slaughterhouse.

Parts of the Australian city of Melbourne suffered sharp rises in infections, spurring new stay-at-home measures affecting some 300,000

## China hits back at US amid media spat

Tells four news outlets to disclose finances, staff

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday ordered four US news outlets to disclose details of their staff and financial operations in the country within seven days, as a media row escalates between Washington and Beijing.

The Associated Press, United Press International, CBS and NPR must report the information -- as well as details of any real estate they hold in China -- in retaliation for Washington's crackdown on four Chinese state media outlets, foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said.

The US State Department on June 22 reclassified four Chinese state media outlets as foreign missions in the United States, adding to five others designated in February.

After the first group of outlets were ordered to cut their Chinese staff working in the United States, Beijing hit back by expelling more than a dozen US nationals working for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post.

Beijing also ordered the papers, as well as Voice of America and Time magazine, to declare in writing their staff, finances, operations and real estate in China.

#### **South Korea pushes** for Trump-Kim meet

REUTERS, Seoul

South Korea's President Moon Jae-in yesterday said that US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un should meet once more before the US presidential election in November, a Seoul official said. Moon made the remarks during a video conference on Tuesday with European Council President Charles Michel, saying another summit between Trump and Kim would help resume stalled negotiations over North Korea's nuclear programmes, an official at the presidential Blue House told reporters.

#### **Powerful explosion** kills 19 in Tehran

AFP, Tehran

A powerful explosion at a clinic in northern Tehran killed at least 19 people vesterday, Iran's semiofficial ISNA news agency reported. The blast at Sina At'har health centre caused damage to buildings in the vicinity. Fifteen of the dead were women, state television said. Authorities said the explosion occurred as gas canisters caught fire in the clinic's basement. An investigation has been launched to find out the reasons behind the explosion, authorities have

#### Japan begins charging for plastic bags

AFP, Tokyo

Retailers in Japan began charging for plastic bags yesterday, a move aimed at curbing Japanese consumers' love for packaging and finally bringing the country in line with other major economies. Shops including ubiquitous convenience stores can decide how much to charge customers for the bags, with a common price being three yen (around three US cents). In 2018, Japan vowed to reduce its annual 9.4 million tonnes of plastic waste by a quarter by 2030.



Children watch a rally through a home window fence as Palestinians call for a 'day of rage' to protest against Israel's plan to annex parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, in Gaza City, yesterday. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned Israel Wednesday against going ahead with plans to annex parts of the West Bank, calling them illegal and against the Jewish state's own interests.

## 10,000 flee homes in Rakhine

Says UN rights chief as Myanmar army begins ops in restive state

The United Nations human rights chief said on Tuesday that up to 10,000 people had fled their homes in Myanmar's Rakhine state after what she described as heavy fighting in the past week between government troops and ethnic insurgents.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNCHR) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) later said at least 2,800 people had fled according to early estimates but the true number could be "significantly higher" as the "scope and impact" of the reported clashes was not yet fully known.

Government and military spokesmen did not answer phone calls by Reuters seeking comment on the number of people who had fled or the reported fighting between the army, known as the Tatmadaw, and Arakan Army insurgents.



"Estimates indicate as many as 10,000 residents have already fled as the Tatmadaw advanced and heavy fighting commenced," Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, told the Human Rights Council, a Geneva-based forum, during a debate on Myanmar.

UN agencies cited "reports by local partners and public sources" for the estimates of numbers of displaced

It was not possible for Reuters to independently verify the reports of

fighting and displacement. Access for humanitarian workers is tightly limited in Rakhine. Journalists are banned, making it hard to verify reports from the region.

The reported flight of civilians came after a local administrator, in a letter seen by Reuters, last week warned dozens of village leaders in Rathedaung township that the army planned "clearance operations" against insurgents and urged them to go.

government spokesman later said in a Facebook post that an evacuation order had been sent to local administrators by border-affairs officials but had later been revoked.

The spokesman did not specify why, but said that the government had instructed the military not to use the term "clearance operation". Myanmar's border affairs ministry acknowledged to Reuters that it had issued the evacuation order, but said that it affected only a few villages.

## downplays potential new swine flu pandemic

China yesterday played down the threat of a new swine flu strain with pandemic potential that researchers discovered in pigs, saying the study is

"not representative". The deadly COVID-19 pandemic, which has now infected more than 10 million people worldwide, first emerged in China and is thought to have originated in bats and jumped to humans through an unknown intermediary animal.

## Indonesia set to see a ʻpandemic' baby boom

THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN

Stay home and make babies? As condoms and other forms of birth control are unavailable to a growing number of Indonesians during the Covid-19 pandemic, the world's fourth-most populous nation may see a baby boom.

The National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), the authority overseeing the country's family planning programmes, found that in March, about 10 per cent more of its acceptors face difficulty in accessing birth control, based on reports it received from 34 provinces. BKKBN has 28 million acceptors of its family planning methods nationwide.

## 'We've not spent

medical college workers seems to be a bit unusual to her. She said this after Deputy Opposition Leader and Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader asked the parliament why DMCH required Tk 20 crore for food and accommodation for their health workers.

"We're investigating as to why it is so unusual. We'll take action if there were any irregularities there or in any other places," Hasina said.

Social media too has been rife with rumours about the

Brig Gen Nasir said, "We had told the ministry that we will have to spend Tk 26 crore. They agreed to give Tk 20 crore, but that has not been given yet, so we have not spent any money. We are just accruing bills.

"The rule is that healthcare workers will work for seven days, stay in quarantine at a hotel for 14 days and spend time in isolation at home for another week. Every day for three weeks, we have to bear the food and accommodation costs of 1,894 healthcare workers.'

As Railway General Hospital is attached to DMCH, their staffers' food and accommodation are also being paid for by DMCH, he added.

On May 2, the hospital first opened its doors to Covid-19 patients by turning the "old" Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit into a dedicated hospital for coronavirus patients, and on May 16, the DMCH-2 hospital building followed suit, which means that the burn unit has been operational for nine weeks (or a 3-week cycles) and DMCH-2 has been operational for

Speaking to The Daily Star, Nasir said hotel rooms cost from Tk 350 to Tk 5,500 per night. Rooms in 30 hotels have been rented, he added.

The hotels range from Hotel Shalimar Intl in Kamalapur, Hotel Osmani Intl in Wari, Hotel Melody International in Nawabpur to Hotel La Vinci in Farmgate and Dhaka Regency Hotel and Resort. The room and hotel depends on the position and seniority of the healthcare worker.

He claimed that bills rack up to approximately Tk 13.6 crores per month.

'We are paying a contractor Tk 500 per day for the food of each health worker," said added. So, the food for 1,894 workers for two months costs over Tk five crore.

"We are also paying for transportation of health workers from hotels to hospitals.

These include 11 air-conditioned microbuses, one airconditioned 26-seater tourist coach, two 45-seater non-AC buses and four double-decker buses.

"The cost for transportation is approximately Tk 47 lakhs per month, and about a crore for two months," claimed Nasir.

## Thrust renewed to boost yield

The government provided about Tk 33 crore for distribution of seed and fertiliser among small and marginal farmers to encourage them to grow rice during the Aus season and cultivate summer onion.

also targets expanding cultivation area of Aman rice this monsoon.

Aman, the second biggest crop after Boro in terms of production, provided 39 percent of the total 3.63 crore tonnes of rice output in the last fiscal year.

However, in terms of acreage, it is the biggest crop and the government seeks to expand Aman cultivation to 58.95 lakh hectares this season, up from 58.83 lakh hectares in the previous season, the Department of

Agricultural Extension says. Bangladesh annually consumes 3.2 crore tonnes of rice and 55 lakh tonnes of wheat, according to Food and Agriculture Organization

estimate. The country meets almost the entire requirement of rice through domestic production but it has to meet nearly 80 percent of wheat requirement through imports. However, as the nation does not produce enough surplus of the cereal,

rice market becomes volatile in case Institute. of crop losses for natural disasters like flood, cyclones, data shows.

Secretary Agriculture Nasiruzzaman said, "Our main target is to increase production and ensure that no farmland remains fallow. We will try to replace old varieties as much as possible with the latest high yielding varieties to boost yields."

The renewed focus on increasing production of rice comes amid concerns that food supply may fall short as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to hamper economic and social life globally.

The Daily Star contacted the secretary in the wake of a high-level meeting held on June 15 at the agriculture ministry that took a series of decisions to boost production of

The meeting was also attended by the top officials of various relevant government agencies.

Meanwhile, more than 20 countries have already imposed restrictions on export of food products such as rice, wheat, pulses, soybeans, onions and garlic to ensure sufficient supply in their domestic markets, according to Covid-19 Food Trade Policy Tracker by the International Food Policy Research

In April, the World Food Programme warned about "multiple famines of biblical proportions" for the global health pandemic.

Officials mentioned that the agriculture ministry's decisions included bringing fallow lands in Sylhet, Chattogram, Noakhali and Barishal regions under Aman cultivation and encouraging farmers to plant high yielding varieties (HYVs) in place of local varieties during the season.

The ministry also decided to expand cultivation of newly released HYVs by state-sponsored plant breeding agencies -- BRRI and Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA).

agriculture secretary The mentioned that the BADC also reduced prices of seeds for this Aman "We are providing Tk 20 crore subsidy for seeds," he said, adding

that farmers would also get backing for supplementary irrigation. He hoped increased cultivation of new varieties, timely plantation and supplementary irrigation will

increase Aman output. Contacted, Bangladesh Rice Research Institute Director General

had good production of Boro rice and we have scope to increase yield during the Aman crop season.' He claimed that the level of thrust given on Aman planting and

Md Shahjahan Kabir, said, "We have

increasing yields this year was not seen ever in the past. BADC Chairman Md Sayedul Islam said the state agency would supply 21,000 tonnes of HYV and hybrid seeds of rice for Aman season.

25 percent". DAE Director General Abdul Muyeed said farmers in Barishal and Pirojpur are fond of growing local varieties. The DAE encourages them to grow BRRI Dhan-76 and BRRI

"We have reduced prices of seed by

Dhan-77. This year it targets expanding cultivation of the two varieties fast in those areas. It is also trying to expand cultivation of a new variety, BRRI Dhaka-87, which has potential to be popular like BR-11, said Mueed, when contacted.

"In short, we aim to replace lowyielding, traditional varieties by high yielding ones and pest resistant varieties. We have given utmost importance to bringing all farming technologies to farmers to ensure bumper yields of Aman," he added.

#### THE BOOK REPORT

# Masud Rana, the faulty hero

#### RASHA JAMEEL

He's mysterious. He's charming. He's strong, skilled and agile. He makes you think of James Bond, or perhaps Jason Bourne.

Except that he's deshi. He's Masud Rana. Conceived in the 1960s and tweaked after the Liberation War, Masud Rana featured as a spy of the Bangladesh Counter Intelligence division, formerly a former major of the Bangladeshi army. The books gained a cult following in Bangladesh, so much so that Walther PPK pistols, known to be both Bond's and Rana's preferred weapons, became popular as kids' toys all around Dhaka city.

"I used to live in a small town. A huge part of my childhood was Sheba Prokashoni books—borrowing them or buying them with lunch money from the neighbourhood stationary shops," shares Moneesha Kalamder, 24, Editorin-Chief at Rantages. "It was hard to get hold of English books, so for most Bangladeshis living outside of big cities—especially during the internet's dial-up days—Sheba opened up a window to the spy/thriller genre and the outside world." That was in the early 2000s.

From 30 years earlier, Masud Rana books were captivating the minds of adolescent readers.

"Three kinds of books were available to us in the late '70s to the early '80s—stories translated from the Russian, literary classics by the likes of Saratchandra, and popular fiction like Feluda," recalls S A Bari, 55, telecommunications businessman who grew up reading Masud Rana in classes 7-10.

"All had the barrier of either difficult language or a foreign setting/characters, even if they were set in the neighbouring Kolkata," Bari explains. "Masud Rana books filled this vacuum with its fluid, easy language and vivid descriptions of European cities."

"Bangladeshi men came to idolise Rana as a symbol of masculinity and escape. Sometimes, it could be "toxic" masculinity—feelings were best left unexpressed and beautiful women were only accessories, while Rana himself was a two-dimensional figure with little room for moral ambiguity."

"One of the biggest allures lay in its depiction of explicit content," another reader says, "so the adolescent crowd often ventured into this 'forbidden territory."

Bangladeshi men came to idolise Rana as a symbol of masculinity and escape. Sometimes, it could be "toxic" masculinity—feelings were best left unexpressed and beautiful women were only regarded as accessories, while Rana himself was a two-dimensional figure with little room for moral ambiguity.

He was no pacifist either. The books' warfavouring sentiments popularised and falsely justified Rana's amoral life as a mercenaryfor-hire. In the first chapter of *Durgom Durgo* (1967), for instance, Rana and his sidekicks violently threaten a harmless army captain to gain command at a bungalow in Karachi. They kill Indian soldiers with assault weapons and explosive devices. A soldier, Mahbub, challenges the immorality of Rana's plans, only to be called "dudh er baccha" and have his patriotism questioned. Rana insists that Mahbub not use his mind and conscience during battle. A weak

monologue then attempts to justify Rana's vigilantism, describing it as a one-man war against the injustices of the world.

By the 2000s, these tropes were starting to lose their grasp on readers as the Western thriller slowly became replaced by the bildungsroman.

Nonetheless, since 2000, 150 books have been published in the Masud Rana series, meaning on average Sheba Prokashoni was churning out books once every two months. This sheer volume would not have been possible without ghostwriters. It was in mid-June this year when this was thrown into debate, when

wealthy businessmen in each respective novel. Both spies meet the antagonist at a beach hotel. Both antagonists share similar pseudonyms, 'Goldfinger' and 'Gold Deer', and the same appearance complete with the distinguishable red hair.

Even some of the dialogues are translated directly from Fleming's text. During a poker game, Bond asks Goldfinger, "Don't you cut for seats? I often find a change of seat helps the luck." In Shornomrigo, while playing poker, Rana advises Gold Deer, "Ami dekhecchi jayega bodlale onek shomoye bhagyo fireh jaye. Apnara jayega bodle nilei

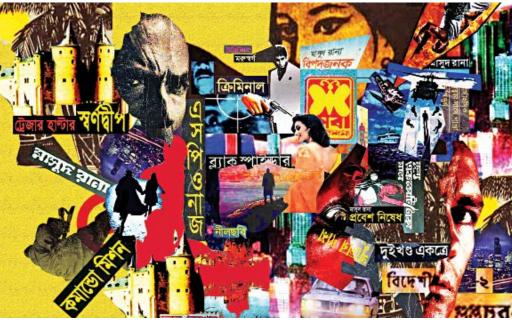


PHOTO COLLAGE: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

the Bangladesh Copyright Office granted the copyright of 260 Masud Rana books to its ghostwriter Sheikh Abdul Hakim, initiating a much-needed conversation about who should own the actual copyright of a literary work: the "official" writer—in this case Qazi Anwar Hossain, or the ghostwriter?

The Office's decision hinged on a rather loaded legal technicality—for their 39 years of working together, Qazi Anwar Hossain never gave Hakim a contract clearly stating that only the creator would retain the copyright. Nor was Hakim a salaried employee. He would just come over with the manuscript and receive the money in return.

Copyright Registrar Jafor Raja Chowdhury told *The Daily Star* that in the absence of such a contract, the relationship between the two became that of publisher and author, granting Hakim not just the copyright of the books he wrote, but also claim over the royalties. Initially, Hakim had apparently received only a lump sum of Tk 800 for writing each *'khondo'* of the book, which rose up to Tk 4,000 per part towards the end of his work with Sheba.

Most Masud Rana books have had six editions, but a lump sum payment means Hakim only received payment for the first edition. He filed his first complaint in 2010, two years after leaving Sheba. The copyright office never investigated until last year.

Yet one wonders whether the issue of copyright is even valid here, given that most of the books are—infamously—plagiarised foreign novels.

Shornomrigo (1967), for example, is more or less a copy of the Ian Fleming classic Goldfinger (1959) in everything from the title and premise, to plot holes. Both spies pose as

"Unfortunately, Mr Bond, that is not possible or I could not play. I suffer from an obscure complaint—agoraphobia—the fear of open spaces. I must sit and face the hotel," Goldfinger responds to Bond. In Shornomrigo, Gold Deer tells Rana, "Agoraphobia rog acche amar. Chokher shamne khola bistriti shojjho korte pari na. Tai hotel er dike mukh kore boshi shobshomoye. Ulto dike boshle khelte parbo na ami."

Such instances of plagiarism are common in Shagor Shongom part 2 (1967), inspired Fleming's The Spy Who Loved Me (1962), Gupto Shongket parts 1-2 (2006) copied from Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code (2003), Boro Khuda parts 1-2 (1995) mostly plagiarised from Peter Benchley's The Beast (1991), and many others. Ironically enough, the fact that only Hakim could name the books he had borrowed from was the winning argument that granted a verdict in his favour, the Copyright Registrar told The Daily Star.

Like its plots which once thrilled three generations of Bangladeshi readers—and in contrast to the nuances they often lacked—this journey of Masud Rana in the real world tells an intriguing story. It reflects the porousness of boundaries, and how stories can, on one hand, travel between cultures, defying codes of ownership and accountability, latching itself only to readers' thirst for imagination and escape. Yet they can also fail to age well, and decades after their time, expose the flaws both in their creation and their consumption.

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# THE INTERNATIONAL BOOKER PRIZE 2020: SHORTLIST

# Humanity invites its degeneration in 'The Memory Police'

#### ALIFA MONJUR

On an unnamed island, the townspeople awaken to an unsettling feeling. Something has disappeared from their memories and dropped into a bottomless pit, joining perfume, hats, and birds, to name a few. From today, the townspeople are incapable of remembering anything about this 'something'.

Disappearing objects aren't what makes Yoko Ogawa's *The Memory Police* so dismal, though. Its true tragedy is about people giving up and giving in. Forgot about roses? Just gather all proof of them ever existing—photographs, poetry, petals pressed into a journal—and burn them to ashes or hurl them into the raging river. Pain does not exist in oblivion.

To maintain this ignorant fantasy—to 'help' the society—the island's authoritarian controllers, the Memory Police, enforce disappearances. They raid homes for illegally hidden objects, and arrest those immune to the erasing force.

Our unnamed protagonist's mother, who was murdered by the Memory Police, was one such disturbance. After realising that her editor, R, can also remember, our protagonist-

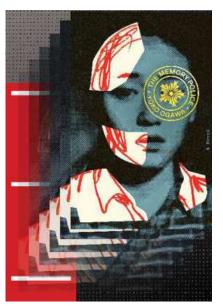


PHOTO COLLAGE: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

novelist decides to hide him under the floorboards of her late father's office with the help of an old man she has known since infancy. R's memories are alive but her own are "sodden flower petals sinking into the waves or ashes at the bottom of the incinerator".

This remarkable work of Japanese literature sat undiscovered by the English-speaking world for 25 years before the 2019 translation by Steven Snyder. Ogawa, whose other translated works include *The Housekeeper and the Professor, The Diving Pool* and *The Cafeteria in the Evening and a Pool in* 

the Rain, has already won every major literary award in Japan. Floating through her gentle storytelling makes it easy to understand the acclaim.

Unlike fiction's traditional nature but like the world it describes, things escalate ever so slightly in Ogawa's novel. You sit at the final page dumbstruck at how things ended this way. This pace fits her narration of social detriment. By not questioning authority, by not staying alert, the townspeople have invited their own destruction, ignoring the chipping until everything was chipped away.

"By detaching meaning from people and objects, Ogawa shows just how one-dimensional people can become without creativity, thought, and knowledge. By not questioning authority, by not staying alert, the townspeople in the novel have invited their own destruction."

It would be easy to class this as political commentary, but Ogawa goes kilometres deeper. Even when R is locked away, he is more alive than our free-living novelist ever was. She goes to work, speaks with neighbours, but her functionality by no means proves her humanity. Her writing does. Towards the beginning of the novel, she and R share this exchange:

"It seems strange that you can still create something totally new like this – just from words – on an island where everything else is disappearing."

"And what will happen if words disappear?"

You see, things can fuse into one's identity and become boundless vehicles of expression over time. What if the pianist forgets how to play? What if the artist forgets about paint brushes? People are what they are in this book. So who would our novelist be without novels?

By detaching meaning from people and objects, Ogawa shows just how one-dimensional people can become without creativity, thought, and knowledge. To her, humanity is the boundless universe inside one's head—the birthplace of art, music, poetry, and human connection. *This* is where people thrive, and it is what Ogawa urges us to never loosen our grip on. Even if the world forces us to. Even if it means we must go underground.

Alifa Monjur is studying commerce and law in Sydney.

#### **WORTH A RE-READ**

# Reading Sontag in the pandemic

What happens to a body when the world around it is wrecked by a disease that has no history?

#### ISHRAT JAHAN



At the time of writing this article, the number of coronavirus cases in Bangladesh crept towards 140,000. This crises has brought forth an old conundrum: we rarely think of diseases as a part of ourselves, until it becomes personal. Until it creeps into our lives and uncovers cracks in our normalcy which we never knew existed.

Susan Sontag's *Illness as*Metaphor and AIDS and its

Metaphors, first written in the late
1970s, provides the words for our
current collective struggle. As an
American philosopher and political
activist, Sontag is best known
for her essays that brought in a
philosophical approach to modern
Western culture in the 1960s-90s.
Her essays in this book analyse the
myths and metaphors surrounding
tuberculosis, cancer, and AIDS,

drawing references from Nietzsche, Camus, and Kant, literary works like *Iliad, The Black Swan,* and *Doctor Faustus,* and the life histories of Keats, Katherine Mansfield, Kafka, and Chopin, among others who suffered from tuberculosis (TB) when it was incurable.

She writes with emotion and force, and her arguments come from a personal place of struggle with breast cancer. The first essay in the collection began as a piece for the *New York Times*. Eventually it became a book of two detailed essays written a decade apart, both articulating the core argument that "diseases themselves are, at times, less dangerous than the cultural discourse which creates our responses and behaviours around them."

As the world tries to navigate

the implications of a novel coronavirus, this idea still rings true. Our discourses of the disease do not focus so much on the dangers it has for a body with underlying health conditions or the preventive/curative measures it requires, as it does on accounts of sudden death and dying in wait to access care. It centres on systematic failure particularly in a developing country, where social distancing is hard and vulnerable populations have no social safety nets or sufficient access to quality healthcare.

The relationship that Sontag teases out between our emotions, our lived experiences, and social and political biases with a disease barely understood, resonates. When reflecting on the romanticization of TB in the 19th century, Sontag

quotes painter Marie Bashkirtsev's journal in which consumption gives one "an air of langour which is very becoming". Sontag unpacks how this popular fashion and etiquette of the time viewed looking sickly as glamorous, thus offering a roadmap of how myths and metaphors spread in social and cultural spaces.

cultural spaces.

It's worth remembering, though, that these essays are personal reflections and are significantly distanced from South Asian realities of illness. They create more questions than they answer, which has a benefit to itself—they challenge us to reflect on the effect of our fears and biases. When Sontag traces the romanticization of TB or the belief that cancer "resulted from feelings of guilt or longing for punishment", it echoes

how the coronavirus is viewed in similar ways—the notion that this is nature's revenge on humankind for their greed and destruction or that one's religion can make them immune or susceptible to the disease.

Diseases take on the form of metaphors perhaps because they are hard to articulate; they are fluid and this characteristic evokes fear, and fear needs something to settle into. Those sick are viewed as taboo and contact with them is feared. Sontag's essays illuminate how myths become powerful in the absence of certainty, and in some cases, construct the edges of our realities.

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# The Baily Star

LATE S. M. ALI

**DHAKA THURSDAY JULY 2, 2020, ASHAR 18, 1427 BS** 

## Levying fees on Covid-19 testing unacceptable

It is the poor who will bear the brunt of the decision

T a time when Bangladesh still lags behind many countries in terms of conducting aggressive testing of people, as suggested by the World Health Organization and health experts, the government's decision to levy fees on Covid-19 testing will discourage the poor people to get tested even if they show symptoms. Although the government's stance so far was to conduct Covid-19 tests at public facilities free of cost, it has changed its position now and fixed fees for conducting the tests—Tk 200 (if samples are given to dedicated sample collection booths or public hospitals) and Tk 500 (if samples are collected from home), according to a health ministry circular issued on Sunday. While none of the other South Asian countries charge any fee for the tests at their public healthcare facilities—and it is rare anywhere in the world to impose such a fee at government-run facilities—our government's decision in this regard is unfortunate.

Although the health ministry circular says that the decision has been taken "to avoid unnecessary tests and ensure better management," health experts say it will not serve the purpose and will rather be counterproductive as it will impose an additional burden on the poor who need to get tested. Also, imposing fees on testing will not stop "unnecessary tests", it will rather need professionalism and training of the service providers who can stop taking unnecessary samples by properly examining the history of those who want to get tested. Besides, at a time when the country is witnessing a continuous surge in Covid-19 deaths and infections, it is difficult to term any test as "unnecessary". It is also not understandable as to how the government would "better manage" the situation through charging fees for tests.

Considering the current upward trend of the infection rate, the government should focus on expanding its testing coverage, because increased testing is key to containing the outbreak. It should also ensure that testing is not disrupted anywhere due to a shortage of kits and a lack of bio-safety labs and skilled manpower. Levying fees on testing at this time is not a well-thought-out decision, and we hope the government will reconsider it.

## Farmers in flood-hit areas need urgent protection

Immediate assistance should be followed up with long-term solutions

VER the last few days, large swathes of land in the north and north-eastern districts of Bangladesh have been inundated, creating fears of farmers incurring huge losses as croplands have become submerged under flood waters. These crops include jute, Aush paddy, vegetable, grains and seedbeds of Aman paddy. The floods have come as a double blow to farmers struggling to deal with the fallout on market supply and demand due to the pandemic, and are now having to deal with the loss of their property and potentially catastrophic damage to the crops on which their livelihoods depend as well.

According to officials of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), some portion of the crops can be saved if the flood water recedes quickly, but almost all the crops will be damaged if the water stays for one week. This flooding has occurred in Bogura, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Jamalpur, Sylhet and Sunamganj, with char areas being hit particularly hard. Overall, almost 27,000 hectares of cropland have been affected, with hundreds of thousands of families finding themselves in particularly vulnerable

We urge the government to provide immediate assistance to the affected farmers and their families. There is no room for complacency—the local governments in the flood-hit areas must provide relief without delay. This will not only involve food support and essential supplies, such as face masks and soap to deal with the scourge of the pandemic, but also financial assistance to make up for lost property and to ensure that farmers are able to go back to farming the land as soon as the waters recede.

These floods demonstrate the importance of making long-term plans to respond to such situations as well. Last year, during monsoon, almost one-third of the country went underwater, and over 200 people in South Asia lost their lives in flash floods and landslides, according to an AFP report. A UN study published on March 21 said that more frequent and severe floods are likely in Bangladesh and India due to climate change, and by 2030, floods could cost South Asia as much as USD 215 billion each year. In this context, the government must seriously take up the fight against climate change and come up with sustainable solutions to help farmers deal with its adverse impacts.

#### **LETTERS** TO THE EDITOR

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#### China, India should act more responsibly

Amidst a global pandemic, two nuclear-armed countries like China and India are in conflict with each other over their borders. If the conflict escalates further or a war does break out eventually, it will not be limited to the borders of these countries only but rather have a devastating effect on many of the neighbouring countries as well. The livelihoods of a large number of people in the region may become uncertain and innocent civilians may lose their lives. Therefore, it is the responsibility of China and India not to engage in conflict but find a peaceful solution to the problem. I hope the people of China and India will build an anti-war movement in their respective countries and force their governments to find a peaceful solution.

Biplob Biswas, by email

# Bangladesh's struggles with money laundering

THE OVERTON



to a seminar Strategy for Prevention of Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism 2019-2021" in November 2019, Finance Minister Mustafa Kamal

said that it is not only that money laundering "creates macroeconomic distortion", but it is "largely destroying our country in various ways". Those were some strong words. And if we look at the data, in the context of Bangladesh, using strong words to describe the curse of money laundering is necessary.

A number of reports released by Global Financial Integrity (GFI) in recent times have pinpointed Bangladesh as being among the worst affected countries to the scourge of trade-based money laundering (TBML). According to GFI's President Raymond Baker, "Illicit financial flows are the most damaging economic problems faced by the world's developing and emerging economies." This means we are among the countries worst plagued by one of the biggest problems (among all the problems) out there that developing countries are having to deal with.

According to GFI, USD 61.6 billion were siphoned out of Bangladesh between 2005 and 2014, which is equivalent to 25 percent of its GDP in FY 2016-17. Between 2008 and 2017, Bangladesh lost a staggering USD 7.53 billion per year on average to trade misinvoicing, which accounted for 17.95 percent of Bangladesh's international trade with all its trading partners during the period.

In a more recent report, GFI revealed that USD 5.9 billion was siphoned out of Bangladesh through trade misinvoicing in 2015—and that Bangladesh is one of the top 30 countries in terms of illicit financial flows.

Similarly, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) reported this year that some USD 3.1 billion or Tk 26,400 crore is being illegally remitted from Bangladesh every year. Though it is lower in comparison to the GFI's

estimates between 2008 and 2017, even this amount would have deprived the government exchequer of about Tk 120 billion as revenue each year, which is significant.

In 2002, Bangladesh became the first country in South Asia to promulgate the Money Laundering Prevention Act in line with the recommendations from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an intergovernmental organisation which combats money laundering. But experts

by the Swiss Banking authorities, Dr Iftekharuzzaman highlighted that it was more likely due to money launderers preferring other destinations, rather than the amount of money being laundered from Bangladesh actually decreasing.

Only recently, the Nikkei Asian Review did a story on how the Directorate General of Health Services quoted prices paid for procurement of medical personnel safety goggles at USD 59 a pair, which is almost five times more



have criticised the government's effort to implement the recommendations. Among those that are unconvinced with the government's work is the Asia/ Pacific Group on Money Laundering, the global body that ranks countries. In 2016, the organisation even warned the government that Bangladesh was in danger of being branded as a "risky" country when it comes to money laundering and terror financing.

Yet, according to Dr Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of Transparency International Bangladesh, money laundering still enjoys impunity in Bangladesh. In a recent article for The Daily Star, he wrote: "Any crime is bound to flourish when laws and regulations are not enforced and violators are not held accountable. This is exactly what has been happening with money laundering in Bangladesh." Though there has been a decrease in total deposits by Bangladeshis in Swiss banks, as recently revealed

than its market rate. Other purchases of medical gowns, software, website development and audiovisual clips under an emergency coronavirus project were similarly excessively billed

Similarly, grain imports from Canada jumped up from USD 438 million in 2018 to USD 1.08 billion in 2019, according to Statistics Canada, representing a 128.31 percent rise. But according to the Bangladesh Bank's statistics, the country-wise import payments for grain do not match with the Canadian figures. According to the BB, import payments to Canada in the fiscal year 2017-18 stood at around USD 500 million only. Therefore, it is quite likely that at least some part of that huge discrepancy occurred due to money laundering.
As the finance minister himself

said, money laundering causes various economic problems. According to one senior BB official quoted by an English

daily, one such problem came in the form of the price of the US dollar seeing an upward trend in Bangladesh earlier in the year, when its price was actually declining in the international market. In the words of the official, "The price of the dollar has increased against the taka because of a rise in money laundering... The Bangladeshi currency is being sent to Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, and Canada.

Years ago, India used to top the charts of GFI reports. However, after WikiLeaks disclosed its massive offshore banking problem, and following significant criticism of the government's failure to address it, policy reforms in the country along with an annual automatic exchange of banking information with Switzerland—letting India access information on bank accounts held by Indian citizens in that country—led to nearly a 50 percent drop in Indian deposits in Swiss banks over a oneyear period. There is no question that launderers probably found other ways to launder their money. But by increasing their cost of laundering money, the Indian government did disincentivise money laundering to some extent.

Meanwhile, our government has decided that it will once again provide people the opportunity to whiten black money during the budget announcement. This, according to experts, incentivises money laundering. Besides that, lack of regulatory monitoring and supervision of financial activities of individuals and enterprises is allowing criminals to hide their actual financial reports. And in the absence of proper coordination between agencies (domestic and international), preventing financial crime becomes even more difficult.

Sadly, Bangladesh meets almost all the requirements necessary to make it a perfect victim of largescale money laundering—including the fact that its government's policies have fallen far short of disincentivising money laundering and have, in fact, facilitated it at times. That has mostly happened because, as Dr Iftekharuzzaman wrote, the perpetrators of the crime have usually been "tied to the power structure" and hence have often "determined the terms" that have allowed them to get away with it.

Eresh Omar Jamal is a member of the editorial team  $% \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) \left($ 

This brings us to the question: When

# Fear of the unknown: Stories of Covid-19 in Bangladesh

AJMAL SOBHAN and QUAMRUL HAIDER

patient on ventilatory support was removed from the ICU of a **1** private hospital in Dhaka when it was found that he was Covid-19 positive. The patient passed away after a short time. After a brain stroke, a 22-year-old non-Covid-19 female patient was taken to the hospital where she worked as a nurse. She was denied admission to the ICU as her family could not produce a Covid-19 clearance certificate. She expired a little later.

These and many more cases, too numerous to list here, demonstrate that the possibility of finding a hospital and a team of physicians ready, able and willing to treat patients, whether Covid-19 positive or negative, is difficult in Bangladesh unless one is well-heeled, or well-known, or well-connected. Clearly, these incidents are in blatant violation of the government's order forbidding hospitals from refusing to treat possible Covid-19 patients.

Meanwhile, as scientists from across the world are striving hard to slow the spread of the virus and to find effective treatments, a team of doctors from the Bangladesh Medical College Hospital claim to have achieved "astounding" success in treating patients suffering from Covid-19 with two commonly used drugs: Doxycycline, an antibiotic, and Ivermectin, an antiparasitic drug. Soon after the news media ran the story, both these drugs disappeared lickety-split from the shelves of pharmacies all over Dhaka.

The concept of treating a virus with antibiotic or anti-parasitic drug has no scientific basis. The doctors did not pursue the normal protocol that is assiduously followed in the research and development of any new drug. Instead, their claim has allowed the sale of unproven medicines among a hysterical population. There was tremendous price-gouging in the process, each drug selling at 1,000 percent more than the regular price. After all, when we feel existentially threatened by a deadly virus, and doctors claim we can take control of our health with a product available at local pharmacies, the price becomes immaterial.

Surprisingly, deaths due to Covid-19 in Bangladesh remain relatively low-1.3 percent of those infected as opposed to 5.1 percent worldwide. Is there a scientific reason for the unusually low death rate? We do not know, but we can conjecture.

In terms of the number of tests, Bangladesh remains at the bottom among the South Asian countries. Manifestly,

from that, due to the sheer size of the population and because tests are done mostly in big cities, only a small part of the picture is visible. Also, the lockdown in the populous cities was fairly strict with police involvement at every step of its enforcement.

Furthermore, an average Bangladeshi with a median age of 25.7 years is bombarded year-round with bacteria, viruses and parasites. Additionally, endemic diseases such as Dengue, Chikungunya, Hepatitis (A, B and C), together with amoebic and bacillary

By living amidst these diseases, the

has gained some degree of immunity,

could be considered Covid-19 positive.

This has more to do with bottom line

considerations. They probably feel that

their facilities might get inundated

with suspected patients having the least financial wherewithal to take care of their regular medical bills, let alone pay for their care in the ICU, should that ever be

Moreover, while current focus is on treating Covid-19 patients in a hospital environment, those suffering from other life-threatening ailments are ignored or set aside. This will create far more morbidity and mortality after Covid-19 eventually tapers off.

Besides, confusing medical information fed regularly to the public and the plethora of statistics continually

will this invisible killer disappear? Just like influenza, it will never, ever disappear completely, despite an effective Covid-19 vaccine, and antiviral drugs are forecast to be approximately 12 months away. That is because since that fateful day in December 2019, when somebody in Wuhan decided to snack on a bat, or a rat, or a snake or whatever it was, the course of history changed forever. The coronavirus found a good host in us. And when a virus finds a good host, it becomes part of the host species' existence forever.

The virus is impalpable. It is blind to age, sex, race, wealth and social status of its victims. Neither does it respect international boundaries. It also lies totally outside the elaborate social nuances we have carved out through patterns of communication, representation and discourse. These traits have made Covid-19 a lethal adversary, so much so that in an "era when it is easier to smash an atom," we are unable to kill this virus which is 1,000 times larger. Rather, the virus has turned our world upside-down, leaving us scared, lost, devastated and defeated.

Hopefully, exposure to Covid-19 over time, just like the influenza virus we are seasonally exposed to each year, will create a critical mass—60-70 percent of the population—that will develop "herd immunity." In the meantime, the virus is winning. Consequently, more people, particularly the vulnerable ones like the elderly and those suffering from multiple chronic illnesses, will test positive in the ensuing months and succumb to the

The pandemic has spurred calls for national unity. But as in so many aspects of our life, politics and corruption in Bangladesh are dividing the population at a time when they are facing financial, social, moral, religious, psychological and emotional problems. Nevertheless, until the pandemic subsides, our solemn duty toward social distancing, unflinchingly wearing face masks in public places, and practicing strict hygiene should be paramount. That is the daunting reality confronting us. The sooner we vow to embrace this reality, the better we will be equipped in matters of reduction of our stress and anxiety levels, and thence, march as one global community on the path of general wellbeing, human welfare and world peace.

being bandied about the affected dysenteries, have never left the country. demographics need to be sorted out carefully. In particular, it is important youthful population as an organic body to make a clear distinction between a patient "dying of Covid-19" and "dying with Covid-19." For example, in all likelihood, an 80-year-old person with multiple comorbid conditions and who is Covid-19 positive may have died with

> As the number of Covid-19 cases exceeds 10 million globally, with half a million deaths, many countries are still suffering from sustained community transmission. As such, the pandemic for these countries, including Bangladesh, has not peaked yet. In fact, public health experts fear that there will be a massive resurgence of the virus this fall as it sickens people simultaneously with the



A man carrying his wife, a kidney patient, out of Dhaka Medical College Hospital on June 21, 2020 after they were told that only admitted patients could get tested for Covid-19 there. She used to get her dialysis done at the Kidney Foundation Hospital in Mirpur-2 but it denied her treatment, asking for a Covid-19 clearance certificate.

which their counterparts in affluent nations do not have, as they are hardly exposed to these diseases. Having said that, health care system in Bangladesh is least equipped to handle Covid-19, rather than died of Covid-19. a pandemic such as Covid-19. Private hospitals—an integral part of health care in major cities—have failed miserably to respond to the crisis. No significant effort has been made by them to triage clinically symptomatic patients who

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#### THE WORLD AFTER COVID-19

## 'A home-school approach with feature phones can benefit most vulnerable children'

Dr Safigul Islam, Director, BRAC Education Programme, shares his thoughts with The Daily Star's Naznin Tithi about the challenges associated with school reopening, ways to recover children's learning loss over the extended break from school, and BRAC's education model for this crisis situation. This interview is part of an interview series by The Daily Star that aims to give readers an idea of what changes to expect in a post-Covid-19 world.

Once the educational institutions reopen, what will be the major challenges for schools? How to recover the learning loss caused by the long study break?

There are a number of challenges associated with school reopening. The supply, quality and use of masks—particularly for children, and especially for those who are poor or in early grades—will be an issue. This will require concrete policy. Design issues need to be sorted out by the educationalists and health experts. If a special design is needed, it would mean production of at least 30 million new masks. Among other things that need to be considered are: how long a child can use a mask inside the classroom, what the teachers will do, whether they will be using masks while conducting classes, and if so, what the guidelines for this will be.

Maintaining safe distance inside the classroom and doing so for a prolonged time is another important matter. In that case, how many children can be accommodated in a classroom? The number will likely vary from one school to another, one classroom to another, and from one grade to another. In some grades/classrooms, there are a large number of children (60-70).

For classes conducted in shifts, teachers may need to work for a longer period. The other issue is having proper toilet facilities for both boys and girls as well as for the teaching staff. So all this will require a standard guideline from the ministries and relevant departments which should be properly communicated to the teachers and parents. The information can be communicated through electronic and printed media, so that parents and school communities are fully cognisant of it.

Preparing the teachers for classroom teaching after an extended break will no doubt be challenging, but it is essential. Many teachers don't know what percentage of their students have had the opportunity to follow the TV-based lessons. There will be a learning gap between children who are following lessons and children who are not, particularly those in the rural areas. In other words, the learning gap among children will be considerably higher compared to the pre-Covid-19 period.

The challenges would be much more difficult at the early grade level. With barely any class experience in the pre-pandemic period, these children would have a six months' learning loss to make up for (if classes resume from September/October, that is). How will they be able to complete this academic year and move onto the next grade? Even if some kind of remedial classes are conducted to address the learning loss, will it really work for the students of early grades, or will it only work for those in the higher

Ideally, every school should make a quick assessment of the learning loss and develop a grade-specific response plan. However, a good way to go will be a combination of short, medium and long term planning.

How would you evaluate the government's response so far to ensure education to the 40 million students now stuck at home?

School closure was essential and the government acted pretty quickly to start its TV-based lesson initiative. A number of private TV channels stepped up to extend similar services to the children. We know that some of the channels are also conducting remote classes through internet and online platforms like Zoom, Hangout and so on. These are very appreciable initiatives. However, questions remain about the reach and effectiveness of such methods.

Available information suggests that almost 62 percent of the children have access to TV. However, only 25 percent of them watch it for learning purposes. A study by BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) also shows that children's self-study time per day declined from 185 minutes in the prepandemic period to 115 minutes during the pandemic, and is positively associated with



**Dr Safiqul Islam** 

The education budget maintains Bangladesh's record for having one of the lowest allocations in South Asia and among developing countries in terms of share of GDP and of the national budget. Why is our budget for education so low even after the damage done by Covid-19?

Some argue that it is the education sector's failure to convince the government to prioritise it, while others point at capacity issues related to utilising a larger budget. Some point out that if the private/family expenditure on education is added, then the total allocation would be higher. One can also say that lack of proper research on education and dialogue and advocacy with the policymakers is responsible for constraining our efforts to realise the need for increased allocation. This year, people expected a higher allocation for education inclusive of additional amounts that would be required to reopen schools, to accelerate technological integration across all important areas in the sector, and finally to give incentives so as to keep children in schools in the post-pandemic

period. The surcharge that the government added on phone/internet bills in this budget can be counterproductive to technological advancement in education, and by extension to the dreams for a Digital Bangladesh.

You have been leading Brac's education programme for many years now. Tell us about your experience of working with the children of most vulnerable sections of society during this crisis.

During the crisis, in order to address the students' inaccessibility of the government's televised lessons, we came up with a Home School approach through the use of feature phones. Curriculum supplementation has been made by adding content such as psychosocial elements and preventive measures against coronavirus. Teachers have been trained virtually to deliver lessons in a group of 3-4 children, preferably from the same neighbourhood. Classes are held 1-2 times a week for 15-20 minutes. This is far from adequate, but it at least helps children to be connected to the world of learning. Teachers who come from the same community can be accessed if a child needs additional support. Special attention is given to disabled children. Most parents are relieved to see that children are connected with the teachers. Children are also happy, because it is almost fun for them to learn through a phone. It is a new experience for them. However, there are challenges such as the call time cost that is equivalent to almost Tk 50 for a 20-minute class for 3-4 children in a group. There is evidence that many parents forget to leave the phone for schooling. Quite often, teachers need to give them a heads-up.

Attention is given to virtual monitoring. Progress and problems are shared with the headquarters staff through virtual meetings

Is online education the ultimate solution? Is it practically feasible for Bangladesh? Technology is important but not a panacea. It will only be helpful and rewarding if it is

properly aligned and blended with the insideclassroom and outside-classroom learning assignments. Children and teachers need to be prepared to use technology. A tablet, or a smart phone, or a projector can facilitate and add value to lesson plan development, data management, learning outcome related analysis, and performance of each child in their interest areas. Technology can immensely benefit teachers' development. However, it is equally important to consider the need for technological penetration across the country,

How do you see the future of our education sector post-Covid-19? Should there be a rethinking in how we teach children, what we teach them, and what education should entail to create well-balanced, productive, innovative human beings?

A curriculum that would be based on the lessons learned from the pre-pandemic period to the mid-pandemic new normal. Things that didn't work well in the prepandemic situation include poor learning outcome of a large number of children, inadequate provision for children engagement in the learning process, low level of analysis of teacher learning, overemphasis on textbook materials, under-emphasis on creativity and art and craft, insufficient library facilities, etc. The quality divide we had in the pre-pandemic situation is also not something desirable for Bangladesh going forward. The BIGD study showed that our children have problems with using waking hours during Covid-19. They have to be prepared for the unforeseen challenges that may come our way once again after this pandemic is over. We are living in a vulnerable and uncertain world, so it is important that, through education, we help our children to grow and develop as responsible human beings, leaning on empathy, collective work, collective response, courage and ability to cope with challenges. We need a better world and we need to do our part to contribute to that world.

# Reimagining an inclusive society



have been many shocking incidents of physical

and verbal abuse that people from the Chinese

background faced in the United Kingdom,

the USA and many other countries across the

world. They suffered discriminatory attitudes

public transports, workplaces, etc. Many people

wrongly associated the Chinese with Covid-19,

Discrimination and stigmatisation have

often been common during epidemics. For

example, gay communities were stigmatised

as a source of HIV infection for a long time.

It took decades of campaign to address the

suffered from rights violations in terms of

employment, travel, insurance, immigration,

etc. In 2000, when I went to South Africa for

the first time to engage in a research project

concerned that I might get infected. Their

on HIV/AIDS, some people back home were

fear was due to the rumours about deliberate

attempts by some to infect others with HIV for

The Chinese were also considered a source

misperceptions. People with HIV/AIDS

and behaviours in educational institutions,

blaming them for the disease outbreak.

of infection during the SARS outbreak, while 12, 2020, Africans faced discrimination during the the London Ebola crisis. In each epidemic, people try to find an "other" group to blame for "causing" School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine the disease while the focus should be on the organised a discussion disease or virus itself. In Bangladesh, there have been a number of titled "Discrimination and Racism During Coronavirus

incidents of stigmatisation and discrimination during the present pandemic. People in Outbreak". There, some neighbourhoods resisted establishing Jabez Lam (Manager, medical facilities for treatment of Covid-19 Hackney Community in their areas. Healthcare professionals and Services) mentioned Covid-19 patients faced eviction threats. Some were forced to self-isolate by flatmates while that the centre had received reports from the Chinese and East Asians in London about they had common cold. Many do not feel abuse and harassment since the Chinese comfortable in disclosing their condition when government announced the lockdown of they test positive for Covid-19 due to fear of Wuhan city from January 23. Since then, there discrimination. These are just a few examples.

Why should we be concerned about

discrimination during a public health crisis? Firstly, it is a serious violation of human rights. Moreover, it affects the prevention and control efforts. For example, many people felt hesitant to go for voluntary counselling and testing due to the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS, and that happens in case of other infectious disease outbreaks also. Jonathan Mann led the WHO's Global Program on AIDS at the early stage of the epidemic and was the first director of the Francois Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University. He explained that the groups that suffered marginalisation, discrimination, and stigma (e.g. gay people, injecting drug users, sex workers) were at increased risk of HIV infection and they face further marginalisation after getting infected. Marginalisation is at the root of many epidemics, including Covid-19. In several countries including the United Kingdom and the USA, people from Black and ethnic minority groups have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19, which can be tied to the structural inequalities, racism and discrimination they have endured for many years.

While faced with a deadly disease, people try to cope by blaming someone outside their own social circle. Mass media plays an important role in disseminating information during a public health emergency. The way the media frames a narrative as well as the images it uses influence public perceptions. Today, social media gives a platform to almost everyone to share what they want to and thus,

prejudice against certain groups, which gets amplified during a crisis, and this leads to racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

I think our policymakers should recognise the discrimination during any epidemic and confront it. They need to debunk myths and dispel rumours circulated through various channels, design effective public health communication strategies, and implement rigorous awareness campaigns. The responsibility of the media in terms of



Having the right legal and policy frameworks in place is vital to a society where all men, women and children can realise their potential. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

in many cases, misinformation spreads very quickly. Covid-19 is a new virus. Various ideas about its origin and other aspects have been circulated through different channels—each person picked up the story that they wanted to believe in. Many people have inherent

presenting the issue is very important. Each citizen also needs to be conscious and make sure they don't believe in or help spread fake news. They have to be media-literate and identify reliable sources of scientific information to avoid unnecessary fear and

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed many issues related to every society ranging from inequality to what happens within households. But let us not forget about the discriminatory attitudes towards various groups of people in our societies in everyday life. Due to my work in Bangladesh, I have met families who have for years hidden their child with disability inside their home, as they did not want to face criticism from their neighbours. Haven't we all heard insensitive jokes and comments about people with mental health issues, ethnic minority groups, refugees, etc.? The list goes on.

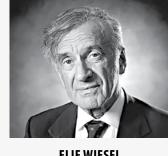
Having the right legal and policy frameworks in place is vital to a society where all men, women and children can realise their potential. But we need attitudinal changes and should learn to respect everyone despite their identity including health status. Only then shall we be able to create an inclusive society that believes in the inherent dignity of each human being.

Covid-19 has given each of us an opportunity to reflect on various aspects of our lives and the world. At a personal level, we felt very vulnerable, and we have also witnessed genuine compassion and a renewed sense of community in many places. To what extent our politics, economy, society and environment will change as a result of this collective experience is yet to be seen. Whether we are going to have a fairer, greener and more just world will depend on the macrolevel socioeconomic policies and decisions on investment priorities. Will we remember our shared humanity, be more empathetic to fellow human beings, and become better prepared to protect their rights in any situation including future pandemics?

Laila Khondkar is an international development worker.

## QUOTABLE Quote

which there was no evidence.



(1928-2016) American author.

Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must at that moment - become the center of the universe.

#### **CROSSWORD** BY THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS** 1 Javelin's kin 6 Toy store section 32 Farm butter 11 Labor group 12 Left, on a liner 13 Mail, as payment 14 Book category 15 Symbol 17 Unrefined 18 Masseur's need 19 Grounds

22 Opposing vote 23 Designated 24 Hoarse 25 Some time 27 "East of Eden" 30 Bing Crosby, WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.

for one 8 Fifth president 9 Gofer's work 31 Vein contents 33 Fan's place 35 Monastery figure 38 Brat's opposite 39 Grand, for one 40 Laughable 41 The Evil One 42 Meanspirited

**DOWN** 1 Tempt 2 Lack of vitality 3 With adeptness 4 Spring shape 5 Amuse

6 Comic bit

7 Clumsy one

10 Worries 16 Spotty ailment 20 Relate 21 Bond, for one 24 P lookalike 25 Mideast region 26 Aussie marsupial 27 Winding dances 28 Zealous 29 Singer Gore

30 Casino game 34"The King and I" heroine 36 "Put – happy face" 37 Great weight

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS OFT A|S|K|E|W LINDA PERA TODO ICE UGHS ROCK BEHOL ADDONTO URGEHUMP N T O P V E N T E A T ΙT





BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

BY MORT WALKER



**GRAPE VINE** 

#### **CENTRE STAGE**





## **GOLPO NOI**

Based on the pandemic, a drama, Golpo Noi, is being directed by Chayanika Chowdhury. The leads for the drama are Zakia Bari Mamo and Anisur Rahman Milon. The cast also includes Irfan Sajjad, Mili Bashar, Masum Bashar and Abul Hayat. The entire cast for this project completed the shooting from home. Mamo said, "The drama is based on few stories from the current crisis which will surely leave a mark on the hearts of the audience. I have not worked on this type of project before. Everyone worked for this project from their residence." According to the director, the drama will be aired on July 3rd on NTV.

## Apurba's hope to be back on screen

popular actor Apurba last stood in front of a camera. Since the announcement of the shutdown, the actor hasn't been doing any shooting. Many actors are returning to work maintaining all safety protocols. However, Apurba decided not to return to work immediately. He said, "As of yet, I have not scheduled



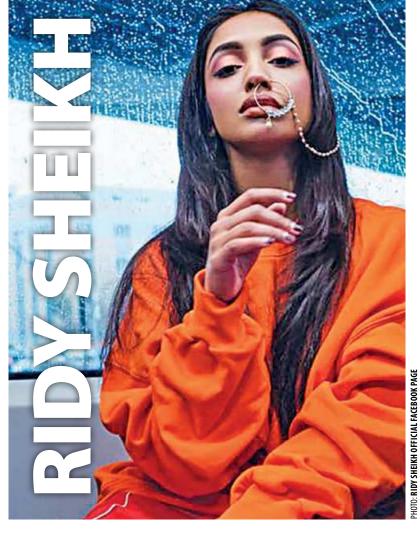
any shooting. I am still deciding on when to return to work as I feel safe staying home during this time. However, I hope to take on projects from next month." Apurba and his son, Ayyash, share their birthdays on the same day: June 29. The father-son duo celebrated and wished each other using social media.

## **TANJIN TISHA** on youtube

Talented television actor Taniin Tisha has been indoors since March 18. The actor said, "I am spending time doing different activities at home. I help with household chores and even try cooking. I opened a YouTube channel where I have been uploading short video clips for my fans and followers. I received good responses for those videos. I plan to upload new contents for the channel.'



Talented actors Siam Ahmed, Bonna Mirza and dancer Ridy Sheikh have been staying indoors and doing different activities to remain healthy and fit. In this interview with Star Showbiz, the artists shared what they miss the most during quarantine and what they have been doing for their physical and mental health.



Did you make any indoor dance covers during this lockdown? Yes, I have actually done a lot of indoor dancing recently. I also made quite a few dance covers as well.

#### How are you maintaining your dance activities while at home?

I have converted a room in my house into a dance studio by installing mirrors which helps me practise. I also love dancing on my rooftop sometimes. I am currently trying to be more fitness-oriented. So, besides my regular online dance lessons, I am also planning on introducing, for instance, a cardiodance lesson to help people stay fit during this lockdown. Many people are looking for alternative options to be more active, and I believe it will be beneficial as it boosts your immunity system, which is especially essential during this time.

Do you regularly practise dancing? Yes, I regularly practise dancing. Since I am on social media, I often get requests from my fans to do dance routines or teach one online. I will even conduct an *Instagram* dance class today. Besides that, I have launched online dance classes on my website where people can choose their preferred lessons and apply for them. So, I am always in touch people and can simultaneously keep

up with my dancing.

#### Did you do any live performance or do you plan to do a live performance for your audience?

I did a live performance on Pohela Boishakh from my home. The Instagram dance lesson will also be live. Besides dancing, is there any other activity or hobby that you have taken up recently?

I have actually started making videos on Tiktok during this lockdown. Initially, I underestimated the types of content available as I was only exposed to the typical South Asian videos. But, I later decided to explore myself as a content creator to come up with new and unique video ideas.

#### Do you have a message for the readers?

I would advise the readers to focus on their mental health as this pandemic has taken a toll on everyone. It is important to be active and optimistic rather than spending the day unproductively. I, myself, try to spend my free time efficiently by reading books, learning something new or coming up with new ideas, so that I don't regret it later. It is always important to try and make use of what you have.

Shreya Shomoyeeta



# **Bonna Mirza**

How are you staying positive during the pandemic? It is hard to stay positive during this pandemic, but since I have a

comfortable life, I can stay home and spend time with my family. Those of us in the middle to upper class can still maintain their lives during this pandemic. The people who are most affected are the lower-class people who have to work daily to earn money for food. They are the ones who are in the worst state now. With their daily struggles to earn money for food, they probably don't even get the time to think about how to stay positive. So, I will say that in these current times, their struggles are much different and more difficult than our ones.

Nowadays, all we hear about is how things are getting worse. How do you keep yourself positive?

I don't have any way to keep myself positive. I have accepted that if I happen to die, I will die and if I can live then I will live. What I find ironic is that even though I don't check about COVID-19 updates, I have to provide news about the virus to people as my work asks for me to do so.

Do you have any message for the readers about how they can take care of their mental health during this pandemic?





#### How have you been spending quaran-

I spend my time mainly just reading books, watching movies and writing stories. I also have been working on my next films.

Have you learnt any new skills while in quarantine?

I have learnt to control my anger.

What are you missing the most during quarantine? I miss acting the most.

What is the first thing that you will do once this ends?

I would like to start working on my projects as soon as the quarantine ends. Many people are not being able to earn a living due to this, so I would like to start my projects so that they can get paid.

Do you have any message for the readers?

We all have to face this huge crisis together, so it is better for us all that we stay at home. To keep our families safe, we must all remain at home.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

#### Here are some binge worthy movie and series you can spend your time watching while you stay at home social distancing, keeping yourself, as well as

others, safe.

POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS



## The Sinner

The Sinner is a crime-drama anthology series, following the life of a detective as he investigates mysterious crimes and uncovers many secrets. It was developed by Derek Simonds, produced by Donna E. Bloom, distributed by NBCUniversal Television Distribution, and stars Bill Pullman, Jessica Biel and Matt Bomer, among others. The series, which is based on The Sinner by Petra Hammesfahr, was first released on August 2, 2017, with its third season released on February 6, 2020.

## AARYA

Aarya is a Hindi crime-drama series, aired on June 19, 2020 on Hotstar. It was created and directed by Ram Madhvani, Sandeep Modi and Vinod Rawat, produced under the banners of Ram Madhavani Films and Endemol Shine Group, distributed by Star India, and stars Sushmita Sen, Chandrachur Singh and Sikandar Kher, among others. The show, which is based on Pieter Bart Korthuis' Penoza, follows the life of Aarya, as her life becomes a mess.







Alex Rider is a spy thriller web television series on Amazon Prime Video, and has been based on the eponymous novel series by Anthony Horowitz. It has been created by Guy Burt, directed by Andreas Prochaska and Christopher Smith, produced by Mat Chaplin and Angie Daniell, with Otto Farrant in the lead. It tells the story of a teenager who is recruited by the MI6 and follows his adventures. It was originally released on 4 June 2020.

Shreya Shomoyeeta & Amina Hossain

#### **GUESS THE CELEBRITY**

Guess who the celebrity is? **HINT: SHE PUT A BEAUTY TO SLEEP** 



ANSWER FROM THE PREVIOUS ISSUE: "BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH"



সন্তানের যত্নে আপনি যেমন তেমনি নিবিড় যতে বারবার নানা পরীক্ষায় প্রক্রিয়াজাত হয় আড়ং ডেইরি পণা



# MESSI SCORES 700TH

# but title slips further

AGENCIES, Madrid



Barcelona gave up more ground to Real Madrid in La Liga's title race on Tuesday after being held to a Laliga 2-2 draw at home to third-placed Atletico

Madrid as a late penalty from Saul Niguez cancelled out Lionel Messi's 700th career goal.

The draw meant the Catalans staved second in the standings on 70 points and leaders Real Madrid, who have 71, will go four points clear at the top with five games left if they beat Getafe at home on

Barca went ahead at an empty Camp Nou in the 11th minute when Atletico striker Diego Costa knocked Messi's delivery from a corner into his own net. Saul levelled soon after from the spot after the referee ordered a re-take when Costa's initial penalty was saved by Marc-Andre ter Stegen who had strayed from his line.

Barcelona then earned a penalty soon after the interval which Argentine Messi coolly converted for a remarkable 700th strike for club and country, only for Saul to strike again from the spot in the 62nd to earn a share of the points.

"It's a real shame and the league title is looking much harder for us with each game," said Barca coach Quique Setien, whose side have drawn three of their six games since the campaign resumed. "Dropping these points in reality pushes us further away from the title but we have to keep on working hard."

"It's very hard to try and fight for the title when you drop points two matches in a row but we'll keep going until the end," said Barca midfielder Sergio Busquets.

"We were leaders and in a



Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi did a short celebration while facing the camera after scoring his 700th career goal from a cheeky Panenka on Tuesday, but the Argentine had to leave the field far more disappointed as his side were held to a 2-2 draw by Atletico Madrid, all but handing the La Liga title to Real Madrid. PHOTO: TWITTER

and I think it's been difficult for us after the break. Some games we've played better, others we haven't, but dropping points today and at the weekend means we are a little bit further away from our goal perfect situation before the break which is to retain the title.'

Antoine Griezmann, who Barcelona signed for 120 million euros, must have been relishing the match with his former club, but he was not called upon until added time. The World Cup winning forward has not started player of this type."

in three of Barca's six games since returning to action, missing the crucial trips to Sevilla and Celta Vigo which also ended in draws.

But perhaps worst of all for him was coach Quique Setien's declaration that bringing on Griezmann earlier would not have helped his side.

*"*It's true that bringing him on for such little time is tough for a player of his level but the circumstances obliged me to do that. The other option was not to bring him on at all," said Setien. "The players on the pitch were playing well and it wasn't easy to find a place for him without destabilising the team. I don't normally make late changes but I thought a player like him could win the game with one play."

Griezmann, who is Barca's second most expensive player of all time, has only scored one league goal since Setien became manager in January. He netted seven times under previous coach Ernesto Valverde.

"Tomorrow I'll speak with him. won't apologise to him but I understand he might feel bad and I also feel bad for him because he's a great player and a great person, added Setien.

Messi got his 700th goal in style, chipping the goalkeeper from the penalty spot and he celebrated duly, facing the camera directly and gesturing. The Argentine is now part of an elite club. Only Romario, Gerd Muller, Pele, Josef Bican, Ferenc Puskas and Cristiano Ronaldo have reached 700 career goals.

Discussing Messi -- who has scored 630 goals for Barca and 70 for Argentina -- Setien said: "I suppose that another 700 goals will not be scored by Leo, but he will continue to score. You don't know what the ceiling is for a



Bruno Fernandes (C) celebrates his goal from a Paul Pogba assist during Manchester United's 3-0 Premier League win over Brighton on Tuesday. The duo have spent only 219 minutes on the field together, but in that time, the Red Devils have scored eight

## goals and conceded none. Bruno and Pogba click

REUTERS, Brighton



**Premier** Bruno Fernandes has made a telling impact League on Manchester United since he joined from

Sporting Lisbon in January and his link-up play with Paul Pogba in midfield had them firing on all cylinders against Brighton and Hove Albion on Tuesday.

The Portugal playmaker's crisp onetouch passing and eye for goal seem to have transformed United's engine room, where Pogba had often flattered to deceive.

It seems the France international and 2018 World Cup winner has finally found a midfield partner who can bring the best out of him in Fernandes, who took his overall tally to six goals in 13 games with a fine brace against Brighton in the Premier

Fernandes, who was the stand-out player foe the last two seasons in Portugal, believes United can squeeze into the league's top four, with fourth-placed Chelsea two points ahead of them with a game in hand, and was quick to credit his team mates for flourishing under Solskjaer.

"We are fighting for a place in the Champions League and we know we can achieve this," Fernandes told Sky Sports.

"I don't want to talk too much about me and Paul Pogba, we are happy to play together but I am happy to play with everyone. We can combine together, we have qualities, but we know that we have team mates who can do well.

"We knew that we needed to push forward and to try and score from minute one. I was lucky with the first goal and the second goal was amazing, an amazing pass from Mason."

With Pogba bossing the centre of midfield, 18-year-old Mason Greenwood impressed again with a mature performance, having opened the scoring with a solo effort before he fed Fernandez with a delightful cross for United's third goal.

who appears to be cementing a place in the starting lineup alongside Marcus Rashford and Anthony Martial up front.

Solskjaer also singled out Greenwood,

"He's got a knack of that, he can go inside or outside, he is developing into a fine player," Solskjaer told Sky Sports.

"We know we have pace and we want to counter quickly, it was a fantastic goal (the third goal), we are very happy with it.

# Al Amin aiming higher

Karateka Al Amin Islam once used to follow movements and techniques of foreign karatekas, but now he is the one being followed by local karatekas and that is happening after his gold medal haul in the South Asian (SA) Games in Nepal last

Al Amin is one of three gold medallist karatekas from Bangladesh in the 13th edition of the regional multi-sports jamboree in Kathmandu and the 26-year-old from Bangladesh Army has already started preparation for the 2021 SA Games during this coronavirus pandemic.

"I used to be an ordinary karateka but the situation has changed a lot after I won gold medal in the SA Games. The neighbours now come to meet me and my teammates and students of my childhood club [Young Dragon Martial Art Centre] in Rajshahi come to me for advice. They even follow my technique in practice sessions. It is really pleasing for me because I used to follow techniques of foreign karatekas during different international meets I participated in

different international meets such as the 2017 five-nation international karate in Punjab, 2017 4th International Karate championship in Kolkata, 2018 international karate championships in Cambodia, 2018 International Karate championships in Barasat and 2019 South Asian Karate Championship in Dhaka.

"After winning gold medal in the SA Games, a big change came within me and I have promised myself to defend the gold in the next SA Games, which may take place in Pakistan in 2021 or 2022. Í have been preparing myself from now on because I don't want to waste time. I even practised regularly during my one-month vacation as I don't want to gain weight," said Al Amin, who was supposed to join Bangladesh Army yesterday and start training today following a month-long vacation.

The lad from Rajshahi, however, feels that he needs to improve his technique to move forward and needs support from his coaches and the federation.

"An athlete starts dreaming for more success once he succeeds in any meet. I realised my first dream and now I am looking



TEN 2 **SERIE A** Atalanta v Napoli Live from 11:30pm AS Roma v Udinese Live from 1:45am (Friday)

WHAT TO WATCH

**FACEBOOK** 

LA LIGA

Eibar v Osasuna

Live from 11:30pm

Real Sociedad v Espanyol

Live from 11:30pm

Real Madrid v Getafe

Live from 2:00am (Friday)

**ENGLISH PREMIER** 

LEAGUE

Star Sports Select 1

Sheffield Utd v Tottenham

Live from 11:00pm

Man City v Liverpool

Live from 1:15am (Friday)



Juventus forward Paulo Dybala opened the scoring in their Serie A encounter against Genoa in stunning fashion, dribbling past four defenders and finding the net on Tuesday. Cristiano Ronaldo scored an equally impressive 25yard rocket six minutes later before Douglas Costa wrapped up a simple 3-1 win. PHOTO: TWITTER

# INTERATIONAL SPOR

and now I am being followed by others," Al Amin told The Daily Star from Rajshahi.

Al Amin cruised to the title in 60kg category after beating opponents from Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan. His success at the regional games was not a fluke at all as he won at least eight gold medals at national

and international events prior to that. Al Amin was forced into karate by his uncle Shariful Islam at the age of nine. He emerged district champion in 2001 at the age of 12 before taking a long time to make his debut in the national championship in 2011 where he won a bronze medal in under-60kg weight category, a feat which helped him get

a job in Bangladesh Army in 2013. Since then Al Amin started adding feathers to his crown. He became national champion in 2015 and defended his title in 2017 and 2019 [national championships were held irregularly] and won gold in forward to winning a gold medal at Asian level. If I can fulfil my dream at Asian level, I will dream to win medal in Olympics.

"To be honest, I have got the speed which is very important in karate but I think I need to improve more technically to realise my dream and it will only happen when I am given better training under foreign coach and allowed participation in more international tournaments. The federation can play a role in this regard," said Al Amin, who was promoted to Lance Corporal's position after the SA Games.

Karate made its debut in the 2010 SA Games in Dhaka where Bangladeshi karatekas won four gold medals but the discipline was dropped in the 2016 SA Games in India before it made a return in the 2019 SA Games. Bangladeshi karatekas have proved that karate can be a gold-winning discipline for the country.

## Nazmul shows a softer side

Mazhar Uddin



He may be famous for the 'Nagin dance', his trademark celebration after scalping wickets on the international circuit, but left-arm spinner Nazmul Islam Apu showed another

side to his character during these testing times. The 28-year-old has been the frontrunner among national cricketers who have stood beside people during the coronavirus pandemic and reflected true sportsmanship through a sense of responsibility.

Nazmul not only showed his humanitarian side but also displayed the signs of a true fighter after himself testing positive for Covid-19 alongside his parents. Nazmul was finally able to return to a normal life yesterday when he tested negative. But even the deadly virus could not shake Nazmul's convictions and the cricketer wants to again return to the front lines and donate blood plasma.

"I am happy to inform you that I tested negative today [Wednesday] as did my parents. It was a difficult time but, by the grace of the Almighty, we managed to recover. Now that I have recovered, I want to donate plasma so that those who are suffering can get treatment," said a determined Nazmul.

Nazmul has been helping those in need ever since he returned to his hometown in an industrial area in Narayanganj after the Dhaka Premier League was postponed in mid-March due to the pandemic.

He has been involved in charitable activities through social media and has enlisted the help of a few friends, including ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal. The cricketer has worked tirelessly with his friends to collect funds, purchase goods and package and deliver goods from a



community centre in his locality.

Nazmul even began to stay away from his family in a separate home for about 20 days so that they would not be infecting. He continued helping people during that time.

The left-hander and Tamim Iqbal also came forward to support struggling freedom fighters and provided financial support and daily rations through local Upazila Nirbahi

"After the DPL was postponed, my friends and I were discussing how we could help the people in our area who were suffering. I didn't just want to help for one or two days. I wanted to take responsibility for those people for at least one month. But I didn't have the finances to support around 500 people. Tamim came forward to support me financially and also provided goods. Mushfiqur Rahim also came forward and joined the cause and donated a sum of money from his auctioned bat. A few of my friends also helped make this happen," Nazmul said.

The initial plan to help 500 people has expanded to 800, but Nazmul -- who may not be a superstar on the pitch, but has certainly boosted his credentials off it -- is trying to manage expectations.

"Obviously, if I had the ability, I would have continued helping people on that scale but I have limitations. I have had to stop since Eid. But people still come to me for help and I try as much I can personally and I will continue to do so silently," he concluded.



4-LANE DHAKA-BHANGA **EXPRESS HIGHWAY BUILT WITH BSRM XTREME** 

COURTES HATES ENTERED AND AND BEST MAN



# Giving it all to others in pandemic

Mymensingh's poet distributes food, donates blood, arranges burial or cremation of the dead

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Ali Yusuf is always there to lend a helping hand. The 49-year-old poet from Mymensingh has been tirelessly performing humanitarian activities since the coronavirus pandemic hit the country.

Ali is the coordinator of one of the three teams of 25 volunteers who bury or cremate deceased Covid-19 patients in Mymensingh city, said Md Anwar Hossain, chief executive officer of Mymensingh City Corporation, who supervises the work.

Hafez Mohammad Emdadul Haque and freedom fighter Bimol Pal lead the other two teams, and volunteers work in groups of five by rotation, Anwar said, terming them as "frontline soldiers".

Till date, the groups have performed the burial of eight Muslim and cremation of one Hindu coronavirus patients, and Ali was present in all nine instances, said Mohammad Rajon, who volunteered at one burial.

"Volunteers led by Ali distributed relief materials to 600 families and powder milk to 400 poor children in the city. They also provided 100 families with special food during Eid-ul-Fitr," said Rajon.

Rajon has also been working with Ali in distributing relief among the

During one relief work, the volunteers once came across a seven-yearold boy, Abdul Ahad, who was suffering from heart disease. His van-puller



The swelling Jamuna devouring a flood protection embankment at Shubhogachha village in Sirajganj's Kazipur upazila yesterday. People who live near the embankment have started dismantling their homes and moving elsewhere fearing that they would be marooned or their homes destroyed.

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

FIRE SERVICE

## Divers stretched to their limits

Get very brief rest during rescue operations due to manpower shortage

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

A diver has to take a break for about three hours after working under water for an

But the members of the fire service diving unit, which rescues accident victims, get a break for only 20 to 30

Abul Khayer, team leader of divers of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said they endure the workload as they cannot just back and watch people crying for help to find out their missing relatives.

"We are suffering from a shortage of manpower. That's why we have to shoulder the extra burden to continue rescue operations," Khayer told The Daily Star. He has won several awards, including the prime minister's award for showing courage during rescue operations.

According to officials, the fire service diving unit had started its journey in 1990 with only 25 divers. It has sent many letters to the home ministry over the years, requesting an increase in the number of divers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

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

## Trials shall be held



Bangabandhu addressing a mammoth public meeting in Kushtia on July 2, 1972.

July 2, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

INDO-PAK ACCORD SIGNED Indian Prime Minister Indira Candhi and Pakistani President Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto signed an agreement for peace today. The

agreement is described as a decisive breakthrough towards the objective of a durable peace. The agreement has to be ratified by

It is reported that Indira Gandhi talked to Bangladesh Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman over the telephone yesterday night. Indira Gandhi is understood to have informed Bangabandhu of the trend of Indo-Pak talks and also Pakistan's view on recognition of Bangladesh and normalisation of relationships between Bangladesh and Pakistan.

BANGABANDHU VISITS KUSHTIA

Bangabandhu today reiterates his firm resolve to try the war criminals on the soil of Bangladesh. Addressing a big meeting in SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

#### A deadly mistake

Girl dies after being mistakenly given acid instead of water

Our Correspondent, Dinajpur

A 5-year-old girl died after drinking water mixed with acid when she asked for some water at a jewellery shop in Dinajpur's Nawabganj upazila.

Police arrested the jeweller Md Saiful Islam, 34 Saiful mistakenly poured from a bottle of water mixed with Nitric acid, which jewellers use to purify Zannat, 5, from the upazila,

Morsheda Begum, 34, took her youngest daughter Meftaul to Soma Jewellers in Nawabganj bazaar yesterday noon to buy some gold ornaments.

asked for some water.

Meftaul's grandmother Razia Khatun was also there.

At the shop, the girl was playing around and, at one point, asked her mother for some water.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Japan city bans smartphone while walking



AFP, Yamato

A Tokyo suburb yesterday imposed Japan's first ban on a habit seen around the world: pedestrians glued to their phone screens while walking, sometimes dangerously oblivious to their surroundings.

Visitors arriving at the railway station in Yamato City were greeted with banners announcing the new prohibition, which applies to all foot journeys around the neighbourhood's public roads, squares and parks.

"Using smartphones while walking is banned. Please operate your smartphones after you stop walking," a recorded female voice cautioned travellers.

Hong Kong's New Security Law

### Miseries pile up for floodhit people

Many yet to get relief in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat

STAR REPORT

situation worsened in several districts and caused sufferings to people as their houses, croplands, ponds livestock damaged.

Fish farmers in the districts are in fear of incurring huge losses this season as their fishes have ponds were inundated.

Many flood-hit people are yet to get any relief or food assistance from the government and passing days with starvation.

In Sunamganj, some 2,846 ponds -- covering around 529 hectares lands -- were washed away by the flash flood, causing damage worth around Tk 21.45 crore to the fish farmers,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

#### 10 more die with Covid-19 symptoms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Ten people have died with Covid-19 symptoms since Monday in Cumilla.

Dr Mukta Rani, assistant surgeon at Cumilla Medical College Hospital, said of the dead seven were males, two females and one child.

All of them, aged between eight and 80, were admitted to the hospital with cold, cough, fever, chest pain and breathing issues, she added.

She also said that samples were collected from the patients' bodies for Covid-19 tests. A total of 105 patients

were admitted to the isolation unit of the SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha AZAN 4-10 12-45 5-00 6-55 JAMAAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 SOURCE- ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Riot police use pepper spray toward journalists as protesters gathered for a rally against a new national security law in Hong Kong yesterday, on the 23rd anniversary of the city's handover from Britain to China.

PHOTO:

#### according to local fisheries SEE PAGE 4 COL 4 officers.

## Hundreds of protesters arrested

Pro-Beijing politicians welcome city's 'second return' to China amid condemnations from West

Hong Kong police fired water cannon and tear gas and arrested more than 370 people yesterday as protesters took to the streets in defiance of sweeping security legislation introduced by China to snuff out dissent.

Beijing unveiled the details of the much-anticipated law late on Tuesday after weeks of uncertainty, pushing China's freest city and one of the world's most glittering financial hubs on to a more authoritarian

As thousands of protesters gathered for an annual rally marking the anniversary of the former British colony's handover to China in 1997, riot police used pepper spray and fired pellets as they made arrests after crowds spilled into the streets chanting "resist till the end" and "Hong Kong independence".

"I'm scared of going to jail but for justice I have to come out today, I have to stand up," said one 35-year-old man who gave his name as Seth.

Police said they had made more than 300 arrests for illegal assembly and other offences, with nine involving violations of the new law.

The law punishes crimes of secession, subversion,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5