

Vikram

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South Asia and homework on the subjects he is dealing with, diplomatic sources said.

Riva Ganguly Das, the 1986 batch IFS officer, is likely to take over as Secretary (East) at the MEA when incumbent Vijai Thakur Singh retires in September.

With Bangladesh being one of the few South Asian countries with which India has had a steady upswing in ties spanning a wide range of sectors, particularly cross-border connectivity, Doraiswami faces the challenge of taking them forward much further at a time when China is expanding its footprints in South Asia.

Egypt grounds

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kites, Alexandria's governorate said this week on its Facebook page.

Fines imposed for kite-flying in the Mediterranean city can reach up to 1,000 pounds (about \$60).

Egypt's skies have been filled with thousands of colourful paper kites flown by youths from rooftops and on cornices, as the hobby took off during night-time curfews to limit the spread of coronavirus.

But they have also raised complaints, including from an MP.

Khaled Abu Taleb, a member of parliament's Defence and National Security Committee, said last month he wanted the prime minister briefed on the dangers of flying kites because they posed "a national security threat".

The kites might be equipped with surveillance cameras, he said.

Abu Taleb was roundly ridiculed on social media in Egypt, where operating a drone is only authorised with a special permit.

A three-month curfew was lifted in June, even as cases of Covid-19 in Egypt continue to rise, with over 80,000 declared infections and nearly 4,000 deaths to date.

National

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In future. A new University Ordinance will be declared soon. The new ordinance will ensure that there will be no undue interference by the government in the university affairs, he assures. The minister further says that a new education system would be introduced as the government doesn't want the faulty education system pursued during the Pakistani regime any more.

AL LEADERS ASKED TO CONDUCT PROBE

Bangabandhu today directs the secretary of the women's branch of Awami League Sajeda Chowdhury and a few other prominent women Awami League leaders to go to Narsingdi to have an enquiry into the incident in which several persons including some girl students were allegedly manhandled by the police. According to earlier reports the police resorted to indiscriminate lathi charge on a procession brought out by students on July 10 demanding release of a local leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League.

SOURCES: July 14, 1972 issues of *Bangladesh Observer*, *Dainik Bangla* and *Dainik Ittefaq*.

Some ACs

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Guidance from the Chartered Institution of Building Service Engineers, which Dr Fitzgerald helped draw up, warns that split units that do not have a dedicated source of outside air supply into a room "could be responsible for re-circulating and spreading airborne viral particles into the path of socially distanced users".

The guidance says: "It is recommended that any ventilation or air conditioning system that normally runs with a re-circulation mode should now be set up to run on full outside air where this is possible."

Dr Fitzgerald said that opening a window while operating the unit was the best way to mitigate risk, even though it may go against conventional wisdom and be more expensive.

He said these kinds of wall-mounted units were often installed when people only needed air conditioning for a few days each year.

Harvard environmental health researcher Joseph Gardner Allen says ventilation systems with highly effective filters are a key way of filtering droplets from the air, according to CNN.

A study in China in April linked coronavirus transmission to an air-conditioning unit after a diner at a restaurant in the city of Guangzhou infected nine others.

"We conclude that in this outbreak, droplet transmission was prompted by air-conditioned ventilation. The key factor for infection was the direction of the airflow," researchers from the Guangzhou Center for Disease Control and Prevention said.

More than 12.7 million people have been infected with the virus, and more than 565,000 worldwide have died, of whom more than 134,000 are in the US, where air conditioning is widespread.

Cases have surged in the American south and west, where temperatures are highest.



National Disaster Response Force personnel carry a sick woman during a rescue operation in a flood affected area in Pithsala of Barpeta district, some 105kms from Guwahati, the capital city of India's northeastern state of Assam yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Bachchan family hit by virus

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Saturday, when they said they had mild symptoms of Covid-19.

Hospital officials and government health authorities said earlier yesterday that Amitabh and his son were in stable condition.

People in northern and western India were conducting Hindu prayer rituals for the Bachchan family, social media and television footage showed.

Amitabh, 77, was badly hurt in an action scene at movie set in 1982, an incident that triggered tremendous support and love for him across the nation as people prayed for his recovery. At the time one fan was said to have walked backwards from southern Hyderabad city to Mumbai in his honour.

Since then, Amitabh has been operated on several times.

Aishwarya, 46, who often features on "most beautiful" lists, has worked in several Bollywood and Hollywood films. She is a brand ambassador for several multinational companies, including L'Oréal.

Amitabh's wife Jaya, also an actor, has tested negative, said the health minister. Amitabh, a revered celebrity who endorses dozens of Indian and global brands, has a net worth estimated to be over \$100 million, trade analysts say.

The minister later deleted his tweet, but another government official confirmed to Reuters the information was accurate. A spokeswoman for Aishwarya declined to comment.

Top bureaucrats and ministers have been asked to show restraint on tweeting regarding the Bollywood star family, an official in the prime

minister's office told Reuters.

India yesterday registered a record increase in the number of coronavirus cases, taking the total number of affected people in the country to nearly 850,000, the world's third-highest, and prompting authorities to re-impose partial lockdowns in some densely populated areas.

Federal health ministry data showed that more than 27,100 new cases were reported in the previous 24 hours, while the death toll increased to 22,674, after 551 people succumbed in a day.

Amitabh said in a tweet on Saturday night that he had tested positive for the infectious virus. Within minutes, Abhishek, 44, tweeted that he had also tested positive.

Father and son were moved to the Nanavati Hospital in Mumbai despite

showing only mild symptoms and the father-son duo appealed to their millions of fans to stay calm.

Authorities launched a massive sanitising drill at Bachchan's upscale residence in Mumbai, spraying disinfectant in the large compound and on cars parked outside.

Amitabh has been a prominent figure in the fight against the coronavirus, appearing in public service advertisements where, in his trademark baritone, he urges people to wear masks, wash hands frequently and maintain social distance.

India's film industry recently resumed film shoots after a months-long hiatus following the imposition of a nationwide lockdown in late March.

But actors over 65, such as Amitabh, are banned from the sets because of their vulnerability to the virus.

Rivers swell, sufferings intensify

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In Rangpur, people in three hit farmer of Gobordhan village in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila, said, "Our house and other properties have been submerged. We along with our livestock have taken shelter on roads for survival. We have no food. We are now depending on some dry food provided by some of our relatives," said.

In Sirajganj, the flood situation has deteriorated rapidly posing a threat of long-term flood.

Jamuna may cross the danger level today as the river is swelling up rapidly, said AKM Rafikul Islam, sub-divisional engineer at Sirajganj WDB.

In Sunamganj, people of all the 11 upazilas are in peril as the flash flood hit the region for the second time amid the pandemic.

Fish farmers have incurred a huge loss and farmers would entirely lose their crops if the flood prolongs a few more days.

The Surma river was flowing 42 centimetres at Sunamganj town point yesterday morning.

Johirul Alam, district relief and rehabilitation officer of Sunamganj, said, "We are distributing 336.9 tonnes of rice, Tk 20,18,500 and 3,600 packets of dry foods among the victims. We opened 269 shelter

centres in the district".

In Sylhet, the Surma was flowing at 80cm above the danger level at Kanaighat point yesterday morning, affecting around 48,000 families in five upazilas.

Shofiq Uddin Ahmed, district relief and rehabilitation officer in Sylhet, said, "We've already disbursed 115 tonnes of rice and 900 packets of dry foods among the affected people."

Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat, Pabna, Dinajpur, Sylhet and Nilphamari contributed to this report.

No mask no entry

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distancing measures have helped keep the numbers low.

So far, 300 samples, collected at the Hakimpur Upazila Health Complex, were tested in the district headquarters, he told The Daily Star last Wednesday. No new samples were tested as of yesterday.

Only samples of patients, who came to the health facility with coronavirus symptoms, were collected and tested, he added.

The physician said a 16-member Corona Protirodh Committee headed by the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) was formed in May with members from different professional groups in the upazila to monitor the pandemic situation.

Similar committees have been formed at the union levels, said Touhid, who is also the member secretary of the upazila committee.

Early June, the upazila Corona

Protirodh Committee introduced "No Mask, No Entry" regulation which barred people from entering Hakimpur and its public and private establishments without wearing a mask.

Since July 4, the committee introduced "No Mask, No Sale" regulation among the local traders.

Shopkeepers in the upazila headquarters and even in villages, through union parishads have been asked not to sell any item if customers do not wear masks.

If the rule is violated, the committee punishes the traders.

Already several shops have been shut down for selling products to customers wearing no mask.

Fazlur Rahim, president of Hakimpur Dokan Malik Samity (shop owners association), said all their members support the "No Mask, No Sale" policy and are following it.

Only three shop-owners violated the rule and their shops were closed, he added.

Talking to The Daily Star on Wednesday, Hakimpur's UNO Abdur Rafiqul Alam said he has been operating a mobile court regularly since April.

So far, 207 cases have been filed against those who violated Covid-19 restrictions and about Tk 7 lakh has been realised in fine, he added.

Coronavirus cases in Hakimpur, that lies on the India-Bangladesh border, is also low compared to other upazilas adjacent to the border -- Dinajpur Sadar, Biral, Birampur, Chirirbandar and Phulbari.

The UNO said movement of around 500 Indian trucks and helpers, who commute every day through Hakimpur's border with India carrying imported goods, have also been restricted.

"Now, the Indian truckers and

helpers cannot roam easily in the upazila as they did before," he added.

Besides, at nine entry points of the upazila, incoming travellers are questioned. They are asked to go into 14 days of home quarantine if they have coronavirus symptoms or had come in contact with Covid-19 patients.

About social distancing measures, he said in March, April and May, volunteers gave doorstep service to the needy and common people to prohibit any gathering at shops and markets.

Abdur Rafiqul believes Hakimpur can be a model for other places in the country.

"It's a great achievement by Hakimpur's residents. The people behind it deserve acknowledgement", said Abdul Kalam Azad, a senior citizen and President of Dinajpur Chapter Sector Commanders' Forum.

Tigress found dead in Sundarbans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A seriously injured tigress was found dead near Andharmanik forest camp in the Sundarbans on Friday.

"A front and a hind leg of the tigress were severely injured, probably from a crocodile attack. We collected its organs for autopsy and buried the corpse near our camp after skinning it on Saturday," said Bashir-Al-Mamun, divisional forest officer at Sundarbans West range, Khulna.

The officer who saw the body on Saturday told The Daily Star that the tigress aged between 14 and 15 was seen by officials a few times last week near Andharmanik camp.

"But on Friday, they saw her sitting at the same place for hours. In the afternoon, they saw flies buzzing around it," he said.

"There were injuries on her face, the front right leg was snatched from below the ankle and the left hind leg didn't have four claws. She was unable to hunt and must have become very weak."

A tiger census last year found the number of tigers in Bangladesh part of the Sundarbans was 114. At least two other tigers were found dead following the census.

Child marriage

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Referring to the United Nations statistics, she said globally more than 5 million girls are at risk of child marriage because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Early marriage affects a young woman's health," she added.

According to the MJF report, 2,896 children and 9,844 women became victims of different forms of violence last month, and 2,171 children and 11,323 women faced similar incidents in May.

Of them, some 1,376 children and 1,956 women experienced torture and violence for the first time in June, said the report.

A total of 12,740 women and children faced violence in June, while the number was 13,494 in May, it said.

Of the women who faced violence in June, a staggering 98 percent or 9,693 experienced domestic violence.

Also, 97 women were sexually harassed, 36 either raped or subjected to attempted rape. Besides, five others were sexually harassed while receiving food or other support.

At home, 4,622 women were tortured mentally, 1,839 physically, and 223 sexually.

Of the child victims, 1,764 faced domestic violence, 292 violence at workplaces, nine were raped and 99 subjected to attempted rape. Besides, 12 others were sexually harassed while receiving food or other support.

Of them, 1,219 were boys and 1,677 girls.

Referring to media reports, MJF said 14 women and 41 children were murdered in June across the country.

The MJF recommended revisiting the national plan of action to end child marriage and taking new plans immediately considering the present Covid-19 crisis, including making required budgetary allocations.

It also suggested launching a strong coordinated effort without any delay under the stewardship of the women and children affairs ministry and starting skill development and empowerment programmes for girl children through distant learning using radio or online platforms.

Must be taken

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The expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry will set up the dedicated testing centre.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmed and State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam attended the meeting.

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and secretaries of other relevant ministries were connected.

China releases professor who criticised Xi

Say friends

REUTERS, Beijing

A Beijing law professor who has been an outspoken critic of China's President Xi Jinping and the ruling Communist Party was released yesterday after six days of detention, his friends said.

Xu Zhangrun, a constitutional law professor at the prestigious Tsinghua University, returned home yesterday morning but remained under surveillance and was not free to speak publicly about what happened, one of his friends, who declined to be identified, told Reuters.

Calls to the media departments of the Beijing police and Tsinghua University seeking comment went unanswered yesterday.

Xu, 57, came to prominence in July 2018 for denouncing the removal of the two-term limit for China's leader, which will allow Xi to remain in office beyond his current second term.