



# The Daily Star



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**BANGLADESH UPDATE** 2,548 New cases in 24hrs | 2,18,658 Total cases | 2,836 Deaths | 1,20,976 Recoveries | **GLOBAL UPDATE** 634,405 Deaths | 15,559,865 Total cases

## 6.53cr Bangladeshis need assistance: UN

*UNDP recommends cash aid of \$25 a month for the poorest; govt yet to complete one-time cash aid scheme for 50 lakh families*

WASIM BIN HABIB and REJAUH KARIM BYRON

Nearly 6.53 crore poor people in Bangladesh should receive time-bound temporary cash payments to cope with the worst impacts of Covid-19 pandemic, according to the United Nations.

A working paper of the United Nations Development Programme suggests those people should get a temporary basic income of at least \$25 or Tk 2,100 per month, as the UNDP argues the financial aid would help slow the spread of the virus by enabling impoverished beneficiaries to stay home.

The money would give them the means to buy food and pay for health and education expenses, it said.

Titled "Temporary Basic Income: Protecting Poor and Vulnerable People in Developing Countries," the UNDP paper, released on Thursday, said an estimated \$1,623.4 million would be required to help nearly 6.53 crore people living under or near the poverty line in Bangladesh.

The paper comes at a time when the

coronavirus is wreaking havoc on people's income across the world, including in Bangladesh which is now the 16th worst hit country in terms of number of Covid-19 cases. Till yesterday, the death toll in the country stood at 2,836 while the total number of infections rose to 218,658.

The government has already started providing a monthly cash aid of Tk 2,500 to each of primarily estimated 50 lakh families, whose incomes have taken a hit by the pandemic. The move, however, has been marred with mismanagement.

The UNDP, a UN body, carried out assessments in the past few months on the socio-economic effects of Covid-19 in more than 60 countries.

The paper said around three billion of the world's poorest population should get financial aid to shield them from the impact of the pandemic, which has brought havoc to the developing world where millions work in the informal sectors with little access to government welfare or other support.

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With all his belongings, Rubel Hossain, a Masters student at Tejgaon College, is on his way to Sadarghat Launch Terminal in a rickshaw yesterday morning after he left his rented room in the capital's Tejkuinipara. He was heading home in Chandpur as his income from private tuitions came to a halt amid the coronavirus fallout. Losing his only source of income, he was finding it impossible to live in this city. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## FAKE N95 MASKS BSMMU sues a supplier

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) have filed a case against Aparajita International for supplying fake N95 masks to the hospital's Covid-19 isolation unit.

BSMMU Proctor Prof Syed Mozaffar Ahmed filed the case against Sharmin Jahan, proprietor of Aparajita International, with Shabbagh Police Station on Thursday night.

According to sources, Sharmin is a member of Awami League's Central Sub-Committee on Women and Children.

Previously, she was a leader of Chhatra League during her studentship at Dhaka University's Department of Islamic Studies and at Netrokona College.

She currently works as an assistant

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## COST OF ONLINE CLASSES Extra burden on parents, teachers

*They call for affordable internet connection*

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Though it meant an extra Tk 700 per month, Mahmuda Khatun had to get broadband connection at her house for her child, a second grader of Monipur School and College.

The school has introduced online classes during the pandemic to continue their academic activities.

Beside the monthly fee, Mahmuda had to pay Tk 3,000 for the router and the connection, which she said is relatively cheaper than mobile internet data packages.

"This is a burden added during a pandemic when we are grappling with household expenditure," she said.

Sabrina Islam Bonna, who uses mobile

internet data to attend her university classes online, echoed Mahmuda's chagrin.

The Jahangirnagar university student said she needs to use two to three gigabytes of data, costing her Tk 114, to attend online classes for two days.

An undergraduate student of United International University shared the same problem. "Usually, tuition fees are high at private universities. Now this expenses over online education has added to my financial pressure."

A teacher of Mohammadpur Government High School also had to get broadband internet connection at home and buy a whiteboard to take online classes during the pandemic.

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## Recovery number surpasses that of active cases

*35 die 2,548 infected in a day*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of people who have recovered from novel coronavirus has surpassed that of active Covid-19 cases in the country, shows DGHS data.

During yesterday's briefing, Prof Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) at the Directorate General of Health Services, said the total confirmed Covid-19 cases stood at 2,18,658 with 2,548 ones detected in 24 hours till 8:00am.

During the period, 35 people died from coronavirus, taking the death toll to 2,836, she said.

According to DGHS, 1,20,976 Covid-19 patients have so far recovered, including 1,768 in the 24 hours.

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## NEWS ANALYSIS

IMPROVING BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN TIES

## Apology is a must to heal wounds

PORIMOL PALMA

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan called his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday. In not so common a conversation, they exchanged greetings and discussed the flood and coronavirus situations in both countries.

Imran Khan spoke about strengthening regional cooperation through Saarc and stressed on bilateral relations between the two countries. He also described Pakistan's position on the Jammu and Kashmir issue and sought a peaceful resolution.

Both prime ministers' offices issued statements, but none of those spoke about the issues Hasina raised with Imran Khan.

On July 1, Pakistan's newly-appointed High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Imran Ahmad Siddiqui, met Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen in Dhaka. The details of the discussion were not known, but on both occasions,

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Artisans printing fabrics with wooden blocks at a shop in the capital's New Super Market yesterday. They resumed work only a week ago as the shop owners started receiving some orders from individual customers and women entrepreneurs ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha. Like many other businesses, block printing was also hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic as the market had to be shut for about three months since late March. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



## Five 'narcos' killed in 'gunfights'

*UP member among them*

STAR REPORT

Five alleged drug peddlers, including a Union Parishad member, were killed in "gunfights" in Dhaka, Cox's Bazar and Feni early yesterday.

In Dhaka's Diabari area, two men were killed in a "gunfight" with Rab members.

The dead -- Ibrahim Khalil, 50, and Omar Faruk, 38, of Gazipur -- were accused in at least 14 cases with different police stations, said Rab.

Kamruzzaman, assistant director of Rab-1, claimed that the two "drug peddlers" violated signal around 2:30am at a Rab checkpoint in the area that was set up on information that a group of carrying yaba consignment.

As a Rab team started following their motorbike, they opened fire, forcing them to retaliate. Later, the duo was rushed to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital with bullet injuries, he said.

Doctors at the hospital declared them dead, Kamruzzaman, also an assistant superintendent of police, added.

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## China orders US to shut Chengdu consulate

*The move comes days after Beijing told to close its Houston consulate over spying accusations*

REUTERS, Beijing

China yesterday ordered the United States to close its consulate in the city of Chengdu, responding to a US demand for China to close its Houston consulate, as relations between the world's two largest economies deteriorate.

The order to close the consulate in Chengdu, in southwestern China's Sichuan province, continued Beijing's recent practice

of like-for-like responses to US actions.

China had warned it would retaliate after it was this week given 72 hours - until yesterday - to vacate its consulate in the Texas city, and had urged the United States to reconsider.

Relations between Washington and Beijing have deteriorated sharply this year over issues ranging from trade and

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**We Mourn**

Sponsor Director and former Vice Chairman of NCC Bank

**Mr. K. Z. Mahmud**

has passed away on 23rd July, 2020 at 7:40 P.M. at Bumrungrad Hospital, Bangkok, Thailand (Inna lillahi Wa inna ilaihi Rajiun).

His Namaz-e-Janaza will be held at Azad Mosque, Gulshan-2 after Asar prayers on Saturday, 25th July, 2020. He will be buried at Banani Graveyard.

We pray for the eternal peace of the departed soul and express deep sympathy to the bereaved family.

Board of Directors and Management Team



# Don't donate money to Myanmar police

HRW urges Japan citing atrocities against Rohingyas

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Human Rights Watch has called for Japan to immediately cancel plans to donate money to the Myanmar police to purchase vehicles and communications equipment, saying that the force has a well-documented record of serious human rights violations, including those committed against the Rohingyas.

On July 2, 2020, Japan's foreign ministry announced a grant of 100 million yen (\$930,000), claiming that the donations would "strengthen the Myanmar police's ability to carry out public security measures, create 'social stability' and contribute to 'socio-economic development'."

"It's inexplicable that the Japanese government would try to curry favour with Myanmar's abusive security apparatus by providing financial assistance to the police," said Brad Adams, HRW Asia director, in a statement on Thursday.

"Instead of supporting Myanmar's police, Japan should be helping the victims of rights abuses and ethnic cleansing by working with other donor governments to hold the security forces accountable."

Myanmar's police acted as a pillar of repression during Myanmar's 50 years of military rule, arbitrarily arresting dissidents and student activists, engaging in widespread torture, and creating a climate of fear in the country, the HRW said.

The police remain abusive and unconstrained, in large part because the

military-drafted constitution maintains military control of the police, said the New York-based global rights watchdog.

In recent years, the police have engaged in joint operations with the military, carrying out atrocities, including crimes against humanity, against ethnic Rohingyas in Rakhine State in 2012, 2016, and 2017. Police were involved in the massacres at Tula Toli and Gu Dar Pyin, where hundreds of Rohingyas were killed in 2017, it said.

Also, Myanmar police took part in widespread rape, including gang rape, of Rohingyas women and girls, as well as killing children while their mothers were being attacked.

In Rakhine State, the Myanmar police operate the majority of checkpoints, which play a central role in the severe violation of Rohingyas freedom of movement in the state, the rights body said.

Therefore, the HRW said, Japan should suspend all aid to the Myanmar police until systemic reforms are carried out and the police are put under civilian control. Japan should also halt aid to all military-controlled entities and ministries, including the home ministry.

"The Japanese government should realise that giving shiny new equipment to Myanmar's police won't make them less abusive," Adams said.

"By conferring undeserved legitimacy on the Myanmar police, they are signalling to Myanmar's people that their suffering is of little concern."

## BSMMU sues a supplier

FROM PAGE 1  
registrar at the DU registrar office.

Contacted, Sheikh Muhammad Shamim, assistant commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Ramna zone), said, "We have started investigation into the case already and would take action against the responsible one shortly."

Police, however, did not arrest or detain anyone in connection with the case as of 10:00pm yesterday.

WHAT DOES THE FIR READ?

According to the First Information Report (FIR), BSMMU authorities decided to purchase safety gears for the frontline doctors of newly launched Covid-19 unit on May 27.

Receiving verbal instructions from BSMMU authorities, several companies provided masks samples. Those were later sent to Dysin International Ltd, a DGHS approved lab, for tests.

The lab report mentioned Aparajita International's samples to be the best.

Later, BSMMU authorities sought pricing of the masks from Aparajita International on June 23 and received the quotation on the next day.

On June 27, BSMMU approved the work order to provide 11,000 N95 masks in the name of Aparajita International.

The company then supplied around 3,460 N95 masks in four consignments. They first supplied 1,300 pieces on June 30, 460 pieces on July 02, 700 pieces on July 02 and 1,000 pieces on July 13.

SHOW-CAUSE NOTICE SERVED, RESPONSE NOT SATISFACTORY

BSMMU Proctor Prof Syed Mozaffar Ahmed told The Daily Star that Aparajita International supplied first two consignments rightly but the third and fourth consignments had faulty masks.

This is why the authorities filed a forgery case against Aparajita International, he said.

Meanwhile, Brig Gen Dr Zulfikar Ahmed Amin, director (hospital) of BSMMU, told The Daily Star that they first spotted spelling mistakes on the boxes supplied by Aparajita International.

"As the masks were imported from America, there was no chance of any spelling error on it," he said, adding a number of masks' ribbons also tore up while doctors tried to use those.

## Five 'narcos' killed

FROM PAGE 1  
Rab claims to have recovered two pistols, nine bullets, 3,090 pieces of yaba pills and one motorcycle from the spot.

In Cox's Bazar, two men were killed in a "gunfight" with police in Ukhiya upazila.

The dead are Bakhtiar Ahmed, 55, a member of Rajapalong Union Parishad, and Md Taher, 27, of Kutupalong Rohingya camp's E-block, said police.

Pradip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Model Police Station, said they arrested the duo during a raid against drug traders in Hnila area on Thursday.

During quizzing, the arrestees admitted to hiding yaba pills in Wabrang bridge area.

Then police, along with the arrestees, conducted another raid to recover the drugs. Sensing police presence, their cohorts opened fire targeting them around 3:00am. The "gunfight" ensued as police retaliated, the OC claimed.

At one stage, the drug traders fled the scene leaving behind bullet-hit Bakhtiar and Taher. The duo were rushed to Teknaf Upazila Health Complex and then to Cox's Bazar Medical College and Hospital where doctors declared them dead, said police.

Police claimed to have recovered five locally-made guns, 17 rounds of

cartridges and 20,000 pieces of yaba pills from the spot, the OC added.

However, family members and neighbours of Bakhtiar Ahmed claimed that police picked up Bakhtiar on Wednesday from his home at Kutupalong. They have not heard any news from him since then.

Meanwhile in Feni, another alleged drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" between two groups of criminals.

The dead is Nazrul Islam Nakul, 32, of Shuvopur union in Chhagalnaiya upazila.

According to police, they rushed to Taher member road in the upazila on information that two groups of criminals were engaged in a "gunfight".

The law enforcers found Nakul's body when they reached the area. He was then rushed to Feni Sadar Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead, police said.

Police also claimed to have recovered two locally made machetes, 20 bottles of phensedyl, 200 pieces of yaba pills and a rifle from the spot.

Mezbah Uddin, office-in-charge of Chhagalnaiya Police Station, said there were nine drug related cases filed against Nakul.

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



A trash collector puts medical waste into a polythene bag while another looks on at a garbage dumping spot along Green Road in the capital yesterday. Such handling of medical waste poses a serious health risk. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Apology is a must to heal wounds

FROM PAGE 1

the Pakistan side appeared to be eager to improve relations with Bangladesh.

Against this backdrop, questions have been raised about whether Bangladesh is in fact improving its relationship with Pakistan. If the answer is yes, the question becomes how that will unfold, given the brutal legacy of Pakistan's gruesome killing of some 30 lakh Bangladeshis and rape of hundreds of thousands of women during the Liberation War in 1971, memories of which are still fresh in the popular mind.

Some Indian media outlets have looked on the meeting between Momen and Imran Siddiqui suspiciously, especially as it took place at a time when India-China relations are at their worst after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a clash between Indian and Chinese forces at Galwan Valley in mid-June.

India's Telegraph newspaper in an article titled "Delhi Distracted, Pakistan at Play" on July 12 wrote that the meeting comes at a time when India is fire-fighting on multiple fronts with China, and smaller neighbours like Nepal and Sri Lanka. Over the past few months, Delhi has been watching Dhaka and Beijing warm up to each other, the article said.

Quoting a source in Delhi, it added: "And now, Pakistan is trying to be diplomatically more active in Bangladesh... Things seem to be changing very fast."

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The article went on to say that a pro-Pakistani lobby remains active in Bangladesh and tries to influence Bangladesh's foreign policy, prioritising Pakistan and not India, which stood by Bangladesh during the Liberation War.

Asked about this, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said the media can write a lot of things, but questioned whether they were based on facts.

On the content of his meeting with the Pakistani envoy on July 1, he told The Daily Star that for nearly two years Pakistan did not have a high commissioner in Dhaka, and the new envoy, after presenting credentials in February, was just making a courtesy call.

"During the meeting, I told the Pakistani envoy that you have not yet formally apologised for the genocide in 1971," the foreign minister said. Asked about Siddiqui's reply, Momen said, "He did not reply, but said he would relay this to his government."

Asked if Bangladesh wants to improve relations with Pakistan, he said Bangladesh believes in friendship with all. There are some levels of trade between Bangladesh and Pakistan, but some recent behaviour seriously irritated Bangladesh. For example, Pakistan parliament adopted resolutions against the war crimes trial of Bangladesh, which hanged some major criminals who committed crimes against humanity in 1971. That actually further soured Bangladesh-Pakistan

relations. That could be the factor why Pakistan's application for appointing its envoy was not accepted for nearly two years until November last year.

Now a new Pakistan high commissioner has been appointed, the country is eager to heal wounded relations with Bangladesh. The question is if it is possible and how far.

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of international relations at Dhaka University said if Pakistan really wants to improve relations with Bangladesh, the first and foremost thing that it has to do is to formally apologise to Bangladesh for the genocide committed by the Pakistani military in the 1971 Liberation War. Pakistan also has to commit that it will not repeat the mistakes it made by opposing the war crimes trial.

"The relationship with Pakistan cannot go forward without that," he told The Daily Star.

The general relationship, which includes cooperation in Saarc, can surely go on, Prof Imtiaz said. In recent times there seems to be a realisation within Pakistani society that Bangladesh is doing better on socio-economic fronts and Imran Khan himself appreciates that. Imran Khan is not a typical Muslim League type of leader and if his regime has a change in mindset, the bilateral relations between the two countries can also eventually see change, he added.

Asked if it is possible when India-Pakistan relations is at one of its lowest

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## China orders US

FROM PAGE 1

technology to the novel coronavirus, China's territorial claims in the South China Sea and its clampdown on Hong Kong.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China informed the US Embassy in China of its decision to withdraw its consent for the establishment and operation of the US Consulate General in Chengdu," China's foreign ministry said in a statement.

Foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said some Chengdu consulate personnel were "conducting activities not in line with their identities" and had interfered in China's affairs and harmed China's security interests, but he did not say how.

Senior Chinese diplomat Wang Yi, who is also foreign minister, blamed Washington for the deterioration in ties.

"The current difficult situation in Sino-US relations is entirely caused by the United States, and its goal is trying to interrupt China's development," Wang said in a video conversation with his German counterpart.

US President Donald Trump's administration said the closing of the consulate was aimed at protecting American intellectual property and personal information.

ebbs, especially in relation to the Jammu & Kashmir issue and Pakistan's strong bond with China, Prof Imtiaz said that depends on India and Pakistan.

India has problems with many of its neighbours -- Sri Lanka, Nepal. Even, people in Bangladesh are not happy over India's role in regard to Rohingya refugees' repatriation and the National Registrar of Citizenship. Therefore, India's relationship with other countries should not affect Bangladesh's relations with those countries, he added.

"India has strong ties with the US... does not mean it has no relations with Russia and China," Imtiaz Ahmed said.

Munshi Faiz Ahmad, former chairperson of Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, also agreed. He said there is no hurry for Bangladesh to improve relations with Pakistan unless Pakistan apologises for what its military did in 1971.

However, Pakistan's eagerness for cooperation among Saarc countries is positive. This is something initiated by Bangladesh and it can help address many of the region's problems. But enmity between India and Pakistan has made it almost non-functional, he said.

Munshi Faiz said the pandemic is once again showing how regional cooperation is important. India is a rising global power and if it really wants to lead at the global stage, it needs to overcome narrow national interests and be a regional leader first.

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## 6.53cr Bangladeshis need assistance: UN

FROM PAGE 1

And it would cost from \$199 billion per month to provide a time-bound, guaranteed basic income to the 2.7 billion people living below or just above the poverty line in 132 developing countries, said the paper.

It also said the measure is feasible and urgently needed, with the pandemic now spreading at a rate of more than 1.5 million new cases per week, particularly in developing countries, where seven out of 10 workers make a living through informal markets and cannot earn money if they are at home.

Speaking on the UNDP report, Zahid Hussain, lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, said there was little doubt that poverty in Bangladesh has increased significantly in the aftermath of the coronavirus outbreak.

The UNDP estimates 40 percent of the country's population need help and the estimation is pretty much in line with the perception surveys and simulations done by leading think tanks and researchers, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The recommendation to provide cash support to the poor amounting to Tk 2,100 per month is also in accordance with inflation rate, he said.

He, however, said it would be a huge challenge to arrange the funds if

the aid has to be provided for several months, he added.

"What is needed therefore is a national strategy on flattening the virus curve. For this, cash support of this kind will keep a large number of people in home while the government should launch aggressive Covid-19 testing and contact tracing in areas where transmission rate is high," Zahid said.

The UNDP paper said the economic costs imposed by the pandemic are hard not only for the existing poor, but also for those who were at high risk of falling into poverty before the pandemic and who are likely to experience a limited income-generating capacity.

Many of the huge numbers of people not covered by social insurance programmes are informal workers, low-waged, women and young people, refugees and migrants, and people with disabilities -- and they are the ones hardest hit by this crisis, it said.

Besides, according to a Brac survey, earnings of 51 percent households in Bangladesh plunged to zero due to the coronavirus outbreak.

A massive 95 percent people suffered losses in income, it said, adding that around 62 percent of low-income wage earners lost their work opportunities after public holidays were declared in late March

to curb the spread of the virus.

Due to the income shock emanating from the pandemic, 77.2 percent of the vulnerable non-poor fell below the poverty line.

This would imply that beyond the 20.5 percent of the population officially recognised as poor, there is a group of "new poor" representing an additional 22.9 percent of the population that need to be brought within the discussion on poverty, it said.

Recently, a survey of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies said about 13 percent people have become unemployed in the country due to the pandemic.

To help people hit hard by the pandemic, the government allocated Tk 1,250 crore for nearly 50 lakh families where the breadwinners lost their jobs because of the shutdown of the economy.

Under the scheme, each of the poor families is supposed to receive Tk 2,500 a month.

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Rickshaw and cart pullers, labourers, construction workers, farmers, employees of shops, and people employed at small businesses, poultry labourers and transport workers are supposed to be the beneficiaries. They would get the cash support through mobile financial services.

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## TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

## My First School

When I was in Class 2 my teacher handed me a folded letter for my parents. At home, before giving the letter to my parents, I took a quick look. I couldn't understand the message, but it was signed by "Hony. Secretary." This puzzled me. What was the connection between honey, secretary, and my school? Years later, I realized the sender was the Honorary Secretary of my school - Blue Bird School, Sylhet.

In the 1960s, Sylhet was a quaint town with bungalow-style homes and plenty of greenery and ponds. Our house was filled with trees, rose gardens, lemon bushes, as well as cows, chickens and ducks - enough nature to captivate the imagination of a curious child.

When I was five, my parents enrolled me in Blue Bird School. Until then, I had led a blissful life enjoying my home territory. When I was informed about my enrolment, I was too absorbed in my world to realize my carefree days were ending. Instead, I was delighted at my new school uniform: white short-sleeve shirt and blue shorts.

On that first day it was Ammu who took me to school. It was about three miles from our house - twenty minutes by rickshaw - on top of a hill across from Manik Pirer Tilla. The rickshaw dropped us at the bottom of the hill and we walked to the top where an L-shaped bungalow - the schoolhouse - stood alone.

Reaching there, I suddenly had the sinking feeling I was about to be left with strangers. Unnerved, I pleaded with Ammu to stay at the school the entire day. She did this the first day. From the next day a household staffer took me there. He too waited for me the whole day, every day, for several days. I often peeked outside class to ensure his presence.

Then one day he left after classes started.

When I peeked outside the classroom and noticed him missing, I started howling. The other children were amused. The teacher tried to calm me down. I cried for a good half hour before settling down.

At day's end, Ammu came to pick me up. She had brought treats - candies, books - to make up for my distress.



Off to School.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

But when I was left alone the next day I did not complain. Instead, I quickly made friends, playing with them outdoors during breaks.

My days at the hilltop ended soon. The school had outgrown the bungalow and needed larger space. It moved to a two-storied building in Noya Sharak where I spent Class 3. There was no outdoor space to play. But the indoor space was large, including an attractive new library. I spent long hours there poring over the pictures and photographs in large hardbound books.

The following year I was double-promoted from Class 3

to Class 5. The school moved to the next day I did not complain. Instead, I quickly made friends, playing with them outdoors during breaks.

Blue Bird School was a warm and nurturing place to spend my early school years. The teachers taught us without overload. Even though it was an English medium school, we could converse with them in Bangla. Just like the town, everyone knew everyone else at the school. Today, as Sylhet has graduated from small town to large city, so has Blue Bird become a much larger institution.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow "ihtishamkabir" on Instagram.

## Serve people with a smile

Foreign minister Momen tells Bangladesh missions in Europe

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has asked Bangladesh missions abroad to serve people with a smile.

He made the call during a videoconference with ambassadors based in Europe early this week, said a foreign ministry statement yesterday.

However, the context behind the minister's directive could not be known. It has been a common complaint from Bangladesh expatriates that they do not get good service at the missions, especially in countries with high concentration of Bangladeshi migrant workers.

Following the arrest of Bangladesh MP Shahid Islam Papul in Kuwait on June 6 for human trafficking, money laundering and bribery, the foreign minister termed it "shameful for Bangladesh".

Momen instructed the ambassadors to make sure that service seekers are not mistreated in any way. The foreign ministry will take stern actions if it is found that any employee of the Bangladesh missions shows negligence in duty and in providing services and lack courtesy in serving people, the statement said.

## 'Finally a place to stay'

17 Bangladeshis, stranded in Vietnam, get accommodation until repatriation after passing four days near embassy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

After passing four days under open sky near the Bangladesh embassy in Hanoi, 17 Bangladeshis, who were defrauded by Bangladeshi agents, brokers and a Vietnamese company, were provided accommodation on Thursday.

The company that hired them in Vung Tau finally took responsibility to provide hotel accommodation, Bangladesh Ambassador to Vietnam, Samina Naz, wrote in a Facebook post on Thursday night.

It was possible "after our intense negotiation with Vietnam Foreign Office, Vietnam Police & the Owner of the Company group of 17 people working with", she said.

The 17 Bangladeshis had traveled to Hanoi from Vung Tau, around 1,677 kilometres away from Hanoi, and had been demanding repatriation.

Their company, PHX, hired them for jobs early January but hardly could provide jobs, said Faridul Islam, one of the migrants. "As we asked, our madam (PHX owner) told us -- Atiq and Saiful (Bangladeshi brokers) brought you using my company. They could not give jobs, what can I do?".

Faridul said as they recently talked to the media, Atiq and Saiful threatened them of grave consequences and they traveled to Hanoi.

On July 3, the embassy repatriated 11 Bangladeshis. Since then, 45 more traveled to Hanoi, who and the embassy in cooperation with police accommodated. When the group of 17 traveled and took position at a roadside near the Bangladesh embassy, the embassy held meetings with Vietnam authorities, and finally the company owner took responsibility of accommodating the 17 Bangladeshis.

"We described the issues we faced in Vung Tau in front of Bangladesh embassy officials, police and the company owner. Our company's madam could not withstand it and finally agreed to provide us with accommodation until our repatriation," Faridul said.

## RIDESHARING ON MOTORBIKES

## Is the ban proving counterproductive?

PRABIR DAS and SHOAB AHMED SAYAM

Despite suspension of ridesharing services via motorcycles due to health safety concerns, bikers can still be seen with their vehicles parked at intersections in the capital, waving to potential passengers, and with some success too, as many commuters still choose the verbal-contract service despite the risks associated.

As of the end of 2019, over one lakh motorbikes were operating under 16 services, according to data provided by the services to the regulators.

Following suspension of all ridesharing services during the countrywide shutdown in March to contain the spread of Covid-19, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) allowed ride-sharing via cars a month ago, on condition that the vehicles be enlisted with the regulator. It continues to maintain a ban on ridesharing motorcycles due to the risk of spreading coronavirus.

But the clandestine operation of offline ridesharing is not just a concern about health safety.

Technology used in ride-sharing apps provides layers of security, like tracking routes and keeping records of riders and passengers. Bypassing the apps, bikers and passengers alike are at risk of incidents like mugging.

This newspaper spoke to dozens of riders and passengers in Dhaka who are providing and availing the service.

Most bikers expressed their anxiety over the safety issue, but said they cannot stop operations as they have no other way to earn a living.

Zakir Hossain was seen eagerly waiting for a passenger at the busy Paltan intersection. When this correspondent approached him, Zakir asked him whether he needed a ride.

"The ban is active, but I have no other way to earn money. Since we're not using the app, I always feel anxious, especially after evening. I fear a mugger posing as a passenger may snatch away my income, and maybe even hijack my bike," he said.

Abu Syed used to work at a private organisation but started providing rides full-time after losing his job during the pandemic.

He used to earn Tk 1,200-1,500 a day before the pandemic, when he occasionally provided rides. But now, he hardly earns Tk 500 daily, he told this newspaper while looking for a passenger at Moghbazar.

"Before, we didn't have to sit at the



Commuters and bikers bargaining fare for a ride is now a common scene in the capital's major road intersections.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

intersection and ask people to get on, but the situation is different," he said.

Passengers, like the riders, have similar fears regarding security.

"If you want to save time, there's no alternative to motorbikes on busy Dhaka roads," said Monir Hossain, a construction materials supplier, who uses bike-sharing frequently to reach clients and construction sites in time.

"I try to be cautious in choosing my rider. I take services of those who seem trustworthy, as I always carry money with me," he said. "But until the authorities lift the ban, we must use the informal way."

Humayun Kabir, a freelancer, said he would roam around the city using ride-sharing apps, carrying his laptop, camera and other valuables, but never felt unsafe. However, due to no logs and tracking of rides, he hardly uses such modes of transport now.

Both riders and passengers said they hope the ban will be lifted soon.

Contacted, BRTA Director (Engineering) Lokman Hossain Mollah said, "Those doing this are risking their lives. On top of Covid-19, people can be victims of crime."

About the ban, he said they do not have a definite timeline to lift it, and have to follow the cabinet's decision.

As for the loss of livelihood, he said, "It is just an unfortunate situation; they are not the only ones suffering. Many in different sectors have become jobless. Besides, ridesharing should be part-time work, something to do to earn extra income."

"Regardless, putting one's health in danger to earn a living should not be encouraged," he added.

Pathao, a major ridesharing service

provider, views the whole situation differently.

"We do not think a continued suspension of ridesharing and punitive action against offline trips will be effective in curbing the spread of Covid-19," said Sayeda Nabila Mahabub, the company's marketing and public relations director.

Pathao is prepared to ensure health, safety and hygiene, if it is allowed to resume bike trips, she said.

While Pathao has complied with BRTA instructions, they are concerned to see ridesharing on two-wheelers continue informally, she added.

"This clearly demonstrates that the suspension has proven to be ineffective. We call upon BRTA to immediately allow full resumption of ridesharing services," she concluded.

Meanwhile, traffic police officials at different intersections of the capital opined that although carrying passengers on motorcycles commercially is currently not allowed, they do not harshly enforce it on humanitarian grounds.

Besides, when officers ask riders whether they are informally providing rides, they say the passenger is their relative or neighbour.

A traffic sergeant, seeking anonymity, said, "Covid-19 has made many jobless. If they can earn bread for their family this way, then why should we stop them? In the first few days, we would intervene. But later I realised that they all have a similar story. If they don't do this, their families would starve, so now we let them go."

[Tuhin Shubhra Adhikary contributed to this report.]

## Rangpur residents suffer as roads, homes get inundated after rain

KONGKON KARMAKAR, Dinaipur

Rangpur residents are suffering as rain-induced waterlogging has inundated many city streets and areas.

According to the Met office, 42mm rain was recorded in the city in the last four days; on July 19, the figure was 190mm. As a result, at least 17 neighbourhoods in 33 wards under Rangpur City Corporation have become inundated.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found Mulatol, Kamarpara, Kamalkasa, Babu Khan, Shahipara, Habibnagar, City Bazar, Dhap, Hajipara, Amangsukukul, Munsipara, Barkatia Masjid, Gomastapara, Rangpur Central Bus Terminal, in front of Rangpur Kotwali Police Station, Tatipara, Rabartsonganj and Masuapara waterlogged. Many of the areas went under knee-deep water, and residents became marooned.

Slum dwellers were the worst sufferers as rainwater entered into their houses. Many were seen removing water from inside their houses.

Women were struggling to cook. Jesmin Ara, one of them from Kamarpara, said, "I set up my stove on a high place as the kitchen floor was submerged."

On the streets, sufferings got worse when rickshaw-pullers and battery-run three-wheelers refused to go through waterlogged areas. Many residents were wading through water to their destinations. "Water is so dirty and murky, it can cause skin diseases," said Ashish, a resident of RJ road area.

Many dwellers blamed the authorities concerned for the situation.

Mohamad Mamun from Hajipara area said no new drains were constructed since the inception of the city corporation eight years ago.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Tuhin Wadud of Begum Rokeya University, an urbanisation researcher, said poor drainage is behind the waterlogging.

The city should not be inundated as it is situated on high land and surrounded by six rivers, including the Ghagat and Shyamasundari, he said.

The water is not receding smoothly as the sewers cannot drain towards the rivers, he said. The number of drains in the city is not adequate, he added.

This correspondent found drains in many areas filled with polythene, waste and hyacinth.

Citizens said the mayor failed to keep his pledges to improve drainage system. In this regard, Shafiqul Islam Mithu, councillor of ward-14, said drains and canals have to be saved from encroachment.

According to city corporation sources, the city has 200km of drains.

Contacted, mayor Mostafizur Rahman Mostafa admitted the failure. He said they are renovating many drains and constructing new ones to resolve the waterlogging problem.

The works are expected to be completed within one year, he said.

Md Emdad Hossain, superintendent engineer of the city corporation, admitted that the narrowed down drains aggravated the suffering. "We will take steps to clear the sewers on a regular basis," he said.

## Don't go to village home unless you must

Says Khalid Mahmud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday urged Dhaka city dwellers not to go to village homes, unless there is an emergency, during Eid.

Addressing a programme at Dhaka Reporters Unity, he urged anyone requiring to travel urgently, to maintain health guidelines.

DRU organised the event to hand over financial assistance to four families members who died this year and two senior members for their treatment.

DRU president Rafiqul Islam Azad presided over the programme moderated by organising secretary Habibur Rahman.

## Dig a hole and dump it!

Barishal Sher-E-Bangla hospital and city corporation's solution to medical waste management

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, Barishal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) authorities found itself in a waste disposal conundrum as the city corporation has stopped collecting waste from the hospital.

However instead of coming up with a proper solution to dispose of medical waste, the hospital is now dumping waste into holes near the hospital, which are dug up by the city corporation.

This so-called temporary solution is not only adding to the rising risk of polluting the environment around the hospital, but also increasing health risk of patients and commuters.

More alarmingly, these holes are also close to (around 80 feet) the hospital's emergency unit.

Dr Moniruzzaman, assistant director of SBMCH, said BCC has not collected waste from the



After BCC stopped collecting SBMCH's medical waste fearing Covid-19 infection, two authorities dug holes in the area to dump it, putting public health in danger.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

hospital for two months, citing coronavirus as the reason.

Asked, BCC conservancy officer Dr Rabiul Islam said, "We're not collecting waste (from the hospital) after several staffers, including our supervisor, were infected by Covid-19. We've dug a few holes with excavators in front of the hospital for disposing the waste. Our workers don't feel safe collecting waste -- what can we do?"

According to BCC, around

a tonne of medical waste is produced at the hospital every day.

With the sheer volume of waste, the hospital is running out of space at a fast pace. During a recent visit, it was seen that a third hole was being prepared after the first two have been filled up. However, various medical wastes were seen lying on the ground. Dr Moniruzzaman said the authorities are compelled to do this due to

a lack of inventory. Asked why did they dig the hole near the emergency, he said they had to do so due to space constraint.

He said BCC used to collect waste from the hospital, except the Covid-19 unit, whose waste was burnt behind the unit. The situation would have been different if the hospital had an incinerator, he added.

For the time being, experts recommended that the hospital authorities and the city corporation dispose of the medical waste not in the open or close to the hospital.

But most importantly, the hospital needs to purchase an incinerator immediately, they added.

This medical waste is usually dumped at a landfill in Kawnia area of the city. Meanwhile, BCC is considering another modern landfill at Taltoli area.

Lincon Bayen, co-ordinator of Bangladesh Environmental

Lawyers Association, said it's very dangerous to dump the waste this way. "We strongly ask the hospital authorities to come up with a safe dumping place."

According to experts, medical waste is not like other types of waste.

They should be dealt with caution as it can spread various diseases, including skin diseases, HIV, Hepatitis B and C, antibiotic resistant germs (superbugs) and other dangerous germs can spread from medical waste, said Dr Mizanur Rahman, a physician.

Another physician Dr Bakir Hossain said these are longstanding issues. The hospital, established in 1968, have not been able to solve these problems for a long time. Along with waste disposal issues, the hospital also suffers from human resource problems.

Despite repeated requests, the hospital authorities are yet to take care of these problems, he added.

## Chief justice forms vacation benches for HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain has constituted 12 single-judge High Court benches for hearing and disposing of cases during the court's annual vacation.

Appellate and High Court Divisions of the Supreme Court went on vacation from yesterday and will reopen on August 9.

The benches will virtually conduct judicial functions, said a notification by SC administration on Thursday.

The judges are: Justices Tariq ul Hakim, Muhammad Abdul Hafiz, Syed Refaat Ahmed, Md Rais Uddin, AKM Abdul Hakim, FRM Nazmul Ahasan, Abu Zafar Siddique, Sheikh Hassan Arif, Md Ruhul Quddus, Farid Ahmed, Shahidul Karim and SM Kuddus Zaman.





## Zakaria Mahmud passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khondkar Zakaria Mahmud (Bachchu), son of late Khondkar Masudar Rahman, a resident of 8 Dutabash Road, Baridhara, Dhaka, passed away at a Thai hospital on July 23. He was 74.

Zakaria, who was suffering from multiple complications related to lung cancer, breathed his last at 7:40pm local time at Bumrungrad Hospital in Bangkok, says a press release.

He was managing director of Home Creations Ltd, sponsor director and former vice chairman of NCC Bank Ltd. He was also sponsor trustee of Independent University, Bangladesh.

During his long business career, Mahmud was managing director of Subarna Trading Company Limited, a renowned trading company in Bangladesh.

Mahmud left behind his wife Yasmine Mahmud, son Farshed Mahmud, daughter Faarzein Mahmud, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren to mourn his death.

His body will be brought to Dhaka in the early hours today and his namaz-e-janaza will be held at Azad Mosque, Gulshan-2 after Asr prayers the same day. Later, he will be laid to rest at Banani Graveyard.

All his relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the janaza and pray for the eternal peace of his departed soul. During the funeral, social distancing measures will strictly be followed, and masks and hand sanitisers will be distributed to the participants.

## Poor response from buyers

FROM PAGE 12

rearing them at his house for seven months.

But he could not sell any of the cattle until yesterday.

"I had to spend around Tk 1.40 lakh on an average for purchasing and rearing each of the bulls, but customers are not bidding more than Tk 1.20 lakh," said Yusuf.

Another trader Hafizur Rahman who brought seven bulls from Kushtia said the total cost of each bull would be around Tk 60,000 on an average. He too is not getting satisfactory offers from customers.

**DSCC AND DNCC MAKESHIFT CATTLE MARKETS**

Sacrificial animals have been brought to some of the 16 makeshift livestock

markets, including the Dhupkhola math cattle market, but trading has not begun in these markets.

This year Dhaka South City Corporation approved 11 makeshift cattle markets while DNCC approved six, including the permanent one in Gabtoli. **ONLINE SALES START**

Many are buying sacrificial animals from various online markets, especially the Digital Haat of DNCC which was inaugurated on July 11.

Abdul Wahed Tomal, general secretary of E-Commerce Association of Bangladesh, said they have sold over 100 sacrificial animals through the online cattle market.

A customer can place an order and pay digitally from their website www.digitalhaat.net.

## Recovery number

FROM PAGE 1

Therefore, the number of active cases is now 94,846.

Some 12,027 samples were tested in the 24 hours, Dr Nasima said, adding that 709 people were also put in isolation during the period.

The data shows 43,164 people were infected and 36,434 people recovered in the last two weeks.

Meanwhile, finding of new cases has also dropped with the decline in daily testing numbers, according to the data.

Some 88,479 samples were tested between July 11 and 17, and 21,914 people were found Covid-19 positive. Some 19,301 people were diagnosed with the disease after 84,283 samples were tested between July 18 and yesterday.

Of the 35 dead, 28 were males and seven females, and they were aged between 31 and above 100, Dr Nasima added.

Of them, 11 were from Dhaka, six each from Chattogram and Khulna, four each from Sylhet and Rangpur, three from Barishal, and one from Rajshahi divisions.

On March 8, the first three coronavirus cases were confirmed in the country. Bangladesh reported its first coronavirus death on March 18.

According to the Institute of

Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, on April 5, the country reported 18 new cases, representing a 26 percent increase from the previous day. Since then till yesterday, the day-to-day increases have exceeded by 20 percent.

Record shows Bangladesh crossed the figure of 100 confirmed cases on the 6th of April and it took only eight days to cross 1,000 cases.

On May 3, the Covid-19 cases reached 10,000, and 50,000 confirmed cases were recorded on June 1.

The Covid-19 cases jumped to 1 lakh on June 17 and crossed the grim milestone of 2 lakh on July 17.

## Iraq forces free German woman kidnapped in Baghdad: officials

AFP, Baghdad

A German woman kidnapped in Baghdad earlier this week was freed overnight, Iraqi officials said yesterday, without providing additional details.

"Security forces have freed activist Hella Mewis," Iraq's military spokesman Yahya Rasool said in a statement.

posts criticising the authorities.

"We have examined Dr Sultan's social media presence and could not observe any status that is against the government in any way. If he is being given a show-cause for what he posts, then the same should be done for all doctors -- everyone shares content like this. There can be codes of conduct but freedom of expression cannot be restricted," said Dr Nirupam Das, chief administrator of the Bangladesh Doctors Foundation.

Dr Sultan is a graduate of Faridpur Medical College.

## Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12

today at the airport that his Jakarta trip was "highly successful". Indonesia appreciated Bangladesh's position on issues like prisoners of war and Bangalees stranded in Pakistan.

Indonesia has also assured its active support for Bangladesh's entry into the UN, adds Abdus Samad Azad. Individually, the Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr Adam Malik is currently the president of the UN General Assembly.

The foreign minister further informs that Adam Malik shared the concern of Bangladesh and her people over the delay in the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan. He had been made to realise that the equation between POWs and stranded Bangalees in Pakistan is an absurd proposition. Abdus Samad says that Pakistan's attempts to sell the lies that there is a possibility of reunification has been rejected by all including Indonesia as "bogus". The possibility of meaningful cooperation between Bangladesh and Indonesia in the fields of trade and other economic affairs was also discussed in detail, informs the foreign minister. **SOURCES:** July 26, 1972 issues of *Bangladesh Observer*, *Dainik Bangla* and *Dainik Ittefaq*.

## UP chairman

FROM PAGE 12

charge of the police station, said the union parishad was supposed to distribute rice at Tk 10 per kg among 4,083 cardholders in the union in three phases.

As the cardholders gathered at the union parishad for the last day of rice distribution on Wednesday, they were told that there was no stock.

Being informed, Bhaluka upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) went to the spot and asked the chairman and her staffer about the shortage.

In primary interrogation, the staffer confessed that they sold 200 sacks of rice (30kg per sack) to a local dealer.

The arrestees were produced before a Mymensingh court yesterday with a five-day remand prayer for the chairman, the OC said, adding that the court, however, granted a day of remand.

The court also recorded the statement of the guard under Section-164 and sent him to jail, said the OC.

## Covid-19

FROM PAGE 12

said, warning that the desperation being generated could have far-reaching consequences.

"What we hear is that many people who are losing livelihoods, once the borders start opening, will feel compelled to move," he said.

"We should not be surprised if there is a massive impact on migration in the coming months and years."

More migration forced on people by desperate circumstances, he said, will result in numerous "tragedies along the way", including more deaths at sea, human trafficking and exploitation.

Chapagain also called for urgent support to help "relieve that desperation", stressing that in addition to a moral imperative to help people in need, there is a clear economic argument for helping avoid forced migration.

## About 1.3m children

FROM PAGE 12

The UN agency is also "actively engaged" in supporting a comprehensive outbreak response across the country.

Weeks of torrential monsoon rains, widespread flooding and deadly landslides in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal have affected millions of children and families, the agency said.

Over four million children are currently estimated to be affected and in urgent need of life-saving support, with many millions more at risk.

"Even for a region that is all-too-familiar with the devastating impact of extreme weather, the recent heavy monsoon rains, rising floods and continued landslides are creating a perfect storm for children and families affected," said Jean Gough, Unicef regional director for South Asia.

"The Covid-19 pandemic and containment and prevention measures add an additional complication to the mix, as Covid-19 cases are accelerating in some of the affected areas," she added.

Over 700 people have died and dozens are missing across the four countries, with continuing reports of children drowning.

The Unicef said it is on the ground working in close coordination with respective governments and humanitarian partners to scale up its responses and support the immediate needs of

affected children and their families, but the response is complicated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated containment and prevention efforts.

Measures such as physical distancing and handwashing need to be observed in order to minimise the risk of infections among affected populations, especially those in emergency shelters.

Many areas remain inaccessible due to damage to roads, bridges, railways and airports.

The most urgent needs for children are clean water, hygiene supplies to prevent the spread of disease, food supplies and safe places in evacuation centres for children to play.

"The fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic is being compounded by climate change and extreme weather events and are arguably the biggest issues affecting children in South Asia right now," said Jean Gough.

"Immediate support, more resources and innovative programmes are urgently needed to address the challenges that these threats represent to the region's children."

In India, over six million people across Bihar, Assam, Odisha, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have been affected by the floods, including an estimated 2.4 million children.

Though flooding at this period of the year is common, this widespread scale of floods during mid-July is unusual.

## Relief scarce in flood-hit

FROM PAGE 12

UP chairman Moniruzzaman Monir of Gabasara, the worst hit area in Tangail's Bhuapur upazila, said 13,000 people have been affected by flood in his union.

He could distribute the 24 tons of rice he had received from the government among only one-fourth of the victims -- 2400 families each receiving 10 kg of rice.

Two other chairmen shared the same problem. However, they have already received the allocation of rice under the VGF programme.

Tangail's Deputy Commissioner Md Ataul Gani told The Daily Star that they have enough relief materials on their hands.

"As the flood may prolong till mid August, we are distributing the relief in phases and all the affected people in need were brought under the relief operations," he said.

The DC added that cooked food was distributed in the worst affected char areas of Bhuapur and special food will be given to all the poor, including flood victims.

In Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, around 4 lakh flood-hit people in the Brahmaputra, Teesta, Dharla, Dudhkumar and other river-basins are facing a food crisis.

Sahera Bewa, a flood victim from Dawabari area under Lalmonirhat's Hatibandha upazila, said her family has been going hungry for the last few days.

"We don't have enough money to buy food. But nobody came to us with food assistance," she said.

Another flood-victim Nur Islam of the same area alleged that UP chairmen and members are giving the government's relief only to their favoured persons.

Lalmonirhat's DC Md Abur Jafor said they would take necessary measures to ensure real poor and vulnerable people get relief.

In Nilphamari, the government's relief programme has remained stalled for the last one week, said victims and local people's representatives.

"We didn't get any relief for the last one week. We are passing days almost in starvation as no one came to help us," said Shahinur Mia, a resident of char Kharibari under Dimla upazila.

Cepa Kharibari's UP Chairman Monirul Haque confirmed Shahinur's claim.

The District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DRRO) H M Hayat assured that flood victims would also receive food under the VGF programme along with more than one lakh poor families in the district.

In Sirajganj too, many flood victims complained of not receiving any relief.

"We are living in water for over a month but nobody comes to give us some relief," said Kohinur Begum of Betilchar village in the district Chowhali upazila.

The village has been waterlogged since last month.

Contacted, the DRRO Md Abdur Rahim said flood relief work has been stalled from the early this month as they are busy with VGF.

In Manikganj, the Jamuna river's water is rising one centimetre per hour, deteriorating the flood situation in the district. More than two lakh people have been marooned.

Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Tangail, Pabna and Manikganj contributed to the story.

## Doctor given show-cause notice over FB

FROM PAGE 12

In a recent post, which has now been removed, he wrote about the government giving fake N95 masks to healthcare personnel that might have caused doctors to get infected.

He added that a large number of doctors have already died with Covid-19 and that he himself got infected on July 1.

On his Facebook timeline, Dr Sultan routinely posts about the importance of detecting asymptomatic coronavirus cases, news about the health sector, and articles from

journals like The Lancet.

According to Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules-2018, which Dr Sultan is being penalised under, the grounds on which a civil servant can be penalised are "avoiding duty, ignoring orders, dishonesty, lodging false complaints, corruption, desertion and terrorism".

On April 23, Health Minister Zahid Maleque ordered health officials not to talk to the media.

Teachers, engineers and health workers have faced departmental action during the pandemic over Facebook

posts criticising the authorities.

"We have examined Dr Sultan's social media presence and could not observe any status that is against the government in any way. If he is being given a show-cause for what he posts, then the same should be done for all doctors -- everyone shares content like this. There can be codes of conduct but freedom of expression cannot be restricted," said Dr Nirupam Das, chief administrator of the Bangladesh Doctors Foundation.

Dr Sultan is a graduate of Faridpur Medical College.

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Hereby JSC ASE EC notifies you on holding the open tender for the right to conclude the contract for Lot 1: "Supply of magnetite 20S" and Lot 2: "Supply of magnetite 8S" for Rooppur NPP. The documentation is published on the official procurement site of the nuclear industry <http://zakupki.rosatom.ru>, procurement No. 200722/0536/945.

## Several

FROM PAGE 12

pointing in the same direction, they reported in the journal Scientific Reports. "This is a really exciting discovery," lead authors Massimo Delfino from the University of Turin and Dawid Iurino, a palaeontologist at Sapienza University in Rome, told AFP by email.



### ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Asian University for Women (AUW), an independent international institution of higher learning, is currently looking for suitable candidates for the following position:

- Head of IT

Detailed information/job descriptions for the above position is available at our website: <http://asian-university.org/career-opportunities/>

As an equal opportunity employer, the Asian University for Women strongly encourages qualified women to apply. The positions are based in Chittagong, Bangladesh. Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

[www.asian-university.org](http://www.asian-university.org)



### WE MOURN

We are deeply shocked and grieved at the sad demise of Trustee **K Z Mahmud**, honorable Vice Chairman, ESTCDT, the founding Trust of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) who passed away on July 23, 2020 (Inna Lillahe Wa Inna Ilahe Rajeun). Late **K Z Mahmud** was also the Managing Director of Home Creations Ltd.

On behalf of the Education, Science, Technology & Cultural Development Trust (ESTCDT) and the IUB Board of Trustees, Members of the Faculty and Management, Students and Alumni; we express our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and pray to the Almighty to grant eternal peace to his departed soul.



Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)

## Beijing

FROM PAGE 12

"The two sides had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on the recent Sino-Indian border situation and fully affirmed the positive progress made by the front-line border defence forces of the two countries to disengage from contact and ease the situation on the ground," the Chinese foreign ministry said in a statement released yesterday evening.

The statement was referring to the 17th meeting of the India-China Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination (WMCC) on border affairs held online between senior diplomats from the two countries yesterday.

New Delhi and Beijing are closely monitoring each other's disengagement process and levels of withdrawal as both countries cautiously attempt to resolve the latest -- and the worst in decades -- crisis in bilateral ties.

China is yet to reveal the PLA's casualty figures but the Indian army lost 20 soldiers in a violent brawl between the border troops of the two countries on the night of June 15. Both sides have amassed large numbers of well-armed troops on their side.

Yesterday's statement from China said both sides "...emphasised that they will maintain bilateral military and diplomatic dialogues and consultations in accordance with the important consensus reached by the two foreign ministers and special representatives on border issues, properly handle remaining issues on the ground, and promote further cooling of the border situation."



## INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH (IUB)

### Vacancy Announcement (Full-time positions)

**Applications are invited for full time positions in the following areas:**

- School of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences**
  - Department of Media & Communication
    - Assistant Professor
  - Department of Law
    - Assistant Professor
    - Lecturer
  - Department of Social Sciences & Humanities
    - Assistant Professor
  - Global Studies & Governance Program
    - Assistant Professor
- School of Business and Entrepreneurship**
  - Department of Human Resource Management
    - Lecturer
  - Department of Accounting
    - Lecturer
  - MBA & EMBA Program Office
    - Program Manager
  - BBA Program Office
    - BBA Program Officer

- School of Engineering, Technology and Science**
  - Department of Computer Science & Engineering
    - Lecturer
    - R&D Officer
    - Lab Technician
- School of Environment and Life Sciences**
  - Department of Environmental Science and Management
    - Assistant Professor
  - Department of Life Sciences
    - Assistant Professor
    - Lecturer
    - Lab Manager
    - Lab Assistant
    - Research Assistant
- School of Pharmacy and Public Health**
  - Department of Pharmacy
    - Assistant Professor
    - Lecturer
  - Department of Public Health
    - Associate / Assistant Professor
    - Lecturer

For details and to download the Application Form, please visit <http://www.iub.edu.bd/jobs>; fill it in and email it to: [hrdept@iub.edu.bd](mailto:hrdept@iub.edu.bd) by August 8, 2020

Only online Application Forms will be acceptable





**Bill Gates denies conspiracy theories he created pandemic**

Billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates on Thursday pushed back against some of the conspiracy theories spreading online accusing him of creating the coronavirus outbreak. "It's a bad combination of pandemic and social media and people looking for a very simple explanation," the Microsoft founder said during a CNN Town Hall interview. Doctored photos and fabricated news articles crafted by conspiracy theorists -- shared thousands of times on social media platforms and messaging apps, in various languages -- targeting Gates have gained traction online since the start of the pandemic. A video accusing Gates of wanting "to eliminate 15 percent of the population" through vaccination and electronic microchips has racked up millions of views on YouTube. Gates said he is associated with vaccines but not for the reasons the conspiracies claim, but to save lives.

**Trump tells Putin he hopes to avoid new arms race**

President Donald Trump told his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Thursday that he hopes to avoid an "expensive" US arms race with Russia and China, the White House said. Washington and Moscow are preparing negotiations on a successor to the New START treaty capping their countries' nuclear arsenals. However, China has so far rejected pressure from the Trump administration to join the talks, saying that its arsenal is far smaller than that of the two former Cold War foes. In a call with Putin, Trump "reiterated his hope of avoiding an expensive three-way arms race between China, Russia," a White House spokesman said. According to the Kremlin, the two leaders confirmed the "urgency" of holding bilateral talks on "strategic stability and arms control."

**Panic as US jets fly near Iran passenger plane over Syria**

Two US jets flew dangerously close to an Iranian passenger plane over war-torn Syria, forcing the pilot to take emergency action and sparking panic on board, Iranian authorities said yesterday. The US military said of Thursday's incident that an "F-15 on a routine air mission... conducted a standard visual inspection of a Mahan Air passenger airliner at a safe distance of approximately 1,000 metres (yards)". Iranian state television aired amateur footage of passengers on board screaming as the Mahan Air jetliner appeared to change course suddenly. Another video apparently shot on a phone appeared to show at least two fighter jets flying beside the plane. Iran's official IRNA news agency said the aircraft later landed safely in the Lebanese capital.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

**'Mission of our time'**

Pompeo urges 'free world' to triumph over China 'Frankenstein'

AGENCIES

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has called on "free nations" to triumph over the threat of what he said was a "new tyranny" from China, in a provocative speech likely to worsen fraught US-China relations.

"Today China is increasingly authoritarian at home, and more aggressive in its hostility to freedom everywhere else," Pompeo said in a speech on Thursday at the Richard Nixon presidential library in Yorba Linda, California.

"If the free world doesn't change Communist China, Communist China will change us," he said, calling it the "mission of our time."

Speaking at the Nixon Library in President Richard Nixon's birthplace in Yorba Linda, California, Pompeo said the former US leader's worry about what he had done by opening the world to China's Communist Party in the 1970s had been prophetic.

"President Nixon once said he feared he had created a 'Frankenstein' by opening the world to the CCP," Pompeo said. "And here we are."

Nixon, who died in 1994 and was president from 1969-74, opened the way for the establishment of US diplomatic relations with Communist China in 1979 through a series of contacts, including a visit to Beijing in 1972.

In the major speech delivered after Washington's surprise order this week for China to close its Houston consulate, Pompeo



**"If the free world doesn't change Communist China, Communist China will change us."**

US SECRETARY OF STATE MIKE POMPEO

called for an end to "blind engagement" with China and repeated frequently leveled US charges about its unfair trade practices, human rights abuses and efforts to infiltrate American society.

He said China's military had become "stronger and more menacing" and the approach to Beijing should be "distrust and verify," adapting President Ronald Reagan's "trust but verify" mantra about the Soviet Union in the 1980s.

"The truth is that our policies -- and those of other free nations -- resurrected China's failing economy, only to see Beijing bite the

international hands that were feeding it," Pompeo said.

"The freedom-loving nations of the world must induce China to change ... in more creative and assertive ways, because Beijing's actions threaten our people and our prosperity."

Recalling remarks he made after meeting British leaders in London this week, Pompeo said "maybe it's time for a new grouping of like-minded nations, a new alliance of democracies."

Pompeo said "securing our freedoms from the Chinese Communist Party is the mission of our time," and America was perfectly positioned to lead it.

He also strongly criticized previous US administrations for being too complacent with China and US companies for being too compliant with whatever Beijing demands of them.

While some conservative commentators praised Pompeo's speech on social media and elsewhere, some other analysts were not impressed.

"How do you form a united front against China when the US is bullying its allies, trashing multilateral institutions and pushing an economic decoupling (from China) that no one else supports?" Scott Kennedy of Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies said.

The Chinese foreign ministry yesterday said the speech by Pompeo on China disregarded reality and was filled with ideological bias.

**'Unacceptable'**

WHO chief slams Pompeo for saying he got the post with China's help

AFP, Geneva



The World Health Organization chief on Thursday rejected as false an allegation by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that he owed his position to a deal with China.

Pompeo told a private meeting of MPs on Tuesday that the WHO had become a "political" body, alleging that its decisions were influenced by a deal struck between chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and China that helped him become its head, according to quotes in the Times and Daily Telegraph. "When push came to shove, when it really mattered most", people died "because of the deal that was made", he said.

Asked about Pompeo's allegations during a virtual press conference, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said they were "untrue and unacceptable and without any foundation for that matter."

He insisted that the "sole focus... of the entire organisation is on saving lives. WHO will not be distracted by these comments and we don't want the entire international community also to be distracted."

He reiterated his warning that one of the "greatest threats in the current crisis is the 'politicisation of the pandemic'". Tedros appealed to all countries to work together in the fight against the virus, which has claimed more than 630,000 lives worldwide since it first emerged in China late last year.

"COVID-19 does not respect borders, ideologies or political parties," he said, warning that "politics and partisanship have made things worse."

"COVID politics should be quarantined."



Pro-democracy students burn a portrait of Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha in front of the Government House in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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**Fears for Uighur culture as scholars vanish in crackdown**

AFP, Beijing

It has been almost two years since Bugra Arkin's father Aierken was abruptly snatched from his home in China's troubled Xinjiang region by national security agents. Aierken Yibulayin's publishing firm -- one of the biggest in the region -- translated thousands of books into Uighur before he was detained in October 2018. Arkin has not heard from him since.

"My father had a strong impact on the Uighur publishing industry, and that made him a target of the Chinese government," said Arkin, who lives in California.

"This is very unacceptable and our lives were literally destroyed."

He is not the only one. At least 435 Uighur intellectuals have been imprisoned or forcibly disappeared since April 2017, according to the Uyghur Human Rights Project.

The rounding up of Uighur linguists, scholars and publishers is seen by overseas advocacy groups as part of a campaign by the Chinese Communist Party to erase the ethnic group's identity and culture and assimilate it into the dominant, Mandarin-speaking Han population.

Renowned Uighur linguist Alim Hasani was taken by authorities in August 2018 during a Beijing work trip, according to his son Ershat Alim.

Alim believes that his father, a retired division head of the Xinjiang Ethnic

Language Work Committee, was detained for his research, which aimed to standardise Uighur-Han translations.

More than one million Uighurs and other mostly Muslim Turkic-speaking minorities have been held in re-education camps in Xinjiang following a spate of ethnic violence, according to rights groups.

Uighur literary critic and writer Yalqun Rozi was among the first wave of intellectuals to be detained in October 2016. His relatives later discovered that Rozi had been sentenced to 15 years in prison in 2018 for "inciting subversion of state power" -- a vague charge commonly used for political prisoners.

Authorities suggested that Rozi's detention was related to his role in compiling Uighur literature textbooks that had been in use for more than a decade, said his son Kamalturk Yalqun.

Since 2012, bilingual Mandarin-Uighur education has gradually been applied in schools in Xinjiang, with the aim of reaching 2.6 million students. Prior to that, classes were mostly taught in Uighur and other minority languages.

"By abolishing these textbooks and eliminating Uighur language education altogether, the next generation of Uighur youth will have no way to find their link with Uighur culture," said Yalqun. "It is a way for China to eliminate the entire Uighur identity and assimilate them. That makes me sad and angry at the same time."



PHOTO: REUTERS

A man gestures as people wait for the beginning of Friday prayers outside Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque, for the first time in 86 years, in Istanbul, Turkey, yesterday. Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan joined thousands of worshippers at Hagia Sophia yesterday for prayers there since he declared the monument, revered by Christians and Muslims for almost 1,500 years, a mosque once again amid widespread condemnation.

**NEWSIN brief**

**Malaysia strikes deal with Goldman Sachs**

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia reached a \$3.9 billion settlement with Goldman Sachs yesterday over the Wall Street titan's role in the 1MDB scandal in exchange for the country ending all criminal proceedings against the bank. Billions of dollars were looted from sovereign wealth fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad in a fraud that allegedly involved former leader Najib Razak and his cronies. Malaysia had charged Goldman and several of its former and current employees over the scandal, claiming the bank made misleading statements to investors.

**Fires triple in Brazil wetlands**

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

The number of forest fires in the Pantanal, the world's largest tropical wetlands, has nearly tripled in 2020 compared to the same period last year, according to satellite data released Thursday. Brazil's national space agency identified 3,506 fires from January 1 to July 22 in the Pantanal.

**Vietnam bans wildlife trade**

REUTERS, Hanoi

Vietnam's PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc has issued a directive to ban the Southeast Asian country's wildlife trade with immediate effect in order to reduce the risk of new pandemics, a government statement said. The directive bans imports of live wild animals and wildlife products, eliminates wildlife markets, and enforces prohibitions on illegal hunting and trading of wild animals, including online sales, according to the statement.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Upazila Engineer  
Kazipur, Sirajganj  
[www.lged.gov.bd](http://www.lged.gov.bd)

উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র  
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Memo No. 46.02.8850.000.07.004.20-405 Date: 23-07-2020

**Invitation for Tender (Works)**  
**e-Tender Notice No. 01/2020-21**

The following e-Tenders (OTM) are invited through the National e-GP System Portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)).

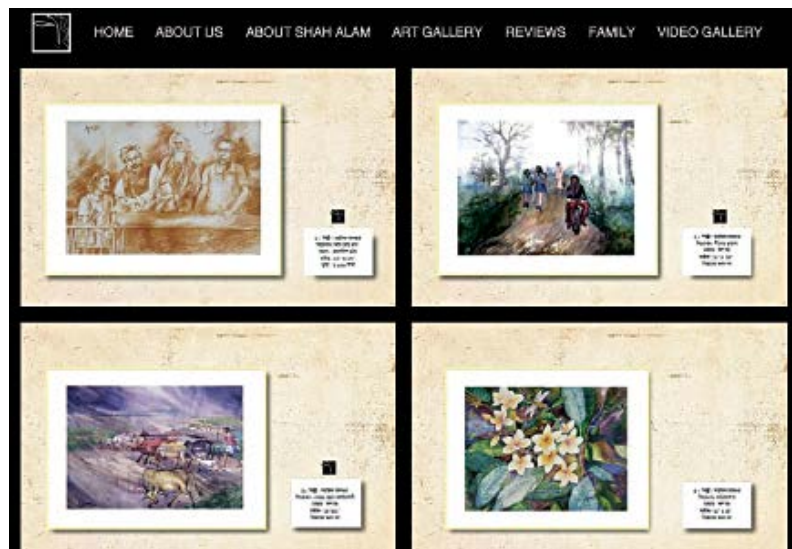
Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Description of work	Last selling date and time	Closing/opening date and time
1	479045	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W14.0640	Construction of Boundary Wall including Gate of Baraitali Balika RPS Charpara Purba Sonamukhi RPS Gandhail Uttar Para Govt Primary School and Hazrahali Govt. Primary School.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
2	479044	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00462	Construction of Additional Classroom Boraitala Purbopara RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
3	479043	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00463	Construction of Additional Classroom Charvanudanga Westpara RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
4	479042	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00464	Construction of Additional Classroom Dakhin Fuljora Girls RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
5	479041	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00465	Construction of Additional Classroom Nishchintapur Mothopara RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
6	479040	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00466	Construction of Additional Classroom 35 Harinathpur Uttarpara RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
7	479039	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W2.00730	Construction of Additional Classroom Ragupur Baromaisha RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
8	479038	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00212	Construction of Additional Classroom Kabihar Borshivanga RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
9	479037	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00211	Construction of Additional Classroom Baraitali RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00
10	479036	e-Tender/PEDP4/SRJKAZ/20-19-20/W1.00210	Construction of Additional Classroom Per Dorata RPS under PEDP4.	17-Aug-2020 16:00	18-Aug-2020 11:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Registration in the National e-GP Portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is required to submit e-Tender. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any scheduled bank branch up to 04:00pm of 17-Aug-2020. Tender security amount has to be deposited online through the bank up to 10:30am of 18-Aug-2020. The above-mentioned e-Tenders will be live from 11:00am of 26-July-2020. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk.

**Md. Rokanuzzaman Khan**  
Upazila Engineer  
LGED  
Kazipur, Sirajganj  
E-mail: [ue.kazipur@lged.gov.bd](mailto:ue.kazipur@lged.gov.bd)

GD-1186





Artworks at the exhibition.

# Arabinda Das Gupta's virtual art exhibition underway

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, from Sylhet

Plabone Shwapan Buni (*Sowing dreams in cataclysm*), the fourth solo exhibition of painter Arabinda Das Gupta, inaugurated virtually on Tuesday.

The ten-day exhibition is organised by Shah Alam Gallery of Fine Art. Anyone could visit and purchase paintings at bit.ly/arabinda. A total of 63 paintings, including drawing sketches, mixed media and watercolour works, represent the loss of social values, romanticism, landscape, science and many other things.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr A K Abdul Momen inaugurated the exhibition in the video conference while painter Jamal Ahmed, Professor of the Faculty of Fine Art in Dhaka University, was the keynote speaker.

Harold Rasheed, painter and chief patron of the gallery, presided the inaugural session where many other notable persons attended.

"In Europe, almost everyone knows about their legendary painters but here, the people in the grassroots are unaware of names like Zainul Abedin or Quamrul Hasan," said the minister. "These days, painters are in distress and everyone should come forward to revive their former glory. I'll do my best to support any initiative taken for the painters."

"There is no art institute or college in Sylhet, no art gallery with modern facilities. I always wished for a proper art college in Sylhet, and hope an initiative will be taken soon," asserted Arabinda, a reticent painter and art teacher.

Arabinda prefers to stay away from the limelight. His previous exhibitions were arranged in 1980, 2002 and 2016. He was born in Habiganj in 1953 and brought up in Sylhet. He completed his graduation from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Dhaka University (then called Bangladesh Institute of Arts and Crafts) in 1976.

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

Eminent dancer, art director, researcher and cultural activist Lubna Marium has transformed the face of classical dance through her initiatives. Her organisation Shadhona and her dance school Kolpotoru, have become household names in the industry. The dance connoisseur, who is the current General Secretary of Nrityajog - the Bangladesh Chapter of World Dance Alliance - Asia Pacific and Vice-President (South Asia) of the World Dance Alliance - Asia Pacific, is the founding initiator of the Ocean Dance Festival. In a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, she sheds light on the challenges faced by dancers during the coronavirus pandemic, and the ways that they are trying to overcome them.

**How has the coronavirus pandemic affected dancers?**

We have hundreds of dancers in Bangladesh, who need to be supported. Stage shows are the primary source of income for any professional dancer. Some of them earn through teaching as well. However, after consulting with certain event management groups that we work with, we have been unofficially informed that we probably won't have any concerts or corporate events this year. Many artistes have taken up dance as a career after careful consideration, efforts and experiments. However, it saddens me to say that I am not seeing many possibilities in this industry at present.

**Now that all stage performances are cancelled and dance schools are closed, how are most dancers coping up?**

I have observed that performers all around the globe are doing concerts for safeguarding the arts. A while ago, we had a meeting with Nrityajog, where we discussed the possibilities of arranging online fund-raising concerts for dancers. I also like Bangladesh Shilpakala

Academy's initiatives. They have started an online platform, where the dancers can make videos with their choreographies and also continue their online classes, for which the academy is remunerating them. Dance teachers are also earning, since the online classes are active. Shadhona, located in Banani, has also started online classes for the time being. Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, despite being a foreign organisation, has been supporting us, and we are grateful to them.

**How are dancers adapting to these changes?**

Dancers have quickly turned to technology for survival. I noticed that Samina Husain Prema and Warda Rihab created marvelous video content. Plus, we have designed an Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) medium, an inventory of all the cultural practices in Bangladesh through Shadhona. We have formed a consortium of 12 organisations. We are also trying to train 1000 young students, academics and scholars to interact with various communities and upload information. Fortunately, the Cultural Ministry is standing

by us, especially in our two-stage workshops—general knowledge about what ICH is and how information can be uploaded into our website as well as our critical research on cultural heritage. 10 officials from the ministry are participating in our current workshop. The seven ethnic minority culture centres will be joining us soon. Besides, E-pledge has accepted a manuscript from Bangladesh for a book on dance and the Routledge wants the manuscript soon. We are working on that in full swing.

**How are you spending time these days at home?**

We are in one building with around four families. My daughter is guiding me on yoga basics, meditation and breathing exercises. She daughter has come up with organic remedies and healthy diet plans for all of us.

**Do you have any message for your fans, colleagues, and well-wishers?**

I would like to appeal to the corporate houses who we have collaborated with for years, especially if they are considering online events. I hope that my well-wishers are keeping fit and staying safe.

PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL



Bojack Horseman

# Shows to catch up on while staying indoors

SHABABA IQBAL

As we stay at home to curb the spread of the coronavirus, we finally have some time to catch up on all the popular shows that everyone is always talking about. From the classics you really should have seen by now to your friends' current favourites, treat yourself to the binge you always claimed you wanted, with these great shows on Netflix.



Peaky Blinders

## BREAKING BAD

The award-winning show, *Breaking Bad*, is filled with shocking moments of violence and wry humour, portraying the rise and fall of Walter White and his conspirators. It is best experienced in intense, indulgent binges. With the acclaimed spin-off



You

*Better Call Saul* and the movie *El Camino*, which serves as an epilogue to the original show, there has never been a better time to take the dive into the fictional world of blue meth.

## YOU

This show was a big hit when it arrived on Netflix, but you may have resisted it after you found that everyone on your social media feeds was hooked to it. While the subject matter is disturbing, the show is presented in such an over-the-top manner, that you wouldn't have any real-life concerns. It's compulsively watchable, without making you think too hard about anything.

## BOJACK HORSEMAN

It's a goofy animated series unlike those that came before it - a middle-aged



Breaking Bad

man (read: horse) consistently struggles to stay out of trouble while dealing with the downside of fame. Although you would be hard pressed to find a moment in *Bojack Horseman* that isn't a hilarious one, the series has some dark and emotionally ambitious moments that will hook you from beginning to end.

## PEAKY BLINDERS

This early 20th century period drama revolves around Thomas Shelby, a World War I veteran turned patriarchal crime boss who wants to up his family's social and financial status in England. The story is loosely inspired by the exploits of real-life gangs in Birmingham during the late 1800s to early 1900s. This one is a great pick for the history buffs.

# "Performance art involves looking at life through a micro lens"

- Yasmin Jahan Nupur

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

In 'Let Me Get You a Nice Cup of Tea', artist Yasmin Jahan Nupur sits across from spectators at an English-styled tea table, in her white jamdani shari. She serves a cup of home-harvested tea, and enchants people with her storytelling, sharing details about the history of tea and its impact on different cultures.

Her performances encompass a great deal of pre-production. Nupur conducts extensive research into individual, social, cultural, and scientific objects of inquiry. Her practice includes installations and performances that are rooted in history, and find their relevance in her surroundings and community. Nupur has won several accolades for her work, both at home and abroad. She collaborates closely with people from different communities, who are deprived of social benefits.

"I try to read extensively during my research. At the same time, I prepare myself from a month prior to a performance, with a proper diet and exercise regime," says Nupur.

Drawing is a meditative practice for the artist, who credits her teachers Dhali Al Mamooun, Abul Mansur and Mansur Karim for inspiring her during her student years at University of Chittagong.

From 2003 to 2004, French artist Awena Cozannet conducted a workshop in Chittagong, organised by Britto Art Trust, which Nupur took part in. "I was inspired to try out performance art because of Awena. Her talks were insightful and thought-provoking," recalls the artist.

Her performances often last for long hours. At the 2016 Serendipity Art Festival, Nupur performed for nine hours every day, for four days. She never leaves her performance space during an event.



Yasmin Jahan Nupur

Her 2014 performance, 'SatontheChair' at Dhaka Art Summit, also showed her diligence. Referring to noted artist Marina Abramovic, Nupur mentioned that in performance art, the emotions are real, whereas in theatre, one imagines and performs role play. "Performance art involves looking at life through a micro lens," she adds. In her project, *A Tailor is Sewing the Dress of Tipu Sultan*, she uses handwoven muslin-jamdani as a signifier of power and consumption embedded in the contested and violent history of the subcontinent. She began threadwork in 2008, inspired from her mother. Nupur is interested in the socio-political connections of fabrics.

Reflecting on the pandemic, she said that most artists prefer a secluded place to work on their craft. However, the abrupt halt to social activities these days has been difficult to deal with. Along with drawing, she has been writing and working on sound and art projects about 'breathing'. While doing so, she likes listening to Mozart and Beethoven.

"Finding a minute to breathe, especially to combat the panic surrounding the pandemic has been crucial for me, both physically and mentally. I am trying to find an image of our breath," concludes Nupur.



Nupur in performance at 'Let me get you a nice cup of tea'.



# Unlicensed buses to be turned into moving Covid-19 hospitals

STAR REPORT

Unlicensed buses around the country will soon be turned into Covid-19 hospitals, offering treatment to patients in hard-to-reach areas.

The decision came at a top-level meeting of different government agencies. Wahtaj Khaben, the minister for buses, announced the decision before the press.

"Since everyone can start a hospital nowadays, we decided to put our unlicensed buses to use. We aren't going to get licences anyway and since we can't operate till the zero-tolerance drive against illegal vehicles is on, we have decided to expand our service basket," Wahtaj said.

"Once we get the government permission, we will start conducting Covid-19 tests as well," he added.

Asked whether these buses would have the required paperwork, Unhealthy Minister Nahid Khaleque said the bus owners had "promised to get the needed licences soon."

"They promised they will get all the legal papers to treat patients and conduct tests," he said, adding, without being prompted, that he "had not been bribed or anything and this was strictly about promises made and underhanded deals cut."

Asked how the ministry could allow more unlicensed hospitals to function after the latest crisis, Nahid said, "This is Bangladesh, Imao. I am an unhealthy minister but I also have no qualifications for this job."

Meanwhile, the decision to turn the buses was met with a lot of derision from citizens. "The authorities are unimaginably stupid," Altaf Ahmed, a restaurateur by profession, said.



COUNTRY

# Ecommerce Mishap Awards to be launched

Note: This is a press release. We hate press releases.

SHUVONKOR SHUVO

Awards are motivating factors for everyone and companies in Bangladesh are constantly making awards which they win to give themselves some sort of validation. We already have some flagship awards events to acknowledge excellence in different sectors of the country. Some examples are the business awards, export awards and of course, our favourite, the women's award, which is an award given to women for doing the exact same things as a man does, except she does it as a woman.

Realising the massive rise in the eCommerce business, this time a new flagship award has been launched by PCAES, said a press release. This award is called 'Local Ecommerce Mishap Award', and it is proudly brought to you by the Pissed-off Customers Association of Ecommerce Sites (PCAES).

The General Secretary, who we aren't even going to name because the press release forgot to mention it, said that due to the lockdown situation, the use of Ecommerce sites has "increased exponentially" in recent times.

People are buying their daily necessities



from eCommerce sites, as most of the retail shops are still closed. And many Ecommerce sites have successfully annoyed their customers with their service failure every day.

Starting from fake products to delivering a package after a month, or even delivering a completely different product as if you are ordering mystery effing boxes, eCommerce sites in this country are going out of their

way to suck.

To recognise these companies fully, the award programme will have different categories. The wrong product delivery award will go to the site with the least accuracy of delivering the right product.

For instance, once a customer ordered a facewash product and was given an onion paste instead. Customer service said it was a kind of organic product. After using it, the customer realised that what that meant was the product organically sucked. Reaching out to customer service again, the customer was told he had actually been delivered the wrong product and new one would come soon. It, of course, never did.

Another award by PCAES will be given for counterfeit or low-quality products. This will go not to the eCommerce sites, but to their excellent suppliers whose continuous success in failure will not go unrecognised. An e-commerce site owner said some suppliers are so good that you can even give them a picture of what you want and they will make sure that your product is nothing like that. Some suppliers even use their creativity to develop knockoff products.

Another exciting category is the "Take this instead". This award will go to the site which consistently calls customers after three to

four days and says, "we actually do not have the product you ordered" and then gives you entirely unrelated options to choose from. They also compel the customers to choose the bad option, because there's no money-back guarantee. These sites are so dedicated to being the worst that they never take the inventory down even if the last stock replenished a decade ago. One founder said that there actually was a virtual museum of products promoting arts and culture of being really bad at what one does.

Misbah, the organiser of the awards, said it all came about they realised that because of the huge number of orders businesses no longer do quality check and mess up all the time.

When asked why this happened, a top official of a leading eCommerce site said, "We receive a lot of order, literally a lot of. It is not possible to do quality check because of the immense love we receive from our buyers."

"Just believe in us, we are expert in mishaps, that is our unique selling proposition."

The 'Local Ecommerce Mishap Awards' is expected to be very popularly and there has been a deluge of submissions.

# 9 rules for the Covid-fair Cattle Market

The following is a public service announcement which contains the rules and regulations that people have to follow in the cattle market. Violators of any of the rules will obviously be hanged.

1. Do not touch the cows. You are not an expert. You may think you are but you feeling up the cow will not give you an idea of the price and nor will it make anyone think that you know what you are doing.
2. Do not take off your mask while negotiating. Contrary to popular belief, the mask does not muffle the sound of your voice in any negligible way. Do not wear the mask on your stupid chin and just wear it properly. Also, cover your nose with it.
3. Do not mill around. You know your budget. You know exactly how much you are willing to spend. There is no point waiting around till a cattle trader finally crumbles under your intense negotiating prowess.
4. Stop embracing acquaintances you meet. Do not even shake their hands. Avoid eye contact if possible.
5. All cows must have masks on. Yes, it sucks, we know. You can no longer count their teeth.
6. Why don't you guys just try ordering online? You know we can't test too many. You know our hospitals aren't that equipped. Just stay indoors. Enjoy the holiday.
7. Sanitising your hand after touching everything around you in the Cow Haat isn't the best practice. Why can't you just stop touching things?
8. Don't spit. We also asked masks not be taken off, but you guys will probably find a way to spit. Also, why do you guys muster up all that strength to draw out that phlegm deep inside, which wasn't even bothering you, only to spit it out.
9. Do you honestly need another rule?

BEEF



Rickshaw-pullers wade through a waterlogged street in Dhaka. The situation is not because of poor drainage system, but is one of the latest ways to ensure cleanliness of the people and protect them from Covid-19.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

READERS CORNER





# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR  
LATE S. M. ALI

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## Health minister gives himself an 'A'

*It's the height of irresponsibility and callousness*

AT the height of controversy surrounding the health sector, when allegations of scams, mismanagement and corruption regarding the government's efforts to contain Covid-19 are rife in the media, the health minister has lauded himself and his ministry for a performance well done in managing its response to Covid-19. Given the sheer scale of mishandling, chaos and inefficiencies in the sector since the outbreak of the pandemic, and the serious allegations against the ministry itself for its involvement in the Regent Hospital's issuance of fake Covid-19 certificates as well as supply of sub-standard N-95 masks to government hospitals in April, we feel this statement is the height of irresponsibility and callousness. It highlights, once again, that the ministry is completely unwilling to even acknowledge—much less be held accountable for—the debilitating state of affairs in the health sector.

After weeks of blame game, during which DGHS made some pointed charges about how it was instructed by higher authorities at the health ministry to sign the MoU with Regent, the DG of DGHS has resigned, citing "health reasons". The government is also making changes at the DGHS top-end to apparently manage its image. But we ask: have the critical allegations against ministry officials been investigated by the government, or is the ministry itself playing judge and jury? Even if we are to assume that the DGHS top officials were solely responsible for the incident, it does not bear well that the ministry has so little control and oversight over its own departments. And let us not forget that Regent/JKG is not an isolated case, but just a high-profile example of the countless incidents of corruption, mismanagement and inefficiencies that have all but destroyed the most important sector at this time of unprecedented health crisis.

From the onset of the pandemic, the health ministry has failed miserably to take charge of the situation and come up with a systematic plan to control the spread of Covid-19 and provide affordable and quality treatment to patients. When asked about contradictory decisions made by the government over the past months, the minister himself claimed, on multiple occasions, that he had no idea why some of those were made. Now, he is giving himself a pat on the back solely based on the fact that the fatality rates in Bangladesh are "lower" than in many other countries, ignoring that, unlike those countries, we are only testing a handful of the population. To say nothing of the fact that an additional 1,776 people have died after showing Covid-19 symptoms from March 22 to July 11, who have not been included in the official count, according to Dhaka University's Centre for Genocide Studies.

At a time when the health ministry needs a complete and radical overhaul, the health minister's remarks have not only disappointed us, but truly made us apprehensive about the future of the sector.

## Grab the land grabbers in Khilgaon!

*Police must protect people's land and property*

IT is shocking that while the whole nation is grappling with a pandemic, there have been instances of land grabbing in Khilgaon, Dhaka. According to a report published recently by this daily, as most people remain indoors or uninvolved because of the pandemic, encroachers are using this opportunity to take over unguarded and empty plots of land in Khilgaon. The report further reveals that in the last few months, grabbers aided by a former Chhatra League leader and a sacked police constable have taken control of at least a dozen plots in Nandipara area by building boundary walls and putting up signboards around them. Landowners and locals alleged that a high official of the Khilgaon Police Station provided shelter to the criminals.

The incident came under public scrutiny after the principal of Dhaka Dental College, on behalf of the plot owners, submitted a prayer on June 24 to the deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Motijheel Division) seeking legal support, following which the police began their investigation. Prior to that, when he submitted three complaints to Khilgaon Police Station, they did not take any action nor did they register any case. Later when the principal filed a case with Khilgaon Police Station on July 1, police arrested the prime accused Masud Ahmed and his partner Ziaur Rahman Pintu. However, active land grabbers are still at large in Khilgaon. Visiting the area on July 4, our correspondent witnessed new boundary walls being built around seven to eight separate plots. A temporary tin-shed room was also found on the principal's plot. Various other landowners talked about experiencing a similar fate, who had trouble registering a general diary at the police station. Moreover, when the plot owners tried to recover their property, the criminals claimed large amounts of money from them!

The above incidents highlight the audacity of these land grabbers who carry out their crimes with impunity. These acts cannot go unpunished and legal action must be taken. In order to keep the plots from being plundered, law enforcement officers should strictly monitor the area and make sure they are protected from land grabbers. The authorities must also thoroughly investigate the matter to find out why complaints couldn't be registered at the police station and bring all the perpetrators to book. Needless to say, it is the responsibility of the law enforcers to assure the safety and security of the people and their property.



BLOWN' IN THE WIND

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

status to the Hindus. For them, the cow is considered a sacred mother-figure and is linked with Lord Krishna, whereas the bovine is attributed with symbolic significance during the Islamic festival of sacrifice, Eid-ul-Adha.

Muslims all over the world continue the practice of sacrifice as a reminder of Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his only son, Ismail, for the sake of Allah. Just when the prophet was about to perform the ritual, a ram was found sacrificed in place of his son. Muslims believe the desire to show their devotion to Allah is more important than the meat or blood. The same ordinance is applicable for the other people of the book. The Jews, however, interpreted the incident from the Hebrew Bible as Abraham's way of testing God as he knew that God would never want him to sacrifice his son. Conversely, the Christians downplayed the sacrifice by arguing that only Jesus Christ's sacrifice had the redemptive power to wash away human sins. Animal sacrifice (except for cows) holds a special place in the ancient Vedic scriptures that make devotional offering obligatory.

Ever since the Modi government came to power in 2014 with the help of the Hindu nationalist organisation RSS, a feisty euphuism to save cow has entered the lexicon of Indian media. Cow vigilantes are on the prowl. Beef eating is being used as an excuse to normalise a hate crime that has seen the horrific killings of mostly Muslims and Dalits by murderous mobs. According to a report by IndiaSpend.com, 97 percent of the "cow terrorism" between 2010 and 2017 took place in the first three years of the Modi government. Although PM Modi has publicly spoken against cow terrorism, the practice is rampant in the country, and is echoed in India's characterisation of its beef-eating neighbours.

Last year, the right-wing magazine Swarajya claimed, "Bakr Eid is fast approaching, and there are just too many carnivorous stomachs to feed in the neighbouring country" (July 19, 2019). The rhetoric is tinged with frustration over India's push to save its cows to starve Bangladesh of beef (Reuters, July 3, 2015). In 2015, the then Interior Minister Rajnath Singh instructed India's

Border Security Force to halt cattle smuggling completely so that the "people of Bangladesh give up eating beef." The same report quoted Jishnu Basu, an RSS spokesman in West Bengal, who said, "Killing or smuggling a cow is equivalent to raping a Hindu girl or destroying a Hindu temple."

Thankfully, the Indian ban on cow trade, both formal and informal, has helped the growth of our local cattle industry. According to Bangladesh Livestock Department, while 2.6 million cows came from India to Bangladesh in 2013, it was only 92,000 in 2018. Last year, due to the revamped cattle farming and rural economy, the country had about 11.5 million animals ready against



This file photo shows Indian cattle being brought through shallow water in the Bichhanakandi area of Gowainghat, Sylhet.

PHOTO: STAR

the estimated demand for 11 million animals (EFE-EPA, Aug 12, 2019). Fifty thousand entrepreneurs had joined the sector and made the country self-sufficient in meat. The heavy price of cattle feed in Bangladesh, however, makes Indian cows cheaper allowing cross-border cow trading still to persist. The trade is further patronised by the opportunist businessmen and corrupt security officials on both sides of the border. Yet, the Indian media presents it as a fault of Bangladesh alone—its eating habit.

The internet is replete with images of cows being tied to rudimentary rafts made out of banana shoots and ferried across the river, or being pulled by the necks using pulleys to hoist them over the barbed border fence. This inhuman treatment of the animals shows that there are some greedy, desperate people on both sides of the border who want to benefit from the price gap of a product. Their method is profane, but its media representation remains sacred.

The moral high ground assumed by

the Indians, judging us guilty of the cardinal sin of gluttony, demands a state-level response. Indeed, we have spoken through our action—by living up to the challenge of meeting the country's need for quality protein, but the unchallenged monologue is helping the xenophobia affecting the relationship between the two countries.

On July 19, a news scroll snaked silently at the bottom of the TV screen. Our media did not even find it worth voicing out in the main news section. The following day, a few local print dailies covered the news almost in a nonchalant manner—that three Bangladeshis were lynched in India for their alleged involvement in stealing of a cow.

I searched for the news coverage of the incident in Indian media: "Three from Bangladesh lynched in Assam for 'cattle smuggling'" (*The Hindu*, July 19); "Bangladeshi Men Lynched on Cattle Lifting Suspicion" (*The Wire*, July 20); "3 Bangladesh cattle thieves lynched in Karimganj" (*Times of India*); "3 Bangladeshis lynched by locals for stealing cattle from Karimganj tea estate" (*India Today*).

How do you know that they were Bangladeshis? "The bodies were found with biscuits and pieces of breads made in Bangladesh, ropes, wire cutters and pliers," the local police officer reported. Ah, so the confectionary items gave away the national identities of individuals who entered the cow shed of a tea estate labourer whose home is 1.5 miles away from the Bangladesh border. This is the second time a mob lynching happened in the same area within the span of a month. On June 1, one Bangladeshi cattle lifter identified as Ranjit Munda was lynched by a group of villagers in the Putani tea

PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

## Europe Rescues Itself



PHILIPPE LEGRAIN

AFTER four days and nights of tough negotiations and many painful compromises, European leaders have reached a deal on a groundbreaking 750 billion euro (USD 868 billion) recovery fund. As a gesture of solidarity toward Italy, Spain, and other countries still reeling from the Covid-19 crisis, the agreement is a major step forward for the European Union.

Even so, it does little to address the eurozone's deepest problems. The Covid-19 crisis has strained the monetary union to breaking point. While the pain has been widely shared, some countries have been hit harder than others. Italy, France, and Spain have suffered the most deaths and the deepest recessions, and tourist-reliant southern Europe seems headed for an especially slow recovery.

Worse, while government debt is soaring across the eurozone, it is reaching perilously high levels in many southern countries, particularly Italy. The initial response to the pandemic left Italians feeling aggrieved, owing to the perception (not unjustified) that northern Europeans had been quicker to blame them for their plight than to offer assistance. Even the pro-European Italian mainstream—from President Sergio Mattarella on down—felt politically alienated from the EU at the height of the crisis.

To her credit, German Chancellor Angela Merkel recognised the gravity of the situation. In May, she and French President Emmanuel Macron proposed a 500 billion euro recovery fund that would be financed through EU-issued debt and allocate grants to the hardest-hit regions and sectors. The European Commission then built on the Franco-German proposal, increasing the headline total to 750 billion euro by adding EU loans to the grants.

The deal struck by beary-eyed EU leaders in the early hours of July 21 is welcome in several respects. While an agreement of some kind was always likely, there was reason to worry that the negotiations would drag on throughout the year, deepening the EU's internal divisions and distracting policymakers from other priorities. Reaching agreement before Europe shuts down in August is a significant achievement in itself.

Better still, the deal preserves many positive elements of the Merkel-Macron proposal, notably 390 billion euro for EU grants, with few strings attached. Four richer northern European countries, led by the Netherlands, had previously insisted that the EU provide only loans, conditional on recipient governments enacting reforms dictated by the EU (and subject to national vetoes). But the stigma of such intrusive conditionality—reminiscent of Greece's treatment a decade ago—was anathema to southern European countries.

Moreover, with government borrowing costs already so low—owing in no small part to the European Central Bank's 1.35 trillion-euro Pandemic Emergency

stimulus packages, the EU grants still will provide a helpful boost to complement the ECB's monetary firefighting.

The biggest benefit of the recovery fund, though, is political. The EU is demonstrating that it can come to Europeans' aid when they need it most. That should provide a sorely needed antidote to Euroscepticism and alleviate the anger generated by the crisis.

Institutionally, the deal is a major win for the European Commission, which was often bypassed during the 2010-12 eurozone crisis. The Commission will be the one borrowing the 750 billion euro to finance the fund, and directing the grants and loans through the EU budget that it administers. And with an eye toward



German Chancellor Angela Merkel (right) and French President Emmanuel Macron (middle) on July 20, 2020.

PHOTO: JOHN THYS/POOL VIA REUTERS

Purchases Programme (PEPP)—EU loans would have been of little help. If anything, they would merely aggravate debt-sustainability concerns, not least in Italy, where public debt is set to soar to more than 160 percent of GDP next year.

As an economic matter, 390 billion euro in grants over the next three years will provide a significant boost. The European Commission expects the EU economy to contract by around 8 percent this year, to 12.8 trillion euro. As such, the recovery-fund grants would be equivalent to 3 percent of GDP, or 1 percent for each year. If Italy's economy shrinks by 10 percent this year, the 82 billion euro earmarked for it would amount to some 5 percent of GDP. Thus, while much smaller than national fiscal

repaying the debt after 2027, it will also oversee the search for new EU revenue sources, such as a digital-services or carbon-border-adjustment tax.

The downside is that, because the recovery fund was folded into the broader negotiations over the EU's 2021-27 budget, the deal required some regrettable compromises. Before the pandemic, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's flagship initiative was the European Green Deal to address climate change. Now, the funding to support a clean-energy transition has been slashed.

Another big challenge for the EU is homegrown authoritarianism. Illiberal governments like that of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán continue to subvert the rule of law with impunity while

garden. In May, another Bangladeshi cow thief, identified as Rubel Miya, was lynched, while three of his Indian accomplices, Malun Munda, Pradip Tanti, and Umashankar Kaibarta, were arrested. Why kill the Bangladeshi and spare the rest? Your guess is as good as mine.

The portrayal of Bangladeshis as intruders, thieves, smugglers, or lifters is a mimetic rivalry promulgated by the state discourse. Why would so many join in the murder of some people caught in the act of stealing? This lynch mob is united with their shared desire of finding a victim to exert their violence. There is a "conversion experience" when one becomes part of a mob in which an individual imitates (mimesis) the behaviour of the other.

For René Girard, the French sociologist and author of "*Violence and the Sacred*", sacred violence is ultimately linked to our desires over the same thing. Girard argues that people don't fight over their differences; they fight because they are essentially the same, and they desire the same objects. They do not necessarily need the same things, but they want objects that will earn the envy of others. People desire things that are desired by others. Girard holds this "mimetic desire" responsible for "victimising mechanism" or scapegoating. The criminals involved in cow stealing are violating a law that is presented not as a crime, but as a sin. And the punishment for such a sin becomes severe when the sin is committed by a supposed outsider. The cow is a surrogate figure in a "mimetic rivalry" that exists on both sides of the border.

It is not possible to know whether the victims were the recently declared "illegal immigrants". After all, the only identity markers are some Bangladeshi-made bread and biscuits. Also it is not clear how many cows were there in the shed of a tea garden labourer to characterise the strangers as smugglers. One thing is obvious: we are indifferent to the state of the victims. We do not protest with the sincerity that these state crimes deserve. Every accused has the right to a fair trial. Somehow, we have accepted the idea that our poor people are disposables. They can be sacrificed, albeit to violence instigated by mob mentality, because they are "smugglers". Meanwhile, on the other side of the border, violence is being construed as a sacred duty to protect a shared ideology. Unless we treat the life of every citizen as sacred, we will not have any meaningful exchange and interactions with our neighbours. Let us raise the ground of our morality so that we can match the moral high ground assumed by the Indian ideologues. If we do not care for our citizens, how can we expect others to do the same?

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*The EU is demonstrating that it can come to Europeans' aid when they need it most. That should provide a sorely needed antidote to Euroscepticism and alleviate the anger generated by the crisis.*

misappropriating EU regional cohesion funds for their own benefit, which is why one of Merkel's top priorities had been to tie future EU funding to respect for the rule of law. But conditionality provisions were gutted, apparently in order to overcome Orbán's threatened veto (which was scarcely credible, because Hungary would have remained a large net beneficiary of EU funding anyway).

With the departure of the United Kingdom in January, there was also hope of doing away with the proliferation of national rebates, a perk first secured by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s and subsequently obtained by other net contributors to the EU budget. These provisions tend to encourage a penny-pinching, zero-sum mentality that undermines European solidarity. But instead of curbing rebates, the budget deal essentially bribes the obstreperous Dutch, Austrians, Swedes, and Danes with even larger ones.

After the 2010-12 eurozone crisis, the philanthropist George Soros pointed out that Merkel always does just enough to keep the euro going, "but nothing more." That is true again. The recovery fund is a welcome step forward. But it does not resolve the eurozone's fundamental problems, which include Italy's unsustainable debt dynamics, Germany's deflationary bias, and the lack of a fiscal rebalancing mechanism. The eurozone has dodged a bullet, but it is still an open target.

Philippe Legrain, a former economic adviser to the president of the European Commission, is a visiting senior fellow at the London School of Economics' European Institute. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2020. www.project-syndicate.org (Exclusive to The Daily Star)



# Tele-counselling support can help tackle Covid-19 mental health issues

ERUM MARIAM and ZAIAN F CHOWDHURY

**T**HIRTY-year-old Ahmed woke up shaking in the middle of the night. He felt choked as he reached for the glass of water beside his bed. He kept gasping for breath, a heavy weight pushing down on his chest.

Ahmed forced himself out of bed and turned the lights on—an effort to challenge the darkness consuming him every night. He feels a crippling sadness as the room lights up. Is there a way out?

Covid-19 has forced us to confine ourselves in our homes, resulting in a range of harmful emotions for many people. Ahmed, for example, experienced difficulties in breathing, irritation, sleep disturbances and an incapacitating fear of being infected.

He had been living in fear of being trapped since he was 15, when his friend accidentally locked Ahmed in his room. Being in enclosed spaces for long periods was particularly suffocating for him; the lockdown triggered the trauma that Ahmed constantly tried to run away from.

Ahmed called a mental health helpline in desperation. He had no idea how it was going to help him, but he knew he had to say something out loud.

The counselling psychologist on the phone was able to make Ahmed feel safe and express himself. He was given an empathetic ear and his words were taken seriously. He was suggested breathing exercises and given tips for getting a good night's sleep, to start with. Ahmed ended the call saying, "Thank you for listening. I feel relieved knowing that I won't die from this. I think I will be okay."

More than 1,300 people have called the same helpline since April 2020. Two out of five called to report such symptoms. Understandably, Covid-19 has changed the world for all of us.

The pandemic could be likened to a wartime situation causing deep uncertainty and panic among millions of people.

**The many faces of a pandemic**  
Many people fear either catching Covid-19 themselves or being asymptomatic carriers who unknowingly transmit the disease to family and friends. This fear is particularly intense in homes with elderly relatives or young children.

Since April, almost 200 callers have expressed worries concerning their current and future financial state, their health and their family's health, according to data collected from Moner Jotno Mobile E (MJM), a tele-counselling platform by BRAC, in collaboration with the Psychological Health and Wellness Clinic and Kaan Pete Roi, an emotional support hotline.

Drastic changes in daily life have caused shifts in routines and schedules, resulting in insomnia, claustrophobia, restlessness, panic, loneliness and isolation. Since April, 195 callers have reported mental health concerns. 80 people have called regarding an immediate emotional crisis. Other callers have acknowledged sleeping problems, self-harm and abuse.

**A deep, deadly void**  
Bangladesh is not prepared for the devastating long-term impact of the pandemic on people's mental health. Mental health is a topic rarely discussed and even more rarely understood. There is only one psychiatrist for every 2,00,000 patients with reported mental health issues in Bangladesh.

There are approximately 200 psychiatrists and 600 psychologists and psychotherapists in total in the country. Few universities offer applied psychology courses, and these are not accessible for many because of lengthy enrolment processes and high course fees. Working in mental health often attracts stigma; a common belief is that

those who work in the field become "crazy". Mental health is not prioritised in social, political or national policy discussions. Consequently, there is a lack of secure job prospects.

At least 11,000 people take their own lives each year in Bangladesh, most of whom suffer from psychiatric disorders such as depression. In 2019, 32 people took their own lives every day.

The real numbers are arguably much higher. There is no national surveillance

Covid-19 has hit low-income families the hardest, leading to tensions within households as families struggle with little to no income.

For instance, 26-year-old Shila's husband lost his job in Saudi Arabia soon after the outbreak. He planned to start a small business after coming back to Bangladesh. He was furious and abusive when he realised that they did not have enough money to do so.

Shila had never spent the money he

in the first 20 days of the lockdown. A number of these incidents have been directly linked to the social and economic consequences of the lockdown. Shila is among many others who have turned to suicide as a way out of the challenges posed by the pandemic.

**Just a call away**  
Moner Jotno Mobile E was initiated in order to address the void of mental health services in Bangladesh, seeking to provide tele-counselling support to people feeling isolated, lost and/or frustrated.

The platform is for anyone seeking a space to be heard, valued and respected. It is hoped that every caller will leave with a more positive experience and a more optimistic outlook for the future. If counsellors sense a risk of self-harm, conflicting thoughts or a need for further support, callers are referred through specific pathways to psychologists.

How can we understand if our loved ones need help?

Here are some symptoms to look out for: loss of desire to participate in any activity, even their favourite hobbies; difficulties in concentration; lapses in memory; difficulty falling asleep and, alternately, sleeping for prolonged periods of time; heightened nervousness and/or a strong fear of other people; rapid changes in moods and emotions; withdrawing from daily life, family and friends. A person may also seem to be hyper-excited one moment and very depressed the next.

Seek immediate support if you know anyone who is displaying one or more of these symptoms.

The trained psychologists at MJM are available from 8am to 12am, seven days a week, at 01709817179.

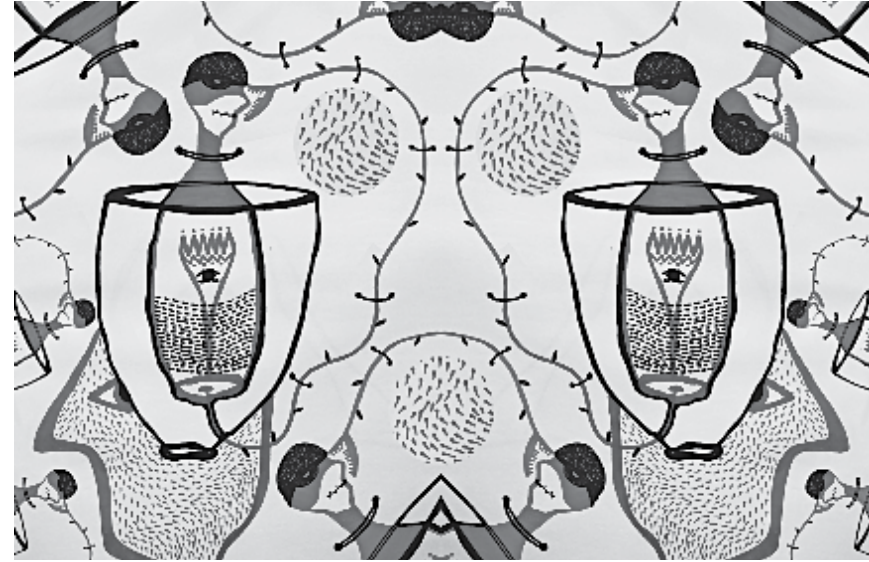


ILLUSTRATION: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

system for suicide. Suicides are under-reported because of shame. Those who attempt suicide and survive it often suffer intense humiliation.

There is one government-run mental health facility, in Pabna, with 500 beds. Its patients are reportedly highly neglected. Mental health services are concentrated around tertiary hospitals in big cities, but non-existent at the level of primary healthcare. The level of awareness of mental health needs and access to support services in rural areas in Bangladesh paints an even bleaker picture.

sent back on anything, for herself or her son, without his permission. She was devastated by her husband's behaviour.

Unable to take it after weeks, at 11pm on April 5, Shila attempted to escape her life. Her mother screamed for help when she spotted her in the cowshed. Their neighbours rushed in and saved her. She was admitted to the nearby hospital by Rehana, the leader of the local *polli shomaj* (women-led institution).

Shila's incident is one of 693 incidents reported through BRAC's community empowerment programme

Dr Erum Mariam is Executive Director of BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University, and Zaiyan F Chowdhury is a communication specialist at BRAC.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN DURING COVID-19

# Accepting the threat as 'real' is paramount



TASLIMA YASMIN

**I**T is now common knowledge that a pandemic, or any emergency for that matter, impacts women and girls differently than men. While the direct health

and financial risks are common for all, it is the additional risk of facing violence and discrimination at home and outside that women and girls have to put up with during any emergency. In the context of Bangladesh, where there is already high prevalence of violence against women, the risk is clearly greater. This leads to the legitimate expectation that there would be stronger commitments towards mitigating these risks in our national response to Covid-19. However, in the national-level actions and strategies pursued so far to address the pandemic, there has been very little emphasis on the issue of gender-based violence, or so it seems from the publicly available information, reflecting a lack of concern at the policy level.

Even the public perception in this regard seems to be somewhat similar; issues of violence against women and gender diverse communities are by and large considered to be of low priority. Certain aspects (or lack of them) may have caused this overall underplaying of the issue during the crisis. Firstly, this is an impact that is not always directly visible unlike the impact on public health. At the same time, media reporting has been relatively limited

due to the outbreak, unlike in pre-pandemic times when the media played a significant role in bringing to the fore issues of violence against women. Because of the necessary restrictions over movement and social gatherings, the civil society organisations too—which always provided services including shelter and legal protection to victims of gender-based violence—have had to limit their engagement. Meanwhile, government responses to the pandemic



**There are many alterations to be made to the government's existing support system so that it can prevent violence against women and girls more effectively.**

have largely focused on issues of public health and economy, with minimal direction to the agencies assigned for the purpose.

The result is that, although a number of development partners and civil society organisations have been insisting on the need to address the risk of violence against women and children, we are yet to reach a public

understanding that acknowledges such a risk as "real".

Needless to say, we have a separate ministry dealing with issues involving women and children under which there is also the Department of Women Affairs, Jatiyo Mohila Sangstha and many ongoing projects on prevention of gender-based violence. There are committees set up at district, upazila and union levels to prevent violence and also central cells on the same at the

in March. By now, those existing, elaborate structures for preventing violence against women and children should have come up with a strategy to provide additional protection and preventive support for victims during the pandemic.

Unfortunately, the voices that are now cautioning about the increase in gender-based violence are largely that of civil society organisations and rights groups. But without the government agencies and functionaries actively leading the initiatives, it is not possible for civil society members alone to provide effective prevention and protection services to the victims of violence.

In designing the steps for ensuring additional protection during the outbreak, all those government agencies and protection services and projects should first accept that the link between the pandemic and increase in gender-based violence does exist. Without this acknowledgment of the severity of the risk, it is hardly possible to take it seriously and plan towards mitigating it. Secondly, an effective strategy direction needs to be given from the government to all these bodies and services on how best to function in the emergency situation maximising the benefits for their target groups. There has to be an inclusive and large-scale consultation initiative at the national level including all relevant ministries, civil society members, women and gender rights groups, donors and development partners. Through such consultation, a brief but effective step-by-step guidance needs to be drawn for various agencies to follow in preventing gender-based violence.

For example, for the One-Stop Crisis Centres (OCC), a special procedural instruction may be provided to all OCCs about how they can maximise their output during Covid-19, instead of working on an ad-hoc basis. Particularly, examination and treatment of the victims of rape and other sexual assaults have to include additional health and safety protocols, and a direction to that effect from the relevant ministry is a timely demand. Similar additional protocols need to be introduced at the safe homes and victim support centres with regard to admission and release of victims. The police stations also need to be given special instructions as regards receiving complaints from victims of gender-based violence, keeping in mind that the victims' option to reach out for help during the crisis is extremely limited.

In short, there are many new alterations to be made to the existing system and these need to be made carefully by the concerned ministries and authorities so that the existing protection systems do not suffer or come to a standstill during the crisis.

However, it is true that while some of these efforts can be initiated right away utilising the existing resources and structures, some inevitably would remain on paper only, unless increased resources are provided. However, for a wider impact, we must first acknowledge that the crisis has indeed increased women's chances of facing violence, and we must consciously try to build this awareness at all levels of governance.

Taslima Yasmin teaches at the Department of Law, University of Dhaka. Email: taslima47@yahoo.com

**QUOTABLE Quote**

**EPICURUS**  
(341 BC-270 BC)  
Greek philosopher.

*It is not so much our friends' help that helps us, as the confidence of their help.*

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- 1 News article
- 5 End table lights
- 10 Copenhagen natives
- 12 Find darling
- 13 1969 Bobby Sherman hit
- 15 Yale student
- 16 Hosp. hookups
- 17 Farrow of film
- 18 Money, in slang
- 20 Days gone by
- 21 Whoop it up
- 22 Words of understanding
- 23 Astronomer
- 25 Hamlet
- 28 Kind of switch
- 31 Quarrelling

**DOWN**

- 1 Loafed around
- 2 Suit worker
- 3 Whole
- 4 Got together
- 5 Statutes
- 6 Commotion
- 7 Poppas' wives

**8 Commend**

- 9 Capital group
- 11 Like Bill Murray in "Ghostbusters"
- 14 1975 ELO hit
- 19 Happening
- 20 Wine grape
- 24 How corn is planted
- 25 New Zealand discoverer
- 26 Peter of "The Stunt Man"
- 27 Sash setting
- 29 Get a big head
- 30 Fake front
- 33 Tightly packed
- 35 Low card
- 38 Print units
- 39 Unclose, to poets

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO [dsopinion@gmail.com](mailto:dsopinion@gmail.com).

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS**

F	O	W	L	A	C	T	U	P	
A	C	R	E	C	R	A	T	E	R
R	E	E	F	C	A	P	O	N	E
C	A	S	T	O	U	T	P	A	N
E	N	T	H	O	S	E	I	N	N
A	D	I	O	S	M	I	N	E	R
D	I	N	K	M	U	G			
R	A	T	R	I	C	H	A	R	D
I	R	E	A	S	H	T	R	A	Y
F	I	N	I	T	E	J	O	K	E
T	E	S	T	E	R	A	M	E	R
S	E	E	D	Y	B	A	S	S	

**BEETLE BAILEY** BY MORT WALKER

**BABY BLUES** BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



POETRY

in a sleepless trance

BY FARNAZ MAHBUB

I hold stares - I sing to the moon  
Rigid, motionless - senseless woes  
Walls whisper, wolves murmur  
Fables engender - wise as fog  
My power wander where twilight wails  
Eyes murky - shadows in shield  
A collide of the heart with the soul  
Body settled flat - logic declining  
Love's revelations - impeccably muting  
With intentions so innocent - childlike  
Resting florets - wrapped in dewdrops  
But brain nerves beating - in vigilance  
That pernicious aftermath - within the hollow  
Like the crackling wood of time  
And pebbled strides - in retaliation  
Melodious shrieking - saxophones, drums howling  
Spirited impulses - dreamlike, vivid  
Myself crumbling  
By the sweetest - INSOMNIA of me

Farnaz Mahbub's passion revolves around traveling and writing. Currently, she resides in Toronto, Canada.



YEAR 2120

The human race is doing quite well. There was a possibility of a climate catastrophe in the early 21st century but they came to their senses soon enough and managed to deal with it by 2050.

Since then, it has been smooth sailing for the human race and the planet Earth.

At the end of Year 2120, a virus started appearing in human bodies. It had no symptoms and thus the human body did not try to reject it. In fact, if it hadn't been for the auto-health check every human being got every month, it probably would not have been detected. This really bothered the scientists and healthcare professionals. A myth that a plague attacked the humans every one hundred years started to circulate. However, it was the year 2120 and everyone was confident that it wasn't anything the global healthcare system couldn't handle.

But then, there wasn't anything to handle. Despite being extremely contagious, the virus continued showing no effects on the body of the host it infected. Gradually, most of the population forgot about its existence. A group of scientists continued working on it but they could discover little about it. They jokingly called it the new appendix. It's just there for some reason.

YEAR 2220

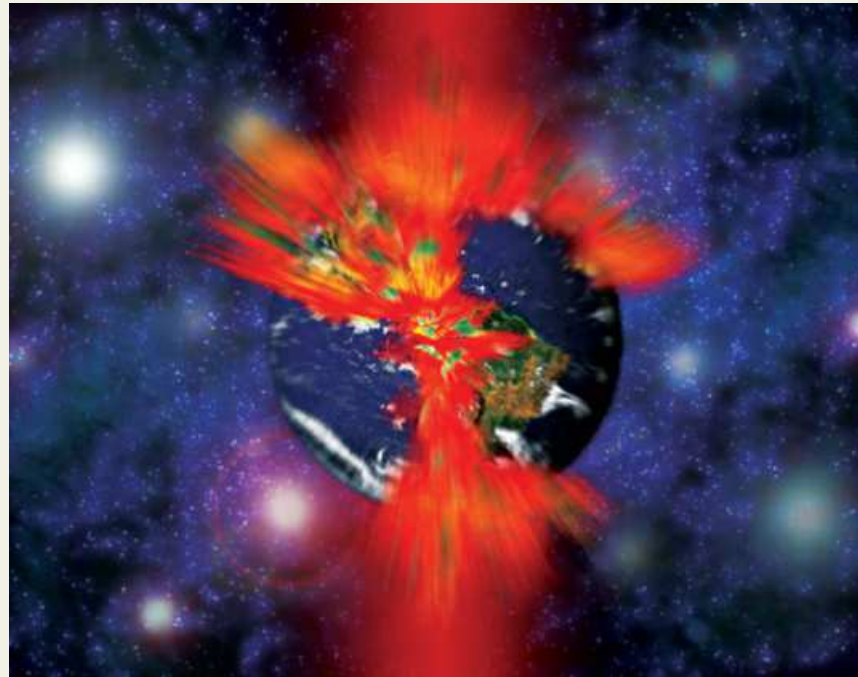
An invisible flying vessel hovers on the Exosphere of Planet Earth. Commander Xr and his subordinate Qb are staring down at Earth. They are employees of a mid-tier motel company called Galaxy Motels. Xr breaks the silence.

"Are you sure it's ready? We have to kill every life form larger than 750 µm."

FICTION

The Retirement

KIDWA ARIFF



"Yes. It has been 1 Lite since we infected them. This should be more than enough time"

"Press the button, then."

"Why do we still have buttons? Aren't we the most advanced civilization in the universe?"

"Just press the button."

And then, with the pressing of one button, every being on Earth dropped dead from what they thought was a harmless virus.

The sudden silence in the speakers gave the Commander a feeling of peace. After he hands over the planet to the construction crew, he shall finally be able to retire with the commission he deserves. It shall be enough to buy a small moon somewhere in Canis Major.

He shall move there with his wife and spend the rest of his life farming.

As always, his peaceful daydream was interrupted by Qb.

"Sir, do you think it's fair that we destroyed every lifeform on the planet just to build a Class-B Resort for struggling Galaxy Travellers?"

"It had reached the pinnacle of civilization. Our Analyst predicted the planet to perish in 2 Lites in a bloody war among the human species. We helped them out by giving them a painless death."

"But sir—"

"Please work. You are not paid to question the ethicality of our business model."

Seeing the ships of the construction

team arrive, Xr and Qb set off to report to the Central Command. While Qb navigated the ship, Xr called his wife.

"Honey, I'll return within the next week. Make a list of your favorite moons and we'll go pick one out as soon as I get back."

He put his communicator down as their ship approached the Central Command which was a small planet with a radius of four thousand kilometres. Xr looked at the sign reading, "GALAXY MOTELS: YOU DON'T NEED TO SLEEP IN YOUR SHIP ANYMORE" and realized it was the ugliest sign in the whole universe.

After three days of waiting, the call from the Chief Employee Resource Officer (CERO) of Galaxy Motels came. "Commander Xr! We will miss you. Here are your documents."

Xr looked at the documents and his heart stopped. His retirement fund was significantly lower than what he was expecting.

"Sir, there's been a mistake. I don't think the commission from my last project has been added."

"Ah, I'm sorry. We forgot to inform you. There was an issue with your last project. You did not qualify for the commission. You're welcome to postpone your retirement and work on a few more projects if the amount isn't enough."

Xr somehow managed to stop himself from putting his fist through the CERO's sneering face and calmly asked, "What issue?"

"The cockroaches survived"

Kidwa Ariff is a business student who misses writing fictions.

REVIEWS

Himadri Lahiri's *Diaspora Theory and Transnationalism*

ISBN: 978 93 52876143. Orient Blackswan, 2019

REVIEWED BY: SABIHA HUQ

The Routledge *Diaspora Studies Reader* (2017) co-edited by Klaus Stierstorfer and Janet Wilson made significant observations about the increase in global movement of people, capital, products, cultures and ideologies; and the consequent rise in research interest in the field of diaspora studies in the twenty-first century. In this light, Himadri Lahiri's *Diaspora Theory*

and discussing future configurations. Across the spectrum of social classes, the constituent aspects of the book are of interest to related studies in Bangladesh for clarity on the inclusions and exclusions to diaspora. In the choice of Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* for textual enunciation of the veracity of his theoretical propositions, Lahiri's book gains in relevance in the Bangladeshi diasporic context.

In his sustained Introduction to *Diaspora Theory and Transnationalism*, Lahiri has simplified the term Diaspora; and simultaneously expressed his intention of erasing certain innocuous but baffling misconceptions that surround the terminology. Short-term stays outside of one's nation state or forced migrations are not diaspora though these may constitute a diasporic community; the prioritising of "contexts" and "dimensions" in defining each case of dislocation being important. He writes, "diaspora is a social formation outside the nation of origin. It is a phenomenon involving uprooting, forced or voluntary, of a mass of people from the 'homeland' and their re-rooting in the hostland(s)" (4). Lahiri elaborately delineates the etymology of the word, and also its several wrong usages; to show at length how it differs from several forms of migration. For example, internal migration, that is, the movement of a group of people from one corner of the country to the other, cannot constitute diaspora. He also suggests how skin colour may influence one's settlement in a new country and consequently becoming a native. A white man in a white man's country would easily mix with the natives and become part of the indigenous community; while the same does not often hold true for people of colour. In our national context, familiar examples may be drawn in the case of people who successfully exchanged "homes" between the two Bengals post 1947; and cannot be easily differentiated down the line. However, the "refugee" tag may not wear off easily from one's new/acquired national identity; and it is by examining such critical issues or creating a framework for approaching similar complicated identities that Lahiri's explanation of the evolution of terminology is handy as a ready reckoner.

Conversely, the term "transnationalism" is a more recent coinage, first used by Randolph Bourne in 'Trans-National America' (1916) to refer to "the linkages between the national and transnational spaces through established networks of different kinds, sometimes with the help of the governments concerned" (Lahiri 14-15). The example of the Chinese investor who lives in San Francisco and claims to have the ability to live anywhere in the world, justifies Lahiri's epithet of transnationalism as "a cognate term" (Lahiri 14).

Diaspora and transnationalism may at times seem to overlap insofar as both are essentially "cross-border processes"; but Lahiri draws upon Rainer Baubock and Thomas Faist to emphasize that they are not coterminous. In this age of globalization and internationalism, communities are prone to transnationalism. Lahiri writes that transnationalism is heavily dependent on the functions of networks across the world, sustained and aided as they are by globalization, IT and facilities of fast travel (16). He discusses the six types of transnationalism referring to Vertovec's classification, in which transnationalism is seen as social morphology, type of consciousness, mode of cultural reproduction, avenue of capital, site of political engagement, and reconstruction of place or locality. Diaspora too has its types. One classification of diaspora endorses the historical/classical, modern/ recent, and incipient diasporas. Another classification of diaspora based on one's homeland status suggests two categories: stateless and state-linked diasporas. There is a third kind broadly based on experience and profession, which can be seen to have different categories - victim, labor, imperial, trade and deterritorialized diasporas. Lahiri comments that missing in the lists are the highly skilled transnational scientists, technologists, human-resource personnel from middle and upper middle classes, who are termed "cyber coolies" or "coolie diaspora," quite an interesting import of the nineteenth century.

Having discussed transnationalism and diaspora at length, Lahiri moves on to the stages of the development of diaspora criticism. There have been paradigm shifts in the history of diaspora theory due to the sociopolitical, economic and technological

developments since the 1990s; these have in turn changed patterns of global movements, and simultaneously our worldviews. In the first phase the idea of homeland-homeland had concrete shape as "cohesive" tentional entities. Sudesh Mishra's idea of homeland being "auto-centred, racially self-evident and ideologically homogenised" reminds of Benedict Anderson's idea of a nation as "imaginary" space that has "deep horizontal comradeship." Mishra along with Gabrielle Sheffer, Walker Connor, William Safran, Robin Cohen, et al. have participated in this theoretical field of root-generated diaspora criticism that one may connect with Derek Walcott's idea of "divided loyalty."

The second phase that Lahiri calls the second "scene" is of situational laterality. In this scene, the duality of home and hostland vanishes in the mire of indeterminacy that supplants "stable points of geo-psychical recognition"; making diaspora studies an extension of postmodernism in context. Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, James Clifford, Deleuze and Guattari are important names in this phase.

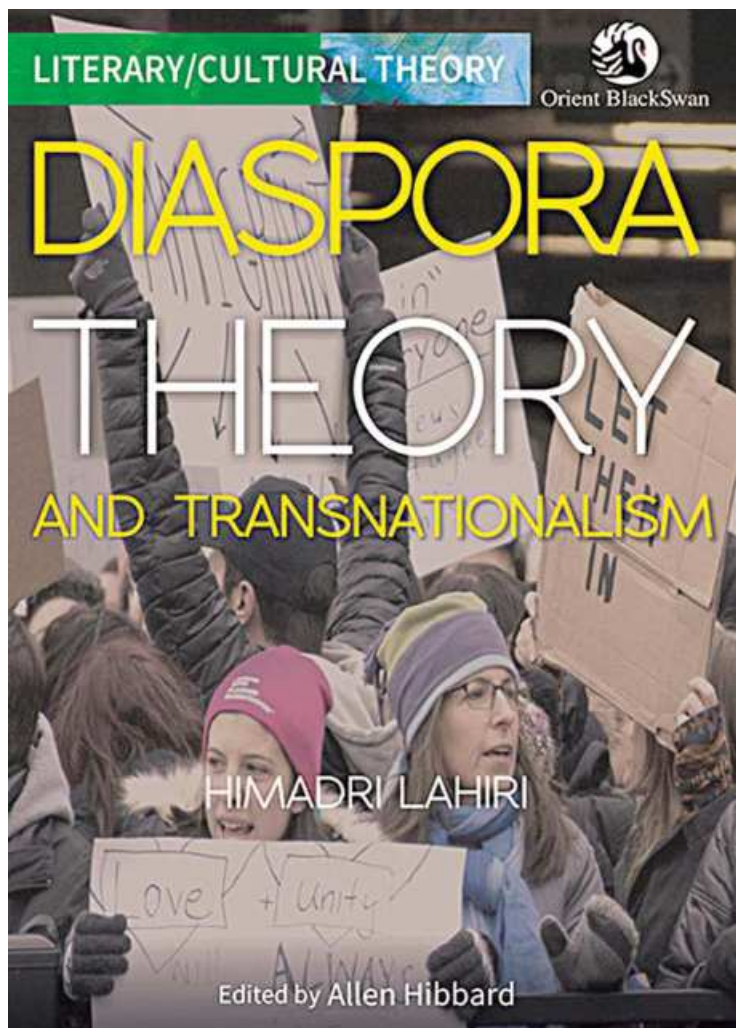
The third is of archival specificity in which the old cannot be equated with the new diaspora. For example, while the old version was "triggered by plantation economy", the new may have "features of migratory flows in the era of advanced capital" (Mishra quoted in Lahiri 22). Indeed, the role of advanced capital is very important in the third scene. This era generates the transnational networks of capitalist projects that involve human migration.

After the long and informative introduction Lahiri presents the idea of diaspora and transnationalism in five elaborate chapters. In the first chapter he classifies diaspora into three phases: classical, early modern and contemporary/late modern. He has also rendered his thoughts on home and homeland. In the second chapter he has dealt with the diasporic subject. Complicated issues like generation, citizenship and cultural hybridity have been defined with much lucidity. In the third chapter he focuses on gender and sexuality. Construction of masculinity and femininity in the diasporic spaces is a debated issue, and in Lahiri's rendition, much of the haze that shrouds masculinity-femininity issues become intelligible. As bearings of reproductivity

and state policy on citizenship are important issues for diasporic subjects, gender and sexuality become integral elements of the sociopolitical scene. Lahiri throws light on the relation between the "queer subject" and "diasporic subject" too, as many consider them to be theoretical twins. In chapter four he takes up the relation between religion and diaspora. Re-establishment of religious traditions in diasporic spaces can be very crucial, as we witness in today's United States for instance. With this "locative" operation of religion, 'translocative' operations are also related; and that calls for "drawing sustenance from the legends and history of the homelands and keeping institutional practices" (Lahiri 98) while being located in an alien land. These two are interrelated in many ways. Religion is also operative, for example, in the practices of nomenclature, though geographical or national connections are mostly influential here. A South Asian Muslim has a different pattern of name than a Muslim from Middle East even though they both may be citizens of the US. In the fifth chapter Lahiri addresses several issues in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, beginning with the history of its title, to assess literary representations of diasporic subjects.

In concluding his book, Lahiri clarifies that he takes transnationalism as falling within the rubric of diaspora studies, and this explains the rather fleeting discussion on it. The author factors the paradigmatic evolution(s) that "diaspora" as terminology has undergone, which makes transnationalism a related vector. He also includes the crucial role of mass media and cyberspace in present times in the continuation and hybridisation of cultural-religious practices, and in the mobilization of political initiatives. He even writes that ICT plays the role of a catalyst in the formation of diasporic identity! Finally, Lahiri has pointed out how liberal immigration policies have backfired in the US or in some EU countries, where today we see ascendant right wing politics introducing major changes in migrancy laws. Cumulatively, the frontiers of diaspora studies thus continue to expand in concentric circles, taking on additional significance in the lives of increasing numbers of people.

Sabiha Huq is Professor of English at Khulna University.



and *Transnationalism* (2019) is both a timely South Asian response and a relevant intervention at that; given the dynamics of the Global South as a hub of outbound migrations. As part of Orient Blackswan's Literary/Cultural Theory series, the book, edited by Allen Hibbard, aims at explicating basic terminologies with clarity; tracing historiographies of diaspora(s) vis-à-vis acculturation and



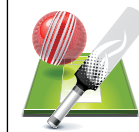


West Indies players celebrate the dismissal of England opener Dom Sibley on the first morning of the third and deciding Test at Old Trafford in Manchester yesterday. Having won the toss, West Indies decided to bowl and reduced the hosts to two for 66 at lunch. PHOTO: REUTERS

## The long road to Sanjida's success

While much fandom surrounds Bangladesh's male cricketers, the story is not the same for women cricketers who have nevertheless been growing in stature on the international arena. Since the halt in cricketing activities, The Daily Star has been talking to women cricketers to learn stories of their early days. In today's instalment, we talk to right-handed batter Sanjida Islam, who represented Bangladesh in four world cups since her debut in 2012.

MOSTAFA SHABUI



For most people, sport is mere entertainment during their early age. It may later turn into a profession, but that usually depends on a lot of factors. However, for Bangladesh batter Sanjida Islam, even during her childhood, sport was more a necessity than a form of entertainment.

Unlike most students, Sanjida could only make it into high school because of her interest in sports. "Since childhood, I was a very mischievous girl who always used to go out and play. I somehow managed to cross primary school. But to enter high school required money for admission and other necessities which my family could not afford. But fortunately, we came to know about a girls' school in our locality which allowed girls who would play regularly to study for free. I joined that school and started by playing volleyball and handball," said the now 24-year-old.

It is a very common scenario in our country to see girls being discouraged by their families to pursue a career in sport but although Sanjida had her family's support, the thing she lacked was the financial capability to help her in her pursuit.

"When I was in sixth grade, we came to know that the BKSP was trying to form a women's cricket team. My father had to toil

hard to arrange the money that I needed to go for a trial at BKSP in Dhaka. I went to the trial and eventually got selected," reminisced Sanjida.

But still, Sanjida's days of hardship were far from over. Sanjida and her family, who had returned from Dhaka with high hopes, saw their dreams shatter when they finally received long-awaited letter from the BKSP.

"My family and I were eagerly waiting for the letter from BKSP after returning from Dhaka. But our hopes dimmed after not receiving a letter for several days. However, suddenly one day the most awaited letter came to our address but what we found out after reading the 26- or 27-page letter would only shatter all our hopes.

"We came to know that it would require Tk 5000 and a lot of other things including school dress, sports jerseys, sports equipment in order to get admitted to the BKSP. But my father did not give up. He went from door to door with the BKSP's letter and was able to gather the fund I required," recalled Sanjida.

Sanjida's life has turned around since then. Known as a T20 specialist, Sanjida has now represented Bangladesh Women's team in 54 T20Is and 16 ODIs till date. However, the right-hander's only regret is that her father, for whom she has made it this far, could not live to witness the success of her daughter.

## 'If we respect one another, these things do not matter'

AFP, London

Almost half a century on from when cricket legends Ian Botham and Viv Richards made their county debut for Somerset their bond is as strong as ever, they explained in media interviews on Friday.

England all-rounder Botham, 64, earned the respect and eternal friendship of 68-year-old West Indies batsman Richards for never turning his back on him even when the Englishman received hate mail during the halcyon days at the county.

Their bond has been recognised with the announcement that future Test series between England and the West Indies will be called the Richards-Botham Trophy.

Between them they made a combined 223 Test appearances, totalled 13,740 runs and 415 wickets.

"What I can say to Ian? I can thank him so much for being in my



corner," Richards told Sky Sports. "We just represented what I think people should be representing: that we're all human beings, and that's the most important thing."

Botham and Richards in their prime were targeted by South Africa to persuade them to go on rebel tours during the time when sporting links were cut due to the apartheid regime.

Both declined but other England stars did go whilst the West Indies also toured there.

"The thing that finally finished me with all that was when they turned round to Viv and said: 'We'll make you an honorary white man.' I said: 'Hang on, where's this going?'" Botham told the Daily Mail in a joint interview. "He's black and he's proud and magnificent

and a great guy.

"He doesn't want to be an honorary white man any more than I want to be an honorary black man."

Richards agreed with Botham over his statement that all lives matter. The pair stressed that it was not a rejection of the Black Lives Matter movement which was born out of the death of unarmed African-American man George Floyd in Minneapolis at the hands of police officers in May.

"I most certainly agree with Ian when he says all lives matter," said Richards. "It's been highlighted now because of the events we've seen played out in America -- this hate towards our colour.

"If we have respect for one another, these things wouldn't come into the equation. Look at Covid. We are not in control. This warfare is hitting everyone -- not just black or white, but every race and every country on earth. We should all just sit back and reflect on where we'd like to be."



Cristiano Ronaldo leaves the pitch dejected after Juventus were handed a 2-1 defeat by Udinese on Thursday. (Inset) Lazio's Ciro Immobile celebrates his winning goal against Cagliari. The Lazio striker leads Ronaldo by one goal in Serie A's top-scorer's race.

## Immobile drives Lazio as Juventus made to wait

AFP, Milan

Seko Fofana scored the winner as Juventus fell to a shock 2-1 defeat at struggling Udinese on Thursday to miss the chance to seal the Serie A title for the ninth time in a row.

Dutch defender Matthijs de Ligt had put the defending champions ahead three minutes before the break in Udine. But a diving Ilija Nestorovski header seven minutes after the interval got Udinese level, with Fofana completing a comeback in injury time.

Juventus remain six points ahead of second-placed Atalanta with three games left to play, and have another

chance to seal the title for the 36th time on the pitch at home against 14th-placed Sampdoria on Sunday.

"We paid for a lack of order after a good first half because we wanted to win at all costs," said Sarri.

"In this way we took the game to a dangerous level, and after the 90th minute, we lost it."

Juventus's performance against the minnows was worrying ahead of their crunch Champions League last 16 game against Lyon on August 7.

"At the moment I am not thinking about the Champions League, in my mind there is only Sampdoria," added Sarri.

The three points were precious for Udinese, who move up to 15th, seven points clear of the relegation zone.

"Juventus wanted to win the championship, but we had a great game," said Fofana.

Lazio came from a goal down to defeat Cagliari 2-1 to move to within a point of third-placed Inter Milan.

Sergey Milinkovic-Savic got Lazio back into the game just after the break with Ciro Immobile connecting with a Luis Alberto cross for the winner after an hour in Sardinia.

It was Immobile's 31st goal this season and moves the Italian back ahead of Ronaldo in the battle for the top Serie A scorer this season.

Simone Inzaghi's side ended their five-match winless run with a victory which leaves them with a slim chance of winning the title, as they sit eight points behind Juventus.

## FOOTGOLF gaining a foothold

AFP, Shah Alam

Her eyes fixed on the flag in the distance, Jamiatul Akmal Abdul Jabar takes a run-up past her cheering friends and kicks a football down a golf course in Malaysia.

This is "footgolf", a novel fusion of two of popular sports that is growing fast and attracting people to the fairways. It follows the rules of golf, but players leave their clubs at home and instead tee off with their feet try to complete each hole in as few kicks as possible.

Jamiatul was having a go at the sport with her friends on a converted course with 21-inch holes outside the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur. The 38-year-old said she had considered golf "such a boring game" but was rather taken by footgolf.

"You feel that this is something new, something to experience," Jamiatul, an avid futsal player, told AFP. "I'm planning to book another (session)."

Thousands of players are now kicking balls on footgolf courses in about 36 countries, and the sport has been governed by an international federation since 2012.

Several World Cups have been staged, although the 2020 edition originally due to take place in Japan has been postponed to next year due to the coronavirus.

The sport's origins aren't clear, but one of the earliest recorded tournaments was in the Netherlands in 2008.

In Malaysia, people started playing footgolf in 2018 at the Bukit Jelutong

course outside the capital Kuala Lumpur, which had been abandoned but was given a makeover by Footgolf Malaysia.

Jeffrey Cottam, who co-founded the organisation, said initial attempts to start the sport were resisted by course owners who balked at the idea of letting footballers onto their greens.

But he finally managed to set up at Bukit Jelutong, and the company now manages two footgolf courses in Malaysia -- the second is in the southern state of Johor -- with a third on the way.

More than 2,000 people play each month in Malaysia, Cottam said.

"Footgolf, like golf, isn't about strength and how young you are," he told AFP. "It's more technical... It's not about beating people. It's about beating the course."

He also hoped the growing popularity of the sport could give some help to ailing courses. Golf has fallen out of favour in many countries, with young people largely uninterested and few having the time to spend a whole day playing the sport, leading to many courses closing.

But footgolf is giving them some much-needed revenue -- in the US, for instance, the sport is now played on more than 500 courses.

Danny Chia, a Malaysian professional golfer who plays on the Asian Tour, also said footgolf might help courses.

"There are a lot of golf courses out there that are not doing very well," he told AFP. "This could be a new avenue for them."

This picture taken on June 21, 2020 shows Sabrina Joan (L) smiling after her "foot-putt" went into the hole on a footgolf course in Shah Alam, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur.

PHOTO: AFP



## Henderson voted best in England

REUTERS

Liverpool's Premier League title winning captain Jordan Henderson was named England's Footballer of the Year on Friday in the annual vote of the Football Writers' Association (FWA).

Manchester City's Kevin De Bruyne, Manchester United's Marcus Rashford and Liverpool pair Virgil van Dijk and Sadio Mane made up the rest of the top five.

Henderson has been central to Liverpool's success under Jurgen Klopp through his leadership and tireless midfield work.



"As grateful as I am I don't feel like I can accept this on my own. I don't feel like anything I've achieved this season or in fact during my whole career has been done on my own," the 30-year-old said.

"I owe a lot to so many different people -- but none more so than my current teammates -- who have just been incredible and deserve this every bit as much as I do," he said.

Henderson has played in 30 of Liverpool's league matches so far this season and scored four goals.

Two other Liverpool players -- right back Trent Alexander-Arnold and goalkeeper Alisson Becker -- also received votes.



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SHAH CEMENT

# Relief scarce in flood-hit areas

Many face starvation as govt relief 'inadequate'

STAR REPORT

Many flood-hit people are passing their days in starvation as the government's relief allocation is insufficient, victims said.

In some places, flood victims alleged the local people's representatives of nepotism in distributing relief, thus depriving those in actual need of aid.

Besides in some areas, flood relief work has been halted as government officers are busy with the VGF (vulnerable group feeding) programme ahead of Eid ul Azha.

However, government officials assured that flood-hit people will also receive food under VGF.

Over 37 lakhs people of 143 upazilas in 30 districts have been affected by flood, according to a report of National Disaster Response Coordination Centre (NDRCC).

The government has distributed over 6,593 tons of rice, over Tk 2.38 crores in cash, some 66,872 packets of dry food and other relief materials among the victims, said the NDRCC report.

In Tangail, where around 2 lakh people are affected by flood, the government distributed some 355 tons of rice, Tk 8 lakhs in cash, Tk 2.5 lakh for baby foods, Tk 2 lakh for fodder and 6,000 packets of dry foods among the victims.

However, many union parishad (UP) chairmen and members are saying the relief amount is not sufficient to cover all flood victims.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



The makeshift dams in Munshiganj's Mawa Kandipara are of little effect against the high current of the overflowing Padma. Floods have beset the country in recent times, and the Padma has swelled beyond danger levels, causing severe damage to houses and roads. This photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# About 1.3m children to be affected by flooding

Says Unicef

UNB, Dhaka

The Unicef has said more than 2.4 million people, including around 1.3 million children in Bangladesh, are estimated to be affected by flooding.

The UN agency on Thursday said over half a million (548,816) families have lost their homes.

Flooding has come at a time when Bangladesh is still recovering from Cyclone Amphan, and its already stretched emergency and health response systems are working hard to contain the spread of Covid-19.

The country now has over 210,000 confirmed cases.

The Unicef said it is working closely with government partners, who are leading the flood response, and NGOs to provide urgently needed water, sanitation and hygiene supplies to children and communities in need.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

# Covid-19 crisis could spark new migration

Warns Red Cross; Trump axes convention as US virus cases top 4m

AGENCIES

The devastating economic toll the coronavirus crisis is taking around the world could spark huge waves of fresh migration once borders reopen, the head of the Red Cross warned in an interview.

Jagan Chapagain, head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), told AFP he was deeply concerned about the secondary effects of the pandemic.

"Increasingly we are seeing in many countries the impacts on the livelihoods and the food situation," he said in an interview at IFRC's headquarters in Geneva on Thursday.

The pandemic and the lockdowns and border closures imposed to halt the spread of the virus have been destroying livelihoods around the planet and are expected to drive many millions more into poverty.

Many people are already faced with the choice of risking exposure to the novel coronavirus or going hungry, Chapagain

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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

# 'Bangladesh will top India within 10 years'

July 25, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

### BANGABANDHU WILL UNDERGO OPERATION

Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is leaving for London tomorrow afternoon.

He will undergo an operation for the removal of a stone from his gallbladder. During the prime minister's absence from the country Syed Nazrul Islam will act as prime minister. Begum Sheikh Mujib, Sheikh Kamal and Sheikh Rehana will accompany the prime minister to London. Bangabandhu's personal physician Prof Nurul Islam will also go with him.

**SIMANTA GANDHI CONGRATULATES BANGLADESH** Simanta Gandhi Abdul Gaffar Khan today expresses his hope that Bangladesh will fare better than India on development within 10 years. He congratulates Bangladeshi people for achieving independence through supreme sacrifice.

**BANGLADESH WILL SOON ENTER UN** The UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim says today that with the process of normalisation now in progress in the Indian sub-continent it should be possible to admit Bangladesh into the United Nations soon. He, however, says that the move should come from the Security Council.

**JAKARTA TRIP SUCCESSFUL** Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad tells newsmen

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



# INDIA-CHINA STANDOFF Beijing claims progress in border talks

AGENCIES

Progress has been made by the border troops of both India and China to disengage and ease the situation on the ground, the Chinese foreign ministry said yesterday at the end of the latest round of diplomatic talks between the two countries.

Since the violent clashes that took place in the high Himalayas over months ago, the two sides have held several rounds of talks to restore calm, and reduced the numbers of troops in the valley, while still pouring reinforcements into the region.

There were no shots fired during the June 15 fighting in the Galwan Valley of India's Ladakh region when the Indian soldiers were beaten with rocks and clubs, but it still marked the worst clash in decades between Asia's nuclear-armed giants.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

# Several species of America's crocodiles came from Africa

AFP, Paris



The several species of crocodiles plying rivers and brackish byways in the Americas -- from Florida to Peru -- all came from Africa, according to a study published Thursday.

They may have descended, researchers speculate, from a single pregnant specimen that bobbed along Atlantic Ocean currents to the New World at least five million years ago, probably longer.

Based on the high-tech analysis of a skull fragment unearthed from the Libyan desert in 1939, the findings are bolstered by genetic evidence

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

# Doctor given show-cause notice over FB post

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A show-cause letter was issued to the doctor of a health centre in Jhalakathi over his Facebook posts yesterday.

Tipu Sultan of Dapdapia Union Health Centre in Nalchity upazila was issued the letter by Dr Shilyul Parvin, the health and family planning officer.

"You often mock and post unfavourable representations of the operations of the government's health division on Facebook," the letter reads.

It added that his Facebook posts were a violation of "civility" and government officers' code of conduct, which is a punishable offence.

The letter also pointed out that his Facebook posts violated the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules-2018.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

# UP chairman held for theft of rice meant for the poor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A female union parishad chairman and a security staffer at her office were arrested on charge of misappropriating rice meant for poor people in Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila yesterday.

The arrestees are Jesmin Nahar Rani, 45, chairman of Meduari union parishad, and Akbar Ali, 50.

A case was lodged Bhaluka Police Station accusing the arrestees hours after their arrests.

Quoting the case statement, Mohammad Mainuddin, officer-in-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



### PRAYER TIMING JULY 25

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-20 12-45 5-00 6-50 8-15  
JAMAT 4-55 1-15 5-15 6-55 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A cattle herder guides the sacrificial animal off a boat from Faridpur to be sold at the Postogola Crematorium on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. Amid fears of the coronavirus pandemic, only 27 cattle markets have gained permission to operate in Dhaka this year. This photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## GABTOLI CATTLE MARKET

# Poor response from buyers worry traders

Some sell sacrificial animals at low prices fearing sharp fall in prices

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHIN MOLLAH

Though it is a week away from Eid-ul-Azha, trading of sacrificial animals has only begun in the city's sole permanent cattle market in Gabtoli.

A good number of animals has been brought to the market, but the number of customers is very poor.

Traders fear loss as the coronavirus pandemic has wreaked havoc on the economy, reducing people's capacity to purchase.

Besides, many have opted not to take part in the sacrificial ritual this year to avoid contracting the virus.

Some traders have started selling cattle at a lower price fearing the loss.

Siraz Hossain, a resident of Mirpur-14, purchased a bull weighing about six and a half maunds for Tk 1.25 lakh on Thursday.

"Last year, I purchased a bull weighing around six maunds for Tk 1.5 lakh. So I am very happy with the bull this time," said Siraz.

Cattle trader Monowar Bepari said he made some profit by selling the bull as he purchased 20 cattle from Sirajganj at a "low price" a few days ago.

Yusuf Khan, a cattle trader from Kushtia's Mirpur upazila, has brought 12 bulls in the market last week after

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2