



# The Daily Star



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<b>2,520</b> New cases in 24hrs	<b>2,21,178</b> Total cases	<b>2,874</b> Deaths	<b>1,22,090</b> Recoveries	<b>644,808</b> Deaths	<b>16,052,579</b> Total cases
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## DHAKA SLUMS

# Where Covid is curiously quiet

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and ZYMA ISLAM

Something strange is happening in the capital's slums -- Covid-19 cases are hard to come by.

When the pandemic first hit, the 20-odd slums in the city were feared to become virus hubs. Apart from high density of the population, shared kitchens, toilets, communal water sources, one room per family living arrangements, open sewers, non-existent waste disposal systems, and the slum residents' overall economic vulnerabilities made them the most vulnerable.

More than four months later, no reliable data, however, can be found to determine whether coronavirus has wreaked havoc on the slums.

The Daily Star correspondents visited seven slums of Korail, Chalantika, Bhashantek, Bauniabandh, Abuler Basti and Lalashori recently and found residents saying the same thing time and again: There are no Covid-19 cases here.

"There have been no coronavirus patients in this slum. This is a rich man's disease," said one in Korail Basti early this month. Other slum dwellers made this claim so repeatedly that it was frankly, flummoxing.

"Why do you insist on talking about it? People are not getting any sicker than they used to be before," said Maulana Abdus Sobhan, chairperson of Korail Basti Unnayan Committee's Boubazaar unit.

Forty-year-old daily wage earner Kamrunnahar, who lives in the slum, said she did not find it necessary to wear a mask since "there was no coronavirus" case there.

"I need to think about what to eat at night, I can't worry about masks," said the woman, who used to work as a domestic help, but became unemployed in the coronavirus fallout.

Councillor of Ward-19 Mofizur Rahman echoed the thoughts of the slum residents, saying, "The rate of infection is very low here."

Talking to The Daily Star on July 21, Meerjady Sabrina Flora, director of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), made a similar observation.

"We are undertaking a survey on the slums in the capital and we are not seeing the infection rate to be high," she said.

Geospatially, this is confusing. Chalantika, Bhashantek, and Bauniabandh, for example, are all in Mirpur, which consistently has had the highest number of Covid-19 cases in the city.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



The crowd at Badura cattle market in Golachipa upazila of Patuakhali makes it seem like there isn't a pandemic going on. When the photo was taken on Thursday afternoon, only a few policemen outside the premises were asking people to maintain social distancing using a megaphone. At least 960 people have tested positive for coronavirus in the district.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

## CRITICISING KL

# Malaysia will expel arrested Bangladeshi

Rights activists outraged

STAR REPORT

The Malaysian Immigration Department has said Rayhan Kabir, the detained Bangladeshi national, will be deported to Bangladesh and blacklisted for criticising Putrajaya's handling of migrants during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a brief statement, the agency confirmed that Rayhan was arrested by its intelligence unit on Friday afternoon from Setapak in Kuala Lumpur, following a two-week manhunt.

"This Bangladeshi national will be deported and blacklisted from entering Malaysia forever," said its Director-General Datuk Khairul Dzaimie Daud, reported Malay Mail.

Meanwhile, two lawyers -- Sumitha Shaanthinni Kishna (Chambers of Sumitha) and Selvaraja Chinniah (Messrs CR Selva) -- have been appointed to defend Rayhan Kabir.

"Pdrn [Royal Malaysian Police] and immigration have been informed [of the lawyers' appointment] via email today. In our letter, we have sought a date to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

# In the name of the father and freedom

SHAHTUB SIDDIQUE ANIK

It was on World Freedom Day when Monorom Polok had to see his photojournalist father handcuffed and jailed.

Things were different over the previous 53 days during which Shafiqul Islam Kajol remained missing -- it was anxious wait and uncertainty for the family then -- but now it's a different battle altogether after he has been traced.

Many on social media may have already noticed a photo of Polok, the 20-year-old son of Kajol, with a placard reading "I demand release of my father Kajol" at the Central Shaheed Minar.

The youngster, all by himself, gave rise to a weeklong viral campaign titled "Freedom of Kajol and Free Thinking" and requested everyone to post a picture with "Free Kajol" written on a white paper from July 21 to 27 from their respective Facebook profile.

Over 300,000 people responded to his campaign. Singers, activists and intellectuals took part in Facebook live programmes in solidarity while a rally was staged in Shahbagh on Friday. More events would follow.

Around two days back, Polok wrote on Facebook, "My journalist and editor father has not been able to return home for 134 days now. We can't meet him even... I came back from the jail gate today. My father's crime was that he shared a news item of a national daily."

A third-year student of a public university, he feels helpless at times. He "cannot sleep, cannot eat, cannot do any regular stuff like before."

He is going through this at a time when the whole nation is badly affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. His mother was a research assistant but she lost her job after the pandemic hit.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



## Covid-19 sample collection now below 10,000

2,520 test positive; 38 more die

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of samples collected in a 24-hour period for Covid-19 testing came down below the 10,000 mark yesterday -- first in the last two months.

This comes at a time when the health experts are continuously urging the authorities to ramp up Covid-19 testing.

During the 24-hour till 8:30am yesterday, 9,615 samples were collected across the country, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Earlier on May 28, 9,310 samples were collected.

Speaking at the regular online briefing yesterday, Prof Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of DGHS,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

# 'Crossfire deaths' on the rise

35 killed so far this month

STAR REPORT

"Crossfires" with law enforcers claimed multiple lives every single day for the past six days, marking a deadly streak in extra-judicial killings.

Statistics obtained by Ain o Salish Kendra show that 35 people have been killed so far in "shootouts" in the month of July -- and the month is not even over yet.

In comparison, 143 people died in "crossfires" between January and June this year, averaging at 23 killings per month. Between late night Friday and the early hours of Saturday, four people died in "crossfires" in Cox's Bazar, Chattogram and Kushtia. All those killed were accused in various criminal cases, including of narcotics.

In Banshkhalia upazila of Chattogram, Sher Ali, an alleged robber was killed in what law enforcers claimed to be a "gunfight" with Rapid Action Battalion, in the early hours of yesterday.

"Sher Ali was killed in a shootout with Rab-7 in Saral union area of Banshkhalia," said Mahmudul Hasan Mamun, assistant director of Rab-7 (media wing).

"He was accused in at least 12 cases filed for murder and robbery with different police stations," he added. The shootout took place in a deserted area underneath a bridge, around 1:00am, informed additional superintendent of police, Sohel Mahmud.

"The robbers had gathered at that spot, and RAB arrived there acting on a tip-off. The robbers, realising they've been found, shot at RAB. After the fight, Ali's body was recovered," he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## FAKE MASK SCAM

# DU official placed on three-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Sharmin Jahan, proprietor of Aparajita International, on a three-day remand in a case filed over supplying fake N95 masks to BSMMU's Covid-19 isolation unit.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Moinul Islam passed the order after Shah Md Akhteruzzaman Ilias, an inspector of Detective Branch of police and the investigation officer of the case, produced her before the court with a three-day remand prayer.

Sharmin, currently working as an assistant registrar at Dhaka University (DU), was arrested from the capital's Shahbagh area on Friday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

# Govt alone not to blame for health sector corruption

Says new DG of DGHS

BSS, Dhaka

Newly appointed DGHS Director General Dr Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam yesterday said the government alone was not responsible for the corruption in the country's health sector.

"People should not make the government responsible alone for the corruption in the health sector...we all are part of it, we all have to be honest from our respective positions," he said.

The new chief of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) made the remarks while talking to reporters after paying homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing a wreath at his portrait on Dhanmondi-32 in the capital.

"Overcoming the present situation is the biggest challenge before us," he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



An engine boat full of people is travelling in the haor while two threewheelers are plying "the road". Thanks to flooding, there is no way to tell where the haor ends and land begins. The photo of Sarail-Arui Road in KaliShimul area of Brahmanbaria was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDYO

# MEDICAL COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST Same gang, over and over again

Question paper leaked despite ring leader Jasim behind bars; police now after their backers

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Just three days before the medical college entrance test in 2015, Rab said it arrested the ringleader and three members of the gang that leaked the questions.

But the gang still managed to leak the question papers ahead of the test on September 18, although its leader Jasim Uddin Bhuiyan Munnu was behind bars.

Although the news of the leak triggered widespread protests, the result was published after two days. In an attempt to deflect the allegations, an official of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said the medical college admission seekers did well in the test because they studied better. The then health minister Mohammed Nasim said the questions were not leaked.

Notwithstanding this, statements issued at different times by law enforcement agencies indicate that the same group of people have repeatedly leaked question sheets of medical college admission tests between 2013 and 2018.

Jasim Uddin Bhuiyan Munnu, the ringleader arrested in 2015, was also arrested in 2011 along with his 20 cohorts while attempting to leak the question sheets.

Officials said the suspects engaged in the same crime every time they got freed from jail.

The other members of the gang who were arrested by Rab in 2015, are: ZMA Salehin Showon, a doctor of a Noakhali Hospital; S M Sanowar Hossain, a teacher of E-Haque Coaching Centre; and Akhtaruzzaman Khan

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



## Same gang, over and over again

FROM PAGE 1

Tushar, the managing director of Laili-Abed Construction Company.

They used to target coaching centre students and promised them of admission to any medical college they like.

The question sheet was handed to them the day before the test.

They took as much as Tk 12 lakh from an admission seeker.

The latest case, filed by the CID last week against the suspects, the gang leaked the medical and dental college admission quizzes for years.

"It is the same gang leaking medical admission question papers for years. They couldn't do it in the last two years. Now we will eradicate the root of the racket," Kamrul Ahsan, additional special superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department's cyber police department, who is investigating the case, told The Daily Star yesterday.

**FROM 2013-18: HOW THEY DID IT** CID Official Kamrul said ringleader Jasim, who is now in custody, formed the gang with his family members.

His wife Sharmin Ara Jesmin Shilpi, brother-in-laws Zakir Hossain Dipu and Alamgir Hossain, nephews Parvez Khan and Sami Ul Zafar Situ, and cousin Abdus Salam Khan, are key suspects.

Salam used to be a machine operator at a facility where the Bureau of Health Education of the DGHS printed the questions.

During the printing, Salam managed to hand his cousin Jasim a copy of the sheets, officials said.

In 2013, the night before the exams, Jasim got hold of the sheet and gave it to Sanowar at Proshika More in the capital's Mirpur. Sanowar took a photo of the sheet and sent it to other suspects Rawshan Ali Himu, Almas and Sazzad using messaging apps.

Many admission seekers who received the leaked question sheet got admitted to the medical colleges, CID case statement said.

The other gang members are: Dr Shovon, Tushar, Rashed Khan and their accomplices.

In 2014, suspects Parvez Khan and a doctor from the capital's East Rajabazar Moyez Uddin Ahmed Pradhan gave leaked question papers to 40-50 students.

After Rab arrested Jasim in 2015, the

other members of the racket collected the admission seeker's national ID cards, copies of their registration cards, phone numbers and the cash and gave those to Jasim's wife Sharmin and his nephew Zafar at Jasim's home, Prithi Villa, in Mirpur.

Sharmin with the help of Salam then called the admission seeker's parents the night before the exam and gave them the leaked questions.

Those students later got admitted to Khulna Medical College, Barisal Medical College, Sylhet Osmani Medical College and Ibrahim Cardiac Medical College.

Freed from jail in 2016, Jasim and other members of the racket resumed the job.

In September 2017, another gang member Mohaiminul Islam Badhan and with help of his father Biddiut Ali leaked the question paper of a medical college that admits students through separate tests, the case statement said.

In the morning of September 20, Jasim and the gang sent those question papers to the admission seekers, it added.

Badhan and Sanowar were accused in another case with Shahbagh Police Station in 2018 over their involvement in leaking Dhaka University admission test questions.

According to officials, printing press employee Salam had blessings from a "DGHS syndicate". Police are looking for Salam.

In primary interrogation, the CID found at least 50 people in the racket.

CID official Kamrul Ahsan suspects that at least 700-800 admission seekers got admitted through this racket over the years.

Ringleader Jasim alone has assets worth at least Tk 50 crore, including two six-storey buildings in Mirpur. The CID so far recovered 78 bank cheques, many of which are from 2015. Investigators are now looking into the assets of the other suspects.

The latest case also accuses 150-200 unidentified people and 14 people who were also accused with Mirpur Police Station over the leak of medical admission test question papers over the years.

CID officials said they are working to identify the admission seekers who benefitted from the leaks.



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

A farmer drying his jute on Palima Bridge in Kalihati upazila of Tangail recently. Many are worried about getting decent price for their produce due to the pandemic and recent shakeup at jute mills.

## Where Covid is curiously quiet

FROM PAGE 1

Similarly, Korail is located in Mohakhali, which is also one of the most infected areas.

But perhaps what is more confusing is that there are decades of compelling scientific evidence pointing out that slum residents are more vulnerable to illnesses.

For example, in 2017, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies did an extensive survey on 800 households in slums, and found several factors that should point towards higher morbidity.

The survey report, titled "Burden of Disease on the Urban Poor: A Study of Morbidity and Utilisation of Healthcare among Slum Dwellers in Dhaka City", found that a vast majority of the slum population did not use soap for washing hands.

Eighty-five percent of the respondents said they wash their hands with only water or mud/ash after defecation. While a tiny minority used soap after their own defecation, almost nobody washed hands with soap after cleaning their children's excretion, according to the report.

Meanwhile, only 18 percent of slum residents reported consistently using footwear while using the toilet. This is in spite of the fact that all the households share toilets, with an average of 12 and a maximum of 25 households sharing one toilet.

About 38 percent of the toilets used were makeshift bamboo and polythene structures, erected over a canal or a skip. Only a fifth of the households used toilets linked to the sewerage system, or with a water-sealed ring slab.

More than half drank water straight from shared public taps, found the survey.

Do these have an effect on their health? The report found that it does -- 95.4 percent of the households reported having experienced illness in the past month. For a control group of non-slum households, this figure was 87.4 percent, showing the slum residents get sicker. More than half of the slum

households experiencing illnesses had fever, cold and other respiratory illnesses.

Then how could Covid-19 apparently gloss over these people-packed urban pockets?

"While we don't have any study results yet, one reason could be the fact that there are some open spaces inside slums," mused Dr Flora, "but we can't say anything concrete until the survey results are finalised."

Interviews of slum dwellers taken by The Daily Star anecdotally raise questions about whether Covid-19 is not being found, because slums are not being tested.

Babu fell sick, along with his entire family, soon after a coronavirus-driven lockdown was imposed, but did not get tested. An owner of a mobile phone recharging booth in Korail's Babubazar slum, Babu was the first to become sick with the flu in his home. He was suffering for two weeks, when his three and eight-year-old sons went down with the flu as well. They each suffered between 20 days and one and a half months.

Asked why Babu did not get tested for Covid-19, he said, "Why would I? There is no coronavirus in the slums. Besides I don't know where to get tested. I don't have the money for treatment either, so why bother!" he said.

Pran Krishna Dey, proprietor of a pharmaceutical store in Bhashantek, said he was selling flu medication in droves, but none of the residents ever sought to be tested, nor did he advised anyone to do so.

"We don't know whether we have coronavirus in this slum or not," he said.

A similar view was expressed by owners and employees of several drug stores near Chalanitika and other slums.

Meanwhile, the muezzin of Baitul Nur Jame Masjid at Chalanitika said when an old man died all of a sudden in the slum three weeks back, he was not tested for Covid-19.

"People said he died of old age, so there was no need for any test," said the

muezzin.

Asked, Prof Nasima Sultana, additional director general of the DGHS, said there has been no dedicated testing in the slums. "We usually don't see the poorest show up at hospitals for testing either," she said.

Shipra Rani Mridha, a Brac Shashtya Karmi, said misinformation and stigma appeared to be a real challenge in the slums. "Many families I work with lack the education, awareness and income to tackle the Covid-19 crisis. They are also scared, because people have a negative perception towards people infected with coronavirus. They do not want to give out information related to their health, even if they are suffering from an illness."

"I have been a community health worker for four years now. I have never seen such fear and resistance in the community before."

"I collected the names of a few people in the area who had fever, in order to arrange appropriate support for them. Many of their family members showed up at my doorstep soon after, and begged me not to share their details with anyone. They were afraid that they would be treated as outcasts, or 'arrested' by the police. Some said they heard people are killed during quarantine. When I tried to talk to them to remove this misconception, some people became aggressive and desperate to strike their names off the list. It was scary."

Back in May, Brac's James P Grant School of Public Health did a rapid research in slums and found that people showing Covid-19 symptoms were being harassed to leave.

"Individuals are worried about being ostracised within the community, and being accused of infecting others and spreading it in the settlements," said Prof Sabina Faiz Rashid, dean of the institute, and one of the authors of the research.

A couple of months have gone by since then, has the situation really changed?

## Turkey calls Greek reaction to Hagia Sophia prayers 'hostile'

AFP, Ankara

Turkey yesterday lambasted Greek statements against the move to convert Hagia Sophia back into a mosque after the first Muslim prayers were held in the Istanbul landmark.

Relations between Nato allies Ankara and Athens have been uneasy in recent months but tensions increased over Hagia Sophia and energy riches in the eastern Mediterranean.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan joined thousands for the first Islamic prayer on Friday since Hagia Sophia was reconverted from a museum into a mosque this month.

Greek prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on Friday said what was happening in Istanbul was "not a show of force, but proof of weakness".

The reaction to Hagia Sophia opening for Muslim worship "once again revealed Greece's hostility towards Islam and Turkey," Turkish foreign ministry spokesman Hami Aksyos said.

## DU official

FROM PAGE 1

During yesterday's hearing, the magistrate asked Sharmin whether she could run a business while holding the post of assistant registrar of DU, but the accused remained silent.

However, claiming herself innocent, Sharmin told the court that she was framed.

The authorities of BSMMU did not say anything about the quality of the masks in the first two consignments, she said.

In the remand prayer, the IO said that the accused, in association with another accused, produced fake N95 masks and supplied those to the isolation unit of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

So, the accused needs to be remanded to gather information about others responsible for such offences, the IO added.

On the other hand, defence submitted a petition, seeking bail and cancellation of the remand prayer on grounds that their client was innocent.

After hearing both the sides, the magistrate rejected the bail petition and granted her remand.

BSMMU Proctor Prof Syed Mozaffar Ahmed filed the case against Sharmin Jahan, a member of Awami League's Central Sub-Committee on Women and Children, with Shahbagh Police Station on Thursday night.

## 'Crossfire deaths'

FROM PAGE 1

Rab claimed they recovered three firearms and 13 rounds of bullets from the spot.

In Kushtia, a person charged with narcotics cases died in a "crossfire" that took place in an empty brick-field in Daulatpur upazila.

He was accused in six cases -- four for drug trading, one for arms smuggling and one related to a clash over drug smuggling, said Officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station SM Arifur Rahman.

He said Kudrat was a listed drug dealer and was involved in drug smugglings at various points of Daulatpur border for almost two decades.

Police arrested him twice earlier but he walked out of jail on bail, the OC said.

Around 2:00am yesterday, police received a tip-off that two groups of drug traders have gathered in Center More area of Dangmarka village, and raided the spot. But sensing their presence, the drug dealers opened fire at police, the OC said.

Police also fired back, triggering a "gunfight", he said.

After the criminals fled the scene, police found Kudrat's body there, he added.

Police also recovered a foreign made pistol, three bullets, one magazine, a sharp weapon and 43 bottles of Phensidyl from the spot.

Superintendent of Police in Kushtia SM Tanvir Arafath PPM (Bar) said police have zero tolerance against drugs.

"Operations would continue in the border areas of the district where drug

smuggling is going on", he said, "and no drug dealer will be spared."

Meanwhile in Teknaf, two Rohingya refugees were killed in a "crossfire" with Border Guard Bangladesh in Hnila union of Teknaf upazila around 11:00pm on Friday.

The deceased -- Md Ferdous, 30, and Md Abdus Salam, 35 -- were residents of Block-H of Balukhali Rohingya Camp in Ukhia upazila.

A BGB patrol team took position in Mochoni Lobon Math area on receiving information that a large consignment of yaba will enter Bangladesh from Myanmar through the Naaf river, said Lt Col of BGB-2 Battalion in Teknaf Mohammad Faisal Hasan Khan.

Soon, they saw two or three persons swimming ashore and they were asked to surrender.

The drug peddlers opened fire at them and the "gunfight" ensued when BGB men retaliated in self-defence, the official said.

At one stage, the drug traders fled the scene leaving behind bullet-hit Ferdous and Abdus Salam.

The duo were rushed to Teknaf Upazila Health Complex and then to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital where doctors declared them dead, the BGB official said.

Police claimed to have recovered 2.1 lakh pieces of yaba from the spot.

A total of 17 alleged yaba smugglers, including 12 Rohingyas, were killed in "gunfights" with law enforcers in Cox's Bazar since July 1.

On Friday, five more alleged drug peddlers were killed in "crossfires" in Dhaka, Cox's Bazar and Feni.

## Covid-19 sample collection now below 10,000

FROM PAGE 1

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death toll in the country went up to 2,874 -- around 1.30 percent of all confirmed cases. The total infection rate now stands at 20.08 percent, according to DGHS.

Meanwhile, 1,114 Covid-19 patients have recovered during the same 24-hour period, taking the total number of recoveries to 122,090 -- around 55.20 percent of all confirmed cases.

Among the dead yesterday were 29 males and nine females. Thirty-four of them died at hospitals, three at home and one was brought dead to a hospital.

Dr Nasima said three of the deceased were aged between 31 and 40 years, six between 41 and 50, seven between 51 and 60, eight between 61 and 70,

## In the name of the father and freedom

FROM PAGE 1

He says he cannot look at the eyes of his mother and sister anymore. It has been a long since they shared a laugh in their house.

**'IMAGINE THE REST'** Kajol, also the editor of Daily Pokkhokhal, went missing on the evening of March 10 after leaving his office in Hatirpool.

Several days after his disappearance, his mobile phone was found active in Benapole, Sub-Inspector Munshi Abdul Lokman, investigation officer of his disappearance case, told The Daily Star earlier.

Soon after being found, he was arrested by Benapole police -- initially on charges of trespassing, and then later in the evening under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure -- and sent to Central Jashore Prison to await trial.

Later, he was made accused in three cases filed under the Digital Security Act, a controversial law that journalists and activists say curbs freedom of press and human rights. In total, five cases have been filed against him.

Asked about the cases, Mir Modasser Hossain, deputy commissioner of the serious crime unit of DB, told a reporter of this paper yesterday that there was no progress yet to disclose.

Nur Khan Liton, adviser of Human Rights Support Society, said, "This is very unfortunate. During this pandemic, a journalist was abducted and despite calls from all quarters for his rescue,

there were no visible efforts from law enforcers.

"Later he was shown rescued near the India-Bangladesh border, which looked staged."

Whatever it was, Kajol could have been released on bail but now the question arises whether an innocent person is being framed, he added.

The rights activist observed that whenever someone powerful files a case against a journalist, there comes a possibility of such "drama" because of over-enthusiasm of law enforcers.

Polok says he understands the cases against his father are politically driven. "After my father disappeared under questionable circumstances, the authorities did not produce a single statement. Now you can imagine the rest."

He said he needed to take the court's help to even be able to file a missing person's case.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, he said it was heartbreaking to see his father in handcuffs, sent to jail, and denied bail. "He has done journalism most of his life and now he is in prison."

He, along with his mother and sister, went to see Kajol in Keraniganj jail recently but could not meet him. The last time he could see his father was in Jashore in mid-May. "I do not know what my father has been going through," he said.

Cultural activist Amal Akash, who took part in protests to free Kajol, said,

## Malaysia

FROM PAGE 1

meet our client. We will be at Bukit Aman [police headquarters] on Monday, 27 July 2020, at 2:00pm, to meet our client," Sumitha told The Daily Star.

"Sunday is a holiday. So, on Monday when we will meet Rayhan, we can know what charges are brought against him and then see how we proceed," she said.

The Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, which has not made any statement since the manhunt by Malaysian police began more than two weeks ago, yesterday said it was waiting for a letter from Malaysian authorities before taking any steps.

The high commission will take action regarding the arrest once the mission receives an official letter over the incident from the Malaysian government, said Bangladesh missions Labour Counsellor Zahurul Islam.

"We are dealing with the issue," he said, adding, "Steps will be taken as per the letter issued through the diplomatic channel."

Rayhan, 25, who went to Malaysia in 2014 and had been working after completing his bachelor's, became the target of Malaysia's manhunt after his criticisms against Putrajaya's detention of undocumented migrant workers in an Al Jazeera documentary titled "Locked Up in Malaysia's Lockdown", which was aired on July 3.

In the 26-minute video produced by Al Jazeera's 101 East team, he accused the authorities of racism against undocumented migrants, claiming that being an illegal immigrant in Malaysia is not a crime.

The documentary said the undocumented migrants were at risk during the coronavirus pandemic when more than 2,000 migrant workers were arrested during raids in locked down areas in Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysian capital.

After the broadcast of the documentary, Malaysian immigration issued a public announcement with Rayhan's photos and addresses, asking people to help arrest him. Rayhan also faced a barrage of hate speech on social media and had to go into hiding in fear of arrest and rights violation.

Meanwhile, police also called a number of Bangladeshis suspecting their links to Rayhan, which terrified them, some of them told this newspaper.

Rayhan's work permit has also been revoked.

"I did not lie. I only spoke about the discrimination against migrants. I did not commit a crime. I want the dignity of migrants and my country ensured. I believe all migrants and Bangladesh will stand with me," Rayhan told The Daily Star in a WhatsApp message shortly before his arrest on Friday.

Meanwhile, rights activists have demanded Rayhan's release.

Expressing deep concern over the arrest of Rayhan Kabir, 21 civil society organisations, including Brac, Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, Manusher Jonno Foundation, and Ain O Salish Kendra, in a joint statement demanded the immediate release and protection of Rayhan Kabir in Malaysia.

"We demand his immediate release and protection," read the joint statement, adding that Rayhan did not commit any crime.

"The evidence shown in the documentary on Malaysia's crackdown on immigrants is reprehensible and deeply troubling. There have been similar allegations in the past against Malaysian law enforcement agencies," it said.

They requested the Bangladesh high commission in Malaysia, foreign and expatriates' welfare ministry and the international organisations concerned to take necessary action to protect Rayhan's rights.

While Malaysian officials and national television criticised the report, claiming it was inaccurate, misleading and unfair, Al Jazeera Media Network has strongly rejected allegations made by Malaysian authorities over the documentary.

Malaysian police announced an investigation of Al Jazeera staffers over potential sedition, defamation and violation of the country's Communications and Multimedia Act.

In a statement, Al Jazeera said it stands by "the professionalism, quality and impartiality of its journalism", and warned of "serious concerns about developments that have occurred in Malaysia since the broadcast of the documentary".

## Govt alone

FROM PAGE 1

A professor at the surgery department of Dhaka Medical College, Khurshid was made DGHS director general on Thursday following the resignation of Dr Abul Kalam Azad.

"I am heartbroken but hopeful."



## ANIMAL SACRIFICE DURING EID 356 spots fixed in Dhaka city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two Dhaka city corporations have fixed 356 spots for sacrificing animals during Eid-ul-Azha, scheduled to be held on August 1.

Among the spots, 256 are in the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) areas while 100 are in Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) areas.

DNCC mayor Atiqul Islam yesterday urged city dwellers to sacrifice animals at the designated places for the better management of waste.

The mayor made the call while holding a meeting on garbage management during the Eid with officials and employees of the city corporation.

Atiqul also directed the officials and employees, who will remain involved with garbage management, to do their duties properly. "Our main target is to clean the waste, accumulated during the Eid, as quickly as possible," he said.

About maintaining health guidelines in ongoing cattle markets, the mayor said they will strengthen the monitoring works in this regard. "We have already formed a team, comprising 10 councillors," the mayor said.

Like previous years, the city corporations have a plan to clean the waste generated during Eid within 24 hours.



PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

**A worker busy storing salt in a sack and then piling those up at a warehouse in Majhir Ghat area in port city. He said they are selling the sacks of salt, used for spraying on rawhide of sacrificial animals, for Tk 500 each, which is Tk 150 less than the previous year. Traders are worried that they will incur a loss as they fear less number of cattle will be sacrificed this year due to the ongoing pandemic. This photo was taken recently.**

## Take institutional action against greedy healthcare companies, professionals

Speakers tell Ganasamhati convention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at an online discussion yesterday demanded for institutional action to hold back a greedy tendency of making excessive profit by unscrupulous private hospitals and clinics, healthcare service organisations and individuals, diagnostic centres, and pharmaceutical companies.

They also demanded establishment of a commission in line with the country's constitution, to stop corruption in the health sector and stressed the need for the sector's digitalisation.

The discussion was part of the daylong online "Public Health Convention 2020" by Ganasamhati Andolan, said a press release.

Noted public health experts and civil society members took part in the convention in several sessions, it added.

The convention was inaugurated by Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Zafrullah

Chowdhury and chaired by chief coordinator of Ganasamhati Andolan Zonayed Saki. It stressed the need for transforming the country's health sector into a people-oriented one to ensure basic health rights for all. For this, it emphasised establishing a democratic system that would uphold accountability to the countrymen.

At a session, speakers said to bring change in the health sector, bringing change in the existing food management, people's consumption pattern and lifestyle as well as change in environmental management and urbanisation are required.

At another session, speakers said ensuring sound health is a vital indicator to ensure individual and collective well-being of people.

People's sound health can play important role in the country's economic development, they said.

## Gonoforum for pro-people steps to ease flood woes

UNB, Dhaka

Gonoforum yesterday voiced concern over the worsening woes of the flood-affected people amid the coronavirus pandemic due to a "lack" of proper steps and plans.

"Pro-people steps and plans are needed to ease the sufferings of the flood-hit people and protect the country's resources, land, crops and livestock, which is impossible without having a properly elected and democratic government in place," the party said.

In a statement, Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain and General Secretary Dr Reza Kibria said massive floods in the northern and central regions of the country, including Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Sirajganj, Jamalpur, Sunamganj, Sylhet and Habiganj, have left people in endless misery.

They said some areas even have been flooded frequently this year. "Besides, people's houses, lands and crops are being destroyed by riverbank erosion. Farmers have become helpless as their crops went under floodwater. The extent of destruction caused by the floods has gone beyond the limit since the gates of Farakka Barrage have been opened. People have become extremely helpless in the floods amidst the coronavirus pandemic."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Hillock razed for dorm

Authorities at Sylhet Shahjalal univ halt work following protest from students, activists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

To construct a residential hall for students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust), parts of hillocks have been razed in the last couple of days.

The move drew immediate flak from students and environmental activists.

The university authorities, however, are trying to cover up their wrongdoings with an assurance that no further razing will take place.

The Tk 23.50 crore project has been undertaken to construct a dormitory for female students of Sust on the campus.

Asked, Md Matiur Rahman, executive engineer (civil) of the university, claimed that no hillocks had been razed for construction purposes. "Some grassy edges might have been razed to level up the ground," he told this correspondent yesterday.

Contacted, Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed, vice-chancellor of the university, answered in a similar vein.

The bottom part of a hillock, which was actually some 'mound of soil', was razed to inspect some issues, he said. "But hearing about the razing, I visited the site on Friday morning, and instructed the engineers not to raze another inch of the hillock," he added.

Criticising the move, Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Sylhet chapter), said, "This is outrageous. How can a university act in such a way. To protect the environment, we fight along with the teachers of the university, but now the university authorities are involved in such an illegal

practice. It must be stopped at once."

Meanwhile, many Sust students protested the razing of hillocks online.

Seeking anonymity, a student said, "Taking advantage of a closed campus, they [authorities] started the construction works, thinking that no one would notice and they would get away with it."

"But this is our university and we won't let such environmentally destructive activities take place there," students said in unison.

According to Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995 (amended in 2000), cutting hills without having approval from the environment authorities is prohibited.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not get in touch with the officials of the Department of Environment as the director and assistant director's contact numbers were found switched off.

Asked about it, the Sust VC said, "The environment department is not aware of the incident. I have spoken to the officials of the department and the issue has been settled."

"No move will be taken by destroying the environment. I have asked the engineers to shift the project 10-20 metres away from the hillocks, if needed," he said.

"I assure everyone that no further harm will be done... If necessary, the construction works will be postponed until we come up with a better plan, while keeping in mind the potential impact on the environment," the VC added.

## FAKE PATHOLOGY REPORTS

### Two owners of diagnostic centre jailed for 6 months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

A mobile court of Barishal district administration yesterday jailed two owners of a diagnostic centre for six months for preparing fake pathology reports and not renewing license for three years.

The Detective Branch of Barishal Metropolitan Police also assisted during the drive, said Ziaur Rahman, executive magistrate of district administration.

He said besides the owners of "The Moon Diagnostic Centre" -- Md Sahin and Shyamal Majumdar -- the court also handed down three months imprisonment to the centre's technician Md Ibrahim and staff member Shyam Saha.

The diagnostic centre was involved in issuing fake reports through forging signatures of doctors, said the executive magistrate. Their license expired in 2017, he added.

He said the accused confessed to the offense and the centre has been sealed off until further notice.

They were sent to jail following the verdict, confirmed Nurul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

## The allure of a million-dollar gift

Online scams involving foreigners on the rise

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Along with some Bangladeshis, a group of foreign nationals have formed organised rackets and swindling crores of taka from people through duping them on social media.

After coming to the country, these foreign nationals, mostly from African countries, throw their passports away. They then recruit educated Bangladeshis by saying that they would start a business.

Later they rent luxurious apartments as "offices" and convince the Bangladeshis to become their accomplices with a promise of lucrative payment.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) claimed to have come up with the information while investigating over dozens of complaints by people, who were deceived by these syndicates.

Since July 2, teams of CID have arrested around 33 African nationals, including from Cameroon, Kenya and Nigeria, from different areas of Dhaka on charges of duping people out of crores of taka.

On Wednesday night, the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit arrested two Nigerians and a Bangladeshi from the capital's Bashundhara area over similar charges.

The arrestees are Albert Ikechukwu alias Eze (31), Okechukwu Christian alias Chukwama (28), and their Bangladeshi associate Nupur Khanam (23).

They have collected over crores of taka through swindling people on Facebook over the last two years, Najmul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of Social Media Monitoring and Cyber Security Crime Department of CTTC unit, told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Ex-CMSD chief Shahidullah dies from Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brig Gen Md

Shahidullah,

the

immediate

past director

of the Central

Medical

Stores Depot (CMSD),

died with Covid-19

at Combined Military

Hospital in Dhaka

yesterday afternoon.

He breathed his

last around 3pm

at the hospital, said Prof

Dr Nasima Sultana,

additional director general

(administration) of the

Directorate General of

Health Services (DGHS)

yesterday.

"Shahidullah had been

undergoing treatment

at the CMH for around

one month after testing

positive for Covid-19,"

Prof Nasima Sultana told

The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## FAKE COVID-19 CERTIFICATES

### Regent MD on 10-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Md Mizanur Rahman, managing director of Regent Hospital's Uttara branch, was placed on a 10-day remand yesterday, in a case filed over issuing fake Covid-19 certificates to 76 labourers of Dhaka Metro Rail.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mainul Islam passed the order after Sub-inspector Yadur Rahman of Uttara Paschim Police Station, the case's investigation officer, produced him before the court with a 10-day remand prayer.

In the remand prayer, the IO said the accused, in association of the chairman and managing director, prepared fake Covid-19 certificates and supplied those to the labourers on different dates since April 9.

So, he needs to be remanded to gather information and know the whereabouts of the others involved, the IO added.

On the other hand, the defence lawyer submitted a petition seeking bail along with cancellation of the remand prayer.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## GIFT FOR BANGLADESH RAILWAY

### 10 locomotives coming from India tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway (BR) will receive 10 locomotives from India on Monday, to overcome its locomotive crisis.

India would hand over the locomotives as grants.

"The broad gauge locomotives, which India is giving as gift, would be handed over at 3pm on July 27 through Darshana-Gede Interchange Point," said Shariful Alam, railways ministry's senior information officer, yesterday.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Indian Railways Minister Piyush Goyal will attend the ceremony virtually, he added.

All the 10 broad gauge locomotives the Indian Railway is going to hand over to BR were commissioned in between September 2012 and December 2015, said officials.

With 72 percent locomotives of BR already crossing their economic life, the government took initiatives last year to hire locomotives from India for the first time to help them overcome the crisis.

In April last year, BR sent a proposal to the railways ministry to "hire" or "get as courtesy" 20 railway engines (10 broad gauge and 10 meter gauge) from India until the first batch of 70 locomotives that Bangladesh bought from the US and South Korea start arriving mid-next year.

"Until then, the 10 locomotives would be very helpful," BR Director General Md Shamsuzzaman told The Daily Star on July 13.

However, BR will not bring meter gauge (MG) locomotives from India. They did not get suitable MG locomotives as India phased out such engines long ago, Shamsuzzaman added.



**A worker unloads a basket full of hilsa to the wholesale fish market in Barishal's Port Road. Since a 65-day ban on hilsa fishing ended on July 23, sales have picked up. The photo was taken on Friday.**

PHOTO: TITU DAS



## ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS

## Parents demand no fee hike for 3 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A section of guardians of students enrolled at English-medium schools yesterday demanded that all such schools not increase tuition and session fees for the next three academic years, taking the pandemic into account.

They made the demand while talking at the launching ceremony of Bangladesh English School Parents Association at National Press Club. They also demanded forming a regulatory body to monitor activities of these schools.

The association also arranged a roundtable on "English-medium Education: Opportunities and Challenges during Covid-19" at the ceremony.

Parents said access to online education should not be cancelled due to delayed or non-payment of tuition fees during this crisis.

Prof Masud A Khan, the association's convener, said there is a perception that only students coming from rich families get enrolled at English-medium schools, which is not true.

He urged all the schools to meet their demands as they are rational.

Organisers said their major objective is to press for their rational demands to address

the "unethical issues" of school authorities over the decades. They are against any commercialisation of education.

MP Prof Habibe Millat, the association's advisor, said in absence of regulatory bodies, it has become difficult to oversee these schools.

Jahirul Islam, the association's co-convenor, placed a 14-point demand at the event.

The points include forming school management committees, incorporating guardians as representatives; creating child safeguard policy to control bullying, racism, physical harassment and abuse; all schools following same grading system; and having websites with detailed information like reports on school environment, audited financial statements, admission and tuition fees.

Several guardians, while talking at the programme, said many school authorities are barring students whose parents failed or delayed to pay tuition fees. This is humiliating for parents and puts mental pressure on students.

They send their children to English-medium schools aiming to make them global citizens, but in many occasions, education quality of many of these schools are low.

## RMG workers block highway for salary, vacation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Workers of a garment factory in Tongi blocked Dhaka-Mymensingh highway for an hour yesterday, demanding full salary of July and 12-day vacation for Eid-ul-Azha.

The workers of Viyellatex Ltd gathered in front of the factory at Sataish area around 9am and blocked the highway around 10am.

The blockade created a gridlock for nearly three kilometres on both sides of the highway.

Police dispersed the agitating workers by firing tear shells and cleared the road around 11am.

Factory authorities recently announced that the workers will get 15 days' salary, Eid bonus and eight-day vacation for Eid-ul-Azha, a worker said, wishing

anonymity.

But a few days earlier, workers started demanding their full salary, including full bonus, and 12-day holiday, he said.

Gazipur Industrial Police Inspector Md Razzakul Hayder said factory officials were scheduled to discuss with BGMEA to resolve the matter, but workers started protesting before that.

An administrative employee of the factory, seeking anonymity, said authorities were following government guidelines regarding holidays. Even then, they had extended the vacation on humanitarian grounds, but workers did not accept.

Now, the factory will follow BGMEA's recommendation after discussion, he added.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Rajshahi doctor arrested for 'rape, blackmail'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A doctor of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital was arrested yesterday, allegedly for raping an apprentice lawyer under threats of releasing her private photographs and videos, said police.

Law enforcers took in Dr Shakhawat Hossain (40), an ophthalmologist, when he went to her room at the city's Bheripara, and shown arrested in a case filed by the 27-year-old victim, filed with Rajpara Police Station, said Officer-in-Charge Shahadat Hossain.

The woman met Rana in March 2019 while she was sub-letting a room with a friend in the area, the OC said, quoting the woman. Rana, who lives in the city's Tikapara, developed a relationship with her, he said.

The case statement said Rana lied to her about being unmarried and established a physical relationship with the promise of marriage. He also captured private photos and videos of her during the relationship, he said.

Yesterday, when Rana went to her room and attempted to rape her, her roommate heard her screaming and called 999, police said.

Rana confessed that he had extramarital affairs with the woman and claimed that their relationship was based on mutual understanding, said Golam Ruhul Kuddus, additional deputy commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police, adding that they would look into the allegations.

## The allure of

FROM PAGE 3

## 'THE MILLION DOLLAR GIFT'

About the process of the scam, CID officials said the arrestees are members of an organised racket, who swindle money from people in the name of developing friendship on social media and alluring them with expensive gifts.

They befriend people, pretending to be citizens of countries like the US or UK.

After a while, they call people through their Bangladeshi associates and identify themselves as custom officials to collect money as customs duty for the expensive gifts, said investigators.

For the last two weeks, over dozens of people have submitted complaints to the CID control room in this regard, said Sheikh Md Rezaul Haider, additional deputy inspector general of CID. These rackets use educated Bangladeshi youths to communicate with their targets, he said.

"They call the so-called Bangladeshi friends in three to four phases using different numbers -- first as courier agents, customs officials and then as embassy officials. By this time, that person is

convinced that an expensive gift is waiting for him," he said.

They do not even stop to think why would someone send them a gift worth a million dollars, that too in such a way over social media, he also added.

While demanding the courier charge or customs duty, the scammers would tell people that they do not do cash transaction, and the recipient has to pay the fees through a bank account, said investigators.

According to a first information report of Pallabi Police Station, filed on July 22 against 12 Nigerians and one Bangladeshi arrested for duping people on Facebook, the syndicates used an agent banking account and account of a trading company to collect the money.

Rezaul said they are looking into the matter as to how they were able to continue duping people through these accounts.

Meanwhile, people should remain alert and inform law enforcers if they receive such strange offers online, said the CID official.

## Withdraw Vat

FROM PAGE 3

Rahman, Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs President Rokia Afzal Rahman, Brac Bangladesh Executive Director Asif Saleh, former University Grants Commission Chairman Nazrul Islam, educationists Syed Manzoorul Islam, Mohammad Kaykobad, MM Akash, Campaign for Popular Education Executive Director Rasheda K Choudhury, Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam, Action Aid country director Farah Kabir, cultural activists Ramendu Majumdar, Mamunur Rashid and Ilias Kanchon issued the statement.

All educational institutions have remained closed since March 17. The closure was extended till August 6.

As a result, education of about four crore students in the country, from primary to university level, has been affected. Currently, many institutions are offering online classes through different platforms.

Yet, online education remains inaccessible to many, mainly in rural areas.

Besides the cost, the speed of mobile internet connection, while moderate in urban areas, is quite poor in most rural locations, where broadband providers are almost absent.

## Ex-CMSD chief

FROM PAGE 3

On May 22, the government replaced Brig Gen Shahidullah with Additional Secretary Abu Hena Morshed Zaman as the CMSD director after the face mask scam created much debate in which the CMSD supplier provided ordinary masks in packets labelled as N95 masks.

Later, the health ministry also formed a probe committee in this regard which has submitted its report at the end of May.

Neither the report has been published nor any action against the scammers has been taken yet.

## 4 killed as pickup ploughs into crowd

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Four day-labourers were killed and two injured when a pickup ploughed into a crowd in Bogura yesterday.

The deceased are Rashidul (50), Abu Zafar (45), Azgar Ali (45) and Montu (44), said police.

Quoting witnesses, Humayan Kabir, officer in-charge of Bogura Sadar Police Station, said some 10 labourers were waiting for potential work on roadside in front of Bogura Sadar Upazila Parishad Office in Matidali around 5am.

Suddenly, a pickup skidded off the road and hit them, injuring six of them.

Locals and co-workers rushed them to Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Rashidul, Zafar, Muntu and Azgar dead.

The injured are: Khajer Uddin (50) of Gaibandha and Moidul Islam (38) of Rangpur. Khajer is in a critical condition, said the OC, quoting doctors.

The driver and helper managed to flee the scene with the vehicle, he added.

## ACCUSED IN MURDER CASE

## Cumilla Jubo League leader expelled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Jubo League central committee has expelled Alamgir Hossain, a joint convener of its Cumilla city unit, supposedly on charges of "being involved in anti-organisational activities".

To this effect, a letter, signed by central Jubo League secretary general Mainul Hossain Khan Nikhil, was issued on Friday night.

It states that the expulsion came as per Jubo League president Sheikh Parash's direction.

A murder case was filed against Alamgir Hossain, also a councillor of ward-23 under Cumilla City Corporation, and his five brothers for killing a local trader in front of a mosque during Juma prayers on July 10.

Three of his brothers were arrested in connection with the murder, said police.

Rekha Begum, wife of slain businessman Akter Hossain, filed the case in which Alamgir was the key accused who is

now on the run, said police.

Akter's brother Shahjalal Alal, also a local Jubo League leader, told The Daily Star, "I am happy with the central committee's decision. I hope we will get justice for my innocent brother."

Cumilla Sadar South Police Station Officer-in-Charge Nazrul Islam said, "We are trying to arrest all the accused. We are yet to get the autopsy report. When the report comes, we will be able to submit a charge sheet."

Neither the absconding councillor nor any of his family members could be reached for comments by this correspondent, despite repeated attempts.

Earlier, regarding his involvement with the murder and possible consequences, Abdullah Al Mahmud, convener of city unit Jubo League, had said the incident was not necessarily political.

Asked if any action will be taken against Alamgir, he had said, "It is not in my jurisdiction. The central committee [of Jubo League] will decide."

## Gonoforum

FROM PAGE 3

Gonoforum leaders said the government needs to ensure temporary shelter and necessary relief assistance for the flood victims.

"We strongly demand the government provide necessary relief after providing shelter to the helpless people," the statement said.

Dr Kamal and Reza Kibria also urged the government to take steps for providing the affected farmers with saplings, seeds and loans as soon as floodwater subsides.

They bemoaned that no government has taken proper initiatives for training on flood control.



Giving in to his children's repeated request, their father took them for a bike ride around Dhaka University campus on Friday. Although the bike barely fits everyone, the parent said a short ride was worth it as the children finally got a break from staying at home for months.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

**EASTERN BANK LIMITED**  
Head Office, 100 GULSHAN AVENUE, DHAKA-1212

**INVITATION FOR BID**

Eastern Bank Limited invites sealed bids from bona fide/eligible suppliers for Anti Malware Solution for ATM & Cash Recycler Machine (CRM).

Interested bidders are requested to collect the RFP document electronically by sending email from their official email address to bidit@eb-ltd.com mentioning name of the company, authorized contact person, mailing address, telephone & mobile phone numbers on or before **Wednesday, 29 July 2020.**

Bids prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the RFP document must be submitted in two separate envelopes, clearly marking 'Technical' and 'Financial' in the envelopes, to the Chairman, Purchase Committee, Eastern Bank Limited, 100 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212 on or before **Monday, 10 August 2020 by 5:00 PM latest.**

## Regent MD

FROM PAGE 3

After hearing both sides, the magistrate turned down his bail petition and issued the remand order.

Police arrested Mizanur from his village home in Gopalganj on Friday.

On July 20, Md Rezaul Karim, an administrative officer of Ekshid Corporation Ltd, filed the case with Uttara Paschim Police Station against Regent Group Chairman Mohammad Shahed, its Managing Director Masud Parvez, Mizanur Rahman, employees Dwipayana Basu and Anindya Basu.

According to prosecution, it was alleged that the complainant, on behalf of his company, signed an agreement with Regent Hospital Uttara branch on April 9 to conduct Covid-19 tests on their 76 labourers, who are working under the Dhaka Metro Rail project.

Under the agreement, the hospital was supposed to take Tk 3,500 for the test on each labourer.

But later, the complainant came to know that the hospital supplied fake Covid-19 certificates even though they paid Tk 2.66 lakh, the case statement added.

**Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management**  
Plot No.4, Main Road No.1, Mirpur-2, Dhaka-1216. Tel: 9003031-35

**WANTED**

(a) **FACULTY MEMBERS**

Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM), which imparts training to bank executives and also runs MBM/EMBM degree programs, invites applications for filling total **05 posts** (1 post for each discipline) of **Lecturer** in the discipline of Finance, Marketing, Banking, International Business and Computer Science/Computer Science & Engineering. Requirements of the positions are mentioned below:

**Requirements:**

(i) At least three 1<sup>st</sup> class/division including Bachelor's (with honours) and Master's level examination without any 3<sup>rd</sup> division at any stage. Degrees under grading system CGPA 4 is equivalent to 1<sup>st</sup> division in SSC & HSC level; CGPA 3.5 (out of 4) is equivalent to 1<sup>st</sup> class in Bachelor's/Master's level.

(ii) Preference will be given to persons having prior teaching/training/research experience and having publications in reputed journals.

(iii) Maximum age is 30 years as on 05 April, 2020 but may be relaxed for outstanding candidate.

\*For applicants holding degree(s) under grading system CGPA 3.6 and above (out of 4) at Bachelor's/Master's level is preferred.

**Benefits:**

**Pay Scale-Tk. 40,600-1,105\*4-45,020-1,260\*6-52,580/-**

House rent allowance @ 60% of basic pay, Medical allowance @ 10% of basic pay & Conveyance allowance of Tk. 3,000/- per month and other benefits as per BIBM Employees' Service Regulations would also be admissible.

**N.B. It is mentionable that persons applied for any of the above posts against previous circular (The Daily Star & The Daily Ittefaq, dated:14.03.2020) do not require to apply further.**

(b) **COMPUTER OPERATOR**

BIBM invites application for filling 03 posts of **Computer Operator** in the pay scale of **Tk. 14,820-880\*7-20,980-940\*11-31,320.**

**Requirements:** (i) Graduate (ii) 03 years experience in computer using operating systems, MS Word, MS Excel, (iii) Experience in hardware maintenance will be preferred. Persons having 3<sup>rd</sup> division/class (or CGPA less than 2.5) in any public examination(s) are ineligible to apply. (iv) Maximum age is 30 years as on 01 July, 2020.

House rent allowance @ 60% of basic pay, Medical allowance @ 10% of basic pay & conveyance allowance of Tk. 1,500/- per month and other benefits as per BIBM Employees' Service Regulations would also be admissible.

Application showing the personal profile inclusive of details of academic qualifications, work/teaching/training/research experience, publications (in case of Faculty Members) with attested copies of educational certificates, mark sheets, a character certificate from a Class I Officer of the Government, other certificates and two passport size recent photographs (duly attested) along with Bank Draft/Pay Order for Taka 1000/- for Faculty Member, Tk 200/- for Computer Operator (non-refundable) in favor of BIBM should reach the Director General, BIBM by 25 August, 2020. **Only short-listed candidates will be subsequently communicated.**





PHOTO: STAR, COLLECTED

# Over 20,000 families marooned in low-lying areas of Pabna

## Many areas under erosion threat as Padma and Jamuna swell up

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Over 20 thousand families have been marooned as swelling Padma, Jamuna and Boral rivers have flooded around a hundred villages of five upazilas in Pabna.

Many of the affected areas are also facing massive river erosion.

Now the Jamuna river is flowing 54 centimetres above the danger level, said Md Abdul Hamid, executive engineer of Water Development Board's (WDB) Bera division.

Over 40 thousand people of four unions in Bera upazila have been affected by flood but till now the people under the flood protection embankment areas are safe, said Asif Anam Siddique, the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO).

Sujanagar UNO Md Rawshan Alam said the four unions have been affected for immense waterlogging while several hundred families in the affected areas have been marooned. Besides, people of the affected areas are facing the threat of massive river erosion, he added.

In Sujanagar upazila, the Padma devoured over five hundred homesteads at Gupinpur, Borkhapur, Raipur, Gulchandpur Haat-malifa, and Khalilpur areas in last few weeks, said WDB engineer Abdul Hamid.

The erosion also hit Notakhola, Ghosilonda, Modhupur, Munshiganj, Paikandi and Panchakola areas of Bera upazila under the district, he said, adding that WDB workers are dumping sandbags in the erosion-hit areas.

Meanwhile, due to the rise of water level in the Jamuna, the Boral river has swelled up, flooding many areas in Chatmohar, Vangura and Faridpur upazilas in the Chalanbeel region over the week, said Md Johurul Islam, executive engineer of Pabna WDB.

"At least five unions of the three upazilas have been flooded. Over a hundred villages in low-lying areas of five upazilas of the district have been flooded," he said.

During this correspondent's visit to the affected areas, the flood affected people said they are facing problem due to shortage of food and drinking water but they are yet to get any support from the district administration.

"We cannot move as the entire village has been flooded. But we are not getting any relief," said Md Sabuz Hossain of Hugaladangi village in Sujanagar upazila.

Contacted, Pabna district relief and rehabilitation officer Md Rejaul Karim said, "Low-lying areas and riverside villages have been flooded but the areas inside flood protection embankments are still safe. The district is yet to be declared a flood-hit area. But the situation is at a vulnerable stage and we are keeping watch on the situation."

Asked about relief work, the official said, "Till now there is no relief for the flood-hit people in Pabna. We are distributing rice under VGF [vulnerable group feeding] programme, which will continue till July 28. We are giving priority to the affected areas."

# It exists only in paper

SOHRAB HOSSAIN WITH FIROZ A MUZAHID

The pandemic has ruined livelihoods of many hardworking honest people, but it apparently could not stop those who had been repeatedly feasting on public money.

In April, when the entire country was grappling to stop the spread of Covid-19, a civil contractor in collusion with at least one such repeat offender, also a government employee, collected over Tk 1.11 crore as payment for a job that exists only in paper.

The payment was collected on April 8 for constructing 10 community centres and concrete steps in six ponds for residents of at least ten different housing projects in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila under Ashrayan-2. Surprisingly, the contractor returned the money to the authorities last week (invoice number 35, dated July 21).

Ashrayan is a government-funded project, undertaken with an aim to provide housing facilities for the homeless and the underprivileged.

Locals said Shamim Mia, proprietor of contractor firm Sarika Traders, located in Patuakhali's Rangabali upazila, returned the money on July 21 afternoon after more than three hundred residents of the Ashrayan project formed a human chain in the morning that day in front of Kalapara Police Station.

The Ashrayan residents at the demonstration demanded punishment for the ones who committed forgery to pocket the money from the project as well as completion of the project as planned.

The incident of the forgery came to light after Abu Hasnat Mohammad Shahidul Haque, the new Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) who joined his workplace in Kalapara on March 22, was asked by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to submit a report on the progress of the construction of

community centres and concrete steps for ponds under Ashrayan-2 project in the upazila.

During his investigation, UNO Hasnat found out that on April 8, more than two weeks into the transfer of the then UNO Munibur Rahman to Barisal Sadar upazila, the contractor collected Tk 1,11,17,635 after submitting relevant documents of the non-existent construction work with signatures of Munibur Rahman and Project Implementation Officer (PIO) of Kalapara Tapan Kumar Ghosh.

He also found anomalies in opening of a joint bank account with Pubali Bank where financial

commissioner (DC) of Patuakhali. The former UNO, Munibur, said during his tenure in the previous workplace, he was not informed of the project undertaken for the construction of community centres and concrete steps in ponds as part of Ashrayan-2 and he never signed any document pertaining to release of payment for such construction work.

After he left Kalapara, in order to forge his signature, the criminals might have obtained his original signature samples that are available in different documents in the UNO's office in Kalapara, he added.

Rintu Talukder, chairman of

mentioned, were issued only by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and the payment was made directly to the bank account of the contractor.

When asked why he collected payment for a work that never took place, Shamim Mia, the contractor, said he only collected the money as the Project Implementation Office of Kalapara asked him to do so over phone.

But after realising that he had been unable to do any work since then due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, he returned all the money to the government, he claimed.

Reached over cell phone for his comments over the allegation, PIO Tapan Kumar Ghosh initially claimed ignorance and refused to divulge any information over phone, but he later said his signature was also forged to collect the money.

He also repeatedly offered to "discuss in detail" about the matter if this correspondent paid visit to his office.

While Tapan was working as PIO in Rangabali upazila, in a general diary (number 36) filed on April 8, 2020, it was stated that he had forged signatures of the local member of parliament and the UNO to assign a contractor for repair work of a rural road.

Furthermore, on August 13, 2013, while working in Kushtia Sadar upazila as PIO, he was suspended by department of disaster management and relief on charge of committing forgery to steal 100 tonnes of rice to be distributed under test relief (TR) programme of the government. He had to stay in jail custody during the incident, confirmed a source.

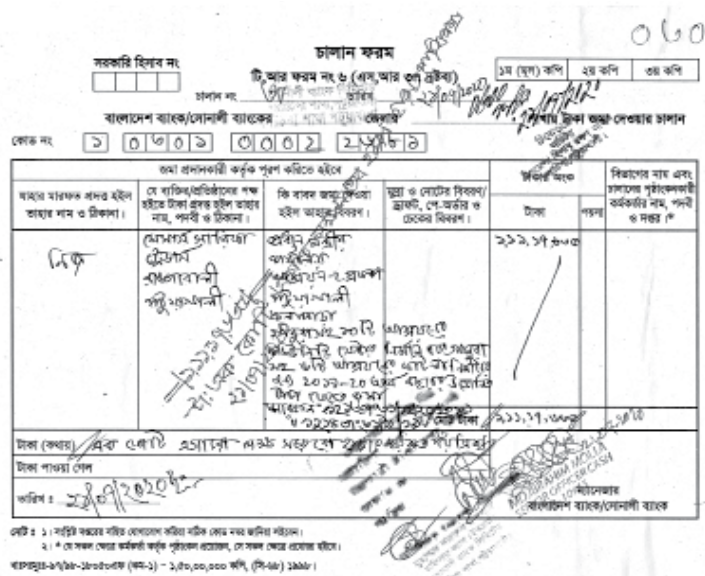
Contacted, Patuakhali DC Matuil Islam Chowdhury confirmed that he has received the report prepared by Kalapara UNO and due action would be taken against the offenders following necessary investigation.

transactions were made for the same construction work. Although government money was deposited in the account, signatures of only one signatory, that of PIO Tapan Kumar Ghosh, were used for opening the account or conducting transactions in it.

Hasnat said he mentioned his findings in his report that he submitted recently to the PMO via the office of the deputy

Champapur Union Parishad; and Anshar Uddin Mollah, chairman of Latachapali Union Parishad, said they were also not aware of any such project for Ashrayan-2 residential areas in their unions.

Both the public representatives also said that the entire process of the "mysterious project" deserves thorough investigation as all corresponding letters regarding the work, with the same contractor's



Workers of Water Development Board put sandbags to prevent erosion by the Padma river in Sujanagar upazila of Pabna.

PHOTO: STAR

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
College Education Development Project (CEDP)  
Sherpur Govt. College, Sherpur  
Rajabari, Sherpur

### Invitation for Tenders (Re-Tender)

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education.
2	Agency	University Grants Commission/National University.
3	Procuring entity name	Principal, Sherpur Govt. College, Sherpur.
4	Procuring entity code	N/A.
5	Procuring entity district	Sherpur.
6	Invitation for	Supply & Installation of Classroom Furniture (Re-Tender).
7	Invitation Ref. No.	CEDP/IDG/SGC-1084/G-4/01(05)/20
8	Date	26/07/2020

**KEY INFORMATION**

9	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (National).
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**FUNDING INFORMATION**

10	Budget and source of funds	Development Budget (Government & IDA Credit).
11	Development partners	International Development Association (IDA), World Bank.

**PARTICULAR INFORMATION**

12	Project code	224017200
13	Project name	College Education Development Project (CEDP).
14	Tender Package No.	G-4.
15	Tender package name	Supply & Installation of Classroom Furniture (Re-Tender).
16	Tender publication date	26/07/2020
17	Tender last selling date	12/08/2020
18	Tender closing date and time	13/08/2020, 1.00pm
19	Tender opening date and time	13/08/2020, 2.00pm
20	Name & address of the office	Principal, Sherpur Govt. College, Sherpur.
	Selling tender document	(1) Office of the Principal, Sherpur Govt. College, Sherpur. (2) Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Sherpur. (3) Office of the Superintendent of Police, Sherpur.
	Receiving tender document	(1) Office of the Principal, Sherpur Govt. College, Sherpur. (2) Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Sherpur. (3) Office of the Superintendent of Police, Sherpur.
	Opening tender document	Office of the Principal, Sherpur Govt. College, Sherpur.
21	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	Will not be held.

**INFORMATION FOR TENDERER**

22	Eligibility of tenderer	(1) The tenderer shall have a minimum of 03 years overall experience in the supply of goods and related services; years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper. (2) The minimum specific experience as supplier in supply of similar goods of at least 01 contract successfully completed within the last 03 years, each with a value of at least Tk 15.05 lac. Years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper. (3) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the tenderer shall be Tk 17.20 lac.			
23	Brief description of goods or works	Manufacturing of wooden desk table and chair with painting (1) Desk table (For one person): 25" x 25" x 32" (2) Chair (For one person): 18" x 15" x 31"			
24	Brief description of related services	Related service shall be in accordance with Section 4: Particular Conditions of Contract Section 6: Schedule of Requirements and Section 7: Technical Specification of the tender document.			
25	Tender document price	BDT 1,500.00 (one thousand five hundred).			
26	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion time in weeks/months
	N/A	G-4	Sherpur	45 thousand	2 (two) months
27	Name of official inviting tender	Professor Md. Abdur Rashid.			
28	Designation of official inviting tender	Principal (Acting).			
29	Address of official inviting tender	Sherpur Govt. College, Sherpur.			
30	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel: 0931-61219	Fax: N/A	E-mail: ggovcollege@yahoo.com	
31	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.				

GD-1189

Professor Md. Abdur Rashid  
Principal (Acting)  
Sherpur Govt. College, Sherpur

**Pabna University of Science & Technology**  
Office of the Project Director, PUST, Pabna

Memo No. PUST/PD/e-GP/OTM/23 Date: 24/07/2020

### e-Tender Notice (FY/2019-20)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works of "Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project" PUST, Pabna.

Serial No.	Tender ID	APP ID	Package No. & Invitation Ref. Number	Name of works	Tender publication date & time	Tender closing date & time	Method
01	478561	158695	PUST/PD/e-GP/OTM/23	Supply of Books and Journals for the Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project, PUST, FY 2020-2021.	23 July, 2020 and 18.00	31 August, 2020 and 12.00	OTM

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Engineer Lt Colonel G M Azizur Rahman  
afwc, psc (Retd)  
Project Director  
Pabna University of Science & Technology  
Development Project

GD-1190

# Housewife raped in Jashore, 1 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A housewife was raped allegedly by one of her neighbours in Jashore's Bagharpara upazila on Friday night.

Meanwhile, following a case filed by the victim, also wife an expatriate, with Bagharpara Police Station, law enforcers detained Shihab Uddin, 23, of Amuria village, the same night.

Officer in Charge of Bagharpara Police Station Syed Al-Mamun said the arrestee was produced before a court yesterday that sent him to jail.

According to the case statement, since the victim's husband lives in abroad, Shihab had been stalking her for long. As a sequel, finding the victim alone at home the culprit entered her house around 7:00pm on Friday, raped her forcibly and fled the scene, police said.



## SOUTH CHINA SEA ROW

## Australia rejects Beijing's claims

AFP, Sydney

Australia has rejected Beijing's territorial and maritime claims in the South China Sea in a formal declaration to the United Nations, aligning itself more closely with Washington in the escalating row.

In a statement, Australia said there was "no legal basis" to several disputed Chinese claims in the sea including those related to the construction of artificial islands on small shoals and reefs.

"Australia rejects China's claim to 'historic rights' or 'maritime rights and interests' as established in the 'long course of historical practice' in the South China Sea," the declaration read.

"There is no legal basis for China to draw straight baselines connecting the outermost points of maritime features or 'island groups' in the South China Sea, including around the 'Four Sha' or 'continental' or 'outlying' archipelagos."

The declaration comes after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared Beijing's pursuit of territory and resources in the South China Sea as illegal, explicitly backing the territorial claims of Southeast Asian countries against China's.

Beijing claims almost all of the South China Sea based on a so-called nine-dash line, a vague delineation from maps dating back to the 1940s.

US relations with China have markedly deteriorated in recent months, especially over trade disputes, the coronavirus pandemic and Beijing's crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong.

On Friday, Beijing ordered the US consulate in Chengdu to shut in retaliation for the closure of its Houston mission over accusations of being a hub for intellectual property theft.



Policemen march past the US consulate in Chengdu, in Sichuan province, yesterday. Inset, A worker removes the sign at the entrance to the US consulate. Security was tight outside the US consulate in Chengdu yesterday as staff inside prepared to leave, a day after China ordered it to close in response to a US order for China to shut its consulate in Houston.

PHOTO: AFP

## Trump eases controls on armed drone exports

The Trump administration moved Friday to ease controls on exports of armed drones, saying that allies need US technology and that other countries outside of a non-proliferation pact were taking over the market. The White House announced that President Donald Trump had approved a move to diverge partly from the 1987 Missile Technology Control Regime, in which 35 countries agreed to restrict the sales of unmanned weapons delivery systems. The MTCR was aimed at controlling the spread of missiles that could deliver large payload like nuclear weapons. But it also covered armed drones, at the time not a major component of armed conflict as they are now.

## UN calls on US to ensure right to peaceful protests

The UN warned Friday against using excessive force against demonstrators and media in the United States, and said the deployment of unidentified officers increased the risk of human rights violations. Responding to questions about violent clashes in the US city of Portland between federal forces and demonstrators protesting against racism and police brutality, a UN spokeswoman stressed that the right to peacefully assemble and protest must be protected. Protests raged in the US after the killing of George Floyd, an African American man who died at the hands of police in Minneapolis on May 25. Those protests began losing steam earlier this month, before reports emerged of federal officers snatching Portland protestors and taking them away in unmarked vehicles, spurring a fresh wave of demonstrations.

## Bolsonaro's poll numbers rise in Brazil despite gaffes



Three polls released this week show gains for President Jair Bolsonaro, putting him as favorite to win re-election in 2022 despite his controversial handling of Brazil's raging coronavirus crisis. The far-right leader, who is himself currently infected with the virus, has downplayed the pandemic even as it has exploded in Brazil, the country with the most infections and deaths from Covid-19 anywhere in the world except the United States. But this week's polls suggest the man dubbed the "Tropical Trump" is weathering the crisis relatively well. The latest, published Friday by news magazine *Veja*, puts the far-right leader comfortably ahead in the first round of the presidential election, with 27.5 to 30.7 percent of the vote, depending on his opponents. Bolsonaro would easily win the second round against any opponent, even his popular ex-justice minister turned nemesis, Sergio Moro, or leftist former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, the poll found.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

## CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

## Record cases in every region

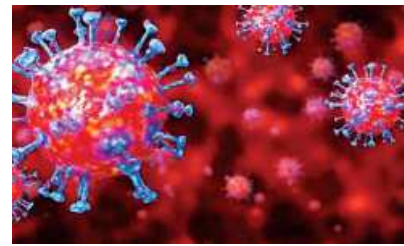
REUTERS, London

Almost 40 countries have reported record single-day increases in coronavirus infections over the past week, around double the number that did so the previous week, according to a Reuters tally showing a pick-up in the pandemic in every region of the world.

The rate of cases has been increasing not only in countries like the United States, Brazil and India, which have dominated global headlines with large outbreaks, but in Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, Bolivia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Bulgaria, Belgium, Uzbekistan and Israel, among others.

Many countries, especially those where officials eased earlier social distancing lockdowns, are experiencing a second peak more than a month after recording their first.

"We will not be going back to the 'old normal'. The pandemic has



already changed the way we live our lives," World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said this week. "We're asking everyone to treat the decisions about where they go, what they do and who they meet with as life-and-death decisions - because they are."

The Reuters data, compiled from official reports, shows a steady rise in the number of countries reporting record daily increases in the virus that causes COVID-19 over the past month.

At least seven countries recorded such increases three weeks ago, rising to at least 13 countries two weeks ago to at least 20 countries last week and to 37 countries this week.

The true numbers of both cases and deaths are almost certainly underreported, particularly in countries with poorer health care systems, health experts and officials say. For this report, the Reuters data was restricted to countries that provide regular daily numbers.

A surge in cases usually precedes a rise in deaths by a couple of weeks.

The United States remains at the top of the case list, this week passing more than 4 million cases and recording more than 1,000 deaths for four consecutive days. Brazil and India - which epidemiologists say is still likely months from hitting its peak - have also exceeded 1 million cases.

## PROTEST OVER UNPAID WAGES

## HRW urges Maldives to free migrant workers

AFP, Male

Human Rights Watch yesterday urged the Maldives to drop charges against 80 migrant workers arrested for demanding their unpaid wages in a country otherwise known for its upmarket tourism.

The New York-based group said authorities detained the foreign workers during separate demonstrations against inhumane living conditions and work without pay.

"The authorities should drop charges and release all those held for engaging in peaceful protest, and address allegations of human trafficking and other abuses..." HRW said in a statement.

Workers in the construction sector had not been paid even before the country went into coronavirus lockdown in March, according to officials. Sporadic clashes erupted since May.

Bangladeshi worker Mohammad Mohsin told AFP by phone that clashes with police broke out two weeks ago as they had not been paid for six months.

"Our families are dying at home starving and being hunted by loan sharks," Mohsin said, referring to many borrowing money to travel to the Maldives in search of what they believed would be well-paid jobs.

Maldives has 3,175 coronavirus cases. 15 people have died.

The majority of infections have been among Bangladeshi workers who often live in squalid conditions on the highly congested capital island.



## Trump signs orders to force lower prices for drugs

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

President Donald Trump on Friday signed four executive orders aimed at lowering some prices that US citizens pay for prescription drugs that may have appeal as he faces an uphill re-election battle and criticism over his handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

At a White House ceremony, Trump laid out his plan to sign four executive orders regarding drug prices. One is about importation. The others would direct drugmaker rebates straight to patients and provide insulin and EpiPens at steep discounts to low-income people.

The fourth, which might not need to be implemented if negotiations with drug companies are successful, would require Medicare to buy drugs at the same price that other countries pay, Trump said.

Democrats are eager to draw a contrast between Trump's orders and their sweeping plans to authorize Medicare to negotiate prices with pharmaceutical companies, an idea the president had backed as a candidate.

Consumers may not notice many immediate changes from the new orders, which must be carried out by the federal bureaucracy and could face court challenges.

Trump came into office complaining that pharmaceutical companies were "getting away with murder" and promising to bring them under control. Nearly four years later, things are much the same despite some recent moderation in price increases.

## 'Mr President, don't go!' Video of woman begging Peru president for a hospital bed to save her husband goes viral

AFP, Arequipa

A video of a mother running behind a van carrying Peru's President Martin Vizcarra and begging him to save her husband from COVID-19, has gone viral.

"Mr. President, Don't go!" screams a tearful Celia Capira as she begs for a hospital bed for her husband in the video shot on Sunday in Peru's second largest city, Arequipa.

But the 32-year-old mother of three's story did not have a happy ending, as her husband Adolfo Mamani, 57, died on Tuesday.

Arequipa's overwhelmed hospital system which lacks both beds and oxygen couldn't save him.

"They killed him; he was well, they told us he was stable, in the morning I took him breakfast," Capira told local reporters on Tuesday.

Images of Capira's tear-soaked cheeks covered with a mask and face shield have come to reflect the desperation of a local population that wants answers from authorities.

Outside the Honorio Delgado hospital where Mamani died, authorities have set up an overflow tent where he was initially

given treatment.

"Mr President, you have to go to the tent, don't leave the hospital until you've seen the condition (patients) are in," sobs Capira in the video as the presidential cavalcade moves away.

"Mr president, it's bad and inhuman," she screams.

On Monday, Mamani was transferred from the tent to a hospital bed, but he died the next day.

The couple ran a store in Arequipa, in the country's south. "What will I do with my children, how will I tell them their father isn't here any more?" Capira, who's children are aged one, six and 14, asked reporters.

On Tuesday, Vizcarra apologized to the widow, saying he hadn't seen her.

"It's unfortunate that madam Celia's husband has died. I give her my condolences and sincere apologies for not having heard her, and we are at her service and everyone's that has lost a loved one," said Vizcarra.

But soaring coronavirus cases in Arequipa show no sign of abating.

With more than 370,000 cases and over 17,000 deaths, Peru is one of the worst affected countries in Latin America by the coronavirus.



People carry a portrait of Sergei Furgal, the governor of the Khabarovsk region, during an unauthorised rally in his support in the Russian far eastern city of Khabarovsk, yesterday. Residents of Khabarovsk near the border with China have taken to the streets en masse since the Furgal was arrested by federal law enforcement and flown to Moscow on murder charges earlier this month. He was replaced this week by a Kremlin appointee who never lived in the fraught region.

PHOTO: AFP

## New arms race in space?

Russian mystery projectile adds new front in US-Russia rivalry

AFP, Washington

The United States this week accused Russia of having tested an anti-satellite weapon in space, a charge Moscow has denied, saying the device was a "special instrument" for inspecting orbiting Russian equipment.

Whatever it was, the incident marks for Washington a rare military escalation in space.

The ability of one satellite to attack another was until now merely theoretical.

The United States, Russia, China and, since 2019, India, have been able to target satellites with Earth-launched projectiles, but these explosions create millions of pieces of debris in orbit, prompting the world powers to refrain from such tests.

This week's incident may be seen as a message to Washington, which under President Donald Trump is building up a new "Space Force" wing of its military.

Space Force's commander, General Jay Raymond, on Friday reiterated that "space is a warfighting domain just like air, land and sea."

In November 2019, Russia launched a satellite named Cosmos 2542. A week later, that satellite surprised observers when it released a sub-satellite, Cosmos 2543, capable of maneuvering in orbit to observe, inspect or spy on other



satellites.

This sub-satellite moved close to a US spy satellite, USA-245, and to another Russian satellite. A game of cat and mouse began in orbit, easily observable from Earth by astronomers and the US military, which publicly expressed its concern.

On July 15 at around 0750 GMT, Cosmos 2543 (the sub-satellite with a surface area of less than a square meter, according to the US military), released an object at a high relative speed, around 200 meters per second, said astronomer Jonathan McDowell.

Dubbed "Object E" by the United States, it is still in orbit and appears not to have hit anything. Its size, shape and purpose remain a

mystery, but that does nothing to diminish the threat it may pose.

In orbit, satellites speed through the void at tens of thousands of miles per hour. The smallest contact with another object risks smashing a hole in its solar panels or damaging or even destroying it, depending on the size of whatever it may hit.

In space, the difference between a satellite and a weapon is therefore theoretical: whatever its function, "Object E" is a de facto "projectile" and therefore a "weapon," the US says.

Spy satellites are enormous, extremely costly and rare.

Russia is far less dependent upon satellites than the United States, and its satellites are much less expensive, he said.

That was echoed by the Space Force commander on Friday, who noted that ever since the Gulf War in the early 1990s, the entire US military, from war planes to infantry, depend on space-based technology for navigation, communications and intelligence.

"There's nothing we do... that doesn't have space enabled in it every step of the way," the general said.

The United States and Russia will have the chance to hold direct talks next week in Vienna, during their first meeting on space security since 2013.

## FOREIGN MEDDLING IN 2020 US POLLS

## Counterintelligence chief warns voters

REUTERS, Washington

Voters should be on high alert for foreign interference in the Nov 3 US election, the US counterintelligence agency chief said on Friday in a rare warning that the public should screen information and report suspicious actions.

William Evanina, chief of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC), said that with just over 100 days to the election, it was "imperative" his agency share with voters some of the information about possible interference that US spies have given to campaigns and legislators.

"The American public has a role to play in securing the election," said Evanina, who directs the counterintelligence branch of the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Given the complexity of US vote counting and auditing systems, Evanina said it would be "extraordinarily difficult for foreign adversaries to broadly disrupt or change vote tallies without detection."

However, Evanina said US spy agencies now see foreign adversaries trying to compromise US political campaigns and candidates, as well as elections infrastructure. He said foreign nations are trying to influence US voters via social and traditional media, using issues including the coronavirus pandemic and domestic protests as disinformation fodder.

Evanina said his agency was mainly concerned with interference by China, Russia and Iran, though other unnamed countries and non-state actors "could also do harm to our electoral process."



# Unusual symptoms of COVID-19

DR ZUBAIR KHALED HUQ

What are the more unusual symptoms of COVID-19 and what should you be watching out for? Other symptoms that have also become prevalent in patients are the loss of smell or taste, fatigue and a runny nose, as well as diarrhoea. The reports of these non-respiratory effects started to build as doctors began treating more patients; much of the current scientific understanding of them is still in the early stages and not confirmed by enough research. But recognising they exist could help healthcare professionals spot them sooner and possibly minimise their effects.

**Skin rashes and COVID-19 toes:** It is not unusual to see skin rashes in someone with a viral infection, what is unclear about COVID-19 is whether the rashes associated with infection are specific to the virus, meaning there is actual virus in the skin, or if they are a manifestation of the immune system reacting to the virus that is elsewhere in the body. COVID-19 toes can be found on the side or sole of the foot and in some cases has been seen on hands and fingers. Doctors have reported a range of skin-related conditions that might be connected to COVID-19, including head-to-toe red rashes, hive-like eruptions, blisters and rashes spreading across larger patches of skin.



**Pink eye or conjunctivitis:** The Royal College of Ophthalmologists and College of Optometrists has said that in any upper respiratory tract infection, there is a possibility that it could result in viral conjunctivitis. They highlighted that this would be a secondary complication in viruses such as the coronavirus.

**Gastrointestinal symptoms:** It has now become clear that not all of those infected with COVID-19 display the classic respiratory symptoms that doctors focused on early in the pandemic; many people only

experience diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting. Acknowledging that COVID-19 can affect the gut as well as the respiratory system is critical, especially when it comes to controlling the spread of infection.

**Renal symptoms:** The gut is not the only open target for the virus. Some studies have reported finding SARS-CoV-2 virus in the urine of infected people, although extensive studies of kidney tissues so far are not conclusive. But among hospitalised patients, for example, doctors are finding

microscopic amounts of blood, as well as hints of proteins, in the urine, both of which are signs of cellular injury to the kidneys even if the patients do not complain of any symptoms.

**Hepatic symptoms:** Further, over half of the COVID-19 patients seem to have elevated or lower-than-normal levels of liver enzymes, which could signal that the virus has invaded the organ. Combined, those two facts make it reasonable to question whether the virus can infect and injure the liver. Fortunately, current data suggest that COVID-19 does not

lead to dramatic liver failure.

**Blood clots and stroke:** One of the risks of COVID-19 cases has to do with blood clots, including those that can lead to stroke. However, some experts believe SARS-CoV-2 could be uniquely damaging the circulatory system. As with kidney, lungs, liver and intestinal cells, blood vessel cells also carry the Angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2) receptors, which means the virus could be directly infecting the cells that line the vessels and, therefore, contributing to clot formations of small blood clots in different organs.

**Altered smell and taste:** Another group of intriguing reports from people affected by COVID-19 has to do with their loss of smell and taste. Most of us are familiar with the way congestion from a cold or allergies can impact these senses. The damage may be caused by the inflammatory reaction that causes tissues to swell and compress the nerves, or because of more direct viral infection.

Doctors and other healthcare professionals need to keep their eyes and minds open to these emerging new symptoms of COVID-19 so that the patients can be treated carefully.

The writer is a gerontologist and a public health specialist.  
E-mail: zubairkhaledjoy@gmail.com

## FOOD SAFETY

### How to ensure safe vegetables and fruits in COVID-19

PROF M KARIM KHAN

Very often parents ask us whether they will be able to offer seasonal fruits and vegetables to their child or not in this pandemic? How to make them safe or disinfected for consumption and how to preserve them.

The coronavirus is a new virus and we do not know all about this virus yet, but so far there is no evidence that it transmits through food or drink. Established mode of transmission is droplet infection. Questions may arise if droplets are on vegetables or fruits how can we make them disinfected or safe. It is quite simple. Just follow these instructions:

- Wash your own hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Then put the fruits or vegetables one by one under running water for a minimum of twenty seconds. If they require rubbing to clean them, use a soft sponge to clean the dirt attached to the fruits or vegetables.
- No soap, detergent or chemicals are advocated to clean fruits or vegetables.
- After cleaning them as advised above, you may put them in water for more than 20 minutes, which is optional.
- Dry the fruits and vegetables with tissue papers.
- Now it is ready for consumption or to refrigerate for future use.

I think if someone follows these simple steps, it will make their fruits and vegetables safe enough for consumption. Stay safe, stay home and be happy.

The author is a Professor of Paediatrics at Community Based Medical College, Mymensingh.  
E-mail: mmukhan@gmail.com

## HEALTH bulletin



### Loss of smell and taste are solid indicators of COVID-19

An international team created a mobile device app that allows users to report repeatedly on symptoms thought to be relevant for COVID-19 and to self-report results of reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing for SARS-CoV-2. The app has been used by more than 2.6 million people in the U.K. and U.S. who believed they had symptoms of COVID-19. Of about 18,500 participants who underwent RT-PCR testing, about 7,000 tested positive.

Loss of smell and taste were much more common in participants who were RT-PCR positive than in those who were RT-PCR negative (65% vs. 22%; odds ratio, 6.74); results were similar regardless of country of domicile, age, or sex. These two symptoms best discriminated test-positive from test-negative participants, although several other symptoms — particularly fatigue and skipped meals — also were significantly more common in the test-positive participants.

This study involves self-selected participants who self-reported various symptoms; there was no formal testing of smell and taste. Nevertheless, the study provides strong evidence that loss of smell and taste are associated with COVID-19. However, one third of people with COVID-19 do not report these symptoms.

## Vitamin D: the 'sunshine' vitamin

DR TAUHIDA RAHMAN EREEN

Vitamin D is so important that your body makes it by itself - but only after skin exposure to sufficient sunlight, hence the name 'sunshine' vitamin. Vitamin D is required for many bodily functions. Your body needs this essential vitamin to build and maintain bone and teeth health. Your skin, muscle, brain and nerves also need Vitamin D to function properly. Studies suggest that vitamin D may play an important role in the prevention of various allergic diseases. Vitamin D is a hormone, a nutrient essential for good health.

**How to replenish this valuable nutrient:** Keep in mind that the best way to get more vitamin D is from sunshine. Thirty minutes of sun exposure to the face, legs, or back - without sunscreen - at least twice a week should give you plenty of vitamin D. Only 20% of our vitamin D is meant to come from our diet. But it is also equally important to get vitamin D from foods or from supplements.

Foods that are high in this vitamin include fatty fishes like tuna and salmon which are a great source of vitamin D. Some dairy products like cottage cheese, soy milk, homemade sour yoghurt are rich in vitamin D. Other sources include orange juice, beef liver, egg yolks, mushroom, carrot, broccoli, avocado and sweet potatoes. Infants vitamin D storage in the first year of life relies on the mother's storage of vitamin D before birth.

**Causes that can lead to vitamin D deficiency:** Infants who are only breastfed, people with dark skin (which does not absorb the sunlight as well as light skin), obese people, people who have liver or kidney problems and people who use sunscreen often and people who take certain medicines, like anti-seizure drugs or steroids are at risk of vitamin D deficiency.

A long-term deficiency can lead to osteoporosis, bone and muscle aches, depression, dental changes, brittle nails, hair loss and skin sagging. Inadequate exposure to sunlight, poor choice of food, ageing process, obesity, pregnancy and lactating stages - these conditions increase the need for this vital vitamin. It can be consumed in the diet through food or supplements

and by exposing yourself to the sunlight. You can have a simple blood test prescribed by your doctor to detect vitamin D deficiency.

Too much of any good thing is a bad thing. Too much vitamin D can cause an abnormally high blood calcium level, which could result in nausea, constipation, confusion, abnormal heart rhythm, and even kidney stones. But the good news is that it is nearly impossible to get too much vitamin D from sunlight or foods. Nearly all vitamin D overdoses come from supplements so be careful if you are having vitamin D supplements. Always consult your doctor before you take any supplements.

The writer is a Cosmetologist and Dermatologist.



Physical activity at home during COVID-19

ZAHID BIN SULTAN

Worldwide social distancing policies during the COVID-19 pandemic is restricting people's daily activities. People are getting less opportunity to exercise and participate in outdoor activities like going to the gym or walking in the park. Insufficient physical activity is one of the leading risk factors for death worldwide and a key risk factor for non-communicable diseases. Here is how you can safely exercise in this pandemic.

- If you have fever, cough or difficulty in breathing or any symptoms of COVID-19, stop exercising. Contact your health care provider regarding your symptoms because COVID-19 patients required specific exercise protocols according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). A respiratory physiotherapist can help you to make an effective respiratory exercise and rehabilitation plan.
- Maintain social distancing when exercising outdoors and practice good hand hygiene before and after exercise.
- If you are not used to physical activity, start slowly with low-intensity activities such as walking or low impact exercises for shorter periods and gradually increase the intensity of activity over time.
- Choose the right activity and intensity to reduce the risk of injury.
- If you feel any chest pain or discomfort during any kind of physical activity, stop the activity immediately and consult your doctor. Patients with heart diseases should measure their target heart rate (THR) before any physical activity.

The writer is a neurodynamic specialist and clinical physiotherapist at BRB Hospital Ltd.  
Email: ranacrphysio@gmail.com

f b /StarHealthBD



## Rumors and misconceptions unveiled

### Can people wear mask while exercising ?

- People should **NOT** wear masks when exercising as masks may reduce the ability to breath comfortably.
- Sweat can make the mask become wet more quickly which makes it difficult to breath and promotes the growth of microorganisms.
- The important preventive measure during exercise is to maintain physical distance of at least one meter from others.



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# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR  
LATE S. M. ALI

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## 6.53 crore peoples' lives hang in the balance

*UNDP's report calls for urgent cash payments to the right people*

A UNDP working paper has suggested that nearly 6.53 crore people need to receive time-bound temporary cash payments in order to cope with the devastating financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The enormity of this statement cannot be lost on the government. It means 6.53 crore people are in dire need of cash in the coming months. The UN organisation recommends Tk 2,100 per month for the next few months so that the beneficiaries, mainly poor and the newly impoverished, can stay at home which will help to slow the spread of the virus. At present, infection rates are high and the virus has spread all over the country—the 16th worst hit in the world. Partial opening to ease the economic hardship has led to this situation which will worsen unless drastic measures are taken.

The hardest hit by the pandemic are those in the informal sector who earn low wages and include women, young people, migrant workers, refugees and people with disabilities—none of whom are covered in the social insurance programmes. According to a Brac survey, earnings of 51 percent households in Bangladesh plunged to zero due to the coronavirus outbreak. Without such cash handouts, they may literally starve.

A national strategy is therefore immediately needed to provide this cash support while increasing testing and contact tracing in areas where transmissions are high.

Firstly the government must acknowledge the enormity of the task ahead which is to come up with an estimated USD 1,623.4 million to help these people to help them buy food, pay for health and education expenses, etc. This will require mobilising funds from its own sources as well as from the international community and the private sector.

But just having enough funds to pay such emergency cash handouts will be of no use if the money is not managed properly and distributed to those who need it most. The government has allocated Tk 1,250 crore for nearly 50 lakh families and each family is supposed to receive Tk 2,500 a month. But the government has managed to disburse the funds only among 16.16 lakh families amid inconsistencies found in the list of beneficiaries. The list has been revised and sent by the district administration but according to the finance division around 10 lakh families will be provided with cash before the coming Eid. This is only a fraction of the population that must be helped immediately.

The irregularities that lead to leakages in the funds available must be eliminated before new funds are distributed. This means the list has to be properly made with the legitimate beneficiaries identified by experts and organisations that work with poor populations. The cash can be distributed through electronic transfer. The task at hand is no doubt formidable. But it has to be undertaken on an urgent basis and can be accomplished if there is political will. With 6.53 crore peoples' lives hanging in the balance, there is no time to waste.

## Ensure affordable internet for students, teachers

*Reduce the education divide*

IT is concerning that many students and teachers across the country are finding it hard to bear the cost of online classes because of the high internet charges. Around four crore students in the country, from primary to university level, have been affected due to the pandemic since all educational institutions were closed on March 17 to contain the spread of Covid-19. Although many institutions have introduced online classes to make up for the loss of learning, a vast majority of students cannot afford the high internet charges.

The high cost of a broadband connection and the necessary equipment, such as a router, needed for online classes, have added to the burden of parents who are struggling to meet the regular household expenditure. The same is true for teachers as paying the internet bill every month with their meagre salary has become very difficult for many of them. The cost of mobile operators' data plans are even higher than the cost of broadband connections. And for many students living in the remote rural areas, online education remains completely inaccessible because of poverty, poor internet connectivity and a lack of necessary equipment.

Although the issue of the digital divide created during this pandemic has been discussed in the media and various other forums, we are yet to see any comprehensive plan from the government to address the problem and ensure that online education is accessible to all students at every corner of the country. Questions have also been raised about the lack of preparations of our public universities in holding online classes and reaching students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Public and private universities have been calling for affordable mobile internet packages for their students for a long time. And the UGC has also urged the government to introduce free internet packages for university students to enable them to access online education. We hope to see a positive development in this regard soon. It is good to know that Shahjalal University of Science and Technology have already signed an agreement with a telecom operator to provide affordable internet packages for its students. We hope other universities will also take such steps.

# A strong banking system makes a strong economy



ABU AFSARUL HAIDER

FOR the last several years, the banking sector in Bangladesh has been playing an important role in our USD 300-plus billion economy where banks comprise more than 80 percent of all financing activity. Besides providing investible funds to both the public and the private sector, they are also facilitating international trade and service payments, generating employment, earning foreign remittance, strengthening rural economy, developing the housing sector, etc. But in recent years, this crucial sector has been facing many challenges, which include among others, a big volume of non-performing loans (NPLs), lack of corporate governance, increasing capital shortfall and slow loan recovery that have raised serious concerns about the efficiency and soundness of this sector.

According to the "Global Competitiveness Report 2019" of World Economic Forum, Bangladesh scored 38.3 out of 100 and ranked 130th out of 141 countries in soundness of banks. This ranking is the lowest among South Asian countries (India scored 60.4 and ranked 89th, Pakistan ranking 93rd, Sri Lanka 94th and Nepal 106th). In defining banks' soundness, weak monitoring, growing default loans, lack of good governance, balance sheets and availability of funds, and capacity to repay were taken into consideration. Another report (Financial Stability Report, 2019) unveiled by the Bangladesh Bank (BB) shows that the country's banking sector maintained the lowest capital adequacy ratio (CAR) in 2019 compared with neighbouring countries (India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). Bangladesh maintained the CAR at 11.60 percent, way less than 17 percent in Pakistan, 16.5 percent in Sri Lanka and 15.1 percent in India. Capital adequacy ratio (CAR) is the reflection of all financial indicators of banks, including the ratio of defaulted loans, the capability of keeping provisioning against regular and classified loans and the actual situation of corporate governance.

It is an open secret now that the country's banking sector has been mired in a series of scams and irregularities, such as the funneling of loans worth billions of taka by violating banking rules and procedures to influential people, who have been known to be lax with repayments. As a result, as of September 2019, defaulted loans in the banking sector stood at a record Tk 116,288 crore. Disappointingly, instead

of taking any strict action against loan defaulters, Bangladesh Bank (BB) opted for a relaxation of various rules. Under the relaxed policy offered in 2019, the central bank has given special loan rescheduling facility to loan defaulters, allowing defaulters to regularise their loans for 10 years by paying just two percent of their loans as down-payment. As a result of the central bank's decision, last year, a record Tk 52,770 crore was rescheduled, but of them, Tk 13,284 crore have turned sour again, according to BB data. BB data also showed more than 50 percent of the defaulted loans amounting to Tk 48,057 crore were with the eight state-run banks and 41 private banks together had defaulted loans amounting to Tk 44,174 crore, as of December 2019.

Industry experts, however, have strongly criticised the policy. Khondkar Ibrahim Khaled, former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank, said, "The policy

will destroy the banks." The policy will have serious "side effects" on the money market. When loans are not recovered for a long time, lending rates go up and hurt businesses, he added. In a similar vein, Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute said, "Actually, this is just an eyewash to camouflage the actual situation of defaulted loans." Wholesale rescheduling indicates that banks are trying to clean up their financial balance sheets artificially in a bid to show profits. The volume of non-performing loans (NPLs) would have increased significantly if banks had not regularised the defaulted loans in a relaxed manner, he pointed out. These numbers (reduce defaulted loans) may look good on paper but in the long run the policy would deteriorate the banking sector's financial health because long-term loan rescheduling would hurt and squeeze

the banks' capacity to give fresh loans to productive sectors which in turn could bring disaster to the economy. Amid such a situation, the coronavirus outbreak in March added salt to the wound for the banking sector. Due to the ongoing economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, most of the business houses have been forced to take out a large amount of money to pay wages and salaries to employees and for other operational expenditures. Individuals too are withdrawing deposits from their savings account, cashing out fixed and deposit pension schemes prematurely to support their family expenses. According to Bangladesh Bank, bank deposits decreased to Tk 12,28,000 crore at the end of this April from Tk 12,53,600 crore in January 2020. Moreover, the governments' recent move to cap bank interest rates within 9 percent against loans and 6 percent for deposits will surely encourage

budget deficit. It seems the current trend of high government borrowing would increase further in the coming months due to a dismal revenue collection amid the global coronavirus outbreak. Economists and bankers anticipate all this to definitely put further pressure on bank deposits in the coming days, which will ultimately increase the risk of crowding out the private sector with adverse effects on private investments.

Once the outbreak is contained and the economy resumes its normal activity there will be more demand for money, both from the private and public sector. Private sector will be needing money for business structuring and the government will need to spend a substantial amount of money on development projects to boost up economic activities and to create aggregate demand, but the question remains, how can banks lend smoothly if they do not have adequate funds. To answer the question, economics 101 tells us that when the economy starts growing, the country needs more sources of finance and more sources of credit. Today, there is a strong need for other types of institutions like venture capital, private debt equities, strong bond and capital market, etc., so that businesses can raise longer-term finance through these institutions and reduce their reliance on short-term bank finance. Similarly, the government should also focus on availing foreign grants as well as low-cost funds from external sources and should take initiatives to strengthen the bond market as the country needs long-term investment to achieve its development goals and thus reduce dependency on bank borrowing.

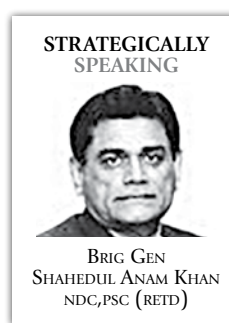
Therefore, it is high time for our policymakers to understand that a healthy, strong and efficient financial sector is a vital component of economic growth. Anne-Marie Gulde-Wolf, the International Monetary Funds (IMF's) Asia-Pacific Deputy Director said: "Reforming the banking sector is one of the top priorities for the government to enhance the resilience of the economy... Comprehensive reform is required to address banking sector weaknesses. Measures should include enhanced banking regulation and supervision, state-owned commercial banks reforms, tighter criteria for loan rescheduling/restructuring, stronger corporate governance in the banking sector, and enhanced legal systems to accelerate loan recovery." Therefore, the sooner the government starts to implement the above recommendations, the faster Bangladesh will embark on a path that would create a stronger economy.

Abu Afsarul Haider is an entrepreneur. He studied economics and business administration at the Illinois State University, USA. Email: afsarulhaider@gmail.com



borrowing but banks will face hurdles in attracting depositors. Furthermore, the government decision to raise excise duty by 20 to 25 percent in various slabs on deposits above Tk 10 lakh in the current budget for 2020-21 is expected to further discourage depositors to park their money in the banking system. Unfortunately, while the banking sector is passing through such a financially difficult period, government's borrowing from the banking system continues to rise. Data shows in the just concluded fiscal year the government's net borrowing from the banking sector stood at Tk 85,000 crores, up by Tk 37,633 crores from the original estimate due to a dismal revenue collection amid the global coronavirus outbreak. For this fiscal year (2020-2021), the government has set its bank borrowing target at Tk 84,983 crore to meet part of its Tk 1.9 lakh crore

## There is indeed something 'rotten in the state of Denmark'



BRIG GEN SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN NDC, PSC (RETD)

WE knew that our system was plagued with moral and systemic corruption, but we couldn't imagine that it was this bad, and were it not for Covid-19, much of the muck that has surfaced in the last four months might have remained under the surface. The pandemic has bared us at all levels, individual and collective; and at the administrative level, the veneer of rectitude and scruples has been all but removed.

But corruption is not a recent phenomenon. It's enough to mention Bangabandhu's memorable comment about corruption without quoting it, to jog our memory. Unfortunately, corruption had never left us. Every regime since his, of whatever shade, has practiced it with due diligence and unwavering single-mindedness. And every succeeding administration has not only replicated it, but practiced also with vengeance and gusto. If there is any list that we have had the misfortune to top or be thereabouts with regularity, it is the corruption index, which every regime has vehemently disagreed and trashed out of hand, not unpredictably. The conspiracy theorist going on overdrive to discover heinous motives behind the machinations of the watchdogs, the media singled out for concocting stories and overlooking the truth.

The last four months of the pandemic has been for many an existence like Alice in the Wonderland. But things are not only getting "curiouser" and "curiouser", it is exposing the faults in the system ever more. But what is the most frightening is the truck between some people in the administration and the corrupt in the public sphere. The revelations have been startling, though not shocking. We have gone past the stage of being stunned long ago. The malaise has infected all strata of our society and all areas of our activity, polity not excepted. The environment that

Covid-19 has created has become a mirror that reflects our society. Getting up every morning to see the mirror is not gratifying at all.

The panic created by the virus has eroded the human in us. Ailing parents have been discarded, left to die by their children. Burial of dead parents was done by a few humanitarian organisations and some UNOs. Some doctors and health workers, our front line fighters, were not allowed to enter their own homes, forced

that allows a convicted felon to go about not only freely in public, but also enter into deals with banks, set up hospitals, get enrolled in an important sub-committee of the ruling party, have bank managers root for him for loans discarding the normal scrutiny and verification process, pass off as a member of the PM's staff, commandeer the services of UNOs for personal business, fleece thousands from people through sham MLM companies, and endanger the security of the country



Md Shahed posted this photo of 'meeting' at the office of director general of DGHS on his Facebook profile on April 2.

out by neighbours for fear of being infected. Even land grabbers are exploiting the situation to illegally occupy property. And of course there are the PPE suppliers and some private hospitals that have made capital out of the crisis. Some have been caught, others not yet.

One wonders whether we would ever come to know about the inimitable craftiness of Md Shahed had the pandemic not intervened. If the media had revealed any one of his "deeds" at any other time, charges of defamation and slander of a very "honourable man" of the society who was conducting his business "honestly" would have been brought against those revealing the blatant misdeeds.

How would one describe a legal system

nobody who could remove him. His deputy has followed suit. The DGHS and his directorate must shoulder much of the blame for the pathetic condition the health sector is in and for all the illegal and corrupt practices conducted by some of the hospitals. The former DG manifests in himself the decay and the pitiful state of the health sector—a sector that by far outruns all the others in corruption. Should we not shudder when we hear a minister admitting that signing documents without ever reading it is the norm rather than the exception? Will he be held to account for the damage his action and inaction have done to the country? Will the DGHS retirement be the end of the story as far as he is concerned?

Can one have faith in a system which allows two big businessmen to evade arrest on allegations of attempted murder, by flying out of the country ostensibly as corona patients? Their private air ambulance was used for the purpose, and that too during the strictest period of lockdown when there were no international flights operating to and from the country! Will one be remiss in suggesting that everything is not well with the state machineries when an act of absconding is allegedly facilitated by state officials?

The present state is the consequence of the absence of accountability. Public servants and elected officials no longer feel obligated towards the public, since it's not public support they need any more for their political validity. The People's House has become, largely, a place for exchanging plaudits and dispensing platitudinous banalities instead of a forum for holding the administration and the lawmakers answerable on behalf of the people they are supposed to represent, and whose interest they are supposed to uphold. Absence of accountability creates people who subvert the nation's interest and security, which may become hard to reclaim. Surely there is something wrong in our state, and it will take not only the Heaven's direction but also drastic actions by the people at the helm to cure it.

Brig Gen Shahedul Anam Khan, ndc, psc (Retd), is a former Associate Editor of The Daily Star.



# How long will the UK harbour a mass murderer?

War criminal Chowdhury Mueen Uddin is suing the British Home Secretary after enjoying almost five decades of immunity



SHUPROVA TASNEEM

**H**OW does a country come to terms with a blot in its history as dark as the mass murder of intellectuals during the liberation struggle of

Bangladesh? No matter how fierce or intense a war is, how does anyone, anywhere, even begin to explain the level of cruelty that motivates one to knock on the doors of academics, journalists, writers and doctors—not soldiers or even politicians, but civilians who make up the moral backbone of a revolution and shape the hopes of a new nation—only to slaughter them in cold blood as the last act of cowardice before conceding defeat?

Perhaps the most suitable words to describe the war crimes committed at Rayer Bazaar on December 14, 1971, were used when the chairman of the International Crimes Tribunal-2 read out the punishment for war criminals Chowdhury Mueen Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman Khan for their complicity in the killing of martyred journalist and poet Selina Parveen. The brutal death by bayonet charge of Selina Parveen, who in her last moments begged for her life for the sake of her child, were described as “an impious butchery... a sacrilegious act... (and) a shame for human civilisation”. Both these men were also charged and convicted for the torture and killing of 17 other intellectuals, including the playwright professor Munier Chowdhury, novelist and journalist

Shahidullah Kaiser, and professor of Cardiology Mohammed Fazle Rabbee.

Yet, halfway across the world in the UK, the leader of the infamous Al-Badr and convicted war criminal Mueen Uddin, confidently claimed that the charges against him were completely false. Despite the testimony of the widow of eminent scholar professor Mufazzal Haider Chaudhury, who saw Mueen Uddin lead her husband away to his death; despite the testimony of the widow of journalist Sirajuddin Hussain, who saw a similar sight; despite testimonies from Mueen Uddin’s colleagues at *Daily Purbodesh* of his intimate knowledge of the detention centres and his handing over of information to Pakistani officers in 1971; and despite hundreds of pages of harrowing testimonies that acted as evidence during the war crimes trials in Bangladesh—Mueen Uddin was able to casually dismiss decades of pain and denial of justice from the safety of his one million pound home in London.

How ironic that the country that has sheltered him since 1972, that allowed him to become a British citizen and even take up a role in its National Health Service as a director of Muslim Spiritual Care Provision, knowing full well the crimes he had committed—as early as January 1972, the *New York Times* identified him “as the head of a secret, commando—like organisation of fanatic Moslems that murdered several hundred prominent Bengali professors, doctors, lawyers and journalists in a Dacca brickyard”—is now facing a libel lawsuit for their efforts. Mueen Uddin is suing British Home Secretary Priti Patel for 60,000 pounds after she shared a report on Twitter linking him to war crimes during Bangladesh’s Liberation War in

1971, according to the *Daily Mail*. The fact that a right-wing tabloid like the *Daily Mail* has taken up this story most enthusiastically is telling—historically, their tone has been decidedly anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim, and cases like these only add fire to the fodder while completely overlooking Britain’s complicity in the matter.

Why is a man like Mueen Uddin still living an easy breezy life of luxury in the UK, when ordinary Bangladeshi



Chowdhury Mueen Uddin photographed in Britain where he fled to after the 1971 Liberation War.

immigrants live with the threat of deportation hanging over their heads due to the “hostile environment” created by the British Home Office? The death of Paulette Wilson on July 23, who was nearly deported after 50 years of living in the UK, has renewed focus on the 2018 Windrush scandal, where a huge number of British citizens of Caribbean origin were wrongfully detained and threatened with

deportation. Even in February this year, a young father who has lived in the UK since he was 12 years old was deported to Jamaica—it seems a two year conviction for non-violent burglary offences is enough to get you kicked out, but war crimes committed in your youth will be received with a blind eye and turning of the cheek.

So far, Bangladesh has not been able to negotiate an extradition treaty with the UK. The oft-repeated excuse for this is Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR), which stipulates that if a person “faces a real risk of being subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in the requesting country”, he cannot be extradited. Given that Mueen Uddin has already been handed the death penalty by the International Crimes Tribunal, the UK cannot hand him over to us on moral grounds. As is often the case with our capricious (ex) colonisers, this strong moral compass seems to have disappeared in the case of Shamima Begum—after being groomed by extremists as a teenager, becoming an “ISIS bride” and losing her baby to pneumonia in the Syrian refugee camps, the UK has still revoked her British citizenship and has only recently allowed her permission to enter the country to fight for it.

What is really alarming is the level of influence that the UK has allowed a war criminal like Mueen Uddin to wield, while at the same time bullying others with far lesser crimes than his. In 2010, Channel 4 Dispatches investigated the extremist ideologies of the Islamic Forum of Europe (IFE)—of which Mueen Uddin is the founder—and how it was spreading across East London from East London Mosque with the ultimate aim of creating an Islamic

state with sharia law in Europe. Despite these revelations and the subsequent expulsion of Tower Hamlets’ mayor Lutfur Rahman from the Labour Party—he was later found guilty of electoral fraud and corruption—Mueen Uddin was allowed to continue to work with Muslim Aid (he still remains a trustee) and be closely involved with the Muslim Council of Britain. Through these actions, Mueen Uddin has managed to become a self-styled “British Muslim leader” and use his influence and lobby to challenge the accusations against him—in 2009, *The Guardian* was forced to print an apology for publishing allegations of involvement in genocide against him because he “has never been prosecuted, charged nor even arrested in connection with these events”.

It is high time for the British government to stop looking the other way when it comes to Chowdhury Mueen Uddin. It is in their interests to stem the extremist ideologies coming from British-Bangladeshi “Muslim leaders” like Mueen Uddin and in the wake of Brexit, it is even more in their interest to build relations with Commonwealth countries like Bangladesh. On our end, we must pursue the establishment of an extradition treaty with the UK with renewed political will. If nothing else, the UK must apply the principle of universal jurisdiction (like they did with Pinochet), which allows states to claim criminal jurisdiction over an accused person regardless of where the alleged crime was committed, and arrange for trials themselves. We have already waited 49 years for justice.

Shuprova Tasneem is a member of the editorial team at *The Daily Star*. Her Twitter handle is @ShuprovaTasneem

# Choosing your child over ‘family honour’

RYAN AFREEN

**T**HE injustice against Nusrat Jahan Rafi, who was sexually abused and later set ablaze on the terrace of her madrasa, shook the country. Yet, despite the cries, protests, and banners that read “Stop Sexual Abuse”, Bangladesh remains rooted in its poisonous conservative practice: ignoring the sexual violence against children when the abusers are family members. This unjustified stigma that silences victims from a very young age leads to re-victimisation—through victim-shaming or being sexually harassed again—and protects perpetrators for the sake of family honour. Children who have no knowledge of their experiences fail to describe it, and many remain silent about their experiences for fear of being re-victimised. This silence surrounding sexual abuse and the lack of action thereof permit the perpetrators to commit such crimes in broad daylight.

This silence is largely influenced by parental denial in children’s accusations against a family member. Parental denial stems from a variety of reasons: the fear of jeopardising family honour, becoming detached from society in fear of shame, having to become financially segregated if the family is dependent on the accused member, and more. Yet the most significant reason is to protect one’s child from re-victimisation. Victim-shaming is instilled in our society, whether it be toward a child or a woman. Thus the possibility of a child being re-victimised through scrutinising her flaws, independence, outfit, or even designating her as the reason for abuse, makes parents hesitant to raise their voices against perpetrators.

Victim-shaming, regardless of

socioeconomic status, primarily creates the cycle of abuse, escape, and re-victimisation that prevents parents from taking legal action against the perpetrators, especially if the perpetrator is a renowned and prominent figure in society. This further reinforces the economic and class divisions in our society and incentivise those in power to escape without a blemish on their

higher, as many victims do not report sex crimes in fear of being blamed, disowned, or ostracised.

Our society stigmatises “sex”, “menstruation”, and “rape” as taboo due to which sex education is uncommon in the country. The gaps in children’s understanding of sexual health limit their interactions with others and suppress social skills. Parents

of not having a structured discussion on the topic. Sexual education is perceived as identifying reproductive organs and sexual abstinence, which disregards the holistic education that is quite necessary in our institutions. A holistic sexual education course would entail: learning about age of consent, emotional relations and responsibilities, reproductive health, and more.

The holistic approach of sexual education, either taught in educational institutions or by parents, firmly distinguishes affection from sexual abuse and harassment maliciously imposed on children by some family members. This validates accusations made by children against their perpetrators, disproving doubtful parents. Hence, parents are spurred to action that can stop the heinous trend of sexual abuse in the family, as well as save children who silently accept severe pain and violation of their human rights.

Parents need to break the silence around sexual abuse and harassment. Parental neglect and a continuation of abuse result in several psychological issues that develop throughout childhood. Post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, fear, poor nutrition, and low self-esteem are a few psychological hazards that affect the victims for their entire lives. The emotional bond between parents and children is destroyed through neglect and disbelief, the consequence of which is a child’s development without love, trust, and support.

When a child experiences discomfort from affection by a family member, he or she cannot readily justify their feelings. However, a strong bond between parents and the child, which fosters a supportive environment,

encourages the child to voice his/her experiences. After all, if children do not open up about their experiences, how would the parents become aware of their child being sexually violated?

The first step to breaking the silence around sexual abuse is to acknowledge sexual violence as a topic of discussion. Talk with your child and ask them about their interactions with family members. Ask them how their day at school was or if any problems arose at home while you were away at work. If your child is attended to by a caretaker, ask your child about their interactions with them. Be conscious about whom your child is associating with, whom your child is sleeping next to or sharing a room with, and the people in your child’s surroundings. Good parenting requires strong communication between parents and children so that there is never hesitation in confiding in each other.

Bangladesh has now become a breeding ground for perpetrators even in the presence of law and order. Thus, sexual abuse should not be a controversial topic for discussion in our country, where 2-year-olds are maliciously raped and mercilessly killed. Children who have been victims of sexual abuse need safe and nurturing relationships to recover from the traumatising experiences that they perchance cannot stave off. It is the responsibility of parents to form this healthy and positive relationship with their children. Saving your children from sexual predators who are family members is far more important than, if not equivalent to, saving family honour. As parents, it is your duty to provide the safe childhood every child deserves.

Ryan Afreen, University of Pennsylvania. Email: afreenry@sas.upenn.edu



records and further silence victims through threats and other means.

In recent months, Bangladesh has witnessed an alarming rise in sexual abuse cases and violence against children. Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) published a report that estimated that in the first six months of 2019, there were 496 incidents of children being raped. However, BSAF claims that the numbers are likely to be

believe that limited information should be shared with children about sexual abuse as it can arouse curiosity among children, and push them to learn more about the topic through different means, such as inappropriate media content, sensitive images, etc.

Parental concerns about sexual education in our country should be given the utmost importance while remaining aware of the repercussions

**ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY**

**JULY 26, 1956**  
Suez Canal seized

On this day in 1956, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser seized control of the Suez Canal and nationalised it, sparking a crisis that later resulted in French, British, and Israeli forces briefly occupying parts of Egypt.

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Optimal
- 5 Compare
- 11 Director
- 12 Call it a day
- 13 Realty unit
- 14 Threw a party
- 15 Pi follower
- 16 Poll numbers
- 17 Nary a soul
- 19 “You there!”
- 22 Oliver Twist’s mentor
- 24 Boosted
- 26 Persia, today
- 27 “Frozen” queen
- 28 Annoying folks
- 30 Bars on cars
- 31 Descartes’s conclusion

**DOWN**

- 1 Sow’s mate
- 2 Engrave
- 3 Use force on
- 4 Sock part
- 5 Patriot Allen
- 6 Brokers’ numbers
- 7 Bear in the air
- 8 Wee worker
- 9 Even score
- 10 Break off
- 16 Singer Henley
- 18 Sty cry
- 19 Ability to drink a lot
- 20 Different
- 21 Some votes
- 22 Pacific nation
- 23 Vicinity
- 25 Phone message
- 29 Dishwashing aid
- 30 Penguin’s cousin
- 33 Took it easy
- 34 Broadcast
- 36 In addition
- 37 “Shucks!”
- 38 Depressed
- 39 Bauxite, e.g.
- 40 Operated
- 41 Time of planning

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

**BEETLE BAILEY**

**YESTERDAY’S ANSWERS**

I T E M L A M P S  
D A N E S A D O R E  
L I T T L E W O M A N  
E L I I V S M I A  
D O R E M I P A S T  
R E V E L I S E E  
E D W I N  
T O W N O N O F F  
A T I T M R T O A D  
S O N T A O A C E  
M O D E R N W O M A N  
A L O N E S P U D S  
N E W S Y E P E E

**BABY BLUES**

WHERE’S SARGE?  
I HEARD HE GOT INTO A FIGHT IN TOWN. HE’S AT THE HOSPITAL.  
SORRY ABOUT THIS  
S’OKAY, I STARTED IT

I’M READY.  
DID YOU BRUSH YOUR TEETH?  
YES.  
WASH YOUR FACE?  
IS YOUR UNDERWEAR CLEAN?  
ARE YOU WEARING THEM?  
TIMES UP FOR QUESTIONS! BYE!



## Forget differences

FROM PAGE 12  
**MUIJIB'S MESSAGE TO INDIRA**  
 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has sent a message of "warmest regards" to Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi whom he also says: "May I take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to you and your government for arranging so speedily my journey from Dhaka to London."  
**SOVIET LEADERS WISHES SPEEDY RECOVERY**

The Soviet Union today offers "best possible treatment" for Bangabandhu either in Dhaka or in the Soviet Union. This is communicated to Bangabandhu by the Soviet Ambassador to Bangladesh VP Popov through a message from the leaders of the Soviet Union.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad informs that the Soviet leaders in their message expressed their personal concern at Bangabandhu's illness and wished his speedy recovery.

SOURCES: July 27, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

## No new int'l

FROM PAGE 12  
 course and rescinded the decision.

That measure had been seen as a move by Trump to put pressure on educational institutions that are adopting a cautious approach to reopening amid the global Covid-19 pandemic.

Trump is eager for schools at all levels to reopen with in-person classes as a sign of a return to normality as he fights an uphill battle for re-election in November.

He is pushing for this even though the virus is out of control in some states, with the US death toll a world-high of more than 144,000.

His administration is leaving it largely up to states themselves to figure out how to open schools safely.

There were more than one million international students in the US for the 2018-19 academic year, according to the Institute of International Education.

Many schools depend heavily on the tuition paid by those students.

Most US colleges and universities have not yet announced their plans for the fall semester but Harvard has said all its classes for the 2020-21 academic year will be conducted online, "with rare exceptions."

## AL leader

FROM PAGE 12  
 After recording statements, the magistrate sent them to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

SM Miraj Al Mahmud, a CID inspector, lodged the case against the two brothers under the money laundering act with Kafrul Police Station on June 26.

On June 7, police arrested nine people, including Sajjad and Rubel, from different parts of Faridpur town for their alleged involvement in attacking a house of one Subal Chandra in the town's Goalchamat area on May 16.

According to the case statement, the two amassed huge amount of wealth after they won contracts from various government departments in the district, including LGED, BRTA, and roads and highways, through manipulation since 2010.

They were also allegedly involved in drug trading and land grabbing.

They own 23 buses, several trucks and a number of luxurious cars.

## 5 die

FROM PAGE 12  
 and breathing problems in the last two days.

The dead are Abul Bashar, 70, and Mir Hossain, 55, both from Cumilla's Monohorgonj upazila, and Ator Ali, 85, from Laksam upazila.

Hospital sources said the death toll from novel coronavirus-like symptoms at the hospital has crossed 200 since the pandemic hit the district in April.

In Patuakhali, two people died from coronavirus-like symptoms yesterday morning.

One of the deceased was Altab Mridha, 61, a resident of Tengrakhali village in Patuakhali Sadar upazila. He breathed his last at Patuakhali General Hospital at 10.15am.

Dr Abdul Matin, superintendent of the hospital, said Altaf was admitted to the hospital on Friday evening with Covid-19-like symptoms, including shortness of breath.

Samples were collected from his body before he was buried at his family graveyard in the afternoon.

In Baulal upazila, Sekandar Ali, 65, died at the upazila health complex around 9:15am, said Akhtaruzzaman, medical officer at the health complex.

The deceased was from Diyara Kachua village in the same upazila.

Sources at the health complex said Sekandar's relatives took him to the health complex around 9:00am. He was suffering from fever and shortness of breath.

Samples were collected from his body for Covid-19 testing.

According to statistics of Patuakhali civil surgeon's office, 27 people have died from novel coronavirus in the district so far.

[Our correspondents from Cumilla and Patuakhali contributed to this report.]



Labrador sniffing dog 'Lotta' is ordered by trainer Sina Knisel to search for a sample at the training site for sniffing dogs of German Army (Bundeswehr) in Daun, Germany, on Friday. The Bundeswehr sniffing dogs school and the veterinarian university of Hanover are developing a training programme to sniff out the coronavirus disease with dogs at airports, border crossings and other highly frequented places.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Public loses faith in govts

FROM PAGE 12  
 prime minister's approval rating has shrunk from a positive seven percent to a neutral zero, the poll found.

People who participated in the survey -- 1,000 per country polled -- generally believed the coronavirus to be more widespread, and more deadly, than official figures show.

Nearly a third of the world's 15.8 million coronavirus infections have been registered since July 1, while the total death toll crossed 640,000.

The United States remains the hardest-hit nation, on Friday reporting its second straight day of more than 70,000 new cases and over 1,000 deaths as the virus takes hold in the country's south and west.

A similar resurgence in Europe has prompted the World Health Organization to sound the alarm over the spread, as Britain joined France, Germany and Austria in tightening rules on mask-wearing as well as

rolling out greater testing. 'WARTIME MODE' New outbreaks continue to wreak havoc elsewhere around the world, with fresh clusters emerging across Asia.

South Korea yesterday reported its highest infections figure in nearly four months, and in Vietnam the first locally-transmitted case in nearly 100 days was detected.

Authorities in China said Friday they would introduce a new wave of testing in the port city of Dalian, home to about six million people, after fresh infections were detected there.

The local government's health commission said the city must "enter wartime mode" to prevent any spread as it announced on-the-spot nucleic acid tests for people using the subway system and new lockdowns for some communities.

That did not prevent the Chinese Super League kicking off behind

closed doors yesterday with the players of Guangzhou Evergrande and Shanghai Shenhua holding a minute's silence for the victims of the pandemic.

However festivities were called off in Sao Paulo, the biggest city in hard-hit Brazil, which indefinitely postponed its 2021 carnival because of the pandemic.

Europe accounts for a fifth of the world's case count so far.

Outbreaks have been seen recently in the Spanish regions of Aragon and Catalonia where officials have reintroduced curbs on daily life and urged Barcelona residents only to leave home for essential trips.

'THE WORLD IS INFESTED' French Prime Minister Jean Castex said on-the-spot testing would be rolled out for travellers arriving in France from 16 high-risk countries.

Masks are now mandatory in enclosed spaces across the nation

and there are fears that the summer holiday season could see a new spike as people flock to beaches and tourist spots.

Britain on Friday also made it compulsory to wear a face covering in shopping centres, banks, takeaway outlets, sandwich shops and supermarkets.

Exceptions have been made, including for children under 11 or people with respiratory problems, but others who refuse to cover their nose and mouth in the UK risk a fine of up to £100 (\$130).

The virus has overwhelmed health systems in Latin America, with infected people sleeping in tents or cars outside hospitals in Peru's second largest city of Arequipa.

"The world is infested," said Raquel Barrera, a 28-year-old in El Salvador who has lost three brothers and both her parents to the disease in less than two months.

## Children drowning, getting sick

FROM PAGE 12  
 In Tangail, two children drowned in the floodwaters at Kalihati and Nagarpur upazilas of Tangail on Friday.

On the other hand, waterborne diseases, including diarrhoea, are spreading among children while extended immunisation programmes have been hampered in the affected areas of the district.

Many of them were living with their families, having taken shelter on streets and embankments, under the open sky. They have little access to nutritious food and pure drinking water.

Acknowledging the situation, Dr Mohammad Mohiuddin, upazila health and family planning officer in the worst-affected upazila in Tangail, Bhuapur, told The Daily Star that the number of child patients were

increasing at the upazila hospital.

In Jamalpur, at least 24 children have drowned in floodwaters this month, while over 250 children suffered from diarrhoea, according to local health authorities.

Besides, children living in shoal areas have been suffering from colds, cough, skin diseases and other waterborne diseases, said Dr Pronoy Kanti Das, district civil surgeon.

In Bogura, 100 families of Kanibari union under Sariakandi upazila, including 50 children, have been sheltering on a 200-metre dyke since June 26.

Nazrul Islam, 35, who has been living on the dyke, said, "Our children are suffering most. Before the pandemic and flood, they used to go to school. There was a vast char where they use to play. Now, they remain hungry most of the time.

The sanitation system is very poor and is creating an unhygienic environment all around. Most of the parents are also afraid of their children drowning in the floodwaters."

In Sirajganj, rural houses and fields went under floodwater, leaving children vulnerable to accidents when they are playing outside. A seven-year old boy drowned in floodwaters in Chauhali upazila last week.

In Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, at least 26 children have drowned in floodwaters in June and July.

Drowning has become common phenomenon in flood-hit areas so parents should be more careful at this time, said Thakurgaon civil surgeon Dr Mahfuzur Rahman Sarcar.

In Lalmonirhat, a schoolgirl in the first grade, seven-year-old Sinha Akhter, drowned in the floodwaters at Ambari village of Burimari union in

Patgram upazila yesterday.

The victim's father, Alam Hossain, alleged that a deep hole was created due to illegal lifting of stones using a dredger machine, in which stagnant floodwater had collected. His daughter drowned when she was crossing the knee-deep water to get to the road.

In Barishal, rampant erosion at many points of the river, is causing sufferings to people.

In Munshiganj, the Padma river was flowing 70 cm above the danger level at Bhagyakul point, inundating many areas.

Along with houses, a large amount of farmland and ponds have been submerged in the district.

Our correspondents from Nilphamari, Tangail, Bogura, Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon, Pabna, and Barishal contributed to the story.

## Race hots up for Indian vaccine

FROM PAGE 12  
 with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Institute of Virology (NIV), will be tested at 12 hospitals -- including AIIMS, Delhi and Patna, and PGI Rohtak -- in 12 cities. The first phase will involve over 500 volunteers, all healthy and between the ages of 18 and 55 with no co-morbidities.

Testing of Zydus's candidate, ZyCoV-D, is currently limited to its research centre in Ahmedabad, but will be extended to multiple cities.

Covaxin trials have already begun in Hyderabad, Patna, Kancheepuram, Rohtak, and now Delhi, to be followed by Nagpur, Bhubaneswar, Belgaum, Gorakhpur, Kanpur, Goa and Visakhapatnam.

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi administered its first dose of Bharat Biotech's vaccine candidate to a 30-year-old healthy man on Friday as part of its combined phase 1 and 2 trials for the drug.

Dr Sanjay Rai, principal investigator

of the vaccine trial project at AIIMS, Delhi, told TOI, "We observed him (the 30-year-old subject) for two hours. There was no immediate side-effect." He said the volunteer has been allowed to go home for now and he will be examined again after two days. AIIMS Patna, which started human trials of Covaxin on 11 volunteers on July 15, has not encountered any major side-effects in volunteers. The results of the first dose are yet to come in.

The Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (PGIMS) in Rohtak has readied 20 volunteers and administered the first dose to three people on July 17.

State nodal officer Dhruva Chaudhary said Rohtak's PGIMS and Patna's AIIMS have enrolled 20 subjects each so far.

"None of the 20 volunteers showed any adverse impact of the vaccine. We are planning to start the second phase of human trials soon," he added. Dr Savita Verma, the trial's principal investigator at the institute, said the

first batch is to be given a second dose on July 31.

Human trials at SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre in Kancheepuram, near Chennai, began on Thursday with two volunteers being administered 0.05 ml of the vaccine each. They will get the next dose on day 14.

Nagpur's Gillurkar Multispecialty Hospital and Research Centre, the only site for human trials of Covaxin in Maharashtra, is expected to start Phase 1 by "July-end or latest in the first week of August", said Dr Chandrashekar Gillurkar, the centre's director.

Bhubaneswar's Institute of Medical Sciences and Sum Hospital, a privately-run medical college, started screening prospective candidates on July 20. The actual administering of the vaccine will take some more days as the volunteer's blood samples are being sent to Delhi, said E Venkata Rao, principal investigator in the trial.

About 60 volunteers from West Bengal have applied for the Phase I

trial in Bhubaneswar, while a few have also applied for trials in AIIMS, New Delhi.

Clinical trials are yet to begin at Jeevan Rekha, a multispecialty hospital in Belgaum, about 450 km from Bengaluru, where Covaxin will be tested on around 200 healthy volunteers in and around Belgaum.

In Hyderabad, two young male volunteers aged below 30 years were given vaccine doses at the Nizam's Institute of Medical on Monday. A third volunteer (from at least 60) will be given a shot in the next two days.

Eleven volunteers from Goa received doses of Covaxin in Phase I starting at 10:00 am yesterday.

Gorakhpur's Rana Hospital and Trauma Centre is waiting for the vaccine to start human trials. "We are ready with volunteers but we have not yet confirmed how many vaccines are coming to us. We'll start as soon as the vaccine reaches us," the hospital's chief administrative officer, Venketesh Chaturvedi, said.

## US unveils

FROM PAGE 12  
 National Laboratory and the University of Chicago created a 52-mile (83-kilometre) "quantum loop" in the Chicago suburbs, establishing one of the longest land-based quantum networks in the nation.

The aim is to create a parallel, more secure network based on quantum "entanglement," or the transmission of sub-atomic particles.

"One of the hallmarks of quantum transmissions is that they are exceedingly difficult to eavesdrop on as information passes between locations," according to the Energy Department statement.

"Scientists plan to use that trait to make virtually unhackable networks."

The department said early adopters could include the banking and health services sectors, adding that there would be applications for national security and aircraft communications.

"Eventually, the use of quantum networking technology in mobile phones could have broad impacts on the lives of individuals around the world," the statement added.

The agency's 17 national laboratories will serve as the backbone of the coming quantum internet, which has initial government funding.

"The foundation of quantum networks rests on our ability to precisely synthesise and manipulate matter at the atomic scale, including the control of single photons," said David Awschalom, a professor at the University of Chicago and senior scientist at Argonne National Laboratory.

## Dozens of prisoners escape from South African jail

AFP, Cape Town

Nearly 70 inmates staged a brazen escape from a detention centre in South Africa's wine-producing town of Malmesbury on Friday after overpowering guards, before most were re-arrested, the government said.

The inmates, who were awaiting trial, broke out around midday during routine physical exercise at the facility situated about 65 kilometres (40 miles) north of Cape Town, the Department of Correctional Services said in a statement.

"The escapees overpowered officials, took the keys and locked three officials in a cell and opened other cells before escaping through the main entrance and over the roof," it said.

Police immediately launched a manhunt and re-arrested 61 of the 69 escapees.

The centre was holding 451 offenders and there were 20 officials on duty at the time of the incident in the town surrounded by wheat and wine farms.

## Int'l online scam group arrested in Serbia

AFP, Belgrade

Serbian police have arrested a group suspected of an online scam worth more than \$70 million following a joint investigation with the FBI, the interior ministry announced Friday.

Eleven people from Australia, Montenegro, the Philippines and Serbia were detained on charges that they "created, promoted and organised" 16 fake investment platforms.

They are suspected of swindling investors from all around the world who placed funds in international bank accounts connected to the group's organisers, a Serbian police statement said.

"After that, the group, on the order of the organisers, closed these fake investment platforms and after some time reopened new ones with the same practiced method," the statement said.

"There is a reasonable suspicion that the organisers and members of this group obtained illegal property worth more than \$70 million," the Serbian said.

The investigation was led by the Serbian Prosecutor's office for organised crime and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), since the group is suspected of scamming investors from Texas, among others.

## Russia sending arms to Libya Claims US

AGENCIES

The United States military has said Russia appears to be sending more military equipment to its mercenaries in Libya, including in the flashpoint city of Sirte, in breach of an arms embargo.

The US military's Africa Command (AFRICOM) said on Friday there was mounting evidence from satellite photos of Moscow's military cargo planes, including IL-6s, bringing supplies to fighters from Russian private military contractor Wagner Group.

## Twitter, Facebook block accounts of Bolsonaro allies

AFP, Rio De Janeiro

Twitter and Facebook suspended the accounts Friday of 16 allies of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro after a Supreme Court judge ordered them blocked as part of a probe into an alleged disinformation campaign.

Tension has been soaring between the far-right leader and the court,

which is investigating allegations that members of his inner circle ran a social media campaign to discredit the court, as well as slander and threaten its judges.

The two US social media giants are also facing increasing pressure to act more aggressively against hate speech and false information on their platforms. Justice Alexandre de Moraes said

in his court order -- which enforced an earlier May ruling -- the accounts must be blocked to stop "the ongoing dissemination of fake news, slanderous accusations, threats and crimes" against the court.

The affected accounts include high-profile figures such as conservative former lawmaker Roberto Jefferson, business magnate Luciano Hang and

far-right activist Sara Winter.

Visitors to their Facebook and Twitter pages in Brazil, though not other countries, saw messages indicating they were blocked.

"This content isn't available right now," read their Facebook pages.

A Twitter notice explained: "Account withheld in Brazil in response to a legal demand".



**SONY SIX**  
England v West Indies  
Third Test, Day 3  
Live from 4:00pm

**ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE**  
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1  
Chelsea v Wolves

Live from 9:00pm  
Star Sports Select 2  
Arsenal v Watford  
Live from 9:00pm

**SERIE A TEN 2**  
Bologna v Lecce  
Live from 9:15pm

Verona v Lazio  
Live from 11:30pm  
Juventus v Sampdoria  
Live from 1:45am (Monday)

**TEN 1**  
AS Roma v Fiorentina  
Live from 11:30pm

## Will Tigers' fate change with Shakib on board?

NABID YEASIN

"I cannot say what the result would have been but had Shakib [bhai] been with us in the tour, he surely would have impacted the game differently," said a dejected Mominul Haque, the Bangladesh Test skipper, after experiencing a thumping defeat yesterday in the second and final Test against Pakistan in Karachi.

A high flying Bangladesh, coming fresh from their clean series sweep against Zimbabwe last month, were slammed back onto the ground without their top all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who has been serving a two-year ban -- with one of those years suspended -- imposed by the ICC since October last year.

The above scenario may be fictitious but considering the plight of a Shakib-less Bangladesh, especially in Tests over the years, this sure seems to be a fair assumption. And although it was Shakib under whose leadership Bangladesh were handed the most humiliating Test defeat by Afghanistan last year, still, Bangladesh's Test results have been positively impacted by Shakib in Tests in the last three years.

Since 2017, Bangladesh played a total of 12 Tests without Shakib and could only muster two wins out of those, losing nine and drawing one. In the same timeframe, the Tigers registered four wins and eight defeats having played the same number of Tests with Shakib in the squad.

The coronavirus pandemic has seen Bangladesh face a total of five series postponements, all of which Shakib was originally scheduled to miss. If not for the pandemic, in these five series, Bangladesh would have played a total of eight Tests -- all of which would have been considered

for the World Test Championship, a competition where the Tigers are yet to register a single point -- four ODIs and four T20Is.

And even though Tigers fared somewhat convincingly in the shorter versions -- ODIs and T20Is -- in the past three years without Shakib, they clearly struggled in Tests even with or without their star all-rounder. Since Shakib's ban, Bangladesh managed

performance was once again repeated in Rawalpindi when Bangladesh were handed yet another innings defeat, this time by Pakistan in February this year.

Surely the enforced halt has spared Bangladesh a very tough challenge in the longer version this year. The challenge will still be tough but at least now the Tigers may have their best all-rounder alongside them as all the postponed series do not seem likely



one Test win out of the four they played. That win was however an expected one and did not put the Tigers to a stiff test as it was against Zimbabwe, an 11th ranked Test side, that too at home.

The struggles in the longer format were much more evident against higher-ranked opponents in foreign turf. Soon after Shakib's ban, the BCB had appointed Mominul as the Test captain in a rather hasty manner before their tour to India in November last year. The best result that the Tigers achieved in the two Tests in India was an innings and 46-run defeat in the pink-ball Test in Kolkata. Similar

to be rescheduled before Shakib's ban comes to an end in October this year.

Shakib, currently in the United States with his family, mentioned in an interview with CricInfo on Friday that he plans to return to training next month, giving himself a three-month period to prepare for a return to cricket. And without a doubt, Shakib's announcement of returning to training comes as an exciting news for the Bangladesh side, who can now also expect their top all-rounder to feature in the coming T20 World Cup that has been deferred to the next year and the Asia Cup which is also likely to be rescheduled next year.

## Atalanta held by Milan

AFP, Milan

Atalanta's slim hopes of pipping Juventus to the Serie A title dimmed further Friday after a 1-1 draw at AC Milan.

The team from Bergamo stay second in the table, five points behind Juve but have just two games left.

Gian Piero Gasperini's Atalanta had routed Milan 5-0 when the teams met for the first time this season in December.

However, they were a goal down after just 14 minutes on Friday thanks to a well-judged free-kick from Hakan Calhanoglu.

Milan, who were on a run of three successive wins in the league, were indebted to goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma for saving a weak 24th-minute penalty from Ruslan Malinovskyi.

However, Duvan Zapata brought the visitors level 10 minutes later.

Matteo Gabbia failed to clear and Colombian forward Zapata pounced to equalise.

Milan stay sixth in the table, one point behind Roma and on course for a Europa League spot next season.

Meanwhile, Crotone became the second club to be promoted to Serie A after Benevento thanks to a 5-1 win over Livorno.

Promotion was guaranteed after rivals Spezia could only draw 0-0 at Cremonese.

Crotone will be playing in the Italian top flight for just the third time after the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 seasons.



PSG forward Kylian Mbappe limped off in tears following a dreadful tackle by Saint-Etienne captain Loic Perrin during the first half of Friday's French Cup final, but later returned on crutches to join trophy celebrations as the Parisiens won 1-0. PHOTO: PSG

## Mbappe injury scare for PSG

AFP, Paris



Paris Saint-Germain coach Thomas Tuchel said "everyone is worried" after Kylian Mbappe hobbled off in the first half of Friday's French Cup final

with an ankle injury after a dreadful tackle by Saint-Etienne captain Loic Perrin.

Mbappe received lengthy treatment but was eventually substituted after his right ankle was caught by a clumsy Perrin challenge that resulted in a red card for the centre-back in likely his final game for Saint-Etienne.

"Everyone is worried. Everyone who saw the foul is worried. Of course I'm worried," said Tuchel after his team's 1-0 win.

"We have to be patient because we don't have any news. I think he will undergo tests tonight."

A tearful Mbappe was replaced by Pablo Sarabia but the greater concern for PSG

will be the severity of his injury ahead of next month's Champions League quarter-final against Atalanta in Lisbon.

He reemerged from the Stade de France tunnel later in the second half on crutches. "It's the third game against Saint-Etienne and it's a third red card, each time in the first 30 minutes," added Tuchel.

"It's not all good news for us." PSG face Lyon in the French League Cup final next Friday before resuming their European campaign in a unique straight knockout tournament at the Estadio da Luz on August 12.

"I hope Kylian is going to recover as quickly as possible because he's a vital player for us," said PSG captain Thiago Silva.

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini said he was "sorry" to hear of Mbappe's injury and hoped it was "nothing serious" ahead of next month's European clash.

Saint-Etienne boss Claude Puel admitted the forward was simply too quick for the 34-year-old Perrin.



Shannon Gabriel celebrates the dismissal of Ollie Pope after providing an early breakthrough for the West Indies on the second day of the final Test against England at Manchester yesterday. England ended on 369 thanks to a 45-ball 62 from Stuart Broad after Pope and Jos Buttler had fallen early in the first session. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Only Botham quicker than Broad

REUTERS, Manchester

West Indies claimed early wickets against England on Saturday but then allowed Stuart Broad to smash a quick-fire half century before the hosts were dismissed for 369 at lunch on the second day of the third and final Test at Old Trafford.

Broad hit the joint-third fastest Test half century for England off just 33 balls as he bludgeoned the West Indies attack and put the skids on their early breakthrough after Shannon Gabriel and Kemar Roach, who passed 200 Test wickets, had both made good use of the second new ball.

Only Ian Botham (twice) has got to a Test 50 for England quicker than Broad, who equals past exploits by Allan Lamb and Andrew Flintoff.

Broad was eventually out for 62 off 45 balls as gave a reminder of his batting

ability in a 76-run partnership with Dom Bess, who was 18 not out.

England started poorly as Ollie Pope failed to add to his overnight 91 and was left agonisingly short of a maiden home test hundred as England resumed on 258-4 but within an hour's play had slumped to 280-8.

Pope was clean bowled by Gabriel and Chris Woakes became Roach's 200th Test victim as was bowled for one.

Jos Buttler, who was 56 not out overnight, became the third wicket in just 17 balls as he was taken at second slip by Jason Holder off Gabriel.

The West Indies skipper then repeated the feat as Jofra Archer edged Roach and departed for three runs. The tourists were then expected to finish off the England innings but Broad turned the pressure back on West Indies.

The Test series is level at 1-1 after West Indies won by four wickets at Southampton but England replied with a 113-run victory at Old Trafford

## An unwelcoming gentleman's club

MAZHAR UDDIN



As they say, cricket is a gentleman's game and, perhaps by that virtue, it is also an expensive sport when it comes to buying modern-day equipment.

Not only is equipment expensive, it is also hard to get quality products in Bangladesh as there are no manufacturers in the country that produce top quality products.

However, there are a few distributors for various cricketing good manufacturers such as SS, SC, CA and DSC in India and Pakistan such, which have a huge demand among cricketers in Bangladesh.

But despite the huge demand there is only a single authorised distributor for each brand in Bangladesh which, along with heavy import duties, is the reason prices of products are comparatively higher.

There are few local importers who buy products directly from India, Pakistan, England, Australia and the United States and sell those in local markets at a relatively lower price.

Among cricket lovers, there is a huge curiosity to know the prices of bats used by stars like Tamim Iqbal, Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim and one is surprised when they get to know the price tag for their equipment.

Tamim is sponsored by Pakistani brand CA and each bat that the left-hander uses costs between Tk 40,000 to 60,000 and at times even more. Luckily, being the superstar that he is, Tamim get sponsored by the company and gets all the equipment from CA round the year and also gets a healthy sponsorship money.

Manufacturers generally sponsor national team cricketers along with a few aspiring players and they can be seen using stickers of specific brands on their bat, pads, gloves and even in the helmet.

There are generally two types of contracts that companies use to associate with cricketers. One is an annual contract and the other is on a match-by-match basis.

Established top cricketers are the ones who are being contracted annually and they not get the gears from the company but also a good amount of money for endorsing products.

Suppose a top Bangladeshi player like Tamim or Mushfiqur has an annual contract from which they receive around 60,000 to 80,000 US dollars per year.

On the other hand, mid-level national cricketers like Soumya Sarkar or Liton Das receive equipment, but the quality of the products vary from the ones given to a Shakib. They also receive 500 to 1000 US dollars per match.

While newcomers and their agents at times get desperate to land endorsement, those range from

on quality.

A pair of pro-quality pads used by first-class and top domestic cricketers' costs around Tk 4000 to 5000, a pair of batting gloves range from Tk 3000 to 4500 and a top-quality helmet costs around 15,000 to 20,000 depending on the brand and quality.

A thigh pad will cost around 2500 and a top-quality carbon abdominal guard can take around Tk 2500.

For bowlers, a pair of top-quality Adidas or Nike brand

same brand costs around Tk 6500 to 7500.

However, there are a few Indian ball manufacturers such as SG or SS that would cost a bit less, around Tk 700 to 900, but those are not the ones that are used in first-class or Premier League matches.

National discard Shamsur Rahman, who used to have sponsors during his stint in the Bangladesh team now has to pay for his equipment as he remains a prominent name in the domestic circuit.

"Cricket equipment is not cheap. Each bat could cost you around twenty thousand taka and as a batsman you need to have at least four bats. You never know when the bat gets broken and generally a bat does not last for more than two years. There are other goods such as pads, gloves and boots which we need to have in stock. Many may think that cricketers earn a lot but the fact is that we also need to invest heavily on our equipment from the main source of our income," Shamsur told The Daily Star.

While professional cricket equipment remains expensive, things are not that cheap for beginners or lower level cricketers either.

A complete set of gear including a bat for kids and age-level cricketers could cost around Tk 12,000 to 15,000. For mid-level players in the second division or third division, equipment ranges from Tk 15,000 to 20,000.

There are a few shops in the capital from which you could buy cricketing goods and the sports market in Gulistan remains one of the biggest and most popular places to buy equipment for amateurs and professionals.

According to Rahat Hasan, owner of Good Buy Inc, a retailer of cricketing goods, informed that the lack of expert labour and shortage of raw materials is the main reason Bangladesh does not have manufacturers.

"It's a huge market and we are getting a good response from professional cricketers and beginners. There are no manufacturers of top-quality cricketing goods in Bangladesh. We have to rely on importing from India, Pakistan, England and Australia. Expert labour and raw materials are not easily available in Bangladesh which is the main reason we have to rely on importing," said Rahat.



### PRICE LIST

<b>BAT:</b> Top Quality - Tk 40,000 to Tk 60,000, Mid-Range - Tk 20,000 to Tk 30,000, Lowest - Tk 5000 to Tk 15,000	<b>HIGH PAD:</b> Tk 1000 to Tk 2500
<b>BATTING PADS:</b> Top Quality - Tk 4200	<b>WICKET KEEPING GLOVES:</b> Tk 4200 to Tk 12000
<b>BATTING GLOVES:</b> Top quality - Tk 3200 to Tk 5000	<b>KEEPING PADS:</b> Tk 2500 to Tk 3500
<b>HELMET:</b> Top Quality - Tk 20,000 to Tk 25,000, Mid-Range - Tk 12,000 to Tk 15,000, Lower Range - Tk 5000 to Tk 8000	<b>BOWLING SHOES:</b> Top Quality - Tk 12,000 to Tk 15,000
<b>BOX/ ABDOMINAL GUARD:</b> Top Quality - Tk 2000 to Tk 2500	<b>BATTING AND FIELDING SHOES:</b> Tk 6000 to Tk 10,000
	<b>KOOKABURRA MATCH BALL:</b> Top Quality - Tk 7500 to Tk 11,000
	<b>PRACTICE BALL:</b> Top Quality - Tk 6500 to Tk 7500

100 to 150 US dollars per match.

Going back to the high price of the cricketing goods, although many national cricketers do not need to spend their money, the scenario is different for first-class and domestic cricketers of Bangladesh. A top-quality bat from SS, SC, CA or DSC, which first-class or top domestic cricketers prefer, costs around Tk 20,000 to 30,000 each and can be higher depending

bowling boot range from Tk 12000 to 15000 while boots for batsmen and fielders can cost between Tk 6000 to 10,000.

If you are wondering if a cricket ball might be less expensive compared to batting equipment, then you have a surprise. A top-quality Kookaburra match ball, mainly manufactured in Australia, costs around Tk 9000 to 11,000 each while a practice ball from the





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

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## FLOOD RAVAGED AREAS Children drowning, getting sick

STAR REPORT

Char resident Poran Sheikh was trying to move his wife and three children in a small fishing boat to a safer shelter when disaster struck.

The boat started swaying violently as the Teesta suddenly turned turbulent and large waves were hitting the boat.

His three-year-old child Sumon slipped out from his mother's lap and fell into the river, disappearing in the blink of an eye.

The family are flood victims from Kisamoter char shoal, under Dimla upazila, in the Teesta river last week.

Like Sumon, many other children have drowned in floodwaters raising concern among families in flood-hit areas.

Not just from drowning, during floods children suffer the most as they are particularly vulnerable to various waterborne diseases.

Field-level health officers are saying that numbers of child patients is increasing rapidly in flood-hit areas.

"Children suffer from diarrhoea, skin diseases, malnutrition and other disease during floods. We get higher numbers of child patients compared to other times," said Sarwar Alam, Dimla upazila health and family planning officer.

A UNICEF press release on Thursday said more than 2.4 million people, including around 1.3 million children, in the country are estimated to be affected by flooding.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



There are no special trains this Eid due to the pandemic. But people started leaving Dhaka for their native homes. This year, the Eid is expected to be celebrated on August 1. The photo was captured at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

LAUNDERING Tk 2,000CR

## AL leader, his brother confess to magistrate

STAR REPORT

A former leader of Faridpur town Awami League and his brother yesterday confessed before a Dhaka court to have laundered over Tk 2,000 crore in the last few years, a court official said.

Sajjad Hossain alias Barkat, former unit Awami League general secretary, and his brother Imtiaz Hasan alias Rubel, former president of Faridpur Press Club gave confessional statements before the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mahmuda Akhter.

Earlier, Uttam Kumar Biswas, assistant superintendent of police at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and also the investigation officer of the case, produced them before the court.

In their statements, the two told the court how they had made a quick buck and sent it abroad.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## Race heats up for Indian vaccine

Man given 1st Covaxin dose at Delhi AIIMS as human trials begin

AGENCIES

Volunteers across India are being administered the indigenous vaccine candidates against the coronavirus disease developed by Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL) and Zydus Cadila.

BBIL and Zydus were granted permission for Phase I and II clinical trials of Covaxin and ZyCoV-D respectively.

A third vaccine candidate, developed by Oxford University, is soon to be tested in India. Serum Institute, which is in a manufacturing partnership with the UK's Astra Zeneca, has said it will begin human trials as soon as it receives regulatory approval.

BBIL's Covaxin, developed in collaboration

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

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

### Forget differences, rebuild nation



Bangabandhu before boarding a plane for London at Dhaka Airport on July 26, 1972. Acting Premier Syed Nazrul Islam is seen embracing the leader.

July 26, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### BANGABANDHU'S CALL TO COUNTRYMEN

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in a message to the nation on the eve of his departure for London for treatment today calls upon the people, irrespective of their caste and creed, opinion and affiliation, to dedicate themselves to the task of rebuilding Bangladesh forgetting all their differences.

The prime minister in his message through Radio Bangladesh and BSS says that compelled by doctors' advice he is going for treatment. He adds that he is confident that with the good wishes of the people and by the grace of God, he would very soon return to the soil of Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu further says, "People of Bangladesh are in my heart. A happy and prosperous future for them is my mission. So I have dedicated my life for their service."



SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## 4 sentenced for making fake Covid-19 certificates

UNB, Barishal

A mobile court yesterday sentenced four people, including the owner of a diagnostic centre, to different terms of imprisonment for their involvement in delivering fake medical test reports in Barishal town.

Md Shahin, owner of Moon Medical Services, and his brother have been sentenced to six months in jail, while two technicians -- Shyam Saha and Shyamal Majumdar -- have been sentenced to three months behind bars.

Members of the detective branch of police sealed off the diagnostic centre during a drive in the afternoon.

Executive Magistrate Ziaur Rahman said the centre had been providing fake medical reports forging signatures of physicians.

The laboratory did not have legal clearance while some chemicals used in the lab failed to meet the standard, he said.

## US unveils blueprint for quantum internet



AFP, Washington

US officials and scientists have begun laying the groundwork for a more secure "virtually unhackable" internet based on quantum computing technology.

At a presentation Thursday, Department of Energy (DOE) officials issued a report that lays out a blueprint strategy for the development of a national quantum internet, using laws of quantum mechanics to transmit information more securely than on existing networks.

The agency is working with universities and industry researchers on the engineering for the initiative with the aim of creating a prototype within a decade.

In February, scientists from DOE's Argonne

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

## 5 die after showing Covid-19 symptoms

STAR REPORT

Five people died after showing Covid-19-like symptoms in Cumilla and Patuakhali in 27 hours till 10:15am yesterday.

Three of them passed away at the coronavirus isolation unit of Cumilla Medical College Hospital in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

Director of the hospital Dr Mujibur Rahman said the three were admitted to the hospital with fever, cold

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



#### PRAYER TIMING JULY 26

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## No new int'l students in all-online classes in US

AFP, Washington

The United States announced Friday it will not take in any new foreign students seeking online-only study, after rescinding a hotly contested order to expel those already here and preparing for that because of the pandemic.

The policy change was announced in a statement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

President Donald Trump has made a tough line on immigration a cornerstone of his message and has suspended several kinds of visas for foreigners during the coronavirus crisis.

The original policy change of revoking the visas of foreign students whose classes will move online in the autumn was taken to court by top universities including Harvard and MIT, teachers unions and at least 18 states.

And on July 14 the administration reversed

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Khurshed Alam, 56, used to work in Qatar as a migrant worker. Returning home, he invested all his savings in a poultry farm in Barigaon area of Dhaka's Dhamrai. He is now worried about losing the farm as floodwater started pouring in. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## HANDLING OF OUTBREAK Public loses faith in govts

Reveals survey in six countries as cases surge across US, Europe

AGENCIES

Governments are fast losing support for their handling of the coronavirus outbreak from a public that widely believes death and infection figures to be higher than statistics show, a survey of six countries revealed yesterday.

Support for the federal government of the United States, the country with the most reported infections and deaths, dropped by four percentage points from mid-June, with 44 percent of respondents declaring themselves dissatisfied, said a report by the Kekst CNC communications consulting group.

In Britain, just over a third of respondents approved of their government's actions, a three-point decline in one month, according to the report, based on an opinion poll conducted over five days in mid-July.

It also included France, Sweden, Japan and Germany. "In most countries this month, support for national governments is falling," the report said.

The notable exception was France, where approval rose by six percentage points, yielding a dissatisfaction rate of 41 percent.

France, which has the world's seventh-highest Covid-19 toll, has all but emerged from lockdown but has seen infections increase in recent days, prompting the government to order face masks in all enclosed public spaces.

In Sweden, which took a controversial soft approach to lockdown and has a higher toll than its neighbours, the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2