

Help Bangladesh

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proposal to remove import duty on goods to be imported from one country to the other under the limited payment arrangement of the Indo-Bangla trade agreement. The limited payment arrangement allows for payment of specific imports in rupees instead of foreign exchange.

SIRAJGANJ TOWN AT RISK
The erosion of the river bank in Sirajganj has taken a serious turn and the Sirajganj town is under serious threat of extinction as River Jamuna has already washed away half of the town's protective embankment. People are leaving the town in search of safe spaces as the constantly swelling river has been eroding homesteads and properties for the last couple of days.

SOURCES: July 28, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

DU suspends

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isolation unit, the release reads.

Against this backdrop, she has been suspended from her post, while a show-cause notice was also served asking her to give an explanation within seven working days for her actions.

Hope

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Even though passenger and goods trains have been running between the two countries for long, businessmen of both countries had been demanding for container train services to make their trade faster, safer, hassle-free and more organised, BR officials said.

The two countries carried out the test run of the first containerised freight train in April 2018.

Earlier in April 2017, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Indian CONCOR and Container Company of Bangladesh Limited (CCBL) to operate container services between the two countries.

A BR official said the container trains will run up to Benapole station until some infrastructures are developed.

Once the infrastructures are ready, trains would go as far as to Bangabandhu Bridge West Station.

There will be a small ICD terminal near the Bangabandhu Bridge station, which will facilitate the service, he said, wishing not to be named.

"But the container trains would not go to Dhaka or Chattogram for now as there is a weight restriction on Bangabandhu bridge," he said.

Asked how they would change from the container trains, the official said it would be same as the charge imposed on other freight trains operate between the two countries.

Mofizur Rahman, president of Clearing and Forwarding Agents Association, said the new service would bring momentum in trade.

"If a container terminal is established at Benapole port, the export and import through the port would be doubled and revenue income of the government will also increase," he told our Benapole correspondent.

Benapole Custom Commissioner Azizur Rahman also expressed similar remarks.

Meanwhile, India has said the newly introduced container train service has opened up a huge opportunity for bilateral trade via rail.

"It's expected that this initiative will substantially boost business and trade between the two countries," Indian High Commission in Dhaka said in a press release yesterday.

The container train service will be a permanent service connecting the nominated inland container depots and terminals of CONCOR in India and various stations under Bangladesh Railway.

France opens probe into Rwandan genocide suspect

AFP, Paris

France has opened a probe into alleged crimes against humanity by a top former Rwandan military official, Aloys Ntwiragabo, during the country's 1994 genocide which claimed 800,000 lives.

Anti-terrorism prosecutors told AFP Saturday that a preliminary investigation was opened after Ntwiragabo was found hiding in the suburbs of the city of Orleans, about 100 kilometres south-west of Paris.

French investigative news site Mediapart tracked down the former Rwandan spy chief, who was identified by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) as one of the architects of the genocide.

Neither the ICTR, Interpol, France nor Rwanda were actively seeking him now and had dropped arrest warrants years ago.

The revelation of his whereabouts comes barely two months after another suspected genocide architect, Felicien Kabuga, was arrested on the fringes of Paris.

Kabuga, who evaded police in several countries for 25 years, is accused of financing the genocide.



A blast ball detonates as police clash with protesters following the "Youth Day of Action and Solidarity with Portland" demonstration in Seattle, Washington on Saturday. Police in Seattle used flashbang grenades and pepper spray against protesters who set fire to construction trailers outside a youth jail, amid a wave of public anger over President Donald Trump's planned "surge" of federal agents into major cities. Story on page 6. PHOTO: AFP

NHRC asks foreign ministry to help Rayhan

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an interview he gave to Al Jazeera news channel on Malaysia's treatment to migrant workers during the movement control order enforced to contain the coronavirus outbreak.

In a tweet, Al Jazeera yesterday termed the arrest "disturbing."

"Al Jazeera finds it disturbing that Bangladeshi migrant worker Mohammad Rayhan Kabir has been arrested for choosing to speak up about some of the experiences of the voiceless and the vulnerable," reads the tweet, posted by Al Jazeera public relations.

The Qatar-based global news outlet said Rayhan, who featured in its 101 East programme "Locked Up in

Malaysia's Lockdown", was subjected to abusive online harassment, hate speech, and became the target of a manhunt in Malaysia.

"Al Jazeera reaffirms its support to freedom of expression as a fundamental human right -- without fear of being criminalised."

Local and international rights groups condemned the Malaysian authorities' steps against the Bangladeshi national and called for his protection.

On Saturday, 21 civil society organisations working on migration and development in Bangladesh demanded his immediate release.

Rayhan, who went to Malaysia in 2014 and had been working after

completing his bachelor's degree, was the target of Malaysia's manhunt after his criticism against Malaysia's detention of undocumented migrant workers in the Al Jazeera's documentary aired on July 3.

In the 26-minute video, he accused the authorities of "racism" against the undocumented migrants in Malaysia.

The documentary said the undocumented migrants were at risk during the coronavirus pandemic when over 2,000 migrant workers were arrested during raids in areas of Kuala Lumpur that were placed under tight virus lockdowns.

Following the coronavirus outbreak, Malaysia enforced

movement control order to curb the virus infections.

After the documentary broadcast, the Malaysian immigration department issued a public announcement with Rayhan's photo and address asking people to help arrest him.

He had to hide himself in fear of arrest while his work permit was also revoked.

Following the arrest, Rayhan was placed on 14-day remand, according to media report.

On Saturday, two Malaysian lawyers were appointed for him.

Malaysia said it would deport Rayhan and blacklist him from entering the country forever.

Australia suffers deadliest day

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Meanwhile, Europe has reported around three million infections -- despite being largely open for summer holidays within the continent.

However in a snap decision, Britain's government said passengers arriving from Spain will have to self-isolate for two weeks, after a surge in cases in the Mediterranean country, with health officials pointing to nightlife as a possible culprit.

The move, effective from yesterday, has reportedly caught out its Transport Minister Grant Shapps who is holidaying there.

It marked another hit to Spain's tourism industry, which is desperately seeking a rebound after lockdowns and border closures pushed around 13 percent of bars, hotels and restaurants to permanently close.

It mirrors the fiscal pain wrought around the world by the pandemic, particularly in precarious economies where livelihoods are fast crumbling.

COVID-19 HEALTH INSURANCE
In India, for instance, millions of migrant workers who fled cities when

Covid-19 hit say they are too scared to return.

Asia's third largest economy has reported more than 1.3 million virus cases and is the third worst hit country behind the US and Brazil.

"We are trying our best to bring back migrant workers, even going to the extent of giving them air tickets, Covid-19 health insurance ... (and) weekly checkups by doctors," real estate developer Rajesh Prajapati said.

"But it has not reaped any positive signs yet."

Pakistan has seen an 80-percent drop in coronavirus deaths but risks a spike in new cases after the upcoming Eid festival, a government health official said yesterday.

According to government data, Pakistan saw daily virus deaths peak at about 150 in June. On Saturday, only 24 new fatalities were reported over the previous day.

North Korea declared its first suspected coronavirus case yesterday, becoming one of the last countries to do so as the number of people

infected worldwide passed 16 million.

The isolated, impoverished state had until now insisted it had not detected a single Covid-19 case -- even as the pandemic swept the planet, overwhelming health systems and trashing the global economy.

At least 645,000 people around the world have succumbed to the respiratory disease, with North Korean arch-rival the United States the worst-hit country by far.

"The vicious virus could be said to have entered the country," leader Kim Jong Un said, according to the official KCNA news agency.

Authorities locked down the city of Kaesong, near the frontier with South Korea, as state media said a defector who left for the South three years ago had returned and was suspected to be infected with the coronavirus.

Vietnam suspended its domestic football leagues yesterday until further notice following news of the first locally transmitted case of coronavirus in nearly 100 days.

After more than three months with no local cases, a 57-year-old retired

Vietnamese man in the central city of Danang tested positive for the virus.

NO FIREWORKS
Around a quarter of the world's 16 million confirmed cases are in the United States, which recorded more than 68,000 new infections in the past 24 hours.

After a drop in transmission rates in late spring, the country has seen a virus surge -- particularly in California, Florida and Texas, which is also bracing for the first Atlantic hurricane of the year.

Daily US fatalities have exceeded 1,000 for the past four days, rapidly increasing the country's death toll to more than 146,000.

"I'm still concerned that America doesn't take it as seriously as the rest of the world," said British golf star Lee Westwood, voicing his hesitation to travel there despite a new quarantine exemption for professional golfers.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, which also count for a quarter of total cases, governments are not planning a return to normality any time soon.

JP replaces secy general Ranga with Bablu

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"I was elected secretary general by the councillor. If the party had asked me to resign, I could have tendered my resignation," he said.

'RANGA REMOVED TO APPEASE GOVT'

More than three presidium members of the JP said that their party chief had removed Ranga on the direction of government.

"He [Ranga] created a controversy by terming Shaheed Noor Hossain as an addict in November last year," said a JP presidium member.

"He [Ranga] reportedly made comments about Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at that time," the JP leader added.

Opposition Chief Whip Ranga,

in November, sought unconditional apology for making derogatory remarks over Noor Hossain at the parliament following heavy criticism in and outside the parliament.

Regarding his remark about Bangabandhu, Ranga said if he had said anything wrong about Bangabandhu then he seeks "unconditional apology" for it as well.

Ranga claimed that he did not call Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina "corrupt and terrorist".

"Beside this, Ranga was vocal against government activities in and outside the parliament that made government dissatisfied," said another presidium member.

Ranga yesterday said that it was normal for them to have constructive criticism of government activities.

"I do not see any reason for anyone becoming dissatisfied regarding the criticism of government," he added.

The senior leaders of the party also said that the party presidium member Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu was in good book of the Awami League leaders.

He was appointed the PM's adviser with a minister's status in the poll time interim government formed ahead of January 5, 2014 national elections, they added.

Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not contact Quader for his comments.

PAST RECORDS

In December 2018, less than four weeks before the December 30 election, JP removed Ruhul Amin Hawlader from the secretary general's post and replaced him with Moshuiur

Rahman Ranga.

The JP chairman HM Ershad was unhappy with Hawlader due to allegation of "nomination business" against him.

Another reason for the change was that Hawlader failed to manage the ruling Awami League to ensure the nomination of two JP heavyweights -- lawmakers Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu and Salma Islam -- from the two constituencies, party insiders said.

In April 10, 2014, Ershad ousted Hawlader from the post, which he had been holding since 2002, and appointed Bablu to it in recognition of his "significant role" in the party.

In January 2016 Ershad removed Bablu from the post on charge of negligence in discharging duties, and reinstated Hawlader.

Pakistan tried to 'backstab' India

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the heights...the high morale and all for no reason comes naturally. People with such a disposition keep thinking of harming even their well-wishers... that is why when India extended a hand of friendship, Pakistan tried to respond, stabbing in the back," the Indian PM said.

However, he said the "gallant Indian army displayed deeds of valour when India demonstrated her might the whole world watched it. You can imagine...the enemy lodged in soaring mountainous heights and our armed forces, our brave soldiers fighting from down below! But it was not about victoriously conquering

the heights...the high morale and all for no reason comes naturally. People with such a disposition keep thinking of harming even their well-wishers... that is why when India extended a hand of friendship, Pakistan tried to respond, stabbing in the back," the Indian PM said.

"Thanks to the courage of our armed forces, India showed great strength in Kargil," Modi said, recalling his own visit to the area.

Kargil Diwas commemorates the day the Indian army recaptured all the Indian posts in Ladakh's Kargil area that had been occupied by Pakistan's army 21 years ago.

It was on July 26, 1999, that the Indian army had announced the successful culmination of "Operation Vijay" declaring victory after the nearly three-month battles in the icy

heights of the Himalayas. More than 500 Indian soldiers died in that war.

"It was the victory of high morale and bravery of our armed forces in the truest sense of the term," Modi said.

In an apparent response to the opposition Congress Party's criticism of his government's handling of the recent border standoff with China in Ladakh, Modi said that "in times of war, whatever we say or do has immense bearing on the morale of the soldier, ever vigilant at the border, as well as the morale of his family."

"We should never forget this... and that is why our conduct,

our demeanour, our speech, our statements, our limits, our aims... whatever we do and say, must distinctly be conducive to enhancing the morale & honour of our soldiers," he said.

The PM cautioned that the dangers of coronavirus are far from over and said the contagion is spreading at many places.

"...the hazards of Corona are far from being over. At many places, it is spreading fast. We need to be extra vigilant. We have to bear in mind that Corona is as fatal today as it was in the beginning -- that's why we have to be fully cautious," he said.

Norwegian Elvis

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an Elvis costume, told Norwegian television after completing his performance early Saturday in an Oslo bar.

His manager said Kjell Elvis, who sang through two days and two nights, had been told to go easy on the coffee, and to rely instead on smoothies, fruit and energy snacks to keep his voice in shape while staying the course.

He did, however, sound increasingly hoarse during the final hours.

Bjornestad, who is 52, had set two Elvis singing records before. The last time, in 2003, it took 26 hours of nonstop performing to come out on top.

This time, he called on fans to make donations during the event which are to be used in part to finance a hospital in Myanmar.

Elvis Presley, who died in 1977 and was known as "The King", was among the 20th century's cultural icons.

He had dozens of number one hits and sold more than 146 million albums, according to the Recording Industry Association of America, and won more gold albums than anybody else.

24 feared

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police, the illegal Rohingya migrant had jumped off the boat that had 24 other people and that he was the only one who managed to swim to the shore safely," Zawawi said.

A search and rescue operation had been launched, but another official told AFP that no bodies or survivors have been found.

It is not clear what happened to the boat.

Muslim-majority Malaysia is a favoured destination for Rohingya, who face persecution in their mostly Buddhist homeland of Myanmar, but authorities have in recent months been trying to stop them entering over coronavirus fears.

Many of the 700,000-plus Rohingya Muslims who fled a military crackdown in Myanmar three years ago have attempted to leave overcrowded refugee camps in Cox's Bazar on boats headed for Malaysia and neighbouring Indonesia.

Zawawi said two coastguard aircraft and two boats have been deployed to search the suspected area.

Malaysia has stepped up maritime patrols since the outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic in a bid to stop Rohingya boats from landing.

Although some have made it ashore many boats have been turned back, sparking anger from rights groups.

Iran says medics exhausted in battle against coronavirus

AFP, Tehran

Iran reported 216 new deaths from the novel coronavirus yesterday, calling on its citizens to observe health protocols more closely to ease the burden on exhausted medical staff.

The Islamic republic announced its first Covid-19 cases on February 19, and the outbreak quickly became the Middle East's deadliest.

Declared coronavirus deaths have surged since the end of June and claimed more than 200 lives nearly every day in the past week, including a record 229 on Tuesday.

"Our biggest concerns are the infection and fatigue of medical staff," health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said in a televised briefing yesterday.

"We can help them and prevent the spread of the disease" by observing basic guidelines such as hand-washing, mask-wearing and social distancing, she added.

Iran said earlier this month that 5,000 health workers had been infected with the novel coronavirus and 140 had lost their lives.

According to Lari, the 216 fatalities recorded in the past 24 hours brought to 15,700 the overall death toll in the country's outbreak.

A further 2,333 new cases of infection were confirmed over the same period, she added, taking the total to 291,172.

The official said that 12 of Iran's 31 provinces were classified as "red" and 13 were on "alert" or close to red.

Red is the highest category on the country's coronavirus risk scale.

Authorities have made masks mandatory in enclosed public spaces and allowed the hardest-hit provinces, including Tehran, to reimpose restrictions that had been progressively lifted since April to reopen Iran's sanctions-hit economy.

Thai protesters use Japanese cartoon hamster to mock govt

REUTERS, Bangkok

Hundreds of Thai protesters sang a Japanese cartoon jingle yesterday with lyrics mocking the government as hungry hamsters feasting on taxpayer cash, part of a new protest movement by youth who say they are using whimsical tactics for serious ends.