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## MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES They're getting little assistance from Covid funds

Say speakers at webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Marginalised communities are getting a meagre amount of assistance from the Covid-19 crisis allocations.

Members of those communities and civil society during a discussion yesterday also alleged that this was happening due to mismanagement, misdirection of assistance, nepotism, and in some cases corruption.

Only 4,100, or 25 percent, families of ethnic minorities in the hilly and plain land areas received the help, speakers at a webinar said yesterday.

The webinar titled "Marginalised People during Covid-19: Inclusion or Exclusion?" was organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF).

The MJF, citing information from its associate NGOs, said that 21,826 people of dalit and harijan communities, 29,631 people with challenges, and 49,239 fishermen, did not receive any kind of assistance between April and June.

A large portion of the members of ethnic minorities on plain land were getting just one meal a day. Unemployment and poverty were on the rise in hilly areas.

Besides, the government targeted assistance to 50 lakh people but so far only 16 lakh received any help.

Speaking as the chief guest, Planning Minister MA Mannan said Covid-19 was causing damage to a number of sectors but the government was facing it with courage.

He, however, said he would not engage in any kind of debate regarding the allegation of small amount of assistance, misdirection of assistance, and corruption.

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A bull leaps out of a train carriage after arriving at the Kamalapur railway station in Dhaka from Jamalpur district. After 12 years, the Bangladesh Railway assigned a special carriage to carry a consignment of cattle. Railway officials said the initiative was taken for cattle owners to avail cheap and safe transport facilities amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## AL's savings rise by 35pc in a year

Party has Tk 50cr, says statement submitted to EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League could spend a little over a third of the Tk 21.2 crore it earned last year, resulting in a 35 percent increase in the party's savings, the AL has said.

In 2019, the party spent around Tk 8.21 crore, according to the party's audited financial statement for the year.

A delegation of the party, led by its Publicity Affairs Secretary Abdus Sobhan Golap, submitted the statement to the Election Commission yesterday.

According to the financial statement, both income and expenditure of the party decreased compared to the corresponding numbers of 2018.

In 2018, the AL's income was around Tk 24.23 crore and expenditure was around Tk 18.87 crore. It had Tk 37.56 crore in its coffers.

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## 'I only said what I've seen'

Says Bangladeshi worker detained in Malaysia over interview with Al Jazeera

SHARIFUL HASAN

Mohammad Rayhan Kabir, a young Bangladeshi who spoke in a documentary aired by Al Jazeera and was arrested in Malaysia, said he only spoke of what he witnessed during the Covid-19 pandemic. His intention, however, was not to offend anyone in Malaysia.

His lawyer Sumita Shaanthinni Kishna said this after she met Rayhan around 11:00am yesterday.

Rayhan also informed that he was not mistreated after arrest. During interrogation, he told the Immigration Police that he spoke about what he had seen and that was his own understanding. But he did not want to hurt Malaysians.

He said that he wants to return home soon.

Earlier on Monday, when the lawyers went to meet Rayhan, Malaysian immigration department did not allow them to meet him and said they would provide another date.

They allowed the lawyers to meet Rayhan around 11:00am today. Police officials along with immigration

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

### Successful operation on Bangabandhu

July 30, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### BANGABANDHU'S PRAYER FOR COUNTRYMEN BEFORE SURGERY

An olive-sized gallstone is removed during a successful surgery on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the London Clinic today. Sir Edward Muir, the Queen's surgeon, performs the operation which lasts two hours. To prevent possible appendicitis in the future, Bangabandhu's appendix is also removed, according to Professor Dr Nurul Islam, the prime minister's personal physician. He informs, "The operation was smooth and uneventful. The prime minister's general condition is satisfactory."

Syed Abdus Sultan, Bangladesh High Commissioner in the UK, informs that Bangabandhu, just before losing consciousness under the influence of anaesthesia remembered his people in Bangladesh, twice saying, "Allah take care of the poor people of Bangladesh."

In a message sent to Bangabandhu, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi today expresses her concern about the health of Bangladeshi premier and wishes him an early recovery. Commonwealth Secretary Sir Arnold Smith also sends a message to Bangabandhu, wishing him an early recovery.

NAP Chief Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani offers special prayers for the speedy recovery and safe return of Bangabandhu today.

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## Shutdown of schools extended till Aug 31

UNB, Dhaka

The government has again extended the closure of all educational institutions in the country until August 31 considering the coronavirus situation.

Mohammad Abul Khayer, public relations officer of the education ministry, confirmed the matter yesterday.

On March 16, the government had closed all educational institutions to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus.

The government is running a distance learning programme through Sangsad Television. Apart from this, classes are being taken on Facebook and YouTube for primary- and secondary-level students.

Many private universities have already started online classes as the University Grants Commission on March 24 urged teachers to

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## 'Model' customers keep Tokyo diners at safe distance



AFP, Tokyo

The coronavirus pandemic might have left many restaurants empty, but one establishment in Tokyo is relying on some model customers to enforce social distancing: life-like mannequins keeping diners from getting too close.

Masato Takemine's Chinese restaurant looks busy even as many businesses in the city deal with a dearth of clientele, with ladies in ornate Chinese-style dresses and a girl in a kimono among those seated at his tables.

But the 16 customers are actually mannequins he has placed randomly at tables to keep diners from getting too close.

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## CASE UNDER DSA Journo Kajol denied bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A virtual court in Dhaka yesterday rejected a bail petition of photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol in a case filed under the Digital Security Act (DSA).

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Baki Billah of virtual court-6 passed the order after Kajol's lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua submitted a petition seeking bail.

Kajol was shown arrested in the case on Tuesday after Md Rassel Mollah, a sub-inspector of Detective Branch (DB) of police and

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### PRAYER TIMING JULY 30

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

## Bank official lands in jail for swindling Tk 12.16cr

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A Bogura court yesterday sent an official of Jamuna Bank to jail on charges of embezzling Tk 12.16 crore.

The court of senior special judge Noreh Chandra Sarker passed the order.

Aminul Islam, assistant director of the ACC in Bogura, said the authorities of the bank filed a written complaint against Sawgat Arman, manager of the bank's Bogura branch, on Tuesday.

On information, the ACC looked into the audit reports of the bank and primarily found Sawgat to be guilty of the crime.

As a result, the ACC arrested Sawgat immediately and placed him before court yesterday, he added.

Sawgat embezzled the money from accounts that were not regularly used by the clients, the ACC official said.



An old man playing a marble game with young boys as onlookers watch on a bridge in Tangail Sadar upazila's Hugra char near the Jamuna. Due to floods caused by upstream water and rainfall, most of the char has been inundated and this bridge is one of the few dry places left.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

## Virus deaths surge in US

Nearly 1,600 lives lost in 24 hrs; cases soar across the world

AGENCIES

Coronavirus deaths in the United States surged to their highest level in months yesterday as Italy extended state of emergency to fight the lingering pandemic.

The human toll of the disease in the US hit a magnitude not seen since mid-May with nearly 1,600 deaths recorded in 24 hours for the world's hardest-hit country, Johns Hopkins University reported.

Residents in the semi-autonomous city of Hong Kong were adjusting to their strictest social-distancing measures yet over fears a "large-scale" outbreak could overwhelm hospitals.

Covid-19 has claimed more than 661,000 lives and infected over 16.7 million people across the globe, according to an AFP tally of official figures, although experts believe the true infection rate could be wildly higher.

President Donald Trump's push for re-election in November has been dogged by the virus crisis that has already killed nearly 150,000 Americans and wrought havoc on the world's biggest economy.

China, which Trump has often criticised for its initial handling of the pandemic, reported a three-month high of 101 new virus cases yesterday as sporadic regional outbreaks illustrated the mammoth task of keeping contagion at bay.

Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam warned the financial hub was "on the verge of a large-scale community outbreak, which may lead to a collapse of our hospital system and cost lives, especially of the elderly".

In Europe, swelling caseloads are blasting a similar hole in local hopes for a financial windfall in summer holiday hotspots.

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