

## Bangabandhu's

FROM PAGE 12

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad today calls upon Pakistan to shun the path of hatred and conspiracy, release all the Bangalees stranded in Pakistan and refrain from obstructing the course of justice so that a new page could be turned in Bangladesh-Pakistan relations on the basis of equality and national integrity.

**HEAVY CROP DAMAGE FEARED** Standing crops, paddy and jute, on a vast tract of land of Pabna and Jamalpur have been damaged heavily by flood. Meanwhile floodwater is receding in Sirajganj. The erosion, however, continued on slowly. Five lives have so far been claimed by flood in Rangpur.

SOURCES: August 10, 1972 issues of *Bangladesh Observer*, *Dainik Bangla* and *Dainik Ittefaq*.

## Bodies

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and a bag with papers from the spot. Masud and Mamun were returning to their workplaces by a motorcycle after the Eid holidays.

Contacted, Shahinul Islam Fakir, additional superintendent of Tangail police, said reason behind the deaths could be confirmed after receiving autopsy reports.

## Music director

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were music directors and composers in the 1960s.

Born on December 24 in 1952, Alauddin won the Bangladesh National Film Award five times as the best music director.

He directed music for more than 300 films.

## Death toll

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tested for Covid-19, Gopalakrishnan said, adding that autopsies of the dead would also be carried out according to the Covid-19 protocol.

Some 149 patients remain in hospital after some were discharged yesterday, Gopalakrishnan said.

Authorities have also asked local people who rushed out to help the passengers trapped in the plane to go into quarantine.

The Boeing-737 plane skidded off the table-top runway of Calicut, crashing nose-first into the ground. Such runways are located at an altitude and have steep drops at one or both ends.

In 2010, another Air India Express flight from Dubai overshoot the table-top runway at Mangalore, a city in the south, and slid down a hill, killing 158 people.

## Deaths more

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Rajshahi and Khulna.

At the daily briefing, additional director general (administration) of DGHS Dr Nasima Sultana said of the 32 that died yesterday, 16 were from Dhaka and the rest were from other divisions.

A total of 11,737 samples were tested in 84 labs across the country in the last 24 hours.

At least 2,611 tested positive, which means one out five tests were positive.

So far, 2,55,113 people tested positive since the detection of the first case in the country on March 8.

The death rate, compared to the total number of cases, stands at 1.32 percent.

The total infection rate is 20.42 percent, according to the DGHS.

Meanwhile, 1,020 Covid-19 patients have recovered in the last 24 hours.

The total number of recoveries stands at 1,46,604 and the recovery rate is at 57.47 percent.

Meanwhile, 865 people were put under isolation, the DGHS official added during the briefing.

Among the deceased, 25 were male and seven were female while one was between 21-30 years old, four within 41-50, 12 were between 51-60 years old, 10 between 61-70, four were within 71-80 and one was between 81-90 years old.

Dr Nasima urged people to test if they detect symptoms. "If you have a fever and cold, please don't ignore and go for testing," she said.

## Covid deaths

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and extending supplemental unemployment benefits if the White House could not reach a deal on a relief package with top Democrats in Congress.

Trump, speaking at a news conference at his golf property in Bedminster, New Jersey, made the vow after negotiations between the two sides broke down on Friday.

Covid-19 infections are rising in 20 US states, according to a Reuters analysis, as the center of the outbreak shifts from sunbelt states such as California, Florida and Texas to the Midwest.

City officials in Anchorage, Alaska, on Friday won a court ruling in favour of a ban on indoor restaurant dining after suing an eatery that defied an emergency order prohibiting the practice.

Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker partially rolled back plans to reopen the state's economy, reducing the maximum number allowed at outdoor gatherings from 100 to 50.



People hold crosses as a tribute to Covid-19 victims and as a protest against the way Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro is handling the pandemic, in front of the World War II Brazilian Veterans monument in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Two witnesses 'forced' to sign on blank papers

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charge of the investigation and did not receive the case documents yet.

Former army major Sinha, 36, had been making travel documentaries for a YouTube channel called "Just Go" with the three university students.

On July 31, he was returning to Cox's Bazar from Teknaf after shooting with Sifat.

His car was stopped at Shaplapur on Marine Drive road.

Police claimed that they tried to search the vehicle and Sinha aimed his pistol at them, which prompted them to shoot in self-defence.

They also claimed that they seized drugs from the vehicle.

Later, police conducted a drive in Nilima resort and arrested Shipra and Rifat.

Police later released Rifat under Guardian's custody. **THEY HIRED RESORT FOR TWO MONTHS** According to Nilima resort officials, Sinha and the three students rented the D-1 cottage on July 6 for two months, with a monthly rent for Tk 70 thousand. Sinha had already paid the rent in two phases to the resort authority, said caretaker Lokman.

Lokman said that Sinha was a very gentle and kind-hearted man. "He would always talk to us with a smile on his face and invite us whenever they would cook good food or bring fruits."

**TWO ACCUSED MISSING** On August 5, Sinha's sister Sharmen

Superintendent of Police ABM Masud Hossain on his cell phone around 9:33pm on the day of incident and informed that Inspector Liaquat Ali signalled a car but it did not stopped and then he ordered Liaquat to shoot, and he shot.

He is now going there, said Pradeep. After listening, SP Masud asked Pradeep to go as well.

Moments later, Inspector Liaquat called SP Masud again around 9:34pm and said that a man wearing an army uniform was trying to "get away after identifying himself as a major".

As the person pointed a gun at him, he shot.

SP Masud said, "The person first shot and missed. Then you shot him."

Asked about status of Sifat and Shipra, he said that a lawyer was already appointed to deal their case. "Rab will interrogate them for the sake of investigation."

**FOUR INTERROGATED AT JAIL GATE** Zamilul Hoque, senior assistant superintendent of Rab-15 -- also the investigating officer of the Sinha murder case, interrogated four police members -- Constables Safanur Karim, Kamal Hossain and Mohammad Abdullah and Assistant SI Liton Miah at the jail gate yesterday.

Mohammad Mokammel Hoque, jailer of Cox's Bazar district jail, said the IO interrogated four policemen at 2:00pm yesterday and would further interrogate the arrestees today.

Shahria Ferdush filed a case against nine policemen. Seven of them have already surrendered and are now in jail.

Lt Col Ashique Billah, legal and media wing director of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), yesterday said that the seven arrestees were placed on a seven day remand after Rab's appointed investigating officer appealed in the court.

"We would take the accused in our custody tomorrow [today] and we would interrogate the suspended policemen in phases. We are working in line with court directives for the complete interrogation of the seven accused within ten working days from the date of the given order."

"Although the plaintiff mentioned nine policemen names, in primary investigation we did not find the presence of the two other policemen in Baharchhara investigation centre. Still, we are verifying their roles and checking further," he said.

About interrogating the Cox's Bazar police super, he said that they have made note of the telephonic conversation that surfaced in different media. "Rab is now analysing the conversation and, if necessary, the investigation officer would take further legal action in this regard," he said, adding, "We want to ensure a fair investigation and the punishment of those responsible."

According to media reports, OC Pradeep Kumar Das called

## Submerged roads keep people marooned

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damage caused to the road. In Kurigram and Lalmonirhat, 25km unpaved road, 9km paved road, a 4km flood control dyke and 44 bridges/culverts under the LGED, Roads and Highway Department (RHD) and Water Development Board (WDB) have been damaged by floodwater.

"The dyke was the only way to connect our village with other villages. As it has collapsed, we have no alternative ways to leave our village, except boats," said Meher Ali, 58, a farmer in flood-hit Sardob village of Kurigram Sadar.

Villagers now have to spend Tk 10 for each trip in boat to cross the water, which is an additional burden on them, he said.

"Around half a kilometre of a road was damaged by water from the Teesta river, and now the road is under water," said Idris Ali, 58,

a farmer from Burihat village in Lalmonirhat's Rajarhat upazila.

In Nilphamari, flood has badly affected communication as 20 bridges and culverts and 40km of road have been damaged.

"We have completed a rough assessment according to which the damage to roads, bridges and culverts stands around Tk 20 crore," said Saiful Islam senior assistant engineer of LGED at the district office.

Badiuzzaman Proddhan, chairman of Khokshabari union parishad in Sadar upazila, said, "A 15km road connecting tourist spot Nil Sagor with Bottoli Haat lies damaged for more than a month, causing communication disruption to 10 thousand people."

"The 150-metre-long Beltoli Bridge connecting Kishoreganj upazila of Nilphamari with Taraganj of Rangpur district has also been

damaged at both ends, snapping communication," lamented Fazal Kadir, a school teacher in Kishoreganj upazila.

In Sirajganj, residents of Shuvogacha village in Kazipur upazila were dealing with a lot of trouble to reach the upazila headquarters as most of the earthen roads in the village have been damaged.

Around 53km of roads in the district have gone under floodwater. But how much of the roads have been damaged would be known after the water recedes, said Abdur Rahim, district relief and rehabilitation department.

The overall flood situation the district was improving slowly and the water level of the Jamuna came under the danger mark. But many people were still left marooned.

[Our correspondents in Sylhet, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari and Pabna contributed to the report.]

## China Airlines

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"Maybe it's because we have been bored for too long," Cheng said to AFP.

Later in the day, the excitable gaggle of kids took to the skies in their new uniforms for a two hour flight over the island and the soaring mountain range that runs down its spine.

The flights are part of an innovative attempt by airlines to scramble up some extra cash at a time when their business has all but dried up.

Like most airlines around the world, both China Airlines and its main competitor Eva Air have had to mothball a huge chunk of their fleet as international travel evaporates during the pandemic.

The two also have a limited domestic business to fall back on.

Yesterday, an Eva A330 from Taoyuan International Airport flew over Taiwan's northeast cape, circled Japan's Ryukyu Islands before returning home via the picturesque and rural southeast coast. The total flight time was two hours and 45 minutes.

An economy seat is selling for around NT\$5,288 (US\$180) while business class costs NT\$6,288.

The China Airlines flight lasts around two hours and will also fly into Japanese airspace before turning around to the eastern coast of Taiwan.

Further flights are planned in the coming weeks and both Eva and China Airlines say they have quickly sold out.

Local enthusiasm for the trips has been helped by the knowledge that there is currently little chance of catching the coronavirus on a Taiwanese flight.

## Tragic day

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of vehicles and pedestrians all within a distance of half a kilometre in Chuadanga Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The accident occurred at Sojrojanj Bazar around 6:30am.

Locals protested the accident blocking Chuadanga-Jhenidah highway, halting transport movement.

A night coach of Royal Express, headed towards Chuadanga from Chattogram, first hit a battery-run three-wheeler, killing three of its eight passengers, said Officer-in-Charge of Chuadanga Sadar Police Station Abu Zihad Md Fakhru.

It also rammed into a number of local three-wheelers, motorcycles and pedestrians, leaving three more dead, said the OC.

The deceased are Sohag Ali, 25, Sharifuddin, 30, Raju Ahmed, 45, Kalu, 40, Milon Hossain, 40, and Sree Shashthi Halder, 42.

The injured were admitted at Chuadanga Sadar Hospital, said Abdus Salam, deputy assistant director of Chuadanga Fire Station.

Kanak Kumar Kanti, additional superintendent of Chuadanga police, told our correspondent that police could not arrest the driver and helper as they went into hiding after leaving the vehicle at the local bus depot.

In Saoghat area on Golakandail-Araihazar road in Ruppaganj upazila of Narayanganj, two persons were killed and two others were injured when a CNG-run auto-rickshaw collided with a truck yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Nasir Madbar, 26, son of Salim Madbar of Charsidhil village in Shariatpur and Wajib Mia, 14, son of Saeed Mia of Panchgaon Charpara area in Arihazar Upazila, said, Parimal Sutradhar, sub-inspector of Ruppaganj Police station.

The police official said auto-rickshaw driver Nasir Madbar was heading towards Araihazar with three passengers. When his vehicle reached Saoghat area, it collided with a sand truck coming from the opposite direction.

Driver Nasir Madbar and passenger Wajib died on the spot.

At the same time, two passengers Nur Nabi, 26, and Nasir Uddin, 28, of Araihazar area were seriously injured. They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Two bodies were recovered and sent to Narayanganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy. The sand truck was seized but its driver and helper escaped. Preparations are underway to file a case in this incident.

In Singair upazila of Manikganj, two people were killed in a head-on collision between a Laguna and a motorcycle in Basta area of Hemayetpur-Singair-Manikganj regional highway on Friday night.

The deceased were identified as motorcyclist-Ashraf Khan, 55, of Airmara village in Manikganj Sadar upazila and Laguna passenger-Abdullah, 8, son of Abdul Jalil of Bartala village under Sreepur upazila of Magura district.

Singair police said Ashraf Khan's motorcycle collided with a Hemayetpur-bound Laguna at Basta Bus stand area of the Hemayetpur-Singair-Manikganj regional highway on Friday night.

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Singair police said Ashraf Khan's motorcycle collided with a Hemayetpur-bound Laguna at Basta Bus stand area of the Hemayetpur-Singair-Manikganj regional highway at around 8:00pm on Friday. The Laguna and the motorcycle were submerged in the water.

Abdullah, an 8-year-old passenger from Laguna, drowned in water. Abdullah was found dead two hours later at 10:30pm by firefighters.

On the other hand, Ashraf Khan was rescued in a critical condition and taken to Savar Enam Medical College Hospital where the doctor declared him dead.

committee member of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, and his team are also working in the punjis to spread awareness, under the leadership of Bishop Bejoy N D'Cruze, head of the Sylhet Diocese.

"We are running from one punji to another -- advising everyone to wear masks, maintain social distancing, and adhere to hygiene rules," said Father Joseph.

He said they themselves maintain strict hygiene and use protective gears during the campaigns.

Another precaution has been stopping gathering for public worship in the punjis during the last few months, he added.

ATM Farhad Chowdhury, UNO of Kulaura upazila in Moulvibazar, said the punji residents have been extremely sincere about the Covid-19 issue.

"Their strict rules make us proud. We are also helping them carry out various activities to increase social awareness, including making it compulsory to wear a mask."

"After meeting with all residents, we have been maintaining a complete lockdown with no exceptions," said Welcome Lymba, a resident of Jaflong punji in Gowainghat upazila of Sylhet.

This includes a ban on tourists, who sometimes stray from the popular hill station in Jaflong into the punjis.

Dipu Rema, a resident of Dhanchhara punji in Sreemangal upazila of Moulvibazar, said they met everyone in the village on implementing the lockdown, so that no one is given any special concessions.

"If Covid-19 is able to enter our area, everyone will be severely affected."

Monika Khonglah, myntri (head) of Megatila punji in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar, said even sacks of rice and pulses bought from outside are sprayed and kept in a hut adjacent to the punji gate for a week, as a precaution against the virus.

Father Joseph Gomes OMI, central

## Examples worth following

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Flora Bably Talang, general secretary of Kubraj, an inter-punji development organisation, said there is a population of around 40,000 who mostly live in hilly punjis in Sylhet division.

"We suffer badly at times due to the poor condition of hilly roads and no electricity facilities. There are so many remote punjis where there are no modern facilities."

"But," he added, "we are following strict health rules during this pandemic for our own safety."

On Thursday, this correspondent was able to secure a visit to three punjis, with special permission and under special arrangement. The nearest of the villages is around 50km from Moulvibazar town.

In the first punji, this correspondent was able to enter through the only open gate and was sprayed down by guards on duty before being allowed in.

Needless to say, he had to keep wearing gloves and a mask all the time and did not enter any house.

"It is a very good practice; anyone can follow it as an example."

Saju Marchiang, publicity secretary of the Khasi Welfare Association, said entry to the punjis for outsiders has been stopped since the government announced the countrywide shutdown back in March after the country's first coronavirus cases were detected.

In each punji, people are under strict guard with only those sick able to leave. Residents of the punjis who have been elsewhere have to maintain a 14-day quarantine outside before they can enter. Not even relatives of the residents have been allowed in during this time.

These measures have paid off as no one has so far been found to be affected by coronavirus in the punjis.

Isolation from the outside world was crucial for these indigenous communities as the nearest healthcare facilities are distant, said local leaders.