

3 Arab states

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could not be released without the concurrence of Bangladesh, adds Swaran Singh.
The Indian offer to Pakistan was made at Simla.
GOVT FIRM TO EASE FOOD SITUATION
Acting Prime Minister Syed Nazrul Islam declares in Chittagong today that the government would not allow a single man to die of starvation. The government has already taken emergency measures to meet the food shortage. However, the situation of strain is likely to continue till next harvest in December, he adds. According to emergency measures, Syed Nazrul says, movement of food grains would be given priority over everything, particularly at the ferry crossings. He stresses on the proper distribution of flour in rural areas where conditions are especially bad. *SOURCES: September 3, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.*

HC asks

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submitted the writ petition to the HC on August 24 following a newspaper report published on August 22 claiming that Md Liton has been in jail for nine months in place of the originally convicted Md Liton, who has been absconding after being released on bail.
On December 7 last year, the police wrongly arrested day labourer Liton instead of the convicted Liton as their names, fathers' names and addresses are similar, the petitioners said.
Their fathers are named Nur Islam, and their village's name is Chatla at Dhologourabnagar union in Lalmohan. Both fathers died several years ago.
The Liton who was convicted and sentenced to two years' imprisonment in a criminal case, is now 41 years old, the petitioners said in the petition.
Law enforcers of Ahad Police Box under Paltan Police Station reportedly arrested Liton, Shamim and Arman Miah on June 28, 2009 for possession of banned anesthesia tablets.
Later, they were released on bail.
The special tribunal-2 of Dhaka on October 22, 2014 convicted the trio and sentenced them to two years' imprisonment and fined them Tk 2,000 each.
Lawyers ZI Khan Panna and Yeadia Zaman appeared for the writ petitioners.

India leads

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the previous seven days and the highest numbers of new cases globally."
In Africa, cases in Ethiopia reached "new highs", while South Africa - which has the fifth most infections globally and the highest number on the vast continent - has continued a downward trend, it said.
Several previous hotspots - including Ghana, Kenya, Gabon and Madagascar - have recorded fewer new cases, the WHO said, adding: "...the figures should be interpreted cautiously as they may be affected by many factors, including the current testing capacity and strategy, and delays in reporting."
Rates have fluctuated in the WHO's eastern Mediterranean region, with the latest highest case numbers seen in Iraq, Iran, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, it said.
MILLIONS BACK AT SCHOOL
More than 25.44 million people have been reported to be infected by the coronavirus globally since it emerged in China late last year and more than 851,000 have died, according to a Reuters tally.
Millions of mask-wearing European children headed back to school yesterday after summer holidays despite rising numbers of infections, as Hong Kong rolled out a mass coronavirus testing programme.
Schools reopened in Russia, Ukraine, Belgium and France, where teachers and their pupils aged 11 and older were obliged to wear face coverings, echoing regulations in place across the continent.
Russia's 17 million school children returned to class as the country confirmed it had passed one million infections -- still well behind the tally in the United States, now higher than six million.
The Chinese city at the centre of the initial outbreak, Wuhan, took another leap back to normality yesterday when its almost 1.4 million youngsters also returned to schools and kindergartens.
State media broadcast images of thousands of students hoisting the Chinese flag -- a daily routine at all public schools -- despite warnings to avoid mass gatherings.
European countries have faced an upsurge in cases in recent weeks after successfully suppressing the numbers, a similar story to Hong Kong where three-quarters of cases have been detected within the past two months.
However, Hong Kong's attempts to roll out a mass testing scheme have been hampered by distrust of officials following China's crushing of the city's democracy movement.
Doctors and testing firms from mainland China are involved in the programme, fuelling public fears that their DNA and data will be harvested to create a system of control underpinned by biometrics.



A student is detained by law enforcement officers during a protest against presidential election results in Minsk, Belarus, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

New radar to usher in a new era

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He further said it may take around three years to install the new radar in Dhaka and fully implement the system which will enhance Caab's capacity to control air traffic communications with any commercial aircraft flying over Bangladesh.
The country now has two radars -- at the international airports in Dhaka and Chittagong. These age-old radars have serious dearth of capacity to ensure surveillance of the airspace which has now expanded significantly with Bangladesh winning the maritime disputes with Myanmar and India.
"A number of air routes are passing through the country's south airspace.

As the existing radar systems cannot control commercial air traffic on the routes, India is now providing the service," said the Caab chairman.
However, Bangladesh gets a share of revenue that India earns from the service.
"Once the new radar system is installed, our control will be established and we will earn a good amount from services to aircraft flying through the routes in the south," said Mafidur Rahman.
Bangladesh has hardly any control over its vast airspace as the existing radar in Dhaka is 36-year-old and has gone through modification several times. The other radar in Chattogram is also very old. With these, the

communication system can go out of order anytime, Caab officials said.
The radar in Dhaka can communicate 200 nautical miles and able to see aircraft within 100 nautical miles. The one in Chattogram can detect aircraft far at 240 nautical miles and its communication capacity is a bit more.
The new radar will be connected through integrated networking system, covering the entire airspace up to the sea boundary.
The technical specification of the new radar has already been completed with the support of ICAO's technical cooperation bureau specialist.
The Caab took initiatives to replace the old radar in Dhaka in 2005.

In 2012, a company proposed to install the radar at Tk 330 crore under the public-private partnership. After all formalities, tender was floated and four companies took part in the bidding in 2015.
Caab primarily selected a company and sent the proposal to the ministry for final approval, but the ministry rejected it as it showed unusual expenditure.
Then again in September 2018 initiative was taken as per the order of Prime Minister's Office to make the purchase under the project titled "Communications, Navigation and Surveillance/ Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM)" under G2G process.

PMO roped in to settle row

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extend Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-6, the first ever metro rail project in the country, up to Kamalapur Railway Station, saying it will jeopardise railway's mega plan to turn the country's prime railway station into a multimodal transport hub.
As per a time-bound plan, the government will build six metro rail lines in Dhaka and its adjacent areas within 2030, aiming to reduce traffic congestion and environmental pollution.
The construction of MRT Line-6 is now underway while the work of MRT Line-1, which will connect Dhaka airport with Kamalapur Railway Station through an underground line, is scheduled to start in December.
The MRT Line-1 will be the country's first underground metro rail system. The 31.24km route will have an elevated section from Notun Bazar to Purbachal.
REASON FOR THE ROW
The MRT Line-6 was initially designed as an elevated track from Uttara to Motijheel. Later, a skywalk was planned to connect the line with Kamalapur Railway Station.
Meanwhile, the DMTCL last year planned to stretch the MRT Line-6 directly to Kamalapur instead of implementing the skyway system so that people can avail the metro rail service directly from the railway station.
But the railway authorities said they have a plan to build a multi-modal transport hub centring the Kamalapur station.
The government has already signed a memorandum of cooperation with Japan to implement transport hub under a G2G public-private partnership project. The basic concept of the plan was approved in the third Bangladesh-Japan joint platform meeting in March last year, reads BR documents.
"So the present proposal for extension of MRT Line-6 alignment on the Kamalapur station premises is not acceptable," reads the minutes of a meeting held at Railway Bhawan in December last year.
"After detailed discussions, it is found that extension of MRT Line-6 will confront the basic theme of development of MmTH [Multimodal Transport Hub] and other Bangladesh Railway development works," it

added.
Besides, Japanese company Kajima Corporation, which had already outlined a concept of the hub, informed the railway authorities that it would withdraw its proposal if the present MRT Line-6 extension plan was accepted, said a top railway official.
He said the minutes of the meeting, presided over by Railways Minister Nurul Islam, was sent the to the DMTCL on December 30 last year.
Meanwhile, officials of railway and DMTCL held a meeting on the issue in the middle of last month, where DMTCL placed a "reviewed" extension plan, said a railway official, who was present at the meeting.
"But we have expressed our reservation over it as the reviewed plan will also obstruct our plan of building a multi-modal transport hub. So we asked them [DMTCL officials] to rethink about it and accommodate our plan," he told this correspondent wishing not be named.
Dhirendra Nath Majumder, additional director general (infrastructure) of Bangladesh Railway, yesterday said, "We will raise our points over the matter at the

meeting [at PMO].
"If their plan is implemented as per the present proposal, our plan would be obstructed. We hope we will be able to reach a solution through discussions," he added.
Contacted, DMTCL Managing Director MAN Siddique said the meeting was called for finalising the places for two stations of MRT Line-1 and 6 in Kamalapur area.
Asked about the railway's reservation over their plan, he said, "We didn't receive any formal objection from the railway authorities. But we will select the sites for the stations considering the masterplan of the railway."
Siddique said they have already completed a topography survey and finalised the alignment for the additional 1.16km of MRT Line-6. "We will start working on detailed design once the site for the stations is selected," he told The Daily Star on August 27.
The deadline for completion of MRT Line-6 is December 2021 and MRT Line-1 December 2026. The estimated costs of the projects are Tk 22,000 crore and Tk 55,561 crore respectively.

For rural economy, burden gets heavy

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An unofficial estimate by Varatia Parishad, a tenants' platform, says over 50,000 families have already left Dhaka, without a steady income to afford living in the capital.
A recent study titled "Livelihoods, Coping and Support during COVID-19", jointly conducted by Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) and Brac Institute of Government and Development (BIGD), showed urban-rural migration was six percent in April but it rose to 13.3 percent between April and June.
For Dhaka alone, this figure was 15.6 percent.
The study, which surveyed 7,638 rural and urban households across the country, noted that this urban exit was driven by four expenditure burdens -- house rent, health costs, transportation, and utilities.
The situation is not very different for those who once held white-collar jobs or worked abroad.
Punno Gopal Paul and Shudipta Rani Chowdhury, a young couple in Dhaka, had a rude awakening when Punno was sacked from his job as a merchandiser at a buying house on April 21.
In July, after spending all their savings on rent, they left the city for Pabna.
"It was getting difficult to pay Tk 15,000 for rent alongside maintaining a family of three, with no job," said Shudipta.
The couple are currently dependent on extended family.
"Punno never learnt how to run a

business or farming. He is still trying for jobs in Pabna town, while I'm preparing for government jobs, although there are almost no job circulars," said Shudipta.
Another large number of people currently adding to the unemployed in rural areas are overseas workers.
According to Prof Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), although more than six lakh people go abroad for jobs every year, this year they are stuck with no way to go.
Most migrant workers are from rural areas, and particularly from low and lower-middle income households.
Some had been in the country for a holiday when Covid-19 halted flights, or returned when they lost their jobs or had no work temporarily, and are currently unable to go back.
At least 95,062 Bangladeshi workers returned home from 26 countries between April and August 30, according to data from the expatriates' welfare ministry.
Ekramul Hossain, a migrant worker from Iraq, lost his job and returned to Bangladesh, where he is currently struggling to set up a business.
He used to earn around \$1,200 per month.
Ekramul has taken a loan of Tk 4 lakh from a relative and applied for another Tk 2 lakh (with a nine percent interest rate) from Bangladesh Krishi Bank to set up a dairy farm.
Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad announced recently that the ministry

has formed a Tk 700 crore fund for the welfare of returned foreign workers, who will be entitled to loans at four percent interest rate.
As an expatriate worker, although Ekramul can avail this, he doesn't know where to apply for it.
"Currently, I am able to earn Tk 3,000 to Tk 5,000 every month, after meeting all the business expenses. Maybe I can reap the benefits later, but now, my situation is not good," he said.
WAYOUT?
Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman at PPRC, said policymakers should include the needs of the rural non-agricultural sector in policies and stimulus packages.
"The stimulus package of Tk 72,750 crores to counter the adverse effect of coronavirus on the country's economy has been designed for the formal economy," said Hossain Zillur, adding that rural people in any case hardly access finance from banks due to so many formalities.
In April, the government announced total stimulus packages adding up to Tk 72,750 crore -- for small and medium industries, and the agricultural sector, among others.
"The government can announce a stimulus package that will be disbursed not via banks but by microfinance institutions. But in the first phase, the government should undertake a large-scale policy consultative process in order to find out what to do in this situation," he added.
Prof Mustafizur said stimulus

packages aimed at the rural economy -- such as Tk 5,000 crore for the agriculture sector and Tk 20,000 crores for cottage, micro, small, and medium enterprises -- must be disbursed quickly.
He also stressed creating more non-agricultural employment opportunities in rural areas.
"There must be employment opportunities for labour-intensive work, such as renovating rural roads and investing in public works. These can help informal sector workers who returned to their villages."
Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha, professor of economics at the University of Dhaka, said since many young people don't have the means to live in the cities anymore or take up agricultural work, they should be given entrepreneurial support -- by introducing them into the supply chain process, providing them with training, and ensuring access to finance.
"The government's strategy must include rural-based small-scale employment generation programmes such as micro, small, and cottage industries.
"Relaxing the provisioning policies of SME loans is also important so that the stimulus package for SMEs can be disbursed as early as possible."
She also stressed on investing in rural infrastructure development in order to decentralise so that people need not move to cities for adequate education and health services.

Bees love

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The study compared 931 bees from green spaces close to nine German cities with 898 bees from rural areas with few roads and lots of farmland and forests.
The bees the researchers looked at were red-tailed bumblebees, common carder bees and buff-tailed bumblebees -- one of the most common species in the UK.
They measured the size of bumblebees based on the distance between their wings -- and found they tend to be bigger in cities.
All three species were larger when there were several roads within a 270 yard radius, suggesting they had to be bulkier to fly across them to reach other flowers.
Star Cineplex
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decision was ultimately up to the authorities of Bashundhara City," says Mesbah Uddin, Cineplex's media and marketing manager.
Mesbah told The Daily Star that they received the eviction notice in August. "It has been a great 18-year long journey. Star Cineplex in Bashundhara City was the go-to destination for film-lovers in the capital."
Contacted, Sheikh Abdul Alim, senior executive (A&F) and in-charge of Bashundhara City Development Ltd, refused to make a comment in this regard.
Even prior to the pandemic, cinema halls had been closing down for years in Dhaka due to the lack of audience interest. Remission of theatre rents, tax alleviations and urgent government assistance during the Covid-19 outbreak were suggested by many hall-owners.
Even though this particular branch has closed down, Star Cineplex continues to expand its services to outlets all over the country.
It will still be available in Mohakhali's SKS Tower and Dhanmondi's Shimanto Shambhar in the capital, with another one to be constructed in the building that will replace Mirpur's Sony Cinema Hall.
DGHS official
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launched the rt-PCR based Covid-19 laboratory at the hospital.
"The statement of the director of hospital [and clinics] is against public interest and injudicious. His statement is against the spirit of liberation war," Dr Zafrullah said.
He also mentioned that they sent two letters to the DGHS via email -- the first one on August 12 and the second one on August 31.
"We did not get any reply," Dr Zafrullah said in the letter.
Dr Farid Hossain Mian, however, dismissed this claim.
"We have received an email regarding their hospital license. There was nothing realted to Covid-19 laboratory in that letter. Later [on Monday], I received an invitation letter to visit their [Gonoshasthaya Kendra] Covid-19 lab. We have not received any application regarding Covid-19 lab at all," Dr Farid Hossain Mian told The Daily Star yesterday.
About his warning to run a mobile court, he said, "None of the Covid-19 laboratories could start testing without our permission. They would not too. So I have told them to run a mobile court as per the law."
Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury said, "Will now the mobile court come and shut down Gonoshasthaya Kendra? What would be the result? Hundreds of thousands of people will be deprived of treatment. If the government thinks that would be better, they will do."
"We, however, are not going to shut down the lab... We sent a letter to the DG of the health directorate again yesterday. We hope they will authorise our lab soon," he added.
On August 15, Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital authorities launched the "Gonoshasthaya Plasma Center" in commemoration of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
Death toll
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which is 15.97 percent of all people tested yesterday.
With this, the total number of confirmed cases rose to 3,14,946 which is 20.16 percent of all people tested since January 21 this year.
Bangladesh is currently ranked 15th in the list of worst affected countries in the world in terms of the number of cases, according to worldometer.info.
The position is one step ahead of Pakistan and one step behind Saudi Arabia.
Meanwhile, 3,290 Covid-19 patients have recovered in the same 24 hours.
The total number of recoveries stands at 2,08,177 which is 65.46 percent of all confirmed cases.
A total of 21 of the yesterday's deceased were males and 14 were females.
One was aged between 21 and 30 years, one between 31-40, four between 41-50, 11 between 51-60 and 18 were above 60 years.
One each were from Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions, two were from Barishal, three each from Rajshahi and Khulna, four from Rangpur, seven from Chattogram while the highest 14 were from Dhaka division.
In those 24 hours, 629 people were put under isolation, the press release added.