



AVOID NEW COLD WAR
 Urges UN chief as empty General Assembly session opens amid world in crises
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"The BNP chief has not been released through the judicial procedure... she was released through the virtue of Sheikh Hasina's humanity, but the BNP leaders are doing negative politics with it."
 AL LEADER MAHBUBUL ALAM HANIF



"We need an integrated transport system prioritizing walking, cycling, rickshaw, water transport and rail."
 PROF SAMSUL HOQUE OF CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT AT BUET



"This is not charity, it's in every country's best interest. We sink or we swim together..."
 WHO CHIEF TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS ON COVAX



REINING IN LOAN DEFAULT

Central bank now 'ineffective'

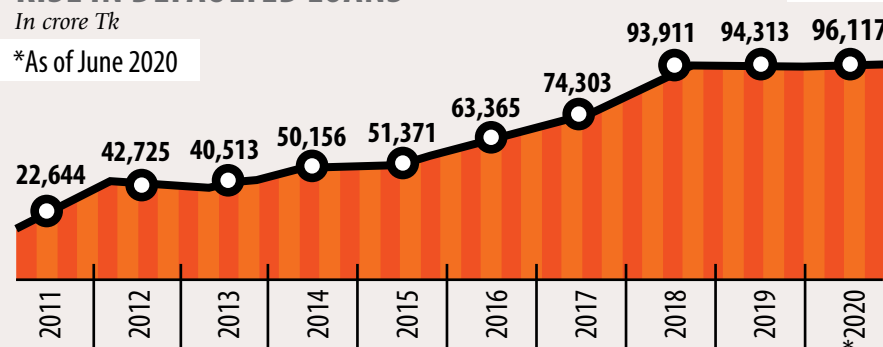
Political influence, intervention by business groups over last one decade are to blame: TIB

RISE IN DEFAULTED LOANS

In crore Tk

*As of June 2020

SOURCE: BB



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The central bank has become an ineffective entity in containing defaulted loans due to immense political pressure and illegal intervention by some large business groups, finds a research by Transparency International Bangladesh.

Vested groups influenced the recent amendment to the Banking Companies Act 1991, appointment of deputy governors of

Bangladesh Bank, and bank inspections by BB officials.

Amid such a situation, the entity that enjoys autonomy on paper now faces a lack of corporate governance, and also a section of its officials are involved in corruption, said the TIB.

The entire banking sector is now at the edge of a cliff and the authorities concerned should take immediate measures to avert

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Expatriate Bangladeshis stage demonstrations outside the office of Saudi Arabian Airlines at the capital's Pan Pacific Sonargaon hotel yesterday demanding issuance of tickets for trips to the Gulf country. The protestors said their jobs will be on the line if they fail to join work by September 30. The Saudi national carrier said it cannot meet the high demand. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

COVID-19 WINTER WAVE

People with conditions will be at greater risk

Experts warn

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Chilly or not, the coming winter is set to be an ominous one.

The spike of pneumonia and asthmatic cases, triggered by the cold and poor air quality, is a typical winter woe.

But this winter, the novel coronavirus will be an additional and potentially deadlier peril, with some countries fearing it will add to the Covid-19 death toll by thousands.

As Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has warned, this winter is likely to herald a second wave of the pandemic in Bangladesh and third or fourth waves in many other places of the world.

Influenza viruses, like the coronavirus, are typically found to be more potent in

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GLOBAL VACCINE PLAN

156 nations join WHO scheme

Superpowers US, China did not sign up

AGENCIES

A coalition of 156 nations, including Bangladesh, has joined a global scheme for fair distribution of future vaccines against Covid-19, an alliance led by the World Health Organisation (WHO) announced, but superpowers China and the United States did not sign up.

Unveiling the agreement at a briefing in Geneva on Monday, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Covax represented the "world's largest and most diverse portfolio of Covid vaccines" in which the priority would be given to those most at risk.

Khalilur Rahman, additional secretary of the foreign ministry, confirmed that Bangladesh is one of the countries that joined the global scheme.

Set up to counter the increasing threat of so-called "vaccine nationalism" in the midst of the ongoing pandemic, the scheme called Covax is being led by the WHO, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness and Innovations (Cepi) to ensure the "equitable access and allocation of Covid-19 health products", not least vaccines.

The scheme would account for about two-thirds of the world population, according to the alliance, which published the list of signatories on Monday after a deadline for binding commitments expired on Friday.

Recognising that the first useful vaccines to emerge may be in short supply, the alliance said approved vaccines will initially be made available to a tightly targeted 3 percent of the population of participating countries,

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Over 5k have died from Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of Covid-19 deaths crossed the 5,000 mark yesterday, as Bangladesh stepped into the 198th day since the first detection of coronavirus in the country.

In the 24 hours till 8:30am yesterday, 28 more patients died, raising the total number of Covid-19 casualties to 5,007, said a press release of the directorate general of health services (DGHS).

The DGHS reported the first death on March 18 and the number of deaths rose to 100 by April 20.

The number surpassed one thousand on June 10, two thousand on July 5, three thousand on July 28 and four thousand on August 25.

The 30th day of June saw the highest number of

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Thankless as always

Women's burden of unpaid care work went up during Covid-19

NILIMA JAHAN

Thirty-two-year-old SM Sharmin, a marketing executive at a private organisation, was cooking while also speaking to one of her clients over the phone, and helping her eight-year-old daughter with her online classes.

The client on the other side of the phone was rebuking her for a small mistake done by her office, and Sharmin was trying to make him understand that it was not her fault.

Suddenly, Sharmin noticed her curry was about to burn. "I was so nervous that instead of switching off the stove, I dropped my phone into the hot pan," she said.

Sadly, she couldn't expect her banker husband, also working from home, to help her by looking after the curry while she was on the phone.

Instead, she got a lecture.

"I was scolded as to how one can be so absentminded so as to drop the phone in the hot pan. He asked me to leave my job if I can't balance my responsibilities," she added.

A recent study by Oxfam International showed that 43 percent of 3,558 women surveyed in five countries, reported feeling

more anxious, depressed, isolated, overworked or ill due to taking on even more unpaid care work during the current pandemic.

The data is similarly skewed in Bangladesh.

A rapid assessment by Brac's Gender, Diversity and Justice Programme early on during the pandemic found 91 percent of 557 women working in formal and informal sectors reported doing higher amounts of unpaid care work, and 89 percent reported having no leisure time at all.

Brac's findings also warned of a negative impact on women's mental health as a result of the extra work.

This correspondent also interviewed 20 female young professionals and entrepreneurs based on Facebook, who run their businesses alongside raising their children and household work. And 18 of them gave responses which echoed Oxfam International and Brac's findings.

Although these women said men have been participating in household work, as compared to before Covid-19 struck, almost everyone reported that the pandemic has affected them disproportionately.

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DU student sues Ducsu ex-VP Nur once again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Ducsu vice-president Nurul Haque Nur and five leaders of Sadharon Chhatra Odhikar Songrokkhon Parishad were sued in another rape case on Monday evening when its leaders and activists were taking to the streets to protest a previous case.

The female Dhaka University student, who earlier filed a case against the six with Lalbagh Police Station, filed the second case with Kotwali Police Station, accusing them of rape, abetting rape and shaming her on social media.

In the second case, she alleged that she was raped by another leader of the platform in a launch cabin in February.

Leaders of the parishad yesterday demonstrated once again, demanding the withdrawal of the cases.

They claimed the complainant was acting on someone else's instructions to frame their leaders in

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Locals have built a makeshift bridge with bamboo scaffolding next to a broken bridge on the Bhullur river in Nilphamari Sadar upazila so that they can at least cross on foot. The bridge, which links more than five lakh people of Dinajpur's Khansama upazila with Niphamari town, was damaged beyond repair during a flood in 2017. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ASADUZZAMAN TIPU

Don't let geopolitical rivalries weaken UN

Hasina tells global leaders

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called for not allowing geopolitical rivalries to weaken the United Nations as the Covid-19 pandemic has shown that both developed and developing nations need the global body more than ever.

"We must not allow our geopolitical rivalries to weaken the UN. We owe it to the founding fathers and future generations to make the UN a truly effective global body for humankind as a whole," she said.

The premier was delivering her speech virtually at the high-level event arranged to mark the 75th anniversary of the UN at its New York headquarters early yesterday (Bangladesh time).

Hasina said the challenges of the present time, including the current pandemic, go beyond borders and the Covid-19 has made the achievement of the 2030 Agenda more challenging. It has exposed the inadequacies of the current international order, she added.

"At the same time, the pandemic has shown that both developed and developing nations need the UN more than ever. It has shown us that multilateralism is the way forward."

The PM urged the UN to provide a credible and practical roadmap for delivering on commitments and responding decisively to global challenges.

"To take the UN on the right course towards its centenary and beyond, UN@75 should provide a credible

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