

TK 200CR PROJECT GETS NOD TO SET UP DRY FISH PROCESSING PLANT, LAB IN COX'S BAZAR  
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# The Daily Star

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## US ELECTION 2020

# America holding its breath

Voting underway on election day amid fears of unrest

AGENCIES

Americans were voting yesterday in the bitterly contested presidential race between incumbent Donald Trump and challenger Joe Biden after a tumultuous four years under the businessman-turned-politician that have left the United States as deeply divided as at any time in recent history.

Voters lined up at polling places around the country casting ballots amid a coronavirus pandemic that has turned everyday life upside down. Biden, the Democratic former vice president who has spent a half century in public life, has held a strong and consistent lead in national opinion polls over the Republican president.

But Trump is close enough in several election battleground states that he could piece together the 270 state-by-state electoral college votes needed to win the election.

Trump is hoping to repeat the type of upset he pulled off in 2016 when he defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton despite losing the national popular vote by about 3 million ballots. Trump is aiming to avoid becoming the first incumbent US president to lose a re-election bid since George HW Bush in 1992.

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Voters line up at a polling station to vote in the 2020 US presidential election in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# US election matters for Bangladeshi migrants

PORIMOL PALMA

As the world eagerly awaits the result of the critical US Presidential Election, an obvious question arises -- will it have any implication on US-Bangladesh relations with a change at the helm or will it remain the same?

Analysts say if Democratic candidate Joe Biden wins, he will relax restrictions on immigration laws. However, any other policy which would apply to Bangladesh will remain largely the same.

"Because of Trump's policy change, many Bangladeshis who have not been able to secure the legal status in the US will benefit if Biden wins. Many families who had been separated will be able to reunite eventually," said former foreign secretary Touhid Hossain.

Sultana Rahman, a New York-based Bangladeshi journalist, said she believes that about 90 percent of the Bangladeshis in the US support Biden.

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# BUYING SMARTPHONE UGC loan for 41,501 public univ students

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The University Grants Commission considers providing 41,501 public university students with Tk 8,000 each interest-free loans so that they can buy smartphones and attend online classes amid the pandemic.

The money will come from UGC's own funds.

The regulatory body of universities had sought the funds from the education ministry, but since it is taking time to respond, the UGC wants to go ahead with the project on its own.

"We don't have the end of Covid-19 [pandemic] in sight. We did not get any concrete answer from the government. If we don't give the money right away, students who can't afford to buy smartphones will further lag behind in their studies," a UGC member said.

He said they wrote to the ministry in June, seeking the funds.

The member also said the UGC had initially planned to give Tk 15,000 to each student. But they cut it down to Tk

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# PREVENTING SECOND WAVE Govt words not reflected in action

WASIM BIN HABIB and MOUJIB AHMED SUJAN

The government's preparations for tackling a possible spike in Covid-19 cases in the coming winter appear to be limited to rhetoric as efforts to control virus transmission and ensure treatment are still far from satisfactory.

In the wake of a second Covid wave in many parts of the world, especially in Europe, the government high-ups fear a likely rise in infections in Bangladesh too, but insist that they have taken all-out preparations for that.

However, the measures taken by the ministries concerned hardly reflect their claims.

Firstly, the government could not strictly enforce the health safety rules, a key instrument in the fight against virus transmission. A large section of the population is still reluctant to wear masks though it is mandatory to use face coverings in public places.

Another important aspect of the preparedness is hospital management. Here too, the government falls short of the required preparations in case the health system gets overstretched due to a spike in infections.

The health directorate has not been successful in ensuring adequate tests, central oxygen supply and other life-support equipment at public hospitals across the country.

Yet, Health Minister Zahid Maleque on Sunday claimed that the government was "completely ready" to tackle a possible second wave.

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'Efforts to control virus transmission must be the number one priority until there is a cure for the virus...'

PROF. MUSHTAQ HUSSAIN  
A CONSULTANT AT THE  
INSTITUTE OF EPIDEMIOLOGY,  
DISEASE CONTROL AND  
RESEARCH (IEDCR).

# HC RULE ON MARITAL RAPE Why laws that allow it should not be void?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday asked the government to show cause as to why laws that allow marital rape of women and girls aged above 13 should not be declared void and discriminatory.

In a rule nisi, it also directed the government to explain why those laws

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# A political conspiracy against independence

PM on killing of 4 nat'l leaders in jail

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the August 15 and November 3 killings proved that there was a conspiracy against the independence and the people of the country.

"Vested quarters had tried to propagate that August 15 killing was an incident against a family, [but] their original objective was caught through the killing of November 3," she said.

The PM was addressing a discussion, organised by the Awami League at its central office on Bangabandhu Avenue, marking the Jail Killing Day. Hasina, also the AL president, joined the programme virtually from the



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A vessel in the Turag river carries vegetables to the capital from the outskirts of the city. Prices of vegetables soared in recent months as the supply was affected due to excessive rain and repeated flooding in the country. The photo was taken in Savar's Aminbazar yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

As part of our ongoing series of interviews of political party leaders, today we are running the interview of President of Oikya NAP Pankaj Bhattacharya.

# Pro-people politics goes off the track

Pankaj Bhattacharya tells The Daily Star

GOLAM MORTOZA

Pankaj Bhattacharya is one of the few veteran left-wing idealistic politicians in Bangladesh. He spent his entire life holding on to his ideologies, which he has never compromised with. This politician is the president of Oikya NAP.



power and the quality of pre- and post-71 elections.

The Daily Star (DS): We would like to get the current political situation from your perspective.

Pankaj Bhattacharya (PB): The politics of welfare for people, to improve the condition of their lives and to create a society free from exploitation suddenly disappeared.

DS: What do you mean by suddenly disappeared?

PB: It started after August 15, 1975. The anti-liberation and anti-independent forces that did not accept the creation of

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# COMMUNAL ATTACKS At least 17 killed during pandemic

Says Oikya Parishad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 17 people from religious and ethnic minorities have been killed between March and September, as communal attacks continued even amid the Covid-19 pandemic, Bangladesh Hindu, Bouddha, Christian Oikya Parishad said yesterday.

Twenty-seven idols were desecrated, 23 temples either vandalised or torched, and five cremation grounds or religious institutions were grabbed during this period, said a

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**Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury**  
03 May 1945 – 04 November 2012

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