







**NEWS** 







## Won't tolerate chaos

associates of the defeated forces are now dreaming of taking the country to a

The PM alleged that these bigots with political patronage were showing their

"The people of Bangladesh are pious, but not fanatics. We must not make religion as the weapon of politics. Everyone has the right to perform his

Hasina mentioned that Bangladesh is a country of communal harmony. The country achieved its independence in an exchange of blood of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians. "The people of the country will move on towards prosperity, progress and development keeping the religious morale high.

development programmes Bangabandhu and Awami League governments for flourishing Islam in the country.

DEBT OF BLOOD

In her 18-minute speech, the PM urged all to take a vow on the eve of the Victory Day not to forget the debt of blood of millions of martyrs.

"We must not let the non-

a vow to transform the country into Golden Bengal imbued with the spirit of Liberation War.

VICTORY DAY AMID COVID

Talking about the Covid-19 pandemic, Hasina said the country is going to celebrate the Victory Day this year in a different situation.

"We have to bring changes to our daily routine due to the coronavirus pandemic. We are carrying out our personal, social and national activities avoiding public gatherings. Each life is invaluable...the death of a single person due to negligence is not

Victory Day following health safety rules. "Make sure that you are masked up while going out of home and clean hands with soap or sanitiser regularly. Your protection is the safeguard for all."

She said the whole nation faced

City

the coronavirus unitedly and set an example in the world.

"In Bangladesh, we have been able to tackle this adverse shock to some extent with timely steps and programmes. We have announced a stimulus package worth Tk 121,000 crore which is 4.3 percent of the GDP."

After absorbing the initial hit, the remittance inflow, agricultural production and export have bounced

Hasina said the government has changed the celebration programmes of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhú Sheikh Mujibur

50th year next year. Had there been no pandemic, we would have celebrated the Golden Jubilee of independence in a befitting manner simultaneously with the programmes of the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation."

The premier said Bangabandhu used to say that nobody honours a beggars'

"We have erased that bad name of Bangladesh in the international arena as Bangladesh is now the name of a dignified country. Today's Bangladesh is not a country of a fragile economy; today's Bangladesh is self-dependent Bangladesh.

Hasina said Bangladesh has fulfilled the eligibility criteria for graduation from the list of least developed countries to a developing country.

Father of the Nation to establish secular Golden Bengal which would be free from hunger and poverty.

"We are at the doorstep of implementing his dream... we have to continue this development. With this, we will be able to fulfil our dream to become a developed and prosperous

Bangladesh Television simultaneously broadcast the prime minister's address. Private television channels and radio stations also aired the speech.

# Hefajat sticks to its stance

"We have also told the minister not to set up Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's sculpture in the city's Dholaipar as there are many mosques, madrasas and Islamic institutions in the area," Ataullah told The Daily Star.

Ataullah is also the chairman of Khelafat Andolon, a political party registered with the Election Commission.

be named, said they told the minister that the government could build monuments like the Qutab Minar in India at different places inscribing 99 to Bangabandhu.

nice and that both sides placed their

arguments in an amicable way. Asked about the meeting's outcome, the home minister, Asaduzzaman Khan,

government will not go beyond the constitution. We will not do anything that hurts people's religious sentiment,"

a policy of "bowing down before anyone" to resolve the ongoing crisis over Bangabandhu's sculpture.

More discussions would be held to settle all issues, raised by the Alems, in a friendly manner, he said.

"We think a beautiful environment has been created ... They have agreed with us that no one should vandalise anything or violate law. They told us to remain vigilant to stop propaganda being spread on Facebook over opposing Bangabandhu's sculpture. They also said they won't wage any movement. They want to solve the issue through talks," he said.

discussions took place with the clerics on their five-point demand, including establishment of "Mujib Minar" instead of sculptures of Bangabandhu.

Hasina may hold discussions on a larger scale to resolve the issue.

Replying to another question, the minister said the construction of Bangabandhu's sculpture in Dholaipar was underway. He, ĥowever, said: "No decision has yet been made on whether

through discussions."

"Mujib Minar" with 99 names of Allah, nev also discussed the matter "We have told them that sculptures are not meant for worshiping.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Md Faridul Haque Khan, Befaq Secretary General and also a top Hefajat leader Maulana Mahfuzul Haque, Maulana Farid Uddin Masud, Maulana Nurul Islam, and Maulana Ruhul Amin, among others, were present at the

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Court against Hefajat Amir Junayed Babunagari, its Joint Secretary General

Under its new leadership, Hefajat has recently been speaking against the construction of Bangabandhu's sculptures, terming them anti-Islamic.

They demanded that the government finds an alternative way in light of Islamic rules to show respect to

government have been arguing that sculptures and idols are not the same and that sculptures exist even in many Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Asaduzzaman mentioned that

and locals began a search for her

across the village. Around 1:30am,

they found her body near a bamboo

grove, said Gaziur Rahman, additional

superintendent of police (Sherpur

The girl was rushed to Dhunat

Ashraful Kabir, medical officer at the

The body was sent to Shaheed Ziaur

"We primarily found evidence of

health complex, said she died before

being taken to the hospital around

Rahman Medical College morgue for an

rape. There were injury marks on her

Police were trying to identify and

The number of rape and sexual

harassment has apparently increased

in recent times, triggering public

chest and blood in her private parts,"

circle) of Bogura.

2:00am yesterday.

said the additional SP.

outcry.

arrest the culprit(s), he said.

Upazila Heath Complex.

Candidates of the exam for enrollment into Bangladesh Bar Council line up in front of its Paribagh office in the capital yesterday to collect admit cards for the December 19 test. Although most of the candidates were wearing masks, they did not maintain social distancing in line with Covid-19 safety guidelines. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

### A train to massacre

They stabbed all the passengers on the train to death with knives and bayonets, except for around 10 to 12 young boys and men who made a run for it in the

The Daily Star spoke to three of these survivors who lost their family members and witnessed the barbaric Golahat massacre in Nilphamari's Saidpur upazila, which saw at least 448 people, mostly Marwaris, killed on June 13, 1971.

Nijhu Kumar Agarwal, now 65, narrowly escaped death but lost nine family members -- including his father and elder brother.

"From the afternoon of June 12, two military lorries from Saidpur cantonment were engaged to carry us from our homes to the railway station. We were told by the soldiers to hurry as there would be no space in the train compartments for those who were late."

As soon as the unsuspecting Marwaris reached the station, they were escorted by soldiers in civil dress and the Biharis, and were pushed into the compartments of the standing train, he said. "From the spot, Pakistani soldiers

abducted 20 young Marwari girls, and out of panic, their guardians couldn't make even the slightest protest," Nijhu continued. In the early hours of June 13, the

train began its short journey on the Saidpur-Chilahati route. Tapan Kumar Das, a 70-year-old

survivor, said the train moved very slowly along the steel tracks before it reached near railway culvert No 338 in the Golahat area and rolled to a stop. To their horror, he said, those inside

found that all gates and windows of the train were locked from the outside and peeping through a crack, he noticed that the train was encircled by local Biharis carrying knives and bayonets and Pakistani soldiers in civil dress at a slight distance.

The killers then opened the gates of each compartment one by one to drag out the men, women and children -first looting all their belongings and finally stabbing and cutting them down to their harrowing deaths, according to

the few remaining survivors.

Binod Agarwal, 65, said some victims requested they be killed by shooting but they were kicked at and the soldiers shouted that the Pakistan government would not waste their bullets on them.

Survivors Nijhu and Binod said during the massacre, the killers were shouting "kharcha khata, kharcha khata". Later, the bodies were carelessly

buried in knee-deep holes on one square kilometre area on both sides of the rail tracks. They were mostly eaten by jackals and dogs, he said.

The incident was described in the 2014 book "Golahat Ganohatya" written by Ahmed Sharif, who works with the organisation 1971 Genocide and Torture Archive and Museum Trust.

assured that they would be sent to India. They were later killed," Ahmed Sharif told The Daily Star. The massacre is also documented

of Nilphamari", published by Bangla Academy.

SAIDPÚR IN 1971

A large number of Marwaris, from various parts of undivided India during the British era, lived in a part of Saidpur which came to be called "Marwari Patti".

workshop in the region, trading in jute and other lucrative industries. Bangalee residents of Saidpur who witnessed those days of turmoil in

towards independence. who migrated here after 1947 came to dominate Saidpur from the morning of

March 23, Pakistan's Republic Day, with the help of the Pakistani army. those who supported independence of Bangladesh in Saidpur remained confined in their homes out of fear

country, the Biharis in Saidpur opposed this, instead hoisting Pakistani flags from house-tops. After the night of March 25, Pakistani

plainclothes soldiers and Biharis began looting and killing Bangalee homes and also attempted to attack the wealthy Marwaris, though they were not Bangla

Before that fateful June day, many local Marwaris and Hindu young men estimated to be from 185 to 300 -- were forcibly taken to the cantonment to work at the under-construction Saidpur airport.

From June 5, Pakistan army officers and local Bihari leaders spoke with Marwari community leaders, assuring them the Pakistani government had arranged a special train for all of them to be taken to India.

They also announced this by loudspeakers in different parts of Saidpur over a few days, asking them to prepare to leave for India, which came as a great relief for the under-siege Marwaris. **NEGLECTED MARTYRS** 

Survivor Nijhu Kumar Agarwal, who recently visited the killing ground with our Nilphamari correspondent, pointed a finger to the spot where he last saw his loveď ones. "Just there, my father and brother

were killed," he said, tears rolling down his eyes. Starting in 2015, the Saidpur upazila

administration, along with local bodies, built a memorial at the spot which was finished in 2018. Saidpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer

Nasim Ahmed said they have a list of 448 victims of the Golahat massacre. "We pay homage to those martyred

at the memorial site," he said. Earlier, the number of dead was reported as 437 but local journalist MR Alam Jhantu, also a martyr's son, said after extensive interviews in the area, the

number was revised to 448. Jhantu also said more than 4,000 people were martyred in Saidpur during the Liberation War.

"But successive governments did almost nothing to preserve the memory

#### Bangla flag was hoisted across the of those martyred.

Such activities are putting a negative impact on the initiatives taken by the government to contain Covid-19 pandemic.

A circular issued by CAAB read the penalty would start from suspension of one flight to four weeks of suspension depending on how many times an airline makes the same mistake.

On December 4, CAAB issued a circular mentioning anyone enters the country from December 5 would have to carry a Covid-19 negative certificate within 72 hours of their flight schedules.

The regulatory authority also asked all airlines operating to and from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport not to issue boarding passes to the passengers if they don't have Covid-19 negative certificates.

Recently, the rate of incoming passengers without having Covid-19 certificate has been on the rise.

In November alone, more than 4,000 passengers arrived without a Covid negative certificate. Therefore, the government this time

made it mandatory to have Covid-19

certificate for incoming passengers. Sources at the HSIA said around 1,400 passengers came to Dhaka by different airlines without having Covid-19 negative certificate.

Besides, the airlines also carried five passengers despite having infected with Covid-19, said the sources.

Four foreigners -- three Indians and one Italian citizen -- were sent back to their countries as they didn't have Covid-19 negative certificate with them. Mobile Court at Hazrat Shahjalal

International Airport on December 13 fined Air Asia, a Malaysia based budget airlines, Tk 1 lakh for carrying an identified Covid-19 positive passenger who had Covid-19 positive certificate with him.

The mobile court at HSIA on Saturday also fined Biman Bangladesh negative certificate through RT-PCR test. Earlier on December 11, Maldivian

without Covid-19 negative certificate. negative certificate will have to face

flight suspension penalty for different Civil Aviation Authority Bangladesh came up with the strict directives following a number of

having Covid-19 negative certificate in the recent weeks. In some cases, several airlines also carried passengers despite having the certificate that they are positive for

Group Captain Chowdhury Ziaul-Kabir, member (Flight Standards and Regulations), CAAB said with great concern CAAB is observing that several airlines were carrying passengers without having Covid-19 negative certificates in RT-PCR lab.

Corona affected passengers. Such activities are putting a negative impact on the initiatives taken by the government to contain Covid-19 pandemic. An airlines will face suspension

for one schedule flight for the first time's mistake for carrying passengers without a Covid-19 negative certificate or carrying Covid-19 affected passenger. For same mistake for the second time,

three schedule flights of the airlines will be suspended and for the third time's mistake, flights will be suspended for one week. The airline's flight will also be suspended for at least four weeks in case of mistake for fourth times.

Civil Aviation Authority Bangladesh in a circular on December

passengers without having Covid-19 come to Bangladesh from December 5 must need Covid-19 negative certificate within 72 hours of their flight schedule.

CAAB came up with the strict

measure to contain the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic. The regulatory authority also asked

all airlines operating to and from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport asked not to issue boarding pass to the passengers if they don't have Covid-19 negative certificate.

Recently the rate of incoming passengers without having Covid-19 certificate has been increased

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certificate for incoming passengers. Sources at the HSIA said around 1400 passengers came to Dhaka by different airlines without having

Besides, the airlines also carried five passengers despite having infected with Covid-19, said the source.

Mobile Court at the Hazrat Shahialal International Airport on December 13 fined Air Asia, a Malaysia based budget airlines Tk 1 lakh for carrying an identified Covid-19 positive passenger who had Covid-19 positive certificate with him.

The mobile court at the HSIA on Saturday also fined Biman Bangladesh Airlines Tk 30,000 for carrying six passengers without having Covid-19 negative certificate through RT- PCR

Earlier on December 11, Maldivian Airlines was fined Tk 2,38,000 for

### Sixty-one more

a total of 400 Biranganas received the

and another 1.31 lakh Hindu women went missing during the War, according to the War Crimes Facts and Findings Committee led by Dr M Hassan.

to have been raped and killed in the Pakistan army camps.

as freedom fighters started following a High Court order on January 27, 2014.

It asked the government to explain why it should not be directed to upgrade the social status of war heroines and provide them with state honour and facilities like those of freedom fighters.

12,000 and special quota in government jobs and benefits for their children and grandchildren. This year, the nation is going to celebrate its Victory Day, the most

different manner on the account of ongoing pandemic. elaborate programmes to celebrate the day at the national level, maintaining

gun salute, placing of wreaths at the monuments to pay homage to martyrs, hoisting the national flag atop all government, semi-government and private offices, as well as offices of autonomous bodies across the country, decorating city streets with miniature national flags and colourful festoons, and illumination of important buildings and establishments, roads

This year, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will not visit the National Memorial at Savar.

placing wreaths. Besides, the traditional parade with the participation of different

Special prayers will be offered at mosques and other places of worship, seeking eternal peace for the departed souls of martyrs and good health of injured freedom fighters as well as beace, progress and prosperity of the

release memorial postal stamps to mark the dav.

State-owned and private television Liberation War.

Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages for the eve of Independence In his message, President Hamid put emphasis on institutionalising

to people's doorsteps. The PM in her message urged everyone to unite against all communal evil forces and thwart any conspiracy

government. She also urged all to follow nealth guidelines and play their due roles in maintaining the country's development, progress and continuity

### 40 more die

[last one month] and was stagnant around 35.

transmissible virus claimed 7,129 lives in the country which is 1.44 percent against the total number of confirmed cases so far

With yesterday's count, the highly

Control and Research (IEDCR), told The Daily Star that "death cases usually rise three weeks after the infection rises. Maybe, today's [yesterday] figure is a beginning as the infection was high in the past several weeks. We are observing a rising trend in the daily death cases over the last few weeks."

Over the past two months, the number of daily cases has also increased. Covid-19 cases rose by 33.49 percent n the last month compared to the

With the latest, the total number of

confirmed cases rose to 4,94,209. Against a total of 19,054 tests in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, the

In the same period, a total of 2,884 Covid-19 patients have recovered from their illnesses, according to the press With this, the total number of

recoveries rose to 4,26,729 and the recovery rate at 86.35 percent. Among yesterday's deceased, 26 were

nales and 14 were females. Two of them were aged between 31 and 40 years, three between 41 and 50,

seven between 51 and 60, and 28 were above 60 years, added the release.

situation which prevailed in the country 50 years back.

audacity.

own religious rituals.

She briefly described various

communal spirit of the Liberation War fade away. My request to the youths and the new generation is that you must not forget the supreme sacrifices of your predecessors ever. You must not let someone dishonour the red and green flag that they have

gifted [us]," she said. The premier said youths must take

The PM urged all to perform their everyday works and celebrate the

A Hefajat leader, wishing not to

names of Allah on them to show respect A government official present at the meeting said its atmosphere was

yesterday said discussions with the Islamic clerics on the sculpture issue was fruitful and that the talks would continue. "I want to make it clear that the

he told reporters at the secretariat. In reply to another query, the home boss, however, claimed that his party Awami League was not maintaining

She only went to buy chips denouncing violence against women, grandparents started looking for her, the "Women and Children Repression but did not find her anywhere. Later, her family members, relatives

> rescued a 12-year-old girl in Ashulia<sup>′</sup>s Dendabar area. The law enforcers said she had gone missing from Sherpur 15 days ago and was allegedly raped

> They are Anzika alias Trisha, 20, a resident of Balyadi village in Sherpur's Nakla upazila, and Ridov Khan, 21, of Darulhuda village of Patuakhali's

Bhandaria upazila.

to Ashulia on November 29, promising her of giving a job, said Rab officials. to Ridoy, who allegedly raped her on multiple occasions, said Maj AHM Adnan Tofadar, company commander

Savar contributed to this report

"All the victims of the Golahat massacre were lured to that train being

in Zahangir Alam Sarkar's "History

They stayed on in the railway town, home of an important railway

1971 said after the March 7 speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, it was clear that Bangalees were heading However, Urdu-speaking Biharis

Marwaris, Bangalee Hindus, and

during the month of March. On March 23, when the Swadhin

All air travellers must be Covid free Airlines Tk 30,000 for carrying six 4 announced that anyone wants to

> Airlines was fined Tk 238,000 for carrying passengers to Bangladesh From now on any airlines carrying passengers without having Covid-19

> airlines bringing passengers to Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport without

Even some airlines are carrying

In November alone, more than 4,000

Covid-19 negative certificate.

4 foreigners—three Indians and one Italian citizens were sent back to their countries as they didn't have Covid-19 negative certificate with them.

carrying passengers to Bangladesh without Covid-19 negative certificate.

FROM PAGE 1

status of freedom fighters. At least 1.62 lakh women were raped

The Hindu women were believed

The process of recognising Biranganas

Every recognised Birangana will now receive a monthly allowance of Tk

prestigious day for Bangalees, in a

The government has initiated

Covid-19 health guidelines. The programmes include a 31and street islands at night.

On behalf of them, tributes will be paid to Liberation War martyrs by

contingents of the Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force, as well as Freedom Fighters' contingent, Para-military forces and law enforcement agencies at the National Parade Ground on the victory day will not be held this year due to Covid-19.

To mark the day, a public holiday, national dailies will bring out special supplements on the occasion while Bangladesh Postal Department will

and radio channels will broadcast special programmes highlighting the President M Abdul Hamid and Prime

democracy and developing a culture of absolute tolerance and mutual respect to provide the benefits of independence

against the country, democracy and

#### of democracy.

FROM PAGE 1 remained stagnant around 20 till mid-November. The daily death cases, however, started to rise again since then

Dr Mushtuq Hussain, consultant of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease

number recorded in October.

positivity rate was 9.85 percent, while the overall positivity rate stands at 16.44

Amid

countrywide protests back, the PM added.

Rahman due to the pandemic. "Our independence will step into the

nation.

She said it was the dream of the

country by 2041," the PM added. State-owned Bangladesh Betar and

He said even Prime Minister Sheikh

the sculpture will exist there. "We will resolve all those issues About Hefajat's demand for building

meeting on Monday. A section of Qawmi madrasa-based clerics on December 5 came up with their five-point proposal. On December 7, two sedition cases were filed with

Mamunul Haque and Nayeb-e-Amir of Islami Andolon Bangladesh Syed Faizul

Bangabandhu. Several top ministers of the

Prevention (Amendment) Bill, 2020" was passed in parliament November 17 keeping death penalty as the highest punishment for rape. Meanwhile in Savar, Rab on Monday

multiple times since then. Rab arrested two people in this

Anzika then handed over the girl

The victim and Anzika knew each

other. Anzika tricked her into coming

of Rab-4. [Our correspondents in Bogura and