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## Present grim, future worrying

As pandemic hits country's labour migration hard

JAMIL MAHMUD

Shahadat Hossain was all set to fly to Saudi Arabia in March as a date farm worker, dreaming of a better life for his family members. But before he could make his journey, came the deadly Covid-19, suspending air communications with the Gulf countries in mid-March.

Like everything that came to a staggering halt, Shahadat's scheduled migration was suspended. The 30-year-old from Chandpur now drives a CNG-run auto-rickshaw to earn a living as his documents are under process for a visa reissuance by the Saudi Arabia Embassy in Dhaka.

"I could have earned a monthly wage of 1,050 Riyal [Tk 23,600]. Besides, there was the opportunity to earn extra by working overtime. But now I end up earning Tk 200-300 a day by driving the auto-rickshaw. It is difficult to run my three-member family with this income," said Shahadat.

While the pandemic deprived workers like Shahadat from a decent earning, it also cast a dark shadow over the country's labour migration as the sector is likely to see a significant fall in annual overseas employment this year.

The Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) data shows about 1.81 lakh workers went abroad from January till May this year. BMET does not yet have the

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The Dhaka South City Corporation demolishing illegal structures, including shops, in the parking area and outside of Sundarban Square Supermarket in the capital's Gulistan yesterday. It also knocked down several hundred such shops at Fulbaria Supermarket-2 in the same area a few days ago. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Husband kills wife after fight over his affair

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTC

A woman has been strangled to death allegedly by her husband in Chattogram's Ambagan Rail Gate area as she prevented him from being involved in an extra marital affair.

Police arrested accused Mohammad Soheli, 37, of Cumilla's Chandina, on Thursday morning, 15 hours after the murder.

The arrestee gave his confessional statement before the court of metropolitan magistrate Sarwar E Jahan yesterday evening.

The victim is Amina Begum, 30, said police.

The murder took place at the tin-shed house of the couple at Ambagan Rail Gate area on December 16, said Mohammad Shahinuzzaman, officer-in-charge of Khulshi Police station.

"The couple has two daughters and one son. They often locked into argument as the wife tried to stop her husband from an extramarital affair. On

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## Covid positivity rate drops to 8-month low

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

The rate of daily positive coronavirus cases dropped yesterday to 8.6 percent, the lowest it has been in more than eight months, while the recovery rate continued to increase.

In 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday, a total of 13,191 tests were performed in 140 Covid-19 testing centres across the country and 1,134 tested positive for the virus. Thirty-six people died with the highly transmissible virus over the same period.

The previous lowest daily positivity rate was on April 10, when 7.93 percent of 1,184 samples tested positive for Covid-19.

The percentage of positive cases is a critical measure because it gives an indication of how widespread the infection is in the area where testing is occurring and whether levels of testing are keeping up with levels of disease transmission, according to John Hopkins University.

A high percentage of positive cases means that more testing should probably be done -- and it suggests that it is not a good time to relax restrictions aimed at reducing coronavirus transmission.

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## FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

### 'No interference in judicial function'



Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman inaugurating Bangladesh Supreme Court on December 18, 1972.

December 18, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### RULE OF LAW AT ANY COST

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declares today that the rule of law will be established at any cost. In his speech on the occasion of the inauguration of the Supreme Court, the prime minister seeks cooperation of the people in general and the lawyers in particular to help establish the rule of law in the country. In order to establish rule of law, the constitution has been passed in such a short time, he says.

He further says that the judiciary will be separated from the executive, which will not interfere in the judicial functions, but the separation will not be absolute because there has to be

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## 11 districts get new DCs

UNB, Dhaka

The government has appointed new deputy commissioners (DCs) to 11 districts, including Chattogram and Cox's Bazar.

A government circular issued yesterday said the order would be effective immediately.

Md Mamunur Rashid, who was serving as the DC of Bagerhat, has been made the DC of Cox's Bazar. Mohammad Mominur Rahman, deputy director of the Prime Minister's Office, is the new DC of Chattogram.

Mustain Billah is the new DC of Narayanganj and Habibur Rahman has been made the DC of Barguna. Muhammad Habibur Rahman and ANM Foyjul Haq have been appointed as the DC of Narail and Bagerhat respectively.

Begum Anjana Khan Majlish is the new DC of Chandpur, Md Anowar Hossain Akand of

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## 'Hitler's alligator' put on display in Moscow



AFP, Moscow

An alligator believed to have belonged to Adolf Hitler that died aged 84 has been taxidermied and put on display in Moscow.

The Darwin Museum said the alligator named Saturn was put on public display several months after the Moscow Zoo donated his remains.

"The installation of Saturn in the permanent exhibition is the culmination of six months of work by our taxidermists and the entire museum," it said in a statement.

The museum said specialists began work in June,

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## Police officer shot by 'drug trader' in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A police official was wounded after being shot by an alleged drug trader while carrying out a drive in the capital's Mohammadpur area yesterday morning, police said.

The alleged drug trader was also wounded in a "gunfight" that broke out after he opened fire on the official.

Ujjal Hossain Khan, assistant sub-inspector of Rayerbazar Police Outpost, was being treated for bullet

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### PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 18

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:20 12:30 3:45 5:22 7:00  
JAMAAT 5:55 1:15 4:00 5:25 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## RU teachers demand registrar's removal

Boycott meeting where he was present

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Teachers of Rajshahi University demanded immediate implementation of recent government orders, including relieving Prof Abdul Bari from the post of the university registrar.

The RU authorities were compelled to postpone a meeting of admission test committee yesterday after several teachers refused to attend it in presence Prof Bari.

The teachers' move came as the government recently asked the university authorities to remove him for not assisting the University Grants Commission probe committee.

The teachers, while talking to The Daily Star, also said they would boycott any meeting that would be attended by Prof Bari.

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After the tide receded, two spotted deer, popularly known as Chitra Harin, were seen grazing in the Sundarbans' Kokilmoni area. One of them is seen trying hard to get leaves of a tree. The photo was taken last month.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ASKER IBNE FIROZ

## Europe to start Covid shots before yr end

Macron tests positive; Tokyo says strain on hospitals severe

AGENCIES

French President Emmanuel Macron became the latest head of state to test positive for coronavirus yesterday, forcing several other European leaders into quarantine as the continent struggles with a winter surge in infections.

With Europe now approaching 500,000 deaths since Covid-19 first emerged a year ago, the EU has pledged to start vaccination campaigns across the bloc by the end of the year in a bid to curb the spread of the disease.

With inoculations seen as the only way to bring the global pandemic to an end, American experts were set to discuss yesterday if US pharma company Moderna's vaccine should be authorised -- the latest to seek approval after the rollout of the Pfizer-BioNTech jab.

Macron was tested for coronavirus after he suffered the first symptoms and will now self isolate for seven days, his office said in a statement.

"He will continue to work and carry out his activities remotely."

Russian President Vladimir Putin wished the French president "a speedy recovery and good health for many years to come", according to a statement published by the Kremlin.

The French leader joins US President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson who were both briefly hospitalised earlier this year after contracting the virus that has killed 1.6 million people worldwide and caused economic havoc around the globe.

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