

## Doa Mahfil for MA Hashem on Monday

CITY DESK

A Doa Mahfil for noted industrialist MA Hashem, founder chairman of Partex Group, will be held on December 28.



MA Hashem breathed his last on Thursday. He was 77 at the time of his demise, says a press release.

He is survived by his wife Sultana Hashem, and five sons -- Aziz Al Kaiser Tito, Aziz Al Mahmud, Aziz Al Masud, Rubel Aziz and Shawkat Aziz Russell.

The Doa Mahfil will be held on Monday after Asr prayers at Gulshan Society Mosque, Road-63, Gulshan-2, Dhaka.

Family members of MA Hashem have requested his relatives, friends and well-wishers to be present at event and pray for the departed soul.

## Prof Mannan's death anniversary today

CITY DESK

Today is second death anniversary of Prof Abdul Mannan, a teacher of Bangla department at Sarishabari College in Jamalpur, says a press release.



On the occasion, a discussion titled "Role of Mannan Sir in Spreading Education and Culture in Sarishabari" will be held at Sarishabari Upazila Press Club in the district around 10:30am.

Besides, Qurankhwani and a doa mahfil will be held at his Sarishabari residence.

Prof Mannan's only son Pallab Mohaimin joint feature editor at is Prothom Alo.

The deceased's family requested all to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

## Abbe Pierre

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Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria for the year 1973. It is learnt that the total turnover of trade envisaged in the agreement with Czechoslovakia would be nearly Tk 10 crores each way. The volume of trade with Bulgaria will be nearly Tk 3.10 crores each way. According to the agreement, Bangladesh will export raw jute goods, tea, leather and other items to Czechoslovakia and import from machineries, China clay, marine engines, and electrical equipment.

Bangladesh will export newsprint, jute goods, handloom products to Bulgaria. The imports from Bulgaria will mostly comprise agricultural sprayers, machineries, port equipment and a few other items.

Source: December 28, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Bangladesh Observer and Ittefaq.

## China hails

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economies to report growth this year. But it has been accused of covering up the initial outbreak, and so contributing to the virus' spread internationally.

At home, Beijing has attempted to stifle criticism by punishing at least eight whistleblowers.

A Chinese citizen journalist who reported on Wuhan's outbreak, Zhang Zhan, has been detained since May and is expected to go on trial tomorrow.

Zhang is a former lawyer who travelled to the city in February to report on the chaotic initial stages of the outbreak, through livestreams and critical essays widely shared on social media platforms banned in China.

The two-day Politburo meeting comes shortly before an international team of WHO experts is expected to arrive in China to investigate the animal origins of Covid-19, during which trip they will visit Wuhan.

An expert from the team told AFP this week that the investigation was "not about finding a guilty country or a guilty authority", but about "about understanding what happened to avoid that in the future".



Civil society activists of Nepal participate in a demonstration against the dissolution of the country's parliament, in Kathmandu, yesterday. Three former Nepali prime ministers joined hundreds of activists demanding PM Oli to reverse his decision on Parliament dissolution announced on Sunday. Legal and political experts say the PM had no prerogative to dissolve parliament under the constitution.

PHOTO: AFP

## Abdul Kader passes away

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and admitted to Evercare Hospital on December 20. He tested positive for Covid-19 on December 21.

Kader's first namaz-e-janaza was held at Mirpur DOHS Central Mosque yesterday after Zuhr prayers. His body was kept at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy from 3-4 pm, where his colleagues and well-wishers paid respects. He was then laid to rest in the Banani Graveyard, after Asr prayers.

Well-known for playing memorable comedic characters, Kader first became a popular face on television with the role of Bodi in Humayun Ahmed's "Kothao Keu Nei" and his regular appearances on the popular family-oriented show "Ittyadi".

"Matir Kole", "Nokkhotrer Raat", "Shobuj Sathi", "Agun Laga Shondhya", "Tin Tekka", "Nitu, Tomake Bhalobashi", "Kushum Kushum Bhalobasha", "Shundorpur Kotodur", "Amader Choto Nodi", "Durer Akash", "Harano Sur", "Ei Shei Konthoshor", "Bohurupi", "Ek Jonome", and "Jol Pore Pata Nore", among others, are some of his most notable television projects. He played a memorable role in the popular feature film "Wrong Number" as well.

He was a part of the renowned stage performance troupe, Theatre, for several decades. He performed in more than 30 plays as a part of this troupe.

"Payer Awaj Pawa Jay", "Tomrai", "Meraj Fokirer Ma", "Dui Bon" and "Ekhone Kritodas", among others, are some of his notable plays. He also performed in theatre productions abroad.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President Abdul Hamid expressed their deep sorrow at the death of the renowned actor. In her message, Hasina said Kader will remain alive in the hearts of people for his spontaneous acting.

They prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathies to the bereaved family.

Renowned actor Ferdousi Majumdar said, "I have lost a close family member of mine," adding, "Abdul Kader was like a brother to me. He was a brilliant stage actor and a hardworking man with an unmatched sense of humour."

Eminent actor and Member of Parliament Asaduzzaman Noor worked with Kader in several television projects, including "Kothao Keu Nei."

"I was lucky enough to speak to him over the phone when he was in Chennai and after he came back to Dhaka," said Asaduzzaman Noor.

"By that time, he knew that there was nothing else the doctors could do. I have lost a long-time friend and colleague. Kader's performance as Bodi in 'Kothao Keu Nei' will be remembered by all for years to come. He was a kindhearted man who loved his family and made sure that everyone around him was happy."

"Abdul Kader worked with our troupe, Theatre, from 1974. He was an important member of our team and we had appointed him as the general secretary," said Ramendu Majumdar, adding, "Ever since he stepped into the private job sector, he couldn't give much time to acting but we stayed in touch over the years. He played an array of roles on stage and was even able to memorise entire scripts and not just his own lines -- which is no easy feat. His demise is a huge loss for all of us. May he rest in peace."

"We would be hard pressed to find any stage or television actor like him," said actor and theatre personality Abul Hayat. "He was a simple man, who approached everything in life with a childlike fascination. He treated everyone on set with equal respect. May he rest in peace."

Renowned actor Dilara Zaman was almost speechless after learning about Kader's demise. "We have lost an

important member of our fraternity," she shared. "Even though Abdul Kader had an established career in the private job sector, he held acting very close to his heart. He was a humorous man, who could make everyone laugh. We shared a great bond. I even went to his daughter's wedding and he was so happy to see me."

Enamul Haque, who has been a part of the industry for over five decades, said, "Abdul Kader was a gifted actor, who brought joy into this world with his characters. He could fit into any kind of role seamlessly. I loved him in the play 'Meraj Fokirer Ma'. I will miss him dearly."

Born in Sonarong village in Munshiganj's Tongibari, Kader's acting career started with the role of "Amal" in a Rabindranath Tagore play called "Daakghor".

A student of Dhaka University, he was involved in theatre from a very young age. He was the drama secretary of the Mohsin Hall Student's Association. He started acting in television shows in 1972. Besides acting, Kader also had a successful career at Bata Shoes from the 80s onwards.

The actor is survived by his wife Khairunnesa Kader along with a son and a daughter.

## EU readies Covid vaccine rollout

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in the south and east were locked down from yesterday, making for a total of 24 million nationwide.

December 26 also brought a third national lockdown in Austria, with all non-essential stores shut -- but ski stations remaining open.

The lockdown and curfew is slated to last until January 24.

The first French case of the new coronavirus variant was found in a citizen resident in Britain who arrived from London on December 19, the French health ministry said late Friday.

They are asymptomatic and self-isolating at home in Tours in central France, and contact-tracing has taken place for the health professionals who treated him.

In Spain, four cases were confirmed in Madrid yesterday.

The patients were "not seriously

ill," the Madrid regional government's deputy health chief Antonio Zapatero said, adding that "there is no need for alarm".

The new strain of the virus, which experts fear is more contagious, prompted more than 50 countries to impose travel restrictions on the UK, where it first emerged.

Bottlenecks of thousands of trucks in southern England were ebbing yesterday, after France lifted a 48-hour entry ban for drivers with a negative coronavirus test and kept its Calais port open on Christmas Day.

South Africa has detected a similar mutation in some infected people, but on Friday denied British claims its strain was more infectious or dangerous than the one originating in the UK.

In Asia, Tokyo reported a record 949 new daily cases, with the figure

for Japan as a whole recently topping 3,000 per day.

Thailand has also seen a new outbreak linked to a seafood market near Bangkok infect almost 1,500 people.

In Australia there was little sign of the usual Boxing Day sale rush on the streets of Sydney yesterday. Residents largely heeded the state premier's request they stay home faced with a new virus cluster.

Across the world, people are being urged to respect social distancing guidelines, as the World Health Organization urged people not to "squander" the "great, heart-wrenching sacrifices" people had made to save lives.

"Vaccines are offering the world a way out of this tragedy. But it will take time for the whole world to be vaccinated," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned on

Friday.

In the Vatican Friday, Pope Francis had pleaded for "vaccines for all" in his traditional Christmas message.

"I call on everyone, on leaders of states, on businesses, on international organisations, to promote cooperation and not competition, to find a solution for everyone... especially the most vulnerable and most in need in all regions of the planet," Pope Francis said.

In authoritarian post-Soviet Turkmenistan, where the government claims no coronavirus cases have been detected, President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov claimed that licorice root could cure Covid-19.

Without citing any scientific evidence, former dentist Berdimukhamedov claimed that "licorice stops the coronavirus from developing".

## 4 held for rape

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police, said the girl was strangled to death. She was murdered over a previous feud with her father.

The victim is suspected to be raped before murdered but police were waiting for her inquest report to confirm the matter.

## Cold wave may

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temperature was recorded as 8.0 degree Celsius in Badalgachhi of Naogaon.

"Mild cold wave is sweeping over the regions of Dinajpur, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Panchagarh, Kushtia, Rajshahi, Pabna, Naogaon, and Srimangal," read yesterday's weather bulletin.

"It may continue," added the bulletin of Bangladesh Meteorological Department, released at 9:00am yesterday.

"Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country. Moderate to thick fog may occur at places over the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere between late night and morning," the bulletin also stated.

"Night and day temperature may fall slightly," it added.

## Journo held

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The arrestee is KM Belal Hossain Shopon, 55, editor of weekly Somoy Asomoy, and also the president of Chatmohar Upazila Reporters Unity.

Raj Ali, pro-AL councillor candidate of Chatmohar municipality's ward-4, filed the case against the journalist under the Digital Security Act on Friday night.

Tozammel Haque, officer-in-charge of Pabna DB police, said they arrested Belal from his home at noon and were investigating the allegations brought against him.

"The arrestee will produce before the court on Sunday morning," the DB OC added.

Talking to The Daily Star, Rokibur Rahman Tukun, president of Chatmohar press club, said Belal was working for the rival candidate of the complainant.

If he is not guilty, he should be released soon, he added.

## Top Hefajat men

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intimidated by some of the accused since his death, but the situation got much worse after the case was filed with a Chatogram court.

Moin lodged the case with the court of Judicial Magistrate Shiplu Kumar Dey. The case stated that it was a premeditated murder.

The court ordered the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) to look into it.

"If Babunagari is not involved, we don't want him to be harassed. But if he is found involved, we want the death penalty for him," Moin said.

He added that those who were threatening the family should not be concerned if they are innocent and urged the government to ensure proper investigation into the case.

Even though Hefajat is an apolitical organisation, Babunagari is using it as a tool to make political gains, he said.

He also urged his fellow men to speak the truth, ignoring the threats.

He added that Shafi's son Anas Madani and Moulana Mohammad Yousuf could not attend the press conference due to safety concerns.

On December 23, Babunagari at a press conference said Shafi died a natural death and the allegation of "murder is politically motivated".

He said, "He died as Allah intended. Those who formed an autocratic system centring Ahmad Shafi and cracked down on innocent students of the madrasa are now out to paint it as a murder."

The top leader of Hefajat urged the government to dismiss the case or face tough demonstrations.

On September 18, Shafi, who often drew controversy for opposing women's empowerment and education, passed away.

## Turkey minister in Libya to inspect troops

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey's Defence Minister Hulusi Akar made a surprise trip to Libya yesterday flanked by top military officers to inspect his country's troops, the ministry said.

Turkish forces backing the UN-recognised government are under strain after strongman Khalifa Haftar called on his fighters to "drive them out, as talks drag on to end a long-running war in the oil-rich nation.

Turkish support for the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli helped stave off an April 2019 offensive by Haftar, who is backed by Russia, Egypt and United Arab Emirates.

The sides struck a ceasefire agreement in October, setting the stage for elections at the end of next year.

But Haftar said there would be "no peace in the presence of a coloniser on our land" during a speech on Thursday.

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## Spacecraft set for festive flyby of Venus

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However, according to the European Space Agency (ESA), the Solar Orbiter will not be able to take any images of Venus as "it must remain facing the Sun".

But it will use some of the onboard instruments to record the magnetic, plasma and particle environment around Venus as it approaches the planet.

At present, the spacecraft is around more than 150 million miles from Earth.

It blasted off into space in February this year from Nasa's Cape Canaveral site in Florida.

According to the ESA, the Solar Orbiter's path around the Sun has been chosen to be "in resonance" with Venus.

This means the spacecraft will keep coming close to the planet every few orbits and use Venus's gravity to alter or tilt its orbit.

The next close approach of Venus is expected to take place in August 2021, and each encounter will increase its orbital inclination.

By 2025, the Solar Orbiter will have enough inclination to take the first ever images of the Sun's polar regions.

The spacecraft will make a close approach to the Sun every five months, and at its closest will only be 26 million miles away, closer than the planet Mercury.

During these times, it will be positioned for several days over roughly the same region of the Sun's surface, as the Sun rotates on its axis.

This will allow the spacecraft to observe magnetic activity building up in the atmosphere that can lead to powerful flares and eruptions, providing new insights into the giant storms raging on its surface.

Predicting when these storms occur could

help governments and companies protect these satellites and other communications infrastructure.

Back in July, the Solar Orbiter revealed its first images of the Sun, taken from 47 million miles of the star's surface.

It was the closest images ever taken of the Sun, revealing "campfires", or mini solar flares, dotted across its surface.

Scientists in the UK helped design four of the 10 instruments on the Solar Orbiter, while the UK Space agency provided £20 million of funding for the £1.3 billion project.

The design and implementation of the spacecraft was undertaken by aerospace company Airbus in Stevenage.

The mission is expected to last a decade.

Once the Solar Orbiter runs out of fuel and power, scientists will lose all communication with the spacecraft.