



The Daily Star



REGD. NO. DA 781 | Vol. XXX No. 82 | CHAITRA 21, 1426 BS | **Your Right to Know** | SHABAN 9, 1441 HIJRI | 12 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00

BANGLADESH UPDATE 5 infected in 24 hours | 61 Total cases | 26 Total recovery | 6 Death | **GLOBAL UPDATE** 55,132 Total deaths | 221,262 Total recoveries | 1,041,126 Total cases

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

A big blow to overseas jobs

Migrants see job cut, non-payment of wages; remittance 15-month low in March

PORIMOL PALMA

The coronavirus pandemic is set to deal a heavy blow to the country's overseas job market and the remittance flow as a large number of Bangladeshi migrants have already lost their jobs or were receiving low wages amid shutdowns enforced to stem the spread of the virus, say economists and researchers.

After different businesses were closed due to the shutdown, the documented workers are being provided with basic wages, but the undocumented ones are getting nothing at all. Working hours of many, including in cleaning jobs and those at grocery stores, have also been slashed.

On the other hand, thousands of Bangladeshi migrants who came home on leave and those who were waiting to fly after securing work visas are not being able to join work abroad as the destination countries have imposed travel bans in face of the coronavirus outbreak, which, according to the experts, is now threatening

to cause a global recession.

"Remittance is likely to see a significant reduction in a few months," Prof Syeda Rozana Rashid of Dhaka University's international relations told The Daily Star.

There is low pay or no pay for many who are suffering abroad. Besides, a large number of Bangladeshis are not able to join work abroad, she said, adding, "This is like a double-edged sword that the country is facing."

Remittance from expatriates is one of the main pillars of the Bangladesh economy. About one crore Bangladeshi migrants sent home \$18.35 billion in remittance last year alone.

Most of the amount comes from countries like Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, USA, UK, Italy and Malaysia.

USA, Italy and UK are the countries hit hardest by the pandemic. The Gulf and Southeast Asian countries, though less affected than Western countries, are

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Maintaining a safe distance, people from low income families wait in queues for relief in the capital's Kamalapur yesterday. With the country under a shutdown for over a week over coronavirus, many underprivileged people are in dire need of food as they have become jobless. Some government, private and voluntary organisations are lending them a hand.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Govt expands ICU facilities outside capital

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

As confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus in the country are on the rise, the government is expanding the intensive care unit (ICU) facilities outside the capital to treat the critical patients.

As of yesterday, a total of 15 ICU beds dedicated for corona patients have been installed in three divisions -- Sylhet, Rajshahi and Mymensingh, according to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Apart from these, there are 34 beds at the two government hospitals dedicated for corona patients -- 26 at Kuwait Bangladesh Friendship Hospital and eight at Sheikh Russel Gastro Liver Hospital, Aminul Hasan, director of Hospitals and Clinics of DGHS, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Besides, there are five beds at Sajida Foundation Hospital and six at Regent Hospital dedicated for Covid-19 patients, he said.

"We are planning to set up 84 more ICU beds in the divisional headquarters for the Covid-19 patients by this week," the DGHS director said.

According to DGHS, there are 508 ICU beds in government hospitals and 737 ICU beds in private hospitals.

Although the government has expanded its ICU facilities in recent times, experts said it is still a far cry from what would be required to meet the demand if the situation turns worse in the coming days.

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Covid-19 death toll rises in Spain, US

Global deaths cross 55,000; Germany says infection rate slowing; experts predict grim economic future

AGENCIES

The number of confirmed coronavirus deaths accelerated past 55,000 yesterday as the United States, Spain and Britain grappled with their highest tolls yet and the world economy took a massive hit.

The human scale of the pandemic has never been starker -- experts warning that more than one million cases of COVID-19 disease confirmed globally is probably only a small proportion of total infections as testing is still not widely available. Many countries are only testing cases that require hospitalisation.

The United States recorded 1,169 COVID-19 fatalities in the past 24 hours, the Johns Hopkins University tracker showed, the highest one-day death toll recorded in any country.

The United States accounts for around a quarter of confirmed cases but Europe is far from being out of danger -- Spain reported more than 900 deaths in 24 hours yesterday, for the second day running. The virus has now killed nearly 11,000 people across Spain.

While Italy still leads the world in

fatalities, France, Belgium and Britain have also been hard hit. The UK government is rushing to build field hospitals after a one-day toll of 684.

The worldwide number of officially confirmed fatalities from the novel coronavirus rose to 55,132, according to a tally compiled Johns Hopkins University at 3:30 BST.

More than 1,041,126 declared cases have been registered in 188 countries and territories since the epidemic first emerged in China in December. Of these cases, at least 221,262 are now considered recovered. Since 1900 GMT on Thursday, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Libya and the Northern Marianas have announced their first deaths.

The battle waged by public health experts across the world ebbed and flowed on Friday, with German experts saying the rate of new infections is slowing thanks to lockdown measures, but Asian city-state Singapore confirming it would close schools and workplaces to fend off a possible upsurge in cases.

"We are seeing that the spread of the

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ADB ON BANGLADESH High outbreak of Covid-19 may hurt economy

7.8pc growth forecast for current fiscal year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's economy will suffer a lot if there is a significant coronavirus outbreak, the Asian Development Bank said yesterday.

The warning came on the 9th day of the nationwide shutdown aimed at slowing down the spread of the highly contagious disease. However, the shutdown suspends many economic activities and puts thousands of jobs at risk.

The Manila-based multilateral lender early last month said the Covid-19 pandemic could wipe out \$3.02 billion off Bangladesh's \$300 billion-plus economy in the worst-case scenario of a significant outbreak.

In such a scenario, 894,930 jobs will be lost, according to last month's ADB analysis.

ADB yesterday said its preliminary estimates indicate that about 0.2 percent to 0.4 percent of Bangladesh's GDP may be lost due to spillover effects of the global Covid-19 pandemic.

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RELIEF DISTRIBUTION

Hasina warns against graft

Gives 31-point directive

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the people to visit physicians if they show any symptom of coronavirus and not to pay heed to any rumour about the virus.

Issuing a 31-point directive on Thursday night in view of the Covid-19 outbreak, she warned that no corruption would be tolerated in the relief distribution.

Hasina advised that there should not be a wholesale use of personal protective equipment (PPE) by all.

Speaking to BSS, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim said, "The prime minister has given the 31-point instruction in the

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Treat patients or face action

Health minister warns pvt hospitals against turning away patients; 5 more test positive for Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five more people tested positive for coronavirus, bringing the country's total to 61, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

He also said private hospitals and clinics that have been refusing to treat patients would face action.

"We're noticing some private hospitals not giving adequate services while some clinics and chambers, to some extent, are kept shut. At this moment, your withdrawal is not logical. Stand by the people and serve them," he told a press briefing via video conference.

"We are watching. We will not hesitate to take necessary measures."

The warning comes after medical personnel in the capital and elsewhere reportedly refused to treat people due to fears that they were Covid-19

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A woman cooking on a makeshift stove near Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital's Gulistan area yesterday. People from the underprivileged group in the city are already bearing the brunt of coronavirus as they cannot earn a living amid a countrywide shutdown. Many depend on the relief from the government and private organisations.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

STAY HOME, STAY WELL

It's time for revision

HSC candidates have ample time to better prepare for exams

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

After the government suspended the Higher Secondary School Certificate and equivalent examinations on March 22 amid growing uncertainty over coronavirus, education officials recommend the examinees see an opportunity in the delay and prepare better.

The examinations were scheduled to take place between April 1 and May 13 but it was suspended and will be rescheduled if the situation regarding the coronavirus outbreak improves, said education ministry officials on Thursday.

Around 13 to 14 lakh examinees registered for this year's higher secondary and equivalent examinations.

The outbreak of the virus in the country has been causing anxiety as it has been taking a toll on almost every domain of people's lives and disrupting their everyday routine.

In an attempt to contain the outbreak, the government declared a 10-day general holiday from March 26 to April 4 and then extended it to April 11.

Ziaul Haque, chairman of Dhaka Education Board, said this is an unusual situation but students must keep their morale high in times of crisis.

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MCCI for Tk 1tn fund

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months, the chamber said.
Collection of advanced income tax and VAT should be stopped now. The loan classification period should be extended up to December 30 this year from June 30.

Bank interest rate and accrual should be stopped during this crisis.

Liquidity in the banking system should be maintained so that all types of entrepreneurs can avail interest free loans from banks and non-banking financial institutions, the MCCI said.

Especially, the garment sector can avail such loans for paying salaries to workers at least for three months.

The MCCI added it was in favour of allowing temporary shutting down of industries if needed. But they have to ensure payment of their employees.

It also suggested supplying subsidised food to workers. For instance, weekly food has to be given to 1,50,000 tea workers and 4,50,000 family members of the tea workers.

Bangladesh Bank can pump money into the scheduled banks to disburse loans at 6 and 9 percent interest rate as soon as possible.

The MCCI also recommended that the repo rate of BB should be slashed to 4 percent from the existing 6 percent.

Moreover, BB can take different steps to help the industrial units during this crisis. For instance, the central bank can grant low interest rate loan to the affected industrial units or zero interest rate loan to the extremely affected units.

The central bank can publish a circular granting a moratorium on loan repayment by the affected companies.

The government will have to increase allocation in the upcoming budget for the public and private hospitals so that they can purchase the required medical equipment and coronavirus test kits.

The food safety measures should

be strengthened for the marginalised people. The government should also take stern actions against the hoarding of food items during the time, the MCCI said.

Unnecessary spending should be reduced, it said.

The government should act promptly to release the fund from the foreign aid.

The chamber also recommended that the government increase allowance and the number of beneficiaries in the social safety net programmes.

The MCCI prepared the proposals in consultation with 11 other organisations.

The statement, jointly signed by Nihad Kabir, president of the MCCI, and Kamran T Rahman, president of the Bangladesh Employers' Federation, said the government should take stern measures to enforce the home quarantine to slow down the spread of the deadly virus.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) yesterday made the similar type of suggestions to the government for facing the coronavirus challenges.

In a statement, it called upon the government to create an emergency fund for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) for their survival amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Many MSMEs are struggling to maintain business operations and pay salaries to their employees, it said.

The DCCI also came with a suggestion of creating a three-year emergency fund by the government so that the MSMEs can take loans from the fund with 1 percent interest rate to pay salaries to their workers.

Factories located in the BSCIC industrial areas across the country also need to be brought under this emergency fund for paying salaries and labour wages. MSMEs should get one-year grace period for repaying the loan.



Showing a blatant disregard for maintaining social distancing, people buy fruits in the capital's Mirpur-10 area yesterday. Such shoppers run the risk of contracting coronavirus.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A big blow to overseas jobs

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also enforcing shutdowns to stop the transmission of Covid-19.

Talking to The Daily Star from US, Italy, France, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, many Bangladeshis said they were staying indoors after their workplaces were closed amid the shutdown.

One migrant, Raju Ahmed, 30, said the grocery store he works at was still open in Kuala Lumpur, but his working hours were halved. "Now I hardly earn Tk 25,000, whereas my previous monthly salary was Tk 40,000."

Raju along with five others, including three undocumented workers, lives in an apartment in the Malaysian capital. "Those three have lost their jobs. I am helping one of them while the two others were surviving on their savings."

Rana Ahmed, a Bangladeshi in Lebanon, said he had to borrow money from his relatives in Faridpur to survive in the coronavirus-hit Western Asian country, which had already been facing an economic crisis.

"We don't know when the situation will improve. We are passing our days in total uncertainty," said the 30-year-old who has lost his job.

Hanif Mia from Saudi Arabia said the coronavirus outbreak has thrown thousands of migrants into uncertainty. "Those who are undocumented are facing more trouble as they have no job guarantee or earnings."

With these migrants in trouble, Bangladesh perhaps has already started to feel the impact.

In March, Bangladeshi expatriates sent home around \$1.29 billion in remittance, which is 12.84 percent less than that of February and the lowest in 15 months, according to Bangladesh Bank data.

DU Prof Syeda Rozana Rashid said the countries which receive foreign

workers had already allocated a significant portion of their budget for the recovery of their economy. It means development activities in those countries will be cut and demand for foreign workers will drop.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said in the 2019-20 fiscal year, when most other indicators -- export, private sector investment or foreign direct investments -- were showing slow or negative growth, migrant remittance was the only good news.

Remittance inflow in 2019 stood at \$18.35 billion, while it was \$15.54 billion the previous year.

"Now with the coronavirus pandemic, things are turning very different. There is no guarantee when the migrants, who have returned home, can go back to work," Fahmida told The Daily Star.

Even, those who are already in those countries may face job cuts given the looming economic recession, she said. "All together, the economy of Bangladesh will be under pressure."

Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) data shows around 60,000 Bangladeshis go abroad for jobs every month. So, if the coronavirus pandemic lingers, queues of those waiting to join overseas jobs will only grow bigger, said the experts.

THE IMMEDIATE NEED
Migration researchers and economists say the immediate need now is to provide healthcare and financial protection to the migrants.

Fahmida Khatun said many migrant workers could already be infected with coronavirus. So, the Bangladesh government must ensure that they get proper healthcare. Those who have lost jobs must be ensured financial

protection.

"They must survive this crisis period. After the next few months, the government should take up mid-term plans on ensuring their jobs abroad and help them with microloans in productive sectors," she said.

Syeda Rozana Rashid said the vulnerable families, who depend on migrant remittances, should be identified and provided with social protection by the government.

She said thousands of migrant workers, especially in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries, have been deported in recent times, as part of the countries' plans to reshape their economic policy prioritising local workforce.

Now that it is a global crisis, Bangladesh and other labour-sending countries can and should negotiate with the labour-receiving countries so that they don't deport the undocumented migrants, but regularise them as a sign of global solidarity, she said.

Colombo Process, a platform of the Asian labour-sending countries, and Abu Dhabi Dialogue, a platform of the labour-receiving countries, should come together and find out ways that are beneficial for all, Rozana Rashid said.

The expert also said imposition of health emergency proved that the developed countries would focus more on improving their healthcare system. "It will require more workforces in the health sector."

"We have mostly semi-skilled and low-skilled people going abroad to work. We can now focus on the skills training on nursing, health technology, management, medicine and hospitality as part of our migration strategy," she added.

Treat patients

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patients. In some cases, the patients died without treatment while going from one hospital to the next.

Zahid Maleque said no new death was reported in the 24 hours before 8:00am yesterday.

Six people have died from the virus so far. Among the 61 positive cases, 26 recovered and went home, he said.

After the minister, Prof Abul Kalam Azad, DG of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), from his office said 22 Covid-19 patients were in hospitals and seven were at home.

Nine laboratories in the capital and five outside have started polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests to detect coronavirus, the DG said.

"Within the first week of April, all the divisions will have at least one PCR laboratory. By the end of the month, 28 laboratories will be set up all over the country to run the tests," Prof Azad said.

The five new cases were detected after testing 513 individuals from 42 districts and officials took "proper measures for contact tracing," he said.

DGHS has 71,000 test kits, he said, adding that there were 4.28 lakh PPEs and 3.6 lakh of those were sent to different facilities.

JOURNO TESTS POSITIVE
A journalist of Independent TV has tested positive for coronavirus.

Forty-seven other employees of the station, who came in contact with the man, were asked to self-quarantine at home, said a statement from the channel.

The journalist self-isolated on March 26 after he started showing symptoms, the release added.

It's time for revision

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"They will stay in the house and do revision. If they have any problem, they can consult with their teachers over phone. No need to get upset about the future of their educational lives," he told The Daily Star on Thursday.

Ziaul said due to the deferment of the exam, students get a chance to prepare better and that they should see the crisis as an opportunity.

"They have already completed the syllabus as the exam was supposed to take place from April 1. They have got extra time and they should use it as a golden opportunity to fix problems, if there are any," he suggested.

To better utilise the time, students can prepare a routine. "For example, they can revise every subject chapter-wise or dedicate a day to study a particular subject."

He said students having the mental strength to overcome the situation is the most important aspect.

"Don't panic about the exam and the admission. Usually university classes start between November and December. So, the policymakers will take decisions to reduce the gap," he added.

High outbreak of Covid-19

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"If a significant outbreak occurs in Bangladesh, the impact could be more significant. The outlook will be updated as more information becomes available," said ADB Country Director in Bangladesh Manmohan Parkash in a statement.

With the spread increasing gradually, Bangladesh economy has started taking a hit. Exporters are saying that international orders are being cancelled while importers say that their businesses have declined.

In March, remittance inflows were \$1.28 billion, a 12 percent drop from the same period last year, according to Bangladesh Bank data.

ADB said Bangladesh economy continued to perform well despite the global economic slowdown. "However, there exists a downward risk due to the COVID-19 global pandemic."

Parkash appreciated the government's recent interventions and said, "Addressing cash management challenges and broader resiliency issues due to Covid-19 related shutdowns and economic knock-ons could help minimise impact on Bangladesh economy."

Bangladesh economy showed strong performance with growing domestic demand, supported by substantial increase in workers' remittances during the first 8 months of the current fiscal year.

"However, the COVID-19 pandemic could hamper such trend due to disruptions in export demands, suppressed consumption, and curbed remittances."

In its Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2020, which does not reflect the impact of the COVID-19, the ADB said Bangladesh economy might

remain strong in the 2019-20 fiscal.

The gross domestic output of the country would grow by 7.8 percent in the current fiscal year, ending on June 30, it forecasts.

These growth forecasts rest on several assumptions of continued political calm, maintained consumer and investment confidence, depressed exports and imports and recovery in the next fiscal, expansionary central bank monetary policy, and favorable weather, said the ADO.

Low revenue collection continues to be a key challenge for the economy it adds.

"The low revenue to GDP ratio in Bangladesh diminishes the country's capacity to sustain high economic growth and reduce poverty. Revenues thus need to be raised significantly through comprehensive tax reforms, by expanding the tax base and making resource mobilization more efficient to support much-needed public expenditure on infrastructure, health and social development."

In a facebook post, Towfiqul Islam Khan, senior research fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue, said the ADB report did not consider the impact of coronavirus on Bangladesh economy, but it considered the impact of the pandemic on the economies of all the other countries in Asia.

"So in my view, Bangladesh's growth forecast is not comparable to most of the countries," he wrote.

"We should not focus on GDP at this moment. Our full attention should be on saving and protecting lives and livelihood of the marginalised people. We should also plan for an economic recovery to be implemented after winning this ongoing war against the pandemic. GDP growth can wait."

Govt expands ICU facilities

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Last week, the government claimed that it was better equipped for critical care than that of many developed countries.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque, while replying journalists' queries, said many large countries did not have as many ventilators as Bangladesh had.

But when the figure was compared with other South Asian countries, including India, Pakistan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, the picture seemed very dismal as Bangladesh stood at the bottom in terms of the number of ICU beds.

In Bangladesh, there are 0.7 bed for every one lakh population while the number is 2.3 in neighbouring India.

The situation in developed countries is far better and a comparison seems absurd.

"I cannot say about other countries. What I can say is that the ICU beds for the normal patient and the ones for Corona patient are different. We are planning to install 1,000 ICU beds and working on it," Abul Kalam Azad, Director General of DGHS, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He, however, did not mention by when these beds would be installed.

A report from Imperial College London estimates that 30 percent of patients who are hospitalised with Covid-19 are likely to require mechanical ventilation.

The UK government has recently announced that it aims to add some 1,200 ventilators in less than two weeks,

ICU BEDS PER 1 LAKH PEOPLE

USA	34.7
Germany	29.2
Italy	12.5
France	11.6
South Korea	10.6
India	2.3
Pakistan	1.5
Sri Lanka	2.3
Nepal	2.8
Myanmar	1.1
Bangladesh	0.7

and forecast it may need 30,000 at the peak of the outbreak, reports BBC.

According to a WHO-China joint mission report released last month, five percent of people diagnosed with Covid-19 require artificial respiration and another 15 percent need to breathe in highly concentrated oxygen, meaning that about 20 percent of the patients need ICU care.

There has been concern over treatment facilities for elderly patients in the country as all the six persons who died from the virus were aged between 60 and 75.

According to a 2018 report of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the country has a population of 16.46 crore. Of them, 1.30 crore are above 60.

Covid-19 death toll rises in Spain, US

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virus is getting slower... it's working," said Robert Koch Institute president Lothar Wieler, stressing that restrictions on public life "need to be maintained" and it was too early to claim victory.

Wieler explained that each person who had caught the virus was now infecting only one person on average, where previously that number had been as high as seven.

The world economy has been pummelled by the virus and associated lockdowns, with more than half the population of the planet under some kind of stay-at-home order.

With airlines largely grounded, businesses closed, layoffs mounting, the economic fallout was shaping into worse than the 2008 financial crisis. Rather, comparisons were being drawn with such traumatic periods as World War Two or the 1930s Global Depression.

In the world's biggest economy, the US government has pumped in unprecedented aid, but still weekly jobless claims jumped to a record 6.6 million - double the previous week that

was also a first.

Morgan Stanley predicted the US economy will shrink 5.5% this year, the steepest drop since 1946.

Things were no better in Europe, where analysts from IHS Markit warned that business activity in the 19-nation eurozone had suffered its worst crunch ever recorded, and the central bank of eurozone member Ireland saying its output could be slashed by 8.3 percent this year.

Financial ratings agency Fitch predicted both the US and eurozone economies would shrink this quarter by up to 30 percent and the Asian Development Bank warned on Friday the global economy could take a \$4.1 trillion hit -- equivalent to five percent of worldwide output.

World leaders have announced huge financial aid packages to deal with the crisis and the World Bank has approved a plan to roll out \$160 billion over 15 months.

While prosperous Western nations are reeling, there is concern about potentially far worse impact in nations already struggling with poverty,

insecurity and weak health systems.

In India, many poor labourers were desperate after losing jobs in a three-week lockdown ordered by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Food was low in slums.

"I'm very sure that he works only for the big people and not for a man like me," said former Modi supporter Ravi Prasad Gupta, a worker laid off from a pipe plant.

The virus has not spared world leaders.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel left her Berlin home for the first time in almost two weeks on Friday after she was quarantined following contact with an infected doctor, but British premier Boris Johnson was still working in isolation after testing positive.

Politically, the virus deepened fault lines in the EU, with Italy's Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte writing to European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen to demand more ambition and courage from his partners, accusing her of peddling ideas "not worthy of Europe".

Hasina warns against graft

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wake of the novel coronavirus situation in the country."

Her directives are as follows:

1. Coronavirus-related treatment measures will have to be taken, and awareness programmes on the issue will have to be implemented.

2. There is no need to hide information about the disease, rather go to physicians if symptoms of coronavirus infection show up.

3. Not all the people generally need to use PPE. Rather, it should be ensured that all those involved in the treatment of patients have PPE. Adopt cautionary measures to keep all treatment equipment, including PPE and masks, disinfected. Take special precautionary measures for disposal of waste.

4. Special priority will have to be given to protect the health of all doctors, nurses, lab technicians, cleaners, and ambulance drivers who are involved in the treatment of Covid-19 disease.

5. Those who are in home quarantine or isolation should be treated humanely.

6. Regularly follow the health rules, including washing hands, using masks and maintaining social distancing.

7. Naval ambulances should be provided in the districts surrounded by rivers.

8. Proper health checkups and medical care for other patients should

be continued.

9. Ensure cleanliness. All city corporations, municipalities and upazila parishes across the country will have to step up their cleanliness activities.

10. Attention should be given to law and order. All the government officials, including that of the Health Services Division, the administration, law enforcement agencies, and the Armed Forces Division will have to continue their works by maintaining proper coordination during this national disaster.

11. No corruption will be tolerated in the relief activities.

12. Assistance will have to be given to day laborers, workers, and peasants so that they don't remain unfed, and a separate list of poor working people will have to be prepared.

13. Social safety net activities will continue.

14. Proper attention will have to be paid so that economic activities don't become stagnant.

15. Food production system will have to continue, and more varieties of crops will have to be produced. Whatever needed for achieving food security will have to be done and no land should be kept uncultivated.

16. Supply system should be maintained.

17. General activities will continue and the prices of essentials will have to be kept under control.

18. All celebration programmes of the Bangla New Year should be suspended to avoid public gatherings. The celebration should be done through digital system staying at home.

19. Local public representatives, political leaders, people of all stages of the society will have to work together. The administration will have to work engaging all the people.

20. Alongside the government, the affluent people and institutions of the society will carry out their relief and healthcare activities maintaining coordination with the deputy commissioners and upazila nirbahi officers.

21. The public representatives and upazila administration will distribute foods among the distressed people by preparing a ward-based list.

22. Special attention will have to be given to the most disadvantaged people like agriculture workers, day labourers, rickshaw and van-pullers, transport workers, beggars, street children, the women abandoned by husband, widows and 'hijra' community and providing relief to them will have to be ensured.

23. Necessary arrangements will have to be made for senior citizens and

children.

24. All government employees and volunteer organisations will have to follow the standing orders (SOD) regarding the disasters.

25. Necessary arrangements will have to be made for monitoring production, supply and regular marketing of the essential goods.

26. Don't buy excessive products after being panicked as there is adequate stock of all necessary goods including food grains.

27. The farmers will continue cultivation regularly, and in this case government incentives will continue.

28. All industry owners, businesspeople and individuals will keep their own industries, business establishments and houses clean.

29. The owners of industries will continue production through discussion with the workers and ensuring their health safety.

30. The media workers are playing a proper role in creating mass awareness and in this case, a watchful eye will have to be kept so that none can mislead the people by spreading rumours and false information.

31. Spreading rumours will have to be stopped. Various rumours are being spread. Don't pay heed to rumours and don't worry about it.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

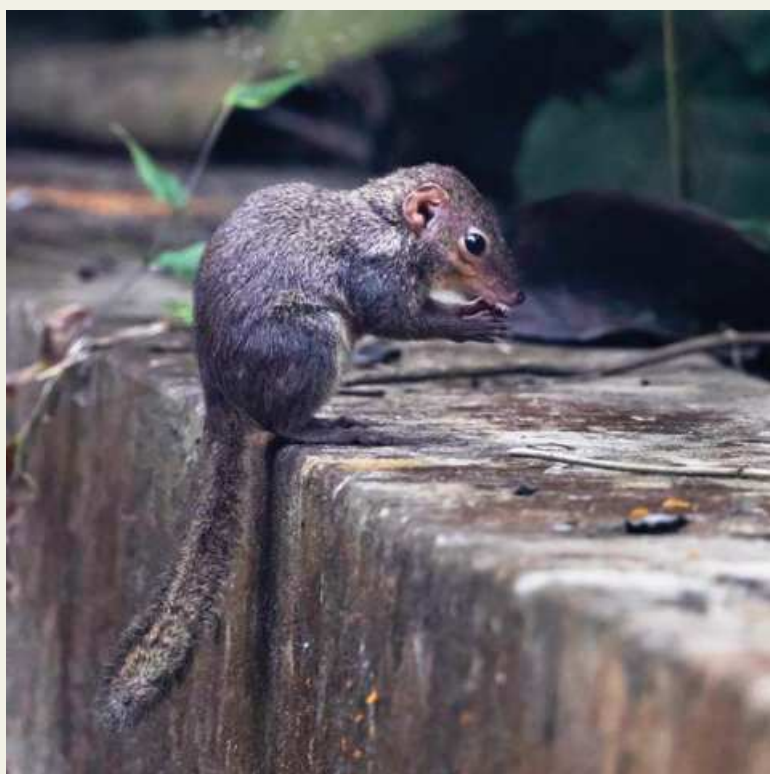
Tree Shrew

It was a bright, sunny morning in early March. Reaching Satchori National Park, I discovered my guide Rahim had not arrived. So I decided to wander along the road outside the park. With dense foliage on both sides, this stretch often yielded good birds. Today, however, the pickings were slim. Even my old standby – a Plum-headed Parrot couple nesting in a roadside tree's cavity – was empty. It would be another month before their eggs hatched and mom became busy feeding her chick.

Returning to my rendezvous spot I found Rahim waiting for me. I threw a water bottle into my backpack and, lugging my camera gear, we walked to the park entrance. Our destination was the watchtower, about half a kilometer down a concrete path through the forest. As we crossed a culvert running over a stream (the name Satchori means Seven Streams) I kept searching the trees for birds, but spotted nothing.

As we continued our trek, we both saw a small creature sitting on the raised guard-wall on the right of the path. Sitting up on its hind legs, it was eating something off its fore legs. I thought it was a squirrel and not even try to photograph it. But Rahim stopped dead on his tracks. "It's just a squirrel," I told him. "No, sir, it looks different. The head is long and pointed. Perhaps it is a Tree Shrew," he said. That's when I raised my camera. It was remarkably free of fear at our approach as I took some photographs. After a few seconds it jumped from the wall and disappeared into the forest floor. We went off to the tower to look for birds. The little animal was forgotten.

A few days later, I was looking at Dr. Monirul Khan's *Photographic Guide to the Wildlife of Bangladesh* when I ran into a photograph of this animal. (By the way - this



Northern Tree Shrew, Satchori National Park, Bangladesh.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

book by Dr. Khan, winner of the Bangabandhu Award for Wildlife Conservation, is a treasure trove of our wildlife and birds.)

According to the book, it was a Northern Tree Shrew, also known as *Gecho Chhucho* in Bangla. Its tail is bushy, but less so than the squirrel's. Its body is 20cm long; the tail is another 20cm. It is not a rodent, but looks in between a squirrel and a rat. Like a squirrel, it holds its food in its forepaws while eating. It is usually silent and spends much time on the ground. Its ears are interesting: large and with unique ear flaps. Feeding mainly on fruits and insects, it breeds year round. In Bangladesh it is found in the forests of Sylhet, Chittagong and Madhupur.

Globally, there are 19 species

of Tree Shrews that comprise the order Scandentia. Their family is called Tupaiaidae; our Northern Tree Shrew's Latin name is *Tupaia belangeri*. The word Tupaia comes from the Malay word Tupai meaning squirrel or small animals resembling squirrels. The Tree Shrew was first described by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1821. The Northern Tree Shrew can be found in a handful of countries to the East and Southeast of Bangladesh.

Our time in the watchtower was amply rewarded with birds. But it is the Northern Tree Shrew that I will remember most from that day at Satchori.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow ihtishamkabar on Instagram.

Uncertainty looms over school exams

MOHIDDUN ALAMGIR

After the postponement of HSC exams for an indefinite period, uncertainty now looms over annual final exams at English-medium schools as well as half-yearly exams of Bangla medium primary and secondary schools.

Due to the school shutdown enforced to contain Covid-19 transmission, educators are unable to complete lesson plans, give class tests and make other preparations for education of school kids.

The government has introduced TV education through Sangsad Bangladesh Television for students of sixth to 10th grades, to minimise the loss, but many students remain out of coverage of the programme.

Until yesterday, there was no TV education for primary education, while not every secondary school student has a television set at their home.

According to the annual academic calendar of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), half-yearly exams at Bangla medium schools are expected to start on April 15 and complete on April 23. The directorate oversees over 1 lakh primary schools, madrasas, and kindergartens, which have over 1.74 crore students.

"We could not complete lessons. Exams can take place only after lessons are completed. If the situation is not normal, how we can hold exams?" said Md Fasiullah, director general of DPE.

In an effort to stem the spread of the virus, all educational institutions were ordered shut from March 17 to 31, which was later extended to April 11.

Across the country, some 3.68 crore students at educational institutions and over a million teachers and other school personnel are now confined to their homes.

Top DSHE officials said that there is a strong possibility that the government will extend the closure till April 25. And in that case, schools and colleges will remain off till May 31 for the Ramadan and Eid ul Fitr vacation.

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education's (DSHE) academic calendar says the half-yearly and pre-test for SSC exams are scheduled to begin on June 13 and complete on June 25.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Skipping meals to survive the shutdown

The grim reality in Rajshahi city slums

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

It was a depressing Tuesday for Kanchan. For breakfast she had leftover rice from the previous night, and did not eat a single morsel till dusk. She then prepared a meal for that night and the next day, calculating and measuring so she has enough food for the days to come.

The elderly woman residing in a slum of Rajshahi city's Bhadra area, who could barely remember her age, would have managed three meals on a regular day by selling scraps she picks up around the city roads.

But due to the shutdown, she cannot go out into the streets and so, must skip meals.

"I've been doing this for the last three days, after my rice stock started shrinking," Kanchan said. "When there'll be nothing left in a day or two, I'll have to starve for the whole day."

Kanchan, her neighbours, and those living in other slums had not received any government food support till Wednesday, six days since local administration began distributing daily essentials among those who are outside government safety-net programmes.

Those who had been deprived include 150 families of Bhadra slum, 35 families of Balia slum, and 400 families of Rabidas and Horizon communities living in two slums of Daspuke area.

Upen Rabidas, vice president of Rabidas community development committee, said the slums of Bhadra and Daspuke are major ones in the city. Slum dwellers, who usually have different means of earning money, have no work during the shutdown.

Kohinur, a resident of Balia slum, said authorities overlooked the slum dwellers while distributing 90 tonnes of rice and Tk 50,000 cash allocated by the government.

They were also ignored while the corporation completed distributing 100 tonnes of rice, which were bought through donations, among 20,000 people, she added.

Contacted, Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) Chief Executive Officer Sharifuddin said they somehow unintentionally missed the slums, and they would be included during later phases of food distribution.

He said the corporation will be providing food support to most of the city's one lakh ultra-poor people in three phases.

After this discussion, authorities, an NGO and army carried out some distribution efforts in the three slums on Thursday, but many are still deprived of relief materials.

According to 2014 data of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the city has at least 105 slums, where 39,077 people of 10,202 families live.

Seventy per cent of slum dwellers were not brought under government safety-net programmes, while 80 per cent of them have no idea about the programmes at all, said Shahidul Islam, regional coordinator of Bangladesh Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge, quoting one of their research.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Khaleda doing well but concerned over Covid-19 situation, says her doctor

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who is currently receiving treatment at her Gulshan residence, is doing well but worried about the prevailing coronavirus situation in the country.

Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, a member of the BNP chairperson's personal physician team, said, "Her health condition is now stable but she needs advanced treatment for a long time to fully recover from her illness."

He said they are giving the 75-year-old BNP chief necessary treatment under the supervision of her daughter-in-law Dr Zubaida Rahman.

Zahid said Dr Zubaida is overseeing her treatment from London.

On March 25, Khaleda was released from jail for six months upon an executive order, considering her age and humanitarian grounds.

The government passed the executive order on two conditions -- that she receives treatment at her Gulshan residence, and does not leave the country.

Khaleda was sent to Old Dhaka Central Jail after she had been sentenced to five

years' imprisonment by a special court in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case on February 8, 2018.

Another team member of Khaleda's personal physicians, wishing anonymity, said Khaleda is unable to walk, and is suffering from pain in the joints of her hands and legs. "She has been given therapy to relieve her pains. Her diabetes condition still not under control. She has some other physical problems for which she needs treatment for a long time."

He said although the BNP chief is ill, she now feels comfortable at the homely environment.

The doctor said Khaleda is passing her time by reading newspapers and books.

He said she is worried about the spread of coronavirus across the world, including in Bangladesh. "She's concerned over the plight of poor people as many of them now have no source of income due to the shutdown of economic activity. She also wanted to know from doctors when the country may be freed from the virus. She looks upset over the rise in the coronavirus cases in the country."



RAFIL ISLAM

The life of visually-impaired Nizamul was already quite difficult, as his meagre income from his roadside insecticide shop in the city's Bhasantek could barely provide for his wife and three children.

But then, the country was hit by the novel coronavirus, that has forced authorities to enforce a countrywide shutdown, blocking the source of income for many like him.

While relief distribution schemes are in place to ease their sufferings, it is often hard for people with disabilities like Nizamul to elbow others in a crowd of desperate people to reach the aid during.

"I have not received any help yet. I have no savings... I don't know how I will survive with my family in the days ahead," the forty-year-old man told The Daily Star.

A number of disabled and disadvantaged persons told this newspaper they want the authorities to have special attention to them, as they cannot move freely amid



This woman, who lives near the High Court area, had to travel to Kakrail on her wheelchair to get some food assistance. The photo was taken in front of Matsya Bhaban on Thursday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

the shutdown and race with others who are also struggling to make ends meet.

Nizamul says he knows the risks of going out, and has the fear of being infected by Covid-19 virus.

appeared and urged me to go back home... I returned with empty hands," he said.

Another disabled person, Tuhin Mia, who is the general secretary of Disable Development Society, said his organisation has 155 members. "All of them are poor, and as far as I know none of them received any aid."

He, however said that he heard some people with disabilities, who are homeless, received some aid.

"As my office is located in Mirpur, I met the local councillor four to five days ago for aid, but he said there is no special arrangement for persons with disabilities... Then I called the mayor, who asked me to give a list to his personal secretary," he said, adding the PS asked him to hand over the list by Sunday.

Physically challenged Billal Hossain from Bogura said people with physical disabilities are highly vulnerable during natural disasters or national crises. The risk to this group is greater due to the effect of their impairments.

"Many of the group cannot

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Patients their priority

Two Kishoreganj doctors provide free consultation over phone

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Two doctors in Kishoreganj are providing free medical service over mobile phones amid the ongoing coronavirus situation.

Dr Deen Mohammad and Dr Md Ataur Rahman mentioned their cellphone numbers on their Facebook accounts so that patients can contact them.

Deen Mohammad has been practicing in the town privately since he retired from Directorate General of Health Services as a director in 2014, said the physician.

Ataur Rahman is an assistant professor of medicine at Shaheed Syed Nazrul Islam Medical College and Hospital, Kishoreganj.

Deen Mohammad said he started the free service in the first week of March. "Currently, I am responding to around 20 calls daily," he said.

Dr Ataur said he is providing the service considering that many do not dare to go to hospital amid fear of being afflicted with Covid-19.

Mohammad Rubel from Kishoreganj's Karimganj said he called Dr Ataur on March 23 and got suggestion on medication for dysentery, fever and cold.

Mithila Debnath, a university student, said she sent SMS to Dr Ataur for her ailing mother who was suffering from cough a week ago, and the doctor replied immediately.

Sohrab Hossain from Hossainpur upazila said he phoned Dr Deen Mohammad to seek suggestion for his three-year-old grandson who was suffering from fever and cough. "After medication, he is now doing well," he added.

Similarly, Abdul Momen thanked the doctor as his child got cured from fever and cold related problems.

AVOIDING COVID-19 TRANSMISSION

Law ministry still undecided on 3,000 prisoners' release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The law ministry is yet to give any decision about the release of 3,000 prisoners from jail on bail as the relevant proposal did not reach the ministry.

Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star yesterday, "My office has not received the proposal about the release... I will give my opinion after examining the proposal and the legal procedure."

Asked what will be the law ministry's suggestion about the prisoners' release, the minister refused to comment.

Jail authorities recently sent a proposal to the home ministry about release of 3,000 prisoners -- including those under trial and jail for bailable offences -- to avoid risk of coronavirus transmission in the prisons.

The home minister reportedly said the matter was being discussed.

Meanwhile, some legal experts including Attorney General Mahbub Alam told this newspaper on April 1 that the government might release the prisoners -- who were and might be sentenced to jail for a short period of time -- to prevent potential spread of coronavirus.

করোনাভাইরাস মোকাবিলায় প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনার পরামর্শ

- অতি প্রয়োজন না হলে ঘরের বাইরে বের হবেন না।
- বাইরে বের হলে মানুষের ভিড় এড়িয়ে চলুন।
- যারা করোনাভাইরাস-আক্রান্ত দেশ থেকে ফিরেছেন, তারা ১৪ দিন সম্পূর্ণ আলাদা থাকুন।
- ঘনঘন সাবান-পানি দিয়ে হাত ধুতে হবে।
- হাঁচি-কাশি দিতে হলে রুমাল বা টিস্যু পেপার দিয়ে নাক-মুখ ঢেকে নিন।
- যেখানে-সেখানে কফ-খুঁথু ফেলবেন না।
- করমর্দন বা কোলাকুলি থেকে বিরত থাকুন।
- মুসলমান ভাইয়েরা ঘরেই নামাজ আদায় করুন।
- অন্যান্য ধর্মাবলম্বীরাও ঘরে বসে প্রার্থনা করুন।
- পরিবার, পাড়াপ্রতিবেশি এবং দেশের মানুষের জীবন রক্ষার্থে এসব পরামর্শ মেনে চলা প্রয়োজন।
- স্বাস্থ্যবিধি মেনে চলুন।
- ভালো থাকুন, সুস্থ থাকুন, নিরাপদ থাকুন।

মিটি-৭১১

Dhaka's air still 'very unhealthy'

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka yesterday yet again ranked first among cities with the worst air quality, in the Air Quality Index (AQI). The Bangladeshi capital had an AQI score of 202 at 8:13 am -- which is classified as "very unhealthy". Thailand's Chiang Mai and China's Shenyang occupied the second and third positions with AQI scores of 192 and 165 respectively.

The AQI, an index for reporting daily air quality, informs people how clean or polluted the air of a certain city is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for them.

When the AQI value is between 201 and 300, the entire population is likely to be affected, according to the index.

In Bangladesh, the AQI is based on Particulate Matter (PM10 and PM2.5), NO2, CO, SO2 and Ozone (O3).

The Department of Environment has also set national ambient air quality standards for these pollutants.

Heavy air pollution has contributed to Dhaka being one of the least livable cities in the world, but following the nationwide shutdown to prevent widespread transmission of the novel coronavirus, the air quality had shown signs of improvement. At 7:30am on March 29, it had an AQI score of 91, far lower than its usual score.

ATTACK OVER LAND Youth killed, 3 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A youth was killed and three were injured in an attack by rivals following a dispute over land in Patuakhali yesterday.

Hasan Pada (28) was declared dead at Patuakhali General Hospital, said police.

Following the incident at Boro Bighai village in Sadar upazila, police arrested one named Salam Ghazi.

The injured -- Farid Pada (50), Sohad Pada (30) and Russell Pada (25) -- were undergoing treatment at the hospital.

RAJSHAHI ZOO Starved dogs kill mother deer, 3 fawns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A pack of stray dogs, presumably starved due to the shutdown, yesterday killed and ate three fawns and their mother deer at Rajshahi zoo.

Five dogs entered the deer shed through a damaged barrier, and killed three fawns at daybreak, said Samar Kumar Paul, executive magistrate of Rajshahi City Corporation, that oversees the zoo.

The dogs later killed the mother deer, he said, and ate them, before zoo staff drove them away, he said.

"Stray dogs (of the city) have been starved," he said, adding that the dogs used to get food from local restaurants and now the restaurants are closed due to coronavirus pandemic.

The remains of the deer were buried inside the shed, he said, terming it "an accident."

Paul said they sought explanation from the zoo officials about the incident.

The zoo had a total of 75 deer with 15 fawns that were born in a period of last three months.

Skipping meals to survive

FROM PAGE 3

Rajshahi City Corporation has no data on slum dwellers, and one of their survey activities on slums has been paused due to the outbreak. Corporation officials, however, think the number of families in those slums has increased in recent years.

Living in tiny shanties equipped with poor hygiene facilities, slum dwellers are at a high risk of contracting coronavirus. Sadly, practising social distancing is almost impossible, the dwellers said.

Right now, they are more worried about managing their meals than the pandemic.

After visiting Bhadra slum on Wednesday afternoon, this correspondent saw Manjila Begum preparing drumstick for cooking her curry at lunchtime.

"We have nothing for lunch; the drumstick is for dinner," she said while talking to others who were huddled up there.

"I'm afraid of the coronavirus, and I have heard about keeping distance," Manjila said. "But tell me, how will we maintain distance in these cramped spaces?"

Md Khalil said he lives with his seven family members in a 70 square feet shanty.

"We can do nothing. We just wear masks to be as safe as possible."

From a distance, Golapi was seen sitting at her grocery and tea shop, despite authorities calling for keeping shops shut.

"I close the shop when they [authorities] come to raid the area, and open it back up when they go away," she said. "I have no other way to live."

Authorities have raided her shop at least five times since the shutdown, but she had not seen anyone visiting the slum with relief materials till Wednesday.

She said her income slumped from Tk 500 to Tk 100 per day. "Whatever I get is still helpful for managing essentials."

During the visit by this correspondent, some youths brought a dish full of 120 lunch packets. Before they could even start distribution, around 30 slum dwellers snatched them away.

"Most of these people are starving. Distributing food among them is tough," Rakibul Hasan, one of the youths said.

Uncertainty looms over

FROM PAGE 3

According to a DSHE official, there are about 90 lakh students currently enrolled in sixth to tenth grades in schools across the country.

Rajuk Uttora Model College principal Brig Gen Kazi Showkat Alam said that education and preparation of students are being hampered.

"Coronavirus is an evolving situation. We are yet to take a concrete decision regarding exams. We will decide when the exam date is near," he said.

DSHE Director General Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk said that if the situation remains the same and school shutdown continues, they have to think about alternatives regarding exams.

"We can think about giving the exam through TV education programme or online, if needed," he added.

On March 22, the government postponed HSC and equivalent examinations scheduled for April 1 due to fears over spread of coronavirus.

Over a million students are expected to sit for the HSC and equivalent examinations.

Teachers of English medium schools in the capital said usually final exams of different classes other than O-level and A-level exams take place in between May and June, and the current situation has cast a shadow on the exams.

Yasmeen Habib, vice principal of Sunnydale, said the syllabi of different classes were almost completed. "We're sending work and links to lectures to students via email, aiming to complete the syllabus".

"We have not so far deferred exam dates, but it is in our consideration," she added.

English medium teachers said all O- and A-level exams for May-June under all boards have been cancelled, following the UK government's announcement that UK schools, colleges and higher education providers will close down.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics officials say there are 78,700 students at 146 registered English medium schools in the country.

However, sources said there are about 350-400 such schools in the country, and many are not registered.

Their struggle is double

FROM PAGE 3

seek alms...I think we have to take special care of them," he added.

Nazma Ara Begum Popy, general secretary of Women Impelling with Disabilities for Empowerment, said, "Persons with disabilities, in some areas across the country where they have good connection with the administration, are getting relief during the crisis. We have also heard allegations that some are being deprived in some areas."

focus to us. Local administration can easily get the list of persons with disability form the Department of Social Services, and give aid to the impoverished ones," Popy, who is visually impaired, added.

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon said apart from directly providing aid to poor people, they have introduced an on-call service where persons with disabilities can call for aid.

"We will supply food and necessities to their houses," he said yesterday, adding the on-call service will start within a day or two.

Pandemic may cause

FROM PAGE 12

the first dip since a 1.4% reduction after the 2008 financial crisis.

"I wouldn't be shocked to see a 5% or more drop in carbon dioxide emissions this year, something not seen since the end of World War Two," Jackson, a professor of Earth system science at Stanford University in California, told Reuters in an email.

"Neither the fall of the Soviet Union nor the various oil or savings and loan crises of the past 50 years are likely to have affected emissions the way this crisis is," he said.

The prediction -- among a range of new forecasts being produced by climate researchers -- represents a tiny sliver of good news in the midst of crisis: Climate scientists had warned world governments that global emissions must start dropping by 2020 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

But the improvements are for all the wrong reasons, tied to a world-shaking global health emergency that has infected more than a million people - while shuttering factories, grounding airlines and forcing hundreds of millions of people to stay at home to slow the contagion.

Experts warn that without structural change, the emissions declines caused by coronavirus could be short-

lived and have little impact on the concentrations of carbon dioxide that have accumulated in the atmosphere over decades.

"This drop is not due to structural changes so as soon as confinement ends, I expect the emissions will go back close to where they were," said Corinne Le Queré, a climate scientist at the University of East Anglia in eastern England.

After world greenhouse gas emissions dipped in the aftermath of the 2007-2008 global financial crisis, they shot back up a whopping 5.1% in the recovery, according to Jackson.

The pattern of a swift rebound has already begun to play out in China, where emissions fell by an estimated 25% as the country closed factories and put in place strict measures on people's movement to contain the coronavirus earlier this year, but have since returned to a normal range.

That kind of resilience underscores the magnitude of the economic transformation that would be needed to meet the goals of an international deal brokered in Paris in 2015 to try to avert the most catastrophic climate change scenarios.

A UN report published in November found that emissions would have to start falling by an

average of 7.6% per year to give the world a viable chance of limiting the rise in average global temperatures to 1.5C, the most ambitious Paris goal.

"I don't see any way that this is good news except for proving that humans drive greenhouse gas emissions," said Kristopher Karnauskas, associate professor at the Department of Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder.

With the world dependent for fossil fuels for 80% of its energy, emissions forecasts are often based on projections for global economic growth.

With governments launching gigantic stimulus packages to stop their economies collapsing, investors are now watching to see how far the United States, and China, the European Union, Japan and others embrace lower-emission energy sources.

"Our estimates indicate that the pandemic's climate silver lining is vanishingly thin," said Seaver Wang, a climate and energy analyst at the institute.

"It's as if we went back in time and emitted the same amount we were a few years ago -- which was already too much. In the grand scheme of things, it really makes no difference."

US recognises Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12

do not come down within seven days.

The prime minister wants to know why it is that the prices are high although commodities are available in the market. Addressing a huge public meeting in Mymensingh, Bangabandhu says that the government has allowed the traders to continue trade but he will not allow them to exploit the people.

Stating that India will supply Bangladesh an additional two and a half lakh tonnes of food grains besides her earlier commitment of five lakh tons, the prime minister says that he is making arrangements for food grains from Soviet Union, Japan and other countries.

Bangabandhu further says that he wants to build a village-oriented economy. He says cooperatives and

cottage industries will be set up to attain this objective.

\$560MN UN AID FOR RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES
UN High Commissioner for Refugees Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan declares in Dhaka today that the UN has fixed a target of 560 million dollars as assistance to the resettlement of refugees in Bangladesh.

CYCLONE LASHES DHAKA CITY

A cyclone with a wind velocity ranging from 70 to 100 mph lashes Dhaka city and adjoining areas for about ninety minutes today evening, leaving in its wake a harrowing tale of devastation, deaths and sorrow. Coming three days after the Mymensingh tornado where Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has visited today to see for himself

the devastations caused by it, Dhaka people are caught unawares by another storm which, according to first-hand reports, left behind at least four children killed and over a hundred people injured.

MONEY SAVED FROM TIFFIN DONATED TO RELIEF FUND

A German school-going student, Otton Reutter, has contributed an amount of 20 marks to the Bangladesh Prime Minister's Relief Fund. Reutter saved the money from his tiffin and pocket expense with a view to donating the amount to the relief fund as a token of sympathy for the war-ravaged people of Bangladesh.

SOURCES: April 5, 1972 issues of Ittefaq, The Bangladesh Observer, Azad, Morning News, Dainik Bangla and Purbodesh.

Google to publish user

FROM PAGE 12

No "personally identifiable information," such as an individual's location, contacts or movements, will be made available, the post said.

The reports will also employ a statistical technique that adds "artificial noise" to raw data, making it harder for users to be identified.

From China to Singapore to Israel, governments have ordered

electronic monitoring of their citizens' movements in an effort to limit the spread of the virus, which has infected more than a million people and killed over 50,000 worldwide.


In Europe and the United States, technology firms have begun sharing "anonymised" smartphone data to better track the outbreak.

Even privacy-loving Germany is considering using a smartphone app

to help manage the spread of the disease.

But activists say authoritarian regimes are using the coronavirus as a pretext to suppress independent speech and increase surveillance.

In liberal democracies, others fear widespread data harvesting and intrusion could bring lasting harm to privacy and digital rights.



TODAY MARKS THE 24TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF Late Salahuddin Ahmad (May 6, 1926-April 4, 1996)

Your memory has not dimmed, your presence felt evermore.....May Allah (SW) grant you Jannatul Ferdous and rest your soul in eternal peace.

We humbly request all our relatives, friends and acquaintances to remember late Salahuddin Ahmad in their prayers.

Wife, children and grandchildren

Berthing of vessels

FROM PAGE 12

got berth on March 30 was scheduled to leave the port on Thursday but later delayed its departure for a day.

Another vessel -- MV Delaware Trader -- got berth on Wednesday and was supposed to leave today morning but the authorities of the ship were yet to confirm the departure date as at least 20 reefer container could not be discharged from it until yesterday evening.

Meanwhile, at least 11 vessels were waiting at the outer anchorage of the port for getting berths at the port jetties until yesterday.

The number of imported goods-laden containers reached at 43,767 TEUs (twenty equivalent units) until yesterday morning whereas the designated space for such containers can accommodate only 37,620 TEUs.

The scenario is similar at the yards designated to reefer containers used for perishable goods like fruits, onion, garlic, ginger, fish and others.

As of yesterday, a total of 2,932 TEUs reefer containers were lying at the port yards against the port's capacity of only 1,620 TEUs.

Mahbubul Alam, president of Port Users' Forum, said although the port remained open round the clock, other offices that provide importers and CNF agents with necessary documents -- radiation clearance, quarantine clearance and others -- to release consignments remained closed.

As a result, the people related to the port could not function properly.

He also demanded waiver of different additional charges taken by the port, shipping agents and off docks to assist the importers.

Contacted, Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) Secretary Md Omar Faruk said the government was considering waiver of port's store rents only for the consignments arrived and be taken away during the shutdown period.

Around 2,500 Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 12

allow transit arrangements for foreign nationals who are stranded in the country during the ongoing nationwide lockdown.

"Indian Ministry of External Affairs is helping. There won't be a problem for those stranded there. The Bangladesh government took measures for money transfer to them from their relatives so that they don't have problems for house rent, food and visas," the official said.

Of the 2,500 stranded Bangladeshis,

more than 1,000 are students, mostly in Punjab, Hyderabad and Delhi. They are staying in hostels and have no problem, the official also said.

India began a 21-day nationwide lockdown from March 25 to stop the spread of coronavirus. No foreign national or Indian expatriates can fly to India during this time. Domestic flights and interstate transport systems have also been suspended. The Indian government is also discouraging international travel from India.

Meanwhile, the foreign ministry in a statement said that the Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi is maintaining contact with the stranded Bangladeshis via telephone, hotline and ensuring their welfare.

"Our missions in India are taking care of them if they face financial or other problems," the statement said.

"The government is committed to bringing back the stranded Bangladeshis in India and other countries once the situation normalises," it added.

Three die after showing

FROM PAGE 12

the dead body to IEDCR for test and the families would be kept in isolation until the test result gets published.

In Sunamganj, the family of a ready-made garments worker who died with coronavirus-like symptoms on Wednesday was kept in isolation in Tahirpur upazila.

Shams Uddin, civil surgeon of Sunamganj, said body of the 22-year-old man was taken to his home. On information, the district administration rushed to the spot, buried the body and kept his family in isolation following IEDCR's directions.

In Bogura, local administration

kept at least three families in isolation as a 45-year-old man got admitted to hospital with coronavirus-like symptoms.

Meanwhile, two patients were undergoing treatment in isolation wards of two hospitals in the port city as they were suffering from fever and coughing.

Seikh Fazle Rabbi, civil surgeon of Chattogram, said samples from their bodies were sent for tests.

In Brahmanbaria, the government officer in Bancharampur upazila who was sent to IEDCR on April 1 as he had flu-like symptoms has been tested negative for coronavirus, said Mohammad Ekram Ullah, civil

surgeon of the district.

In Kushtia, local health officials yesterday collected samples of a navy man, who died on Thursday night with flu-like symptoms to check whether he was infected with Coronavirus, said Anwarul Islam, the district's civil surgeon.

Local administration has locked down the dead's father-in-law's house in Meherpur Sadar upazila where the victim resided for few days before his death, said the civil surgeon.

Our Satkhira, Narayanganj, Sylhet, Kushtia, Chattogram, Bogura, Faridpur and Brahmanbaria correspondents contributed to this report

Pie in the sky

FROM PAGE 12

pizza oven, which we kept extremely secret," Anderson said.

But news of the tasty drop-off proved too hot to handle, and yesterday he was fielding calls from eager reporters -- with one radio station asking if he could deliver to their studio in Perth, over 3,000 kilometres (1,800 miles) away.

"That's probably a bit out of our range," he said. At the moment, Anderson and his team are only planning to fly to properties within 100 kilometres.

The idea was cooked up as coronavirus travel restrictions bit into the outbreak's peak tourist season, stopping the usual stream of caravans and months of booked-out rooms.

Regional travel in the Northern Territory remains strictly controlled, with large swathes in lockdown over fears for remote indigenous communities who experts warn could be particularly susceptible to an outbreak, due to higher rates of chronic illness.

Relief rice seized

FROM PAGE 12

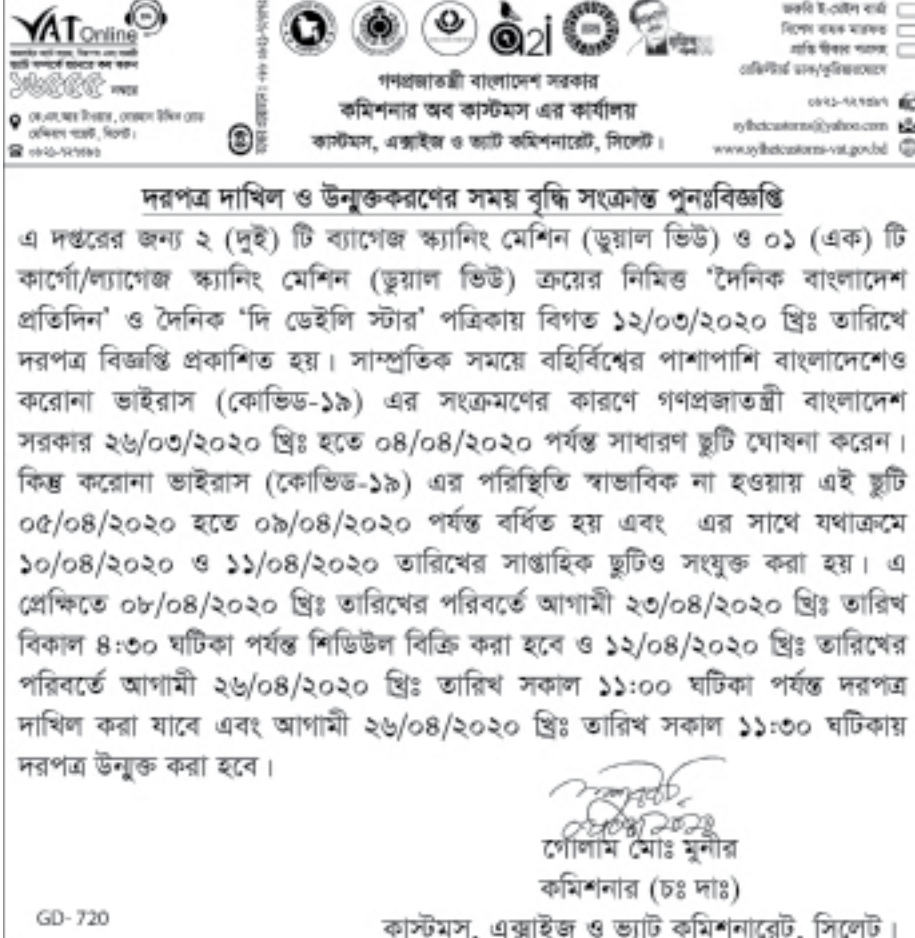
chairman and recovered the rice.

They did not find Ayat at home as the family said he was on the run.

The UNO said hoarding and trading of VGD rice are prohibited and stern action would be taken in this regard. Naogaon Deputy Commissioner Harun-Or-Rashid told The Daily Star that he was informed of the matter.

Asked, how the AL leader could get a hand of such big amount of rice allocated for the government's social safety net programme, the DC said they would investigate the matter and the culprit would be brought to book.

A case was filed with Ranimagar Police Station in this connection yesterday.



YAT Online

পদ্মপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
কমিশনার অব কাস্টমস এন্ড কর্ভোরাল
কাস্টমস, এন্ড্রাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, সিলেট।

দরপত্র দাখিল ও উন্মুক্তকরণের সময় বৃদ্ধি সংক্রান্ত পুনঃবিজ্ঞপ্তি

এ দস্তরের জন্য ২ (দুই) টি ব্যাগেজ স্ক্যানিং মেশিন (ডুয়াল ভিউ) ও ০১ (এক) টি কার্গো/ল্যাগেজ স্ক্যানিং মেশিন (ডুয়াল ভিউ) ক্রয়ের নিমিত্ত 'দৈনিক বাংলাদেশ প্রতিদিন' ও 'দৈনিক 'দি ডেইলি স্টার' পত্রিকায় বিগত ১২/০৩/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখে দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশিত হয়। সাম্প্রতিক সময়ে বহির্বিদেশের পাশাপাশি বাংলাদেশেও করোনা ভাইরাস (কোভিড-১৯) এর সংক্রমণের কারণে গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার ২৬/০৩/২০২০ খ্রিঃ হতে ০৪/০৪/২০২০ পর্যন্ত সাধারণ ছুটি ঘোষণা করেন। কিন্তু করোনা ভাইরাস (কোভিড-১৯) এর পরিস্থিতি স্বাভাবিক না হওয়ায় এই ছুটি ০৫/০৪/২০২০ হতে ০৯/০৪/২০২০ পর্যন্ত বর্ধিত হয় এবং এর সাথে যথাক্রমে ১০/০৪/২০২০ ও ১১/০৪/২০২০ তারিখের সাপ্তাহিক ছুটিও সংযুক্ত করা হয়। এ ক্ষেত্রে ০৮/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখের পরিবর্তে আগামী ২৩/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিকাল ৪:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত শিডিউল বিক্রি করা হবে ও ১২/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখের পরিবর্তে আগামী ২৬/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত দরপত্র দাখিল করা যাবে এবং আগামী ২৬/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ১১:৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্র উন্মুক্ত করা হবে।

গোলাম মোঃ মুনীর
কমিশনার (চঃ দাঃ)

কাস্টমস, এন্ড্রাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, সিলেট।

Stay vigilant and avoid going out

Wuhan people told as authorities fear second wave of infection

REUTERS, Wuhan

The top official in China's coronavirus epicentre of Wuhan warned residents to stay vigilant and avoid going out, even as the latest data showed a decline in new cases in the mainland and no new infections in the central city.

The country where the virus emerged late last year will observe three minutes of silence nationwide today to mourn the thousands of "martyrs" who died in the fight against the pandemic, the official Xinhua news agency said.

Air raid sirens and the horns of automobiles, trains and ships will "wail in grief" after the silence, to be observed at 10:00 am, it added.

China appears to have curbed the epidemic with draconian curbs that paralysed the world's second-biggest economy for two months.

Yesterday, the National Health Commission reported 31 new cases, down from 35 a day earlier and dramatically lower than February's peak. All but two involved travellers from overseas.

Total infections on the mainland, a figure that excludes asymptomatic patients, stand at 81,620, while the death toll rose by four to 3,322. Worldwide, the number of cases has topped 1 million, with at least 52,000 deaths.

Beijing has pushed industries to return to work as the epidemic eases, hoping for a quick recovery from what many analysts expect to have been a deep contraction of China's economy in the first quarter.

Officials are concerned about the risk of a second wave of infections. The threat of a rebound in Wuhan remains high, said Wang Zhonglin, chief of its Communist Party, ordering residents to avoid leaving their homes unless necessary.



General view of the temporary hospital for Covid-19 patients located at the Ifema convention and exhibition centre in Madrid yesterday. More than 900 people died in Spain over the past 24 hours for the second day running, government figures showed yesterday, although the rate of new infections and deaths continued to slow. PHOTO: AFP

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC LATEST UPDATES

MORE THAN 53,693 DEATHS

The worldwide number of officially confirmed fatalities from the novel coronavirus rose to 53,693 yesterday. More than 1,035,380 declared cases have been registered in 188 countries and territories. Of these cases, at least 201,500 are now considered recovered. Italy has 13,915 fatalities, with 115,242 infections. Spain has recorded 10,935 fatalities and 117,710 infections. France has reported 5,387 deaths and 73,743 cases while US has the highest official number of infected people with 245,573 cases and 6,058 deaths.

\$4 TRILLION COST

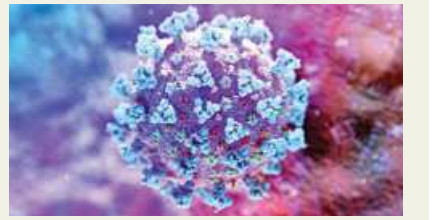
The pandemic could cost the global economy \$4.1 trillion as it ravages United States, Europe and other major economies, the Asian Development Bank warns. The estimated impact is equivalent to 4.8 percent of worldwide output based on a range of scenarios, but the lender says losses from "the worst pandemic in a century" could be higher.

CONFINEMENT FOR HALF OF HUMANITY

More than 3.9 billion people -- half of the world's population -- have been called on or obliged by their authorities to stay at home in more than 90 countries or territories, according to an AFP database. Thailand becomes the latest nation to join the group yesterday introducing a six-hour night curfew.

RAMADAN SOAPS UNDER THREAT

Ramadan television soaps are struggling to keep the cameras rolling just weeks before the Islamic holy month, when they are highly popular during the fasting period. Many countries in the Middle East have imposed tough restrictions, forcing studios to shut down temporarily and others to work under strict rules.



INDIANS TO DISPEL 'DARKNESS'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi calls on confined Indians to hold candles and mobile phones aloft for nine minutes on Sunday to dispel the "darkness and uncertainty" of the coronavirus crisis. He also urged current and former Indian sports stars to help "boost morale" and encourage people to adhere to a nationwide lockdown aimed at containing the coronavirus. Germans to be fined for breaking distancing rules

GERMANS RISK BEING FINED

(\$540) for standing too close to each other from yesterday as officials crack down on people flouting rules brought in to control coronavirus. German Chancellor Angela Merkel comes out of two weeks quarantine, leaving her Berlin home and returning to her office after she was forced into quarantine following contact with a Covid-19-infected doctor.

NIGERIAN MAN SHOT DEAD

A Nigerian man has been shot dead for allegedly flouting a stay-at-home order aimed at curbing the spread of coronavirus, police and a lawmaker said yesterday. Nigeria has introduced a raft of measures, including lockdowns of major cities, to try to contain the virus, which has infected 184 people, two of them fatally. SOURCE: AFP

UK virus deaths could reach 1,000 per day at Easter peak

Warns health secretary; PM continues self-isolation

AGENCIES

UK deaths from coronavirus could reach as many as 1,000 per day around the peak of the country's epidemic, which could come around Easter Sunday, health secretary Matt Hancock warned yesterday.

The health secretary's dire admission was given at the opening of the new NHS Nightingale hospital to fight the Covid-19 outbreak in London.

The government said yesterday it was rushing to build more emergency field hospitals ahead of an expected surge in cases, hours after recording a record 684 deaths from the disease. UK's coronavirus death toll now stands at 3,605.

Two new facilities will be built in Bristol in the west and Harrogate in the north to house up to 1,500 patients, the state-run National Health Service (NHS) said in a statement.

The announcement comes as a similar 4,000-bed facility in London -- built in less than ten days -- was opened yesterday, and as criticism mounts over the government's failure to provide screening, particularly for frontline healthcare workers.

"Further such hospitals will open next in Birmingham and Manchester, offering up to 3,000 beds between them," the NHS statement added.

Meanwhile, Boris Johnson has said he will remain in self-isolation due to a high temperature, despite completing his planned seven-day period.

Earlier, Johnson said Britain will "massively increase testing" for the Covid-19 virus following criticism of his initial light-touch approach to the outbreak.

Heir to the throne Prince Charles Thursday made his first public comments since coming out of self-quarantine after contracting the disease, telling the PA news agency the experience had been "strange, frustrating and often distressing". In a video message, he praised the "utter, selfless devotion to duty" of Britain's health workers.

Britain is currently in the second week of a three-week lockdown, with non-essential shops shut and the public asked to stay at home to try to limit the spread of the coronavirus, reports AFP.

The government has promised an enormous package of support for businesses and employees hit by the measures.

New government figures show 950,000 people applied for state welfare support known as universal credit in the last two weeks. It is available to the unemployed and those on low incomes.

Could TB vaccine protect medics from Covid-19?

AFP, Paris

Could a common vaccine used for decades to protect against tuberculosis help shield health workers from Covid-19?

While developing a specific immunisation against the coronavirus sweeping the planet will likely take many months, researchers are studying the potential benefits of the BCG shot, which many people around the world receive as children.

Laboratories and pharmaceutical firms are racing to find medicines to tackle Covid-19, which has infected more than a million people, killed at least 50,000 and for which there is currently no known treatment, vaccine or cure.

"We have known for decades that BCG has non-specific beneficial effects", in that it protects against diseases other than the one for which it was created, Camille Loch, of the French public health research institute Inserm, told AFP.

Children vaccinated with BCG suffer less from other respiratory illnesses, it is used to treat certain bladder cancers and it could protect against asthma and autoimmune diseases such as type 1 diabetes.

Researchers want to test whether the

tuberculosis vaccine could have a similar effect against the new coronavirus, either by reducing the risk of being infected, or by limiting the severity of the symptoms.

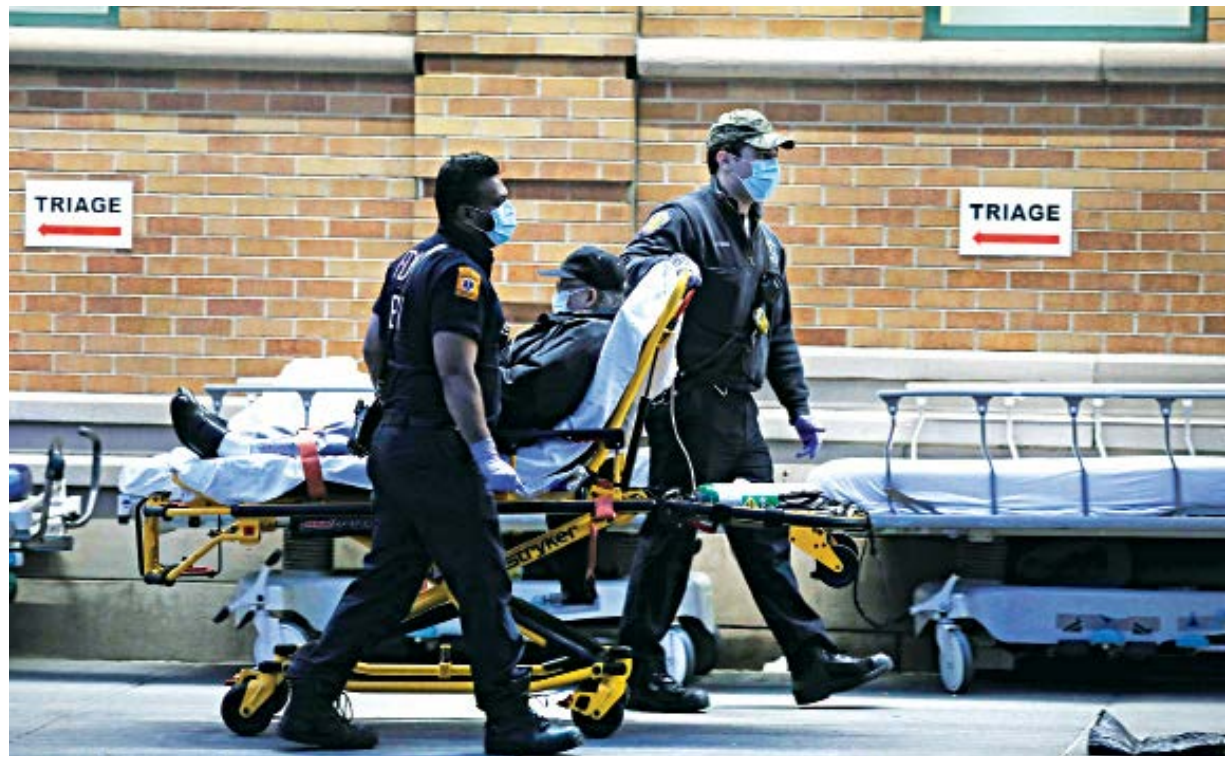
In France, where the BCG vaccine is compulsory until 2007, "most of the study participants will have already had a first vaccination", but the protective effect of this decreases over time, said Loch.

The BCG vaccine does not directly protect medics against the coronavirus, but provides a boost to the immune system which may lead to improved protection and a milder infection.

In the case of Covid-19, in addition to infection by the virus itself, some patients have also suffered excessive immune responses, with the uncontrolled production of pro-inflammatory proteins, cytokines.

However, researchers in Spain, instead of using the BCG, would like to try a new tuberculosis vaccine developed by the biotech firm Biofabri.

In Germany, the Max Planck Institute for Infectious Biology is also preparing a trial with a genetically-modified vaccine candidate, developed by the Serum Institute of India.



Medical workers bring in patients at a special coronavirus intake tent at Maimonides Medical Center in the Borough Park section of Brooklyn in New York City which has seen an upsurge of coronavirus patients on Thursday. PHOTO: AFP

Saving lives 'prerequisite' to save jobs: WHO, IMF chiefs

AFP, Geneva

The WHO and IMF chiefs insisted yesterday that saving lives was a "prerequisite" to saving livelihoods in the coronavirus pandemic -- a crisis they called "one of humanity's darkest hours".

World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and International Monetary Fund managing director Kristalina Georgieva said getting the Covid-19 virus under control first was necessary to revive economic activity -- though they admitted it was difficult to strike the right balance.

The world economy has been pummeled by the virus and the associated lockdowns, with more than half the population of the planet under some kind of stay-at-home order to



stem the spread of the pandemic.

Covid-19 has killed more than 50,000 people, while more than a million have tested positive for the virus.

"As the world responds to Covid-19, country after country is faced with the need to contain the spread of the virus at the cost of bringing its society and economy to a standstill," Tedros and Georgieva wrote in a joint article in the British newspaper The Daily Telegraph.

"At face value there is a trade-off to make: either save lives or save livelihoods. This is a false dilemma -- getting the virus under control is, if anything, a prerequisite to saving livelihoods."

The pair said that in too many countries -- notably poorer ones -- the health systems were "unprepared for an onslaught" of Covid-19 patients and urged states to prioritise spending on healthcare.

"The course of the global health crisis and the fate of the global economy are inseparably intertwined. Fighting the pandemic is a necessity for the economy to rebound," they wrote.

"Our joint appeal is that in one of humanity's darkest hours, leaders must step up right now for people living in emerging markets."

It's time to go home

Australian PM tells visitors, int'l students ABC NEWS ONLINE

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has told visitor visa holders and international students the time has come to return to their home countries as the coronavirus pandemic continues.

After meeting with the National Cabinet yesterday, Morrison said those in Australia who are here under various visa arrangements and cannot support themselves that "there is the alternative for them to return to their home countries".

"Australia must focus on its citizens and its residents to ensure that we can maximise the economic supports that we have," he said.



However, the Prime Minister stated international visitors who have critical skills could be the exception.

"For those backpackers in Australia who are nurses or doctors, or have other critical skills that can really help us during this crisis, then there will be opportunities for them," he said.

"But our focus and our priority is on supporting Australians and Australian residents with the economic supports that are available."

Morrison said there still remained a number of people in the country on visitor visas.

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দরপত্র দাখিল ও উন্মুক্তকরণের সময় বৃদ্ধি সংক্রান্ত পুনঃ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

আসবাবপত্র, কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী, মনিহারি সামগ্রী এবং তয় ও ৪র্থ শ্রেণীর কর্মচারীগণের পোশাক ও আনুষঙ্গিক সামগ্রী জনদের নিমিত্ত 'দৈনিক বাংলাদেশ প্রতিদিন' ও দৈনিক 'দি ডেইলি স্টার' পত্রিকায় বিগত ১৫/০৩/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখে দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশিত হয়। সাম্প্রতিক সময়ে বহির্বিদেশে পাশাপাশি বাংলাদেশেও করোনা ভাইরাস (কোভিড-১৯) এর সংক্রমণের কারণে গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার ২৬/০৩/২০২০ খ্রিঃ হতে ০৪/০৪/২০২০ পর্যন্ত সাধারণ ছুটি ঘোষণা করেন। কিন্তু করোনা ভাইরাস (কোভিড-১৯) এর পরিস্থিতি স্বাভাবিক না হওয়ায় এই ছুটি ০৫/০৪/২০২০ হতে ০৯/০৪/২০২০ পর্যন্ত বর্ধিত হয় এবং এর সাথে যথাক্রমে ১০/০৪/২০২০ ও ১১/০৪/২০২০ তারিখের সাপ্তাহিক ছুটিও সংযুক্ত করা হয়। এ ক্ষেত্রে ০৭/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখের পরিবর্তে আগামী ২০/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিকাল ৪:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত শিডিউল বিক্রয় করা হবে ও ০৮/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখের পরিবর্তে আগামী ২১/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত দরপত্র দাখিল করা যাবে এবং আগামী ০৮/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখের পরিবর্তে আগামী ২১/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ১১:৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্র উন্মুক্ত করা হবে।

গোপাল মোঃ মুনীর
কমিশনার (চঃ দাঃ)

GD-719
কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, সিলেট।

TESTING STATION AT EDGBASTON

English county cricket club Warwickshire have donated their Edgbaston ground to the National Health Service so they can carry out drive-through tests on their staff for coronavirus. The Birmingham ground's car park will serve as host to the NHS staff for the testing as the British Government bid to radically increase the amount of tests per day for the deadly virus. There has been particular concern over the lack of tests being carried out on the NHS staff who are in the frontline of treating patients with the virus. Health Secretary Matt Hancock announced plans on Thursday for 100,000 tests a day nationwide on all citizens to be conducted by the end of April.



POST-PANDEMIC REALITY

Ideal time to focus on domestic cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The coronavirus pandemic has already halted major sporting events around the globe with uncertainty looming over the resumption dates of the postponed events. As the situation remains ever-evolving, doubts regarding a number of future events have also emerged.

As far Bangladesh cricket is concerned, the latest series that came under the coronavirus cloud is New Zealand's tour of Bangladesh in August this year. New Zealand Cricket (NZC) yesterday mentioned that there are 'obvious question marks' over the Black Caps' tour of Bangladesh.

Had it not been for the coronavirus outbreak, the Tigers would now have been in Karachi for the third phase of their three-legged tour. But that was postponed with the two boards agreeing on finding a common window in future to play the solitary ODI and the second World Test Championship fixture of the postponed tour.

Such was the case too for the Bangladesh-Ireland series, originally scheduled for May in Ireland and England. That, too, was cancelled after agreement between the two boards and commitment of finding favourable future dates for the series.

Even Australia's Test skipper Tim Paine recently mentioned that their tour of Bangladesh would probably not go ahead in June. Australia are scheduled to arrive in the country for two World Test Championship fixtures.

With the way things are going, especially after NZC's latest remarks regarding Bangladesh tour, it can almost certainly be said that the landscape of international cricket will change drastically once normalcy returns.

All the cricketing powers will be trying to fit in a potential crammed-up international calendar, trying to squeeze in the postponed events to make up for the huge



Unlike the glory days when fans used to flock to the ground to see the likes of Abahani and Mohammedan battling it out in a domestic league, Dhaka Premier League matches nowadays are played out in front of sparse crowds as this photo from before the league was suspended shows. Things might change in the post-pandemic era but that will depend on the BCB implementing ideas to make the leagues interesting for crowds once again.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

chunk of lost revenues during this crisis. Even England's World Cup-winning skipper Eoin Morgan mentioned the possibility of them fielding separate squads for two different series against two different oppositions at the same time.

Keeping all these in mind, it can be rightly assumed that even when the situation becomes normal, it will still take a lot of time for international cricket to get rolling. It might as well happen that a totally unique method will be adopted in arranging international series after the pandemic.

This might lead to a situation where the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), not amongst the most powerful of cricket boards, might be left wanting for an international series even for years to come. And it would require true instances of

leadership from the BCB high-ups to convince and bargain their way into finding a suitable international series amid all the chaos that await.

In the worst case scenario, what could be the best way for the BCB to tackle the situation? Because just like general people, the cricketers are also eagerly waiting for normalcy to return and for them normalcy means battling out against opponents in the field with bat and ball.

The best way to ensure some cricketing action immediately after the end of the pandemic is resuming domestic leagues. For years now it is being lamented how attractive domestic cricket was in old times when fans used to flock to grounds to witness the likes of Akram Khan playing for Abahani and Minhajul Abedin fighting for

Mohammedan.

In the post-pandemic reality, the focus could be on returning to the roots and the BCB could put more importance in enriching the domestic circuit with better facilities and competitive wickets. Even the cricket fans, who are now confined to indoors spending time watching highlights and counting days of when they get to see players in action live once again, will surely be delighted to get a sight of the ball travelling to boundaries, even in domestic leagues.

Planned and executed properly, the glory days of domestic cricket might just return and if it does, it would be BCB's responsibility to come up with some innovative ideas to keep the fans engaged sustainable periods and not let it fade away again.



Leicester City defender Christian Fuchs showed off an impressive home exercise, walking up and down some steps and doing squats along the way with a chair above his head. His family is in the background as they are in self-isolation.

Babar's reply to 5-year-old Oscar

AGENCIES



Pakistan captain Babar Azam on Friday made a 5-year-old fan's day by responding to his heartfelt tribute on social media.

Oscar, a 5-year-old from the UK, wrote a heartwarming tribute to Babar Azam, saying the Pakistan star is his favourite cricketer. He also revealed his meeting with Babar after he had a surgery on his foot.

The handwritten note was tweeted by Somerset County Cricket Club on Thursday.

The note said Babar Azam was his 'favourite player' and the Pakistan batsman, 'the best T20 player', can hit 'big sixes'.

Babar Azam responded to the tweet by Somerset CCC, thanking Oscar for the note. "Hey Oscar, thank you so much for such a kind note. I am so proud of you buddy. You are a rockstar. Study hard & play even harder champ! Look forward to meet you," he said.

One of the most consistent players, Azam is the only batsman to have registered a batting average in excess of 50 in all three formats since the start of 2018.

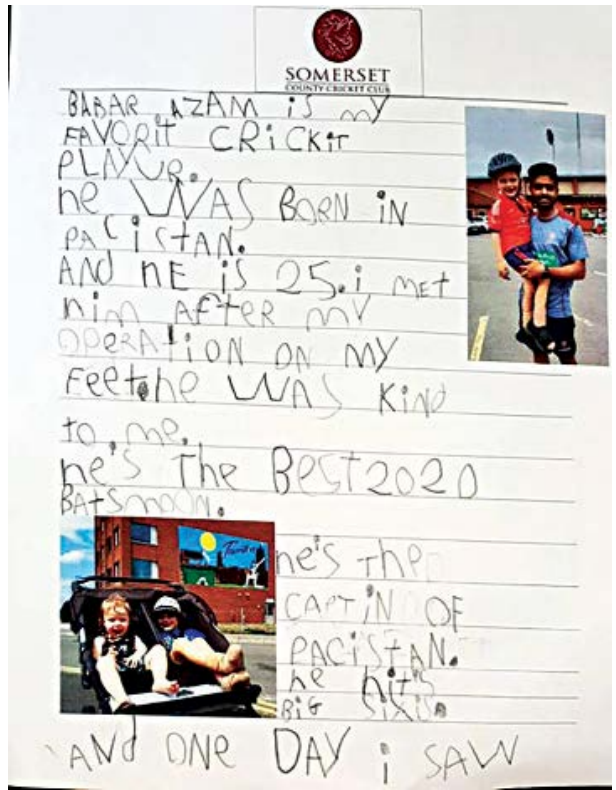


PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

SAFF events in doubt

SPORTS REPORTER



With just under six months left till the scheduled start of the Bangabandhu SAFF Championship in Dhaka, the South Asian Football Federation is having doubts about whether it can hold the seven-nation event due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In a bid to contain the spread of Covid-19, the domestic sporting competitions in all South Asian nations have been postponed for indefinite period while AFC and FIFA have also halted their competitions.

In these circumstances, organisers are having to rethink the fate of the SAFF Championship, scheduled for September 19 to 30 in Dhaka, which had earlier hosted the regional football championship in 2003 and 2009.

"There is no point of making any comment at the moment. If the situation improves, then the SAFF secretariat will hold the championship as scheduled in September, subject to avoiding clash with World Cup Qualifiers which have been suspended," SAFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal told The Daily Star

yesterday.

Helal informed that the SAFF secretariat was supposed to hold an executive committee meeting in the latter part of April, but the meeting has been cancelled following recommendations from SAFF president Kazi Salahuddin, who did not want to put anyone involved at risk.

"If our announced date clashes with FIFA calendar, we will have to reschedule the fixtures because as one knows when the situation will improve and when will FIFA resume its World Cup qualifiers," said Helal.

"If everything comes under control and sporting activities resume in different countries, we won't have any problem holding the championship. But if we see one or two countries still struggling with coronavirus, it will not be possible to hold the championship by excluding any participation nation," said the veteran organiser, who was once general secretary of the Bangladesh Football Federation.

The SAFF U-15 Boys' Championship is scheduled to take place in August, followed by SAFF U-15 Girls' championship in September and SAFF U-18 Girls' Championship in October.

Reminiscence: My first match

In these times of social distancing, we must be safe while remembering that we do not get too used to the world being at a standstill.

We were meant to go watch matches together, agree with a few of our neighbours and disagree with the rest. So, we are taking turns at The Daily Star Sport talking about our first live experience at a sports venue.

NABID YEASIN from Chittagong, 2010



I am widely unpopular among my friends, family and colleagues for remembering things. And hence, as I take my turn to reminisce about the first live match that I watched, I could just barely recall some flashes of the day Bangladesh took on England on March 5, 2010 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram, my hometown.

But even though I am unable to recall much, I vividly remember that I was left heart-broken at the end of the day. Bangladesh had lost the match by 45 runs but I would be lying if I say that that was the reason behind my tears.

Even days before when my father managed tickets for the game for the 13-year-old me, my younger brother and my uncle -- who was vested with the responsibility of our safekeeping and escorting us back home on time -- I was dying in anticipation, thinking about the day I could finally watch Tamim Iqbal, the local boy, smashing some boundaries and sixes and providing the locals with a lot to brag about for days.

The day had finally come and we (me, my brother and our uncle) started hours before the scheduled 9:00 am start of play even though the stadium was just a 40-taka rickshaw fare away from my place.

I remember that the sun had not been cruller that entire summer, burning with all its might. I was still not bothered. And why would I be? I was certain that it would all be worth it if I get to see Tamim taking all the frustration out on English bowlers.

We made it to the gallery -- I don't remember which one -- and after a few minutes, Shakib Al Hasan won the toss and elected to field. I was a bit disappointed as my wait for seeing Tamim in action was extended.

My disappointment would soon increase 10-fold seeing almost a new face in the England squad, Craig Kieswetter, tearing the Tigers' bowling line-up apart. I might have consoled myself had I witnessed any one among the likes of Alastair Cook, Kevin Pietersen, Paul Collingwood and Eoin Morgan rampaging but it was Kieswetter's century that helped England pile up 284 for five.

A big total? Well that just means Tamim has more runs to chase, ergo more fireworks to come, yay! -- I thought to myself as the battered Tigers made their way to the dressing room.

Finally, the moment I had been waiting for arrived. Tamim walked out and took strike. Taking a deep breath, I waited as debutant Ajmal Shahjhad

ran in and enticed Tamim to have a go at a wide delivery outside off. Tamim missed it just as my heart skipped a beat.

Tamim connected the next one but my heartbeats gathered pace, perhaps indicating what was about to happen. Tamim, who is now the batsman the team plays around, was not renowned for his sensible nature back then as he often used to lose his cool initially. I was praying and hoping that it would be one of those days when the elegant left-hander gets past the initial phase and unleashes the beast later on. However, proving my fears right, Tamim could not contain his urge and slashed hard at an outside off delivery the very next ball and was caught near



the boundary at third man.

I just stood there, feeling totally numb as I saw Tamim walk back without opening his account. If this happened now, I would have rationalised it saying any player may have a bad day, but back then there was nothing that could console a 13-year-old kid. I was upset, so much so that I convinced my brother and uncle to go back home just minutes after Tamim's dismissal.

Tamim did somewhat make up for breaking my heart that day when he smashed an incredible unbeaten 141 for Comilla Victorians against Dhaka Dynamites in the final of the Bangladesh Premier League in February 2019, with me writing about his rampage at the press box in Mirpur.

But even after all these years, even after being at the receiving end of many other heartbreaks in personal life, I still cannot forget the one meted out by Tamim that scorching day in 2010.

PL suspended indefinitely

AGENCIES, London



England's Premier League was suspended indefinitely Friday following a meeting of the 20 clubs where a series of financial measures were discussed amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The English league had given a tentative return date of April 30 but that was pushed back with a statement saying the "2019-20 season will only return when it is safe and appropriate to do so" and only with the full support of government and medical guidance.

"There is a combined objective for all remaining domestic league and cup matches to be played," the league said, "enabling us to maintain the integrity of each competition."

The clubs are desperate for the season to be finished if possible to avoid the potential of having to reimburse broadcasters a reported £760 million if they fail to fulfil fixtures for television contracts.

However, clubs insist they will follow government advice on when it is safe for matches to return.

Premier League clubs also agreed to provide a £125 million fund for the English Football League and National League.

UEFA yesterday stated their determination that the current football season should be played to a conclusion and threatened that teams may be excluded from the next Champions League if their domestic competitions are ended prematurely.

The joint response came after the Belgian Pro League announced on Thursday that it recommended declaring the season over with the present table accepted as final. It is the first European league to take such a measure.

That means Club Brugge would in theory go straight into the next Champions League group stage, but UEFA, the ECA and the European Leagues indicated that they may be barred from continental competition if the Belgian league decision is finalised.



AROUND THE COUNTRY Bite-sized news to fit your attention span

The Italian Miracle

A returnee from Italy performed a miracle yesterday! He was under self-quarantine at his home in a district town, yet he injured himself in a road accident.

Please, no photos

A photojournalist entered a quarantine centre to take pictures of coronavirus-infected suspects. Having accomplished this dangerous mission, he was sent to savour this success over the next 14 days in self-quarantine at his home. Now he takes pictures of himself as he "works from home."

A pronunciation issue

"Mask" recently became one of the most widely-used words in the world, ever since the coronavirus started to wreak havoc. An entire village in Bangladesh was divided not over whether or not to use the facial protection gear, but over the pronunciation of the word "mask". One group said it was "m-a-s-k" and the other said it was "m-u-s-k". As an intense argument could not settle the matter, they tried to fight it out, where 50 ended up injured in that fierce clash. Still, the disagreement prevailed.

Oops!

An unlucky man failed to recognise his mask-clad father-in-law as he approached the latter for a source of fire to feed his bad nicotine habit. Humiliation, not help, followed.

Let's go see the infected

The news really travelled fast that a Bangladeshi, who returned from Italy with cold and fever, was kept under

home-isolation in Nobinagar. Over 500 people showed up just to have a look at the suspected coronavirus patient. Police struggled for hours to maintain law and order. Some had even gone in for a touch so they can build immunity fast. The rest is history.

Who do you believe in?

There was huge debate in Rajbari about whether coronavirus has a religion-bias or not. The debate soon turned into a brawl, costing one life. Yet,

coronavirus's affiliations remained a mystery.

From heroes to?

Suspected of being infected with coronavirus, a young man fled from hospital in Barishal to escape the confinement of quarantine. As the news spread, four local youths quickly chased him down, nabbed him successfully and got him admitted to hospital. Who would not go head over heels with the four? So, people, no less than 200 in number, carried the four heroes over their shoulders and marched the entire locality to celebrate the heroics.



Turkmenistan bans Covid-22

Man attempts to make moving roads happen (It's not going to happen)



OSAMA R KALAM, TACTLESS CORRESPONDENT

Turkmenistan yesterday imposed a ban on Covid-22, declaring the virus would never be allowed in the country anymore.

In far-reaching measures, the government of Turkmenistan also decided to put a gag order on anyone speaking about the "so-called virus".

Plainclothes policemen have begun patrolling the streets in hopes

of eavesdropping on coffee shop revolutionaries who dare to discuss the banned disease among themselves.

Furthermore, all mention of the word has been erased from all forms of communication, including on television channels, radios and newspapers. An attempt was also made to trademark the name and cleanse it from the internet entirely, but since this wasn't America, that move did not pan out so well.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED CORRESPONDENT

A frustrated Kabu Mia was seen leaving Dhoka West City Corporation's building last week. He attempted to storm out of there, but was carrying a canvas bag and a plastic wood model of his new invention.

Kabu Mia's tiny frame could barely support the heavy, complicated model of Moving Roads, so he had to stop at every door and patiently wait for someone to open it for him.

Although his exit wasn't the cinematic fit of rage he had hoped it'd be, we could understand his general vibe using an infrared vibe-check machine.

His frustration is justified, though -- the city of Dhoka is still bearing the scars of a failed skycar project. The high-power magnetic beams that would support the skycar network stand abandoned. All essential projects related to city development had to be scrapped after the economy crashed in 2020, the year of the covid-22 outbreak.

Meanwhile, the traffic situation in the city has only gotten worse, with abandoned beams taking up entire lanes. Vehicles move so little in the city that road accidents are rare; people die just by sitting in traffic for eternity.

One evening while returning from work, Kabu had a near-death experience. He was stuck in traffic for nine days with his co-worker Orange, who only speaks in *Oniket Prantor* lyrics.

Those 216 hours changed him as a man. The tortuous experience inspired him to leave his job as a social media manager, and dedicate his life to fixing the city's traffic jam by improving its public transport system.

"People often question my qualifications, but I have been an active member of Neourbanist Memes for Transit-oriented Teens (Numtots) on Facebook for the past seven years, so I'm much more knowledgeable than Abul Kander, minister of roads and watches," he claimed, trying to maintain a serious

expression while balancing Moving Roads using all four limbs.

"The idea is to stop people in their tracks, and get the tracks moving instead, you know," explains Kabu.

"How, and why?" I ask.[1]

"The roads move and you stand on it. It gets you where you have to go," he says.

Kabu has designed, what is essentially, an elevated expressway balanced on two giant

"Mayor Fatul told me over phone that he'll give me 73,000 bitcoins to fund this project, but today his assistant didn't even let me enter his office! She said he always makes promises he can't keep so I should leave!" said a disappointed Kabu.

Kabu invited the country's sovereign to visit his upcoming moving roadshow. "I have called Mr Kander many times to discuss this project but he refuses to talk to experts. I hope the



roller-skates. The skates are controlled by the invisible hand.

He's confident the city authorities will fund this project.

Asked why he cannot come up with a way to improve the existing public transportation system instead of putting wheels on roads, Kabu Mia said, "That system is too corrupt for me, man.

sovereign is smarter than this," he said.

Epilogue

When Kabu Mia was eight years-old, he watched the movie *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham*. Although he attributes his revolutionary idea to the epiphany he had after spending eight hours with Orange, his real inspiration came from the song *Suraj Hua Maddham*'s lyrics. You'll know.



Covid-19 crisis warrants a comprehensive, strategic rescue plan

Fragmented plans will not produce desired results

While the PM's Tk 5,000 crore stimulus package for export-oriented industries and government efforts to address the wage and food insecurity of people have been reassuring, especially with the entire country under partial lockdown, we are realising all too well that the present crisis and the measures taken to combat it will have far-reaching effects on practically every sector of the country. In fact, given our economic reality, there will not be a single sector that will not require government assistance. It is, therefore, crucial for the government to devise a well-thought-out, comprehensive and strategic rescue plan that must be multi-sectoral in approach. This means the emergency plan must prioritise certain sectors such as health, business, employment (formal and informal), SMEs (small and medium enterprises) and all marginalised groups.

As resources are limited, it is imperative that this bailout plan is implemented in the most effective and efficient way so that there is no waste of resources or irregularities in distribution or allocation. No doubt this is a mammoth task and a huge challenge for a government in such an overwhelming crisis. This is why the government must mobilise all the resources at hand and all the players who can contribute to implementing this rescue plan. Already we are seeing how businesses, NGOs, individuals and volunteer groups are trying to contribute in their own way. But in order for all these efforts and programmes to reach every sector and be sustainable, these must be done in a coordinated manner. The government must join hands with all these groups; in some cases, the government will lead and in others it will be the private sector or the NGOs depending on the sector being "rescued".

The need of the hour is thus to formulate this all-encompassing, strategic plan and implement it with efficiency and determination. In this regard, we urge the PM to take a lead on this.

Let journalists perform their duties without fear

Govt must ensure their safety

We are outraged at the news of a journalist being assaulted for reporting irregularities in relief distribution in Nabiganj upazila of Habiganj last Wednesday. The journalist was beaten up with a cricket bat allegedly by a union parishad chairman and his associates for posting a Facebook live video depicting anomalies in relief distribution in the district. Seven other journalists also sustained injuries in the incident while trying to save him. Such behaviour from public representatives is shameful especially when there are allegations against them of being involved in corruption. This, however, is just one small instance of how journalists are harassed and physically attacked across the country when they go for reporting corruption and anomalies committed by government high-ups and politically powerful people. Reportedly, around the same time, another journalist in Bhola was also assaulted for reporting irregularities in relief distribution.

There were many instances in the recent past where journalists were not only harassed and attacked, but also framed in false cases due to personal vendetta. And then there are those who went missing and could not be traced by the law enforcing agencies. Only last month, a journalist went missing and another was picked up from his home at the dead of night, beaten up and framed in a false case for writing against graft. The rampant misuse of power by some of the public representatives and government high-ups against journalists is against with the democratic values we so cherish and deserves urgent attention from the government. In fact, it is through media reports that the government can keep track of whether there is any irregularity that will ultimately hamper the relief efforts it is trying to implement.

In this particular case, we hope the government will take stern action against the chairman and his men. If the chairman thought he was defamed by the journalist, he could go to the local authorities to settle the matter. By attacking the journalist, he only set a bad precedent. We strongly protest this and demand justice for him.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

May we all defeat this enemy

It is indeed terrifying that all across the globe, from the advanced and rich nations to the poor, people are falling victim to the coronavirus, the deadly disease which is sparing none. From prince to pauper, no one is exempted. Never in my life have I thought that something so microscopic could cause such widespread havoc across the planet.

Many countries that possess the most sophisticated tools, weapons and infrastructure have become helpless to the unfathomable ferocity of the virus. We do not know how and when the rage will stop, and the uncertainty is surely making many of us deeply upset. Yet, we must not give up.

During these difficult times that we are going through, I would like to salute all those fearless people in the front line, including doctors and nurses who are placing their lives in danger to save those who are infected. In their endeavour, many of them have died, but many more are still fighting strongly, which provides a beacon of hope during the ongoing crisis. May the Almighty protect and bless us all.

Nur Jahan, Chattogram

SEITY SABUR AND SHEHZAD M ARIFEEN

PLAGUES, pandemics, floods and blights, we were once taught, are vehicles of retribution, weeding out those who have not prepared for divine wrath—the greedy, reckless, and arrogant. Yet heavenly justice can be merciless and undiscerning, destroying innocent lives for the hubris of their leaders. As the global division of labour has expanded and deepened, decades of "structural adjustment", privatisation, deregulation, austerity measures and the deliberate destruction of public institutions and social welfare infrastructure have left a fundamentally weak and vulnerable world. Now the West lies crippled, much of the Third World unable to even measure their predicament, and only a handful of governments managing any kind of effective response at all.

Here, in this crowded land, the first phase of an unofficial lockdown began after March 17, becoming official as of March 25. The government had at least two months to prepare since the first wave of both people and news arrived from China; yet it appears that, for some, other activities took precedence over the health of their fellow citizens. Now that we are finally taking it seriously, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina insists that we must "take measures in such a way that we can protect every person of the country [from the deadly disease]," while Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque has declared that "our country is now safe and doing well" (*The Daily Star*, March 30, 2020). Indeed, with very few new cases of infections being reported, it seems that Bangladesh is succeeding where so many of the mighty have failed. A formidable achievement indeed!

We have, however, sincere doubts about what is being said and the integrity of our institutions. Amidst continued claims that there are no shortages (bdnews24, March 29, 2020), only one of the four facilities originally assigned to be used for coronavirus patients is reported to be equipped for the task. There are severe shortages of protective gear for hospital staff, and too many reports of rejected patients, doctors and nurses refusing to approach them, forcing family members to attend to them instead. Even now, in the fourth week of the pandemic's career in Bangladesh, we are coming across news of a critical patient spending 12 hours in an ambulance, trying to get admitted into six hospitals one after

another, only to die in the end with zero medical attention (*Prothom Alo*, March 29, 2020). Meanwhile, the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) continues to stick to its own narratives with numerous reports coming in everyday of people unable to reach anyone on their "hotline".

While we preach "social distancing", practice surgical sanitisation, bemoan the flood of returning migrants and the *en masse* evacuation of Dhaka, we forget that our "remittance soldiers" do not have the support system to stay in a foreign land without daily wages, and that the working classes do not have the luxury of "social distancing" or sanitisation while going hungry for days under the lockdown (*The*

"middle-income" country.

Covid-19 has stripped naked the modern nation-state everywhere. The helplessness of the world's great statesmen to contain this pandemic has unmasked the deadly flaws in the structure of global capitalism that we have been enduring for ages, under the illusion that such a system is the path to human freedom and progress. This is what happens when we allow private gain to become the organising principle of social life: a world where we can produce enough "fast fashion", but not enough protective masks—a Bangladesh where we have the space to throw extravagant weddings, but not enough to provide safe housing during a crisis. Nishant



Unable to find work, a porter sits idly under a foot bridge at the capital's Karwan Bazar, on April 2, 2020.

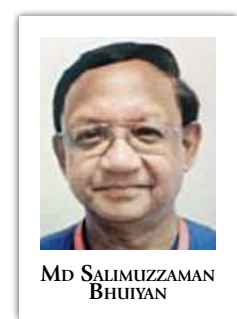
PHOTO: STAR

Daily Star, March 23, 2020). We have put the onus on able-bodied individuals to ensure their personal safety, while disguising the structural inequality that determines who gets infected and who can save themselves. Social distancing is social inequality: the elite retreat into safety while marginalised communities (the working classes, the impoverished elderly, sex workers, the *hijra*-transgender community, etc.) are left exposed. The nation has been abandoned to figure out how to survive on its own, either by hoarding monthly supplies, self-medicating, or reaching out to people in need. Such is the state of this aspiring

Shah, a friend of one of the writers, has put it well: "[T]he reason why we shall not accept this as normal is because the call for normalcy—and its accomplished rhetoric of productivity, work, business-as-usual—is in the service of the very system that has led to this crisis."

Encouragingly, collective efforts have emerged to raise funds and provide PPE and other necessities to the "socially distanced". Such efforts are commendable; yet why do these working-class bodies have to live on our handouts, instead of what they are entitled to as citizens of the state? While affluent voices have cried over the fate of "khete-khawa manush",

Strengthening our collective preparedness to fight Covid-19



MD SALIMUZZAMAN BHUIYAN

I work as a consultant anaesthetist and intensivist in a small district general hospital in north-west England. I work in the intensive care unit (ICU). I would like to share my experience with this virus and warn my country about the dangers of this pandemic and tell them about how to face it. I have been looking after coronavirus-infected patients for the last four weeks now. We have, unfortunately, lost two patients in our ICU despite multi-organ supports (lungs, heart and kidneys). Both had pre-existing multiple co-morbidities. Five of our ventilated patients came from the same area of Cumbria and both went to the same music festival. They had social contacts with each other before they had been admitted to the hospital. One of our anaesthetist colleagues and three nurses have contacted the infection while looking after ventilated patients in the ICU. We have sent them home for self-isolation. I continue to look after very sick patients in the ICU who are fighting for their lives.

The disease is called Covid-19 (Corona Virus Disease 2019). The viral infection had started in the Wuhan city, capital of Hubei province in China, in December 2019. This is a deadly virus. The virus is encapsulated, highly contagious and dangerous. There is no specific drug that can kill this virus. No vaccine is available against it either. The virus enters into the human body through the respiratory route, mainly nose and mouth. It ultimately settles in the lungs and very quickly damages the lungs by causing acute pneumonia. The chest x-rays of all patients look very similar and horrific. The patient finally dies from multi-organ failure. The initial symptoms of the infection are dry cough, high temperature, running nose, sore throat and shortness of breath. The infection spreads directly from person to person. The majority of patients have mild symptoms and eventually recover from the illness. Only a small percentage of the affected population dies. The elderly population with co-morbidities are mostly at risk and very vulnerable.

The epicentre of this pandemic is moving fast from country to country like a typical tornado. First it was in China, then Iran, then Italy and the rest of the Europe, including the UK, and now the epicentre has moved to the USA. So far, the highest number of people died in Italy. In the UK, the number of reported cases is doubling every five days. The number of fatalities is also rising every day. In the UK, more than 10,000 persons are being tested every day. So far, more than 203 countries and territories worldwide have been affected by this virus. No continent except Antarctica has been spared. The situation in the whole world is unpredictable, dangerous, crazy and very scary.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Message to the public: Awareness about the pandemic is vital. Please note that the enemy is very strong and powerful and we need to be prepared fully to defeat this virus. We need to be united as one nation to win this war. Simple measures like good hand hygiene, e.g. hand washing with soap, and maintenance of public health hygiene is important to stop the spread of infection. Self-isolation is very important. Don't go out of your house unless it is absolutely necessary and urgent. Don't invite your relatives or friends in your house. If anyone develops symptoms at home, isolate him/her in a well-ventilated room. If the health of the affected person

deteriorates, please seek medical help or take him/her to the nearest hospital for further treatment. Strictly maintain social distancing. Avoid meetings, public gathering, crowds and mixing with others. Avoid public functions, shopping malls, bus and railway stations, sea beaches, holiday places, clubs, restaurants and gymnasium. Don't come in close contact with others. We may have to consider isolating the elderly, especially those with significant health conditions, e.g. chest disease, diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease, for at least 2-3 months. Listen to the public health warnings and follow their recommendations. Support the elderly, vulnerable people in your area with food, medicine and necessary

patient's droplets, sneezing, coughing, and aerosols falling directly on you. Put on FFP3 mask, hat, gown, goggles/visor, gloves and shoe cover. Take special precaution during intubation and extubation of a patient in the ICU and in theatre. Dispose all the equipment and accessories you have used (mask, gown, gloves, etc.) to treat the patient. After use, send all of them for incineration. Clean the infected area with antiseptic/alcohol wash. Adopt the policy of barrier nursing. Train the healthcare workers about hand hygiene, donning (how to put on PPEs) and doffing (how to dispose the PPEs). Don't allow any visitors or relatives to come near the infected patient. Follow the public health recommendations and WHO guidelines.

Message to the government: This is a global public health disaster. More than 53,000 people worldwide have died already. Unfortunately, Bangladesh can't escape from this onslaught. People's lives are at stake here. Please take it seriously. I would like to urge you to take the following urgent measures: 1) Import and produce testing kits to diagnose Covid-19; 2) Prepare and support our doctors, nurses and healthcare workers to face this challenge; 3) Equip them with PPEs and necessary equipment to protect them from the disease; 4) Train the healthcare workers to combat the disease; 5) Make emergency provisions for extra treatment facilities in hospitals throughout the country; 6) Also make extra provisions for ventilatory support of seriously ill patients in both government and private hospitals; 7) Ban public meetings, public functions and social gathering to stop the spread of the disease; 8) Encourage the public to stay at home and maintain social distancing; 9) Recruit and involve the recently retired doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers to join the government health service; and 10) Involve the army medical core doctors and nurses to care for the coronavirus victims.

I express my sincere thanks to the government for the limited measures Bangladesh has taken so far. I also express my deepest sympathy for those who have already perished and also for their families. Let's pray for the safety of the health of Bangladesh.

Dr Md Salimuzzaman Bhuiyan is the General Secretary of Bangladesh Medical Society in the UK. Email: mszaman57@yahoo.co.uk

Be My Quarantine

Some random thoughts on Covid-19 isolation



SHAMSAD MORTUZA

TOO little money, too much screen time, and uneven distribution of household chores and childcare—a recipe made in hell. Covid-19 is the novel source of love's labour's lost. It used to be "infidelity", but now "domestic conflict" is being touted as the prime cause for divorces in China. There has been a whopping 25 percent increase in the number of divorces following the government-mandated lockdowns. Familiarity, it seems, is breeding contempt. Many couples are fighting over trivial things, not knowing how to negotiate for their own share of time and space in a shared relationship. The rate of domestic violence too has shot up. And officials in China, according to a Bloomberg BusinessWeek report, are struggling to cope with the onrush of divorce applications. In Hunan, "staff members didn't even have time to drink water" as they dealt with cases of separation.

The rest of the world is catching up. "After just over a week of the official order for UK families to stay indoors, nine people have been killed at home in Britain. Sadly, the death toll will not end there," writes Barbara McCarthy in an op-ed for RT, quoting a domestic abuse victim, who said, "The lockdown is hard for everyone, but if you're a victim of abuse, it's hell. You get no downtime." Women are the most likely victims of domestic violence, especially in a system that boasts patriarchy. A Malaysian health ministry directives failed to hide its gender bias in one of its illustrated leaflets designed for women in quarantine. "If you see your husband carry out a task in a manner that clashes with your own method, avoid nagging," the image reads. The leaflet also advised women to "mimic the tone of Doraemon" – a robotic cat from a popular Japanese manga—and maintain a shy, submissive attitude and "feminine" laugh. Just months into the crisis, our social fabric is showing signs of wear and tear. What

does it tell us about humans, the paragon of animals that take their vantage position in the evolutionary schema for granted? The myth of social relations has been punctured by the tiniest of micro-organisms, while asocial behaviours are becoming viral (excuse my pun). The insularity promoted at both individual and official levels is melting down the hide of civility, and the animal self is coming to the fore. The animal that knows just one law: survival of the self. Be fit enough to survive. Doctors in Italy have the tough

choice of being the jury and executioner to judge who is fit enough to contribute to society for some more time. They have to decide the recipient of a ventilator, and ponder whether patients over the age of 80 should be allowed to live or die. The crisis is testing our humanity everywhere. In some cases, the animals that we carry inside surface like the werewolves under a full moon howling at the edge of the forest. Sometimes, they can take the shape of a customer spitting on the fruits in a supermarket or a businessman hoarding stocks hoping to profit in near future. For long, we humans have established the myth

of taming the jungle. The adventures of a white boy in Africa (Tarzan) or a brown boy in India (Mowgli) tell the tales of human triumphs over nature. Civilisation has taught us how to exploit physical nature in order to replenish human nature (including spirituality), build human institutions (including marriage), and pursue growth (including economic development). However, there have been many moments of crisis in history that reminded us of the ills of such transgressions.

being redefined. Some external force-field is restricting our limits. And there are internal ones, too. New prescriptions are given: work from home, bank from home, enter the cloud, play online, and the list goes on. As we are forced to enter the cauldron of our own, the individual bubbles clash with one another, and burst. The divorces are symptomatic of the daily soap opera. Then again, these domestic disturbances are just the tip of the iceberg. What lies beneath is a whole burden of uncertainties that await us. On the surface, we fight over little things, but deep down there are disturbances of a different sort. The immediate uncertainty, of course, implicates our physical health. We are afraid of being contaminated. We are anxious. If the virus is allowed to take its natural course, it will reign for the next two years affecting 60-70 percent of the world population, leaving millions dead in the process. The next uncertainty involves our economic health: put bluntly, what will happen if we run out of our money? Can we think of a state without money? And of course, the above two affect our emotional state. The crisis, therefore, involves physical health, economic health and mental health.

So far, the crisis management has been done by the states. The sincerity, capability and resources of the state are being tested. Once they are exhausted or stretched, the real danger will come in sight. The rich/poor chasm will be bigger than ever. And these external factors will change our psychological makeup forever. Many radical proposals are being considered. So far, most of them tend to highlight virtual experiences in place of the real: online teaching, online sports... everybody is saying "eccc" to pose for the dystopian snapshot.

The impossibility is here. The sci-fi movies are suddenly making sense. All these talks about the machines taking over or humanity changing its face are suddenly more real than fiction. We are no longer the supreme rational creatures who can logically and emotionally articulate the merits of humanism, and justify and explain how nature was created to serve us. We are suddenly faced with a new reality where our fate is enmeshed with the environment. Salvor Zizek, one of the most eminent

cultural philosophers of our time, however thinks that the "biggest threat Covid-19 epidemic poses is not our regression to survivalist violence, but BARBARISM with human face." He warns us of a system that will monopolise the cure, while legitimising it with human sympathy and ideology. President Trump's offer of USD 1 billion to Tübingen-based biopharmaceutical company CureVac to secure the vaccine "only for the United States" is a case in point.

On a positive note, the isolation has allowed us to put matters into perspective. The rise of violence in a domestic space, for instance, goes on to show how toxic we have become, both for us and for others. Our withdrawal from our surrounding has allowed the quality of air to get better—fewer people are dying of respiratory diseases (irony, eh!). You can actually see the city sky as the shroud of pollution has been lifted. The birds are singing in the concrete jungle. The dolphins have returned to the beaches. At a time of separation, we have thoughts of union. We are reminded of the other species with whom we share the world. We are not the only inhabitants of the world whose worries should worry the lot.

It's about time we rethought what it means to be human. Having said that, I shall fail in my duty if I do not hail those heroes who are proving humanity on a daily basis. Our cleaning staff, our doctors and nurses, our security officials, our policy makers. The philanthropists, the scientists, the technicians, the food producers and suppliers who have come to the aid of others. They are the real heroes of humanity. Their fight, however, is one that is being fought outside. There is another battle that needs to be waged. It is inside. It can be fought while being in quarantine. A battle to ensure inner peace and stability by seeking a harmonious balance between man and man, man and nature, and nature and nature. By understanding who we are, and what our individual, social, and environmental purposes are in the grand scheme of things. We just need to look inside, and tell us: be my quarantine.

Shamsad Mortuza is a professor of English, University of Dhaka (now on leave). Currently, he is Pro-Vice-Chancellor of ULAB. Email: shamsad71@hotmail.com

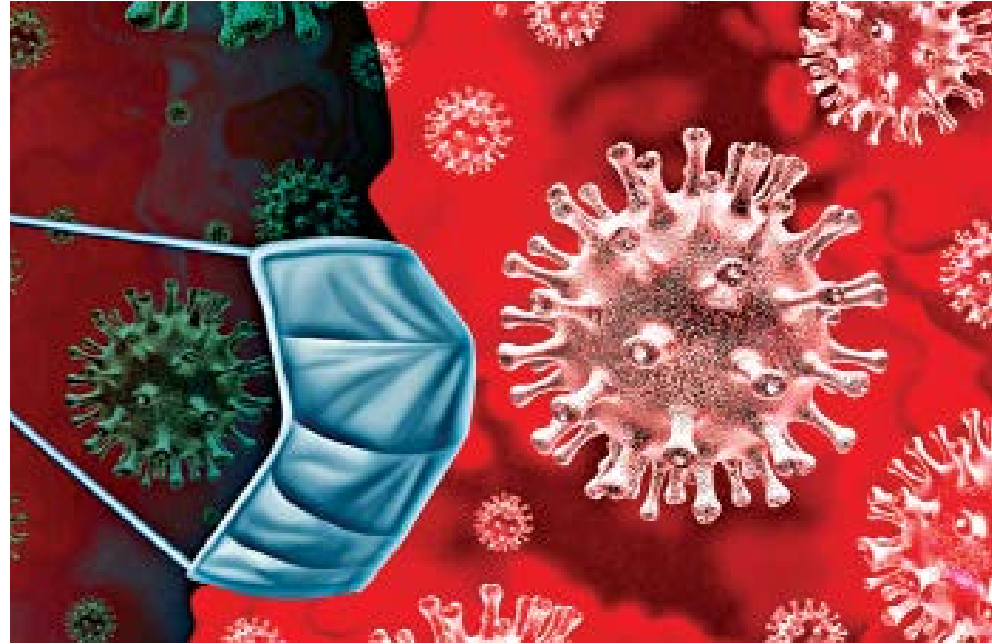


PHOTO: COLLECTED

Novel coronavirus is an atrophy of a similar human/animal transgression/transaction. It is a disease that has been transmitted from wildlife to humans. Kate Jones, the chair of ecology and biodiversity at UCL, reminds us of the hidden cost of human economic development. "There are just so many more of us, in every environment. We are going into largely undisturbed places and being exposed more and more. We are creating habitats where viruses are transmitted more easily, and then we are surprised that we have new ones," Jones said. In our insulated isolation, we suddenly wake up to a new reality. Our circles are

Looking back at the 50 years of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad

MOFIJUL HOQUE

With the whole world entangled in the coronavirus pandemic, we have no other option but to shut down all work and fight to contain the deadly disease. Apart from the medical aspect of this battle involving doctors, health workers, physical facilities and equipment, it is also a massive social struggle with the people of the world coming together. In the midst of this unprecedented global crisis, with all public programmes cancelled, we have an occasion worth celebrating—the 50th anniversary of the founding of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad. The struggle of Mahila Parishad to promote the rights of the women in Bangladesh is part of the global movement to establish a society where men and women are treated equally. It is both a national and global struggle, like the present one against the coronavirus, incorporating individuals, families, communities, the nation and the wider world out there.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad was established on April 4, 1970, immediately after the mass uprising that toppled the decade-long military rule of General Ayub Khan. Women played a significant role in the movement; their massive participation was a new phenomenon, and in the end they created a platform of their own to promote the rights of women. Sufia Kamal, the respected poet and social activist, was the President and Maleka Begum was the General Secretary. Sufia Kamal was joined by a group of senior activists who had pioneered the women's movement in the early days of Pakistan. The bulk of the new members came from the student movement of the Sixties.

They were vibrant and committed.

In a way, Mahila Parishad reflected the long journey of women's struggle in Bengal. Among others, Sufia Kamal was the junior-most associate of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, Manorama Basu was a veteran of anti-colonial movement, Hena Das was a legendary leader of the peasants movement, etc. The large number of young activists formed the base with blessings from the veterans. There cannot be a better combination. The new organisation quickly expanded its branches but got engulfed in the great War of Liberation of the Bengali people. The nine-month long ordeal of the people made a big impact on society, especially on the women who contributed in many ways to become victors and suffered great pain as victims of sexual violence. The emergence of Bangladesh as a secular, democratic, national and liberal republic created great euphoria while Mahila Parishad started a new journey. Women's role in society can no longer be denied in the name of obscurantism or religious bigotry. The constitution adopted in 1972 recognised the equality of man and woman. As affirmative action, the victims of sexual violence during the war were recognised as "Birangana" (or war heroine), quota for women in government service was introduced, seats for women in Parliament were reserved as a temporary measure, etc. But such policies were few in number and symbolic in nature. The patriarchal society imposed its own dictum on the lives of women. The male-dominated society was not ready to accept women as equal in their rights. There existed a huge gap between

constitutional proclamations and the policy and practices of the government. Moreover, the violence against women remained as widespread as before, if not more.

Against this backdrop, Mahila Parishad organised the women for the recognition of their rights and formulation of appropriate policies. It did its utmost to protest against violence and stand by the victims. In view of the widespread violence, the intervention of Mahila Parishad was selective but nonetheless made a big impact in society. Its quick, effective and persistent action brought many cases to the limelight, exposed the vulnerabilities of women, drew attention to the need for formulating proper policies and reforming the law. One can cite the example of Shabmeher whom the traffickers sold to the sex traders which ultimately led to her death by suicide. The brutal murder of Saleha by Dr Iqbal, or Sharmin Rima by Munir, both from the affluent educated class, showed how vulnerable women were irrespective of their social or educational background. The case of Noorjahan, a rural girl from Kamalganj, Moulvibazar, stoned to death following a fatwa by a local Maulana, shocked the nation. Similarly, the rape and subsequent murder of Yeasmin by a group of law enforcers in Dinajpur gave rise to massive protests where Mahila Parishad played a major role. In many such cases, Parishad activists had to launch sustained and persistent acts to ensure justice for the victims. The mural of Yeasmin erected by the local branch of Mahila Parishad on the road to Dinajpur reminds all of the victims and their struggle for justice.

Such acts highlighting the violence against women were a learning experience for BMP

organisation. The organisation developed an elaborate mechanism to provide legal support to persecuted women, establish Rokeya Sadan as a home for women victims and their children, advocate strongly for the enactment of law to protect women, adopt appropriate policy in support of victims, etc. As a result of such actions, the government enacted Act on Women and Child Abuse in 2010. Proper implementation of the law is the new challenge that requires many support mechanisms as well as reforms.

The holistic approach of Mahila Parishad has driven the organisation to adopt multifarious measures being carried out by the members of its wide-ranging network. BMP is lobbying for the adoption of a Uniform Family Code. As part of this effort, in conjunction with legal experts and civil society representatives, they formulated a draft law in 1997 and handed it over to the government. This is a forward-looking document that storms the citadel of patriarchy. The growing participation of women in the workforce has made it imperative for BMP to address the issues of their rights, protection, pay, health, support mechanism and other related issues.

The linkage of national struggle with the global march of women for their fundamental rights was part of BMP's goal right from the beginning. The close relation with the left-leaning World Federation of Democratic Women inspired BMP to introduce 8 March as the International Women's Day in Bangladesh as early as in 1972. The subsequent development within the UN to promote women's rights has opened up new opportunities for the

organisation. The organisation is a strong partner in monitoring the implementation of CEDAW charter. It is also lobbying for the full ratification of CEDAW including clause 2 and 17A. Mahila Parishad is engaged in promoting gender perspective in both governmental and non-governmental policies and implementation. The content and form of women's movement are changing and BMP has to redefine itself in light of the new reality.

Sufia Kamal proclaimed in late Eighties that women's right is a human right. This is a globally recognised slogan to make women equal to men in every aspect of life. In Bangladesh, BMP became the embodiment of that struggle, with its widespread organisational network incorporating members from a broad spectrum of society, both rural and urban. The voluntary participation of women is the basis of the organisation and this is what makes BMP different from others. The organisation has transformed itself to meet the new challenges of life; it has expanded its organisational network, turned itself into the largest women organisation of the land, and at the same time it remains rooted in the nation's past and true to its core philosophy as an organisation linked to the great tradition of Rokeya and others, composed of members rendering voluntary service to the cause of the emancipation of women. The organisation has come a long way. We are confident that it will march forward to bring emancipation not only for women but men and women alike.

Mofijul Hoque is a war crimes researcher and trustee of the Liberation War Museum.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

April 4, 1968
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., ASSASSINATED

In this day in 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr., a leader of the American civil rights movement who was in Memphis, Tennessee, to support a strike by the city's sanitation workers, was assassinated by James Earl Ray.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Snoozes
- 5 Brief rest
- 10 Figure of speech
- 12 To the time that
- 13 Place for a date, often
- 15 Historic time
- 16 "Well, that's obvious!"
- 17 Chest muscle, for short
- 18 Keep
- 20 Decree
- 21 Wild card, at times
- 22 Young fellows
- 23 Dance music
- 25 Ripped
- 28 Deck of fortunes

DOWN

- 1 More pleasant
- 2 Found darling
- 3 Buccaneer
- 4 Junior, to senior
- 5. Impel
- 6 Termite's kin
- 7 Perfect place
- 8 Singer O'Connor
- 9 Votes in
- 11 Famed Florentine family
- 14 Divination tool
- 19 "The Age of Anxiety" poet
- 20 Plant life
- 24 Loving touch
- 25 Goat snack, in cartoons
- 26 Meadowlark's cousin
- 27 Unruly crowd
- 29 "Becket" actor
- 30 Off-campus local
- 33 Oboe parts
- 35 Bullfight cries
- 38 Auction signal
- 39 Young one

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

SETS PAIRS
PLOT ALCAP
ULNA TOYCAR
REGIMENERA
SNARINGSINK
WET MINK
ASLAN FANGS
THEY SOD
EAT STARING
ARI COMICAL
SITTER GAME
ENGINE AMENS
GOATS LES

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

Nationalism, Patriotism, Cosmopolitanism: Tagore's Ambiguities and Paradoxes (Part II)

MOHAMMAD A. QUAYUM

Like nationalism, Tagore's perspectives on patriotism are also characterised by certain paradoxes and ambiguities; he was a fervid patriot, yet he openly denounced and deplored the sentiment of patriotism. We know that Tagore wrote many songs celebrating his native land and paying homage to its beauty and fecundity, of which, as mentioned earlier, two have become the national anthems of India and Bangladesh. Yet he loathed being called a patriot and derided the concept vehemently in many of his writings. For example, in a letter to Aurobindo Mohan Bose, responding to some harsh comments on his view of nationalism by Abala Bose, wife of the celebrated scientist Sir Jagadish Chandra

So why this dichotomy in Tagore's sensibility? Why did he reject something that seemed at once an integral part of his imagination? There are various possibilities. First of all, Tagore saw nationalism and patriotism as inseparable twins; both had a cultish nature that amplified the "vulgarity, cruelty, [and] greed" in people and sought to replace humanity and God with a bloated sense of self and the nation. As pointed out by Aurobindo in a previous statement, patriotism was a sort of a "religion," which, like religious orthodoxy, could engender, in Tagore's own phrases, "abnormal vanity," "moral callousness" and "a spirit of persecution" in its followers. In this context,

It is perhaps because of this inherent danger in the sentiment of patriotism – that it could easily translate into jingoism and reveal itself either on the battlefields of Europe (as in the case of the two World Wars) or in the religious riots in South Asia (as it is happening right now in Delhi, instigated by Modi's ultra-Hindu-nativist-xenophobic nationalism, as I write this article for *The Daily Star*) – that Tagore remained ambivalent about the concept.

Another possible explanation is that, to Tagore patriotism was a personal experience that "comes out of a quest." It was not a matter of fancy or whim, simply because one was born in a particular land. "Those who think that the country is theirs simply because they have been born in it are creatures besotted by external things of the world," Tagore stated. To make desh into *suadesh*, a country into one's own country, one had to apply one's *atmasakti*, or the power of self-making, and reimagine the land through "one's own knowledge, intelligence, love and effort." Therefore, to Tagore, patriotism possessed added meaning and significance to its political and popular usage; it had an imaginative and a spiritual side that eluded most people, who professed their love and loyalty to a country merely because they were its inhabitants.

Moreover, Tagore believed in the harmony and co-existence of the opposing spirits of attachment and detachment. "In their union dwells the ideal of perfection," he wrote in "The Fourfold Way of India." In the context of patriotism, this means that while one should love one's country, one should still remain spiritually detached from it. "The harmony of bondage and freedom is the dance of creation," Tagore explained. He developed this idea beautifully using the metaphor of walking: "In the act of walking, attachment is in the step that the foot takes when it touches the earth; detachment is in the movement of the other foot when it raises itself." Given this metaphorical aspect to Tagore's understanding of the concept, it is no surprise that he actively distanced himself from and disparaged the same idea when it was discussed among politicians and the masses in mundane everyday speech.

A similar kind of ambivalence appears in Tagore's treatment of the concept of cosmopolitanism. We know that throughout his writings Tagore spoke about creating a world culture and bringing humanity together in "one nest." He longed for a world

that was "free from all antagonisms of race, nationality, creed or caste" and that "[had] not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls." In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech in 1913, Tagore categorically stated, "India is there to unite all human races." In a letter to his son Rathindranath, dated 11 October 1916, he further stated, "The age of narrow chauvinism is coming to an end – for the sake of the future, the first steps towards this great meeting of world humanity will be taken on this very fields of Bolpur" (where Tagore's institutions Santiniketan and Visva Bharati are located).

In spite of such supra-national aspirations and desire to create a *mahajati* (grand human community) through the harmony of all human races, Tagore – somewhat curiously – spurned the idea of cosmopolitanism on at least one occasion. Pairing it with nationalism in his book *Nationalism*, he disdainfully stated, "Neither the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism, nor the fierce self-idolatry of nation-worship is the goal of human history." This statement seemingly undercuts everything that Tagore envisioned with regard to creating a global fellowship of humanity and cultivating cultural cooperation and an international mind.

So why did Tagore make such a dismissive comment on cosmopolitanism? Perhaps it was his attempt to reject the type of specifically *political* cosmopolitanism that was developing in Asia around the same time, in which the British Empire was expected to evolve into a new cosmopolitan super-state, and nationalism to be realised in a federation of nations. The leaders of this project included such cosmopolitan visionaries as Dr. Lim Boon Keng in Singapore, Anand de Souza in Sri Lanka and the Theosophists in India, headed by Anne Besant. These individuals, as Mark R. Frost explains, did not give up their "nationalist aspirations" but rather, wanted to tie it "to demands for a 'reconstructed' British Empire, an imperial federation and even a League of Nations that would... eventually (following the end of global hostilities [after World War I]) usher in a new age of peace and brotherhood."

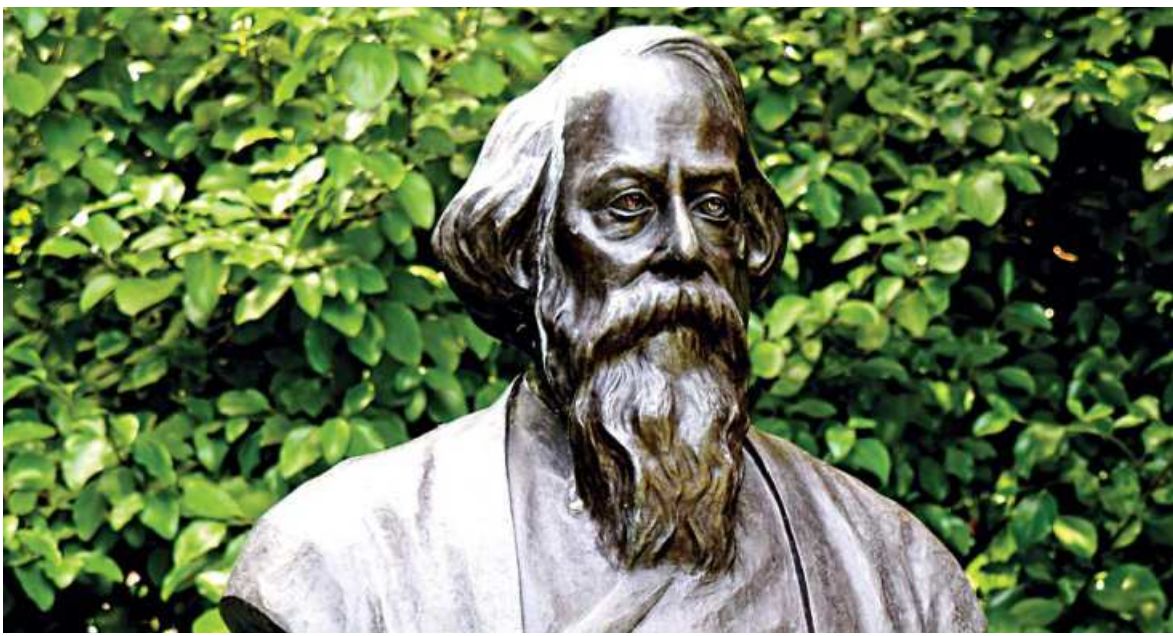
For example, Dr. Lim Boon Keng, a Chinese nationalist and Empire loyalist, envisioned the great potential of the British Empire to bring about a "great union" and a "cosmic harmony" in which the Empire itself would act as the vehicle. To attain such "unity" and "oneness" of

humanity, Lim "advocated the further extension of English as the *lingua franca* of the British Empire." In Sri Lanka, likewise, de Souza dreamed of a "World-Britain" in which the British Empire would turn into a "commonwealth of nations," wherein "No more shall we be two empires – 'White' and 'coloured' under a single name – but one, where all shall have rights as they are able to bear responsibility." Similarly, in India, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, one of the adherents of Besant's political ideas, when asked why he was not in favour of India separating from the Empire like the Sinn Feiners in Ireland, replied, "We want to be in the Empire on terms of equality. We do not want to separate ourselves, but we want to extend within the League of the Empire."

Tagore was not interested in any such political cosmopolitanism that would transform the Empire into a gigantic nation, in which the individual would still have to sacrifice his/her moral qualities for some political and commercial gain and surrender his/her spontaneous self to a virulent self-seeking and artificial life, which would bring power and prosperity but no inner fulfilment or lasting peace.

Tagore's cosmopolitanism was more cultural and spiritual in nature, in which the individual would be expected to share a sense of hospitality and sympathy towards all fellow human beings, and maintain a sense of openness to the world around him. Kwame Anthony Appiah is of the view that a principle characteristic of cosmopolitanism is a feeling of obligation to others, beyond family and kinship ties, "or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship," an interest in the values and practices that lend significance to other people. Tagore's cosmopolitanism shares these spiritual-cultural qualities advocated by Appiah and others, as opposed to the League of Empire type of cosmopolitanism championed by those contemporaries named above. Thus, rejecting political unity vis-à-vis spiritual unity, in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech Tagore affirmed, "Therefore, no superficial bond of political unity can appeal to us, can satisfy us, can ever be real to us... We must discover the most profound unity, the spiritual unity between the different races."

Mohammad A. Quayum is the author of *Beyond Boundaries: Critical Essays on Rabindranath Tagore (Bangla Academy, 2014)* and editor of *The Poet and His World (Orient Longman, 2011)* and *Tagore, Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism (Routledge, 2020)*.



Bose, Tagore commented, "Patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter; my refuge is humanity. I will not buy glass for the price of diamonds, and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live." In a letter to C.F. Andrews, with whom Tagore had a friendship of, in Uma Das Gupta's phrase, "largeness and freedom," he further wrote, "This is the ugliest side of patriotism. For in small minds, patriotism dissociates itself from the higher ideal of humanity. It becomes the magnification of self, on a stupendous scale – magnifying our vulgarity, cruelty, greed; dethroning God, to put up this bloated self in its place."

Nussbaum's response to Richard Rorty's appeal to Americans not to "disdain patriotism as a value" seems pertinent. Comparing Nikhil's cosmopolitan worldview in *The Home and the World* to Rorty's, Nussbaum explains, "I believe, as do Tagore and his character Nikhil, that this emphasis on patriotic pride is both morally dangerous and, ultimately, subversive of some of the worthy goals patriotism sets out to serve... Richard Rorty's patriotism may be a way of bringing all Americans together; but patriotism is very close to jingoism, and I'm afraid I don't see in Rorty's argument any proposal for coping with this very danger."



FICTION |

The Hunt

HASAN MARUF

The crunch of snow beneath our pads was cracking like the breaking of bones between our teeth. The tundra, echoing for miles, a vast white desert, and our breath is the only warmth in the barren winterscape. The quickstep of our feet, pacing in time with one another; our bellies empty, senses sharpened because of it. Smells hang in the air like dead men at the gallows. She - weak, injured, alone and out of breath. Five miles had we followed the trail of her scent! Blood from her wound, blood from her menstruation; her fear is the engine that drives her on. Soon she could sleep on the blanket of crisp, white snow, her throat opened and stomach emptied. Liver first, that's our prize. We claimed first our triumph, later the clan feast on the carrion that we had left.

She was slowing down but we quickened our pace. It was not speed that we had in our favour, its endurance, our steadfastness, focus and will, like the sea that washed stones smooth. Ahead, in a clearing, she stumbled and I took her flank, she toppled like cards. Your jaws around her throat, her eyes, an obsidian abyss, her blood was pouring out like a red carpet against the white snow appeared brighter than a ruby. Her life: ebbing away--- she fell silently, quickly, into her sempiternal slumber.

The metallic throng of her liver slipped down my throat and my sister came to take her fill.

"Wait your turn!"

I ordered. She lowered her head

and falls back in line. Your mouth was incriminated in scarlet, your steely eyed gaze flashed me a glance and for a moment I wondered if I too would be reprimanded, but you buried your face again in the caribou and feasted on her warm, tender flesh. The last twitches of her body faded, she took longer to leave than most, her will was strong, and she must have had young ones.

Our stomachs were full; we stepped aside and let the clan devour the leftovers. They snarled and gripped at each other like humans around a thanksgiving dinner. The lone one waited... he did not eat unless everyone else had finished. It was either that or -- die alone in the wasteland out here. Vulnerability was seemingly a reward like The Crown's golden jubilee. He had tolerated, to a degree, but my King would open his throat if he displeased him at all.

We headed back to the river where the young ones whined at our return. An old fox hole we took last winter was a favourite place to have this year's litter. Four pups, three male and a bitch, ran up to me and licked the fresh blood from my mouth, I regurgitated and they fed on the partially digested flesh. My sister took them off to the water's edge to drink where they would like to chase the birds.

Defunct almost deadened, we tumbled onto the ground and slept for a few hours in the warmth of the den, bedded with leaves and fur. The smell of urine permeated; the pups still in



infancy had yet to go outside when they needed to empty their bladders. It did not stop us slumping into this

quiet torpor, only the smell of humans would do that, and they had not been here in three seasons.

The nightfall came and the temperature dropped depressingly low, the thick coats we had protect us from the cold, but we still huddled together for warmth and a pleasant interlude. I needed to stretch my legs so I ambled outside into the bitter night's air. The sky was dark violet aqua chiffon, littered with stars; the moon--- a silver disc, the lake of the gods, reflected in the heavens. While the others slept you came to me and we mated under the moonlight. Afterwards, we called out in a vociferous celebration.

We howled for the offering of flesh the caribou gave to us. She was the Hades incarnate; audacious yet indissoluble, she would sustain our pack until we needed to be fed again. We honoured her under the moonlight; we honoured the land--- the place we call home, the fruitless snow for protecting us from too many humans. We honoured the sky, for the light that was given to us so that we could hunt and live; we honoured our family, our unity, and the bonds we shared. We honoured the moon herself--- that pale goddess--- this is our call; we honoured it now and it echoed through us into future generations. We are the wolves; wild, rapacious and free, and the royalty of the North.

Hasan Maruf teaches English in DPS STS School, Dhaka. What influences him to lift the pen is not only for his adoration for creative writing, but as a form of therapy to seek spiritual salvation.

CENTRE STAGE

Azmeri Haque Badhon

Model and actor Azmeri Haque Badhon stepped foot in the showbiz scene with Lux Channel I Miss Photogenic back in 2006. Rising to fame with her acting in dramas, like 'Choita Pagla', 'Shuvo Bibaho', 'Rong', among several others, she conquered the audiences' hearts. In this week's interview, she talks about her time in quarantine and what precautionary measures she has been taking for her society during this crisis.

Do you have any advice to the readers regarding the coronavirus?
There is a world of misinformation spiralling around the Internet which people are believing, and the real information isn't reaching them. As a medical student, I think I have a slightly better understanding about this than some, so I would request everyone to listen to the authorities. People are getting beaten up for not staying home, but that is for their own well-being. We have to maintain quarantine since we don't want the disease to spread like Italy or the US. They are developed countries, but they're still going through a really rough time. As a developing country, we are sure to be in an even worse condition. So, we must stay home and maintain distance, even between family members, to stop the spread. If someone does get it, they can contact emergency services. To get more information, people can go to WHO's website. We should help in our own way wherever we are. We have a responsibility to us and everyone around us. We have to be mentally strong to battle this since we have to keep our immune systems in check, and if we're struggling mentally, it might affect our immunity.

How are you spending time in quarantine?
This is the first time I've been in a situation like this. Although it is advised to not panic, I'm a little scared since I live with my father, who is elderly, my mother, who



is diabetic, and my child, who is only eight. I've always maintained a disciplined life, and I'm trying to do the same now, like exercising and eating healthy, although some things are bound to change. I still wake up early and do facial yoga. Then I drink some fluids to

cleanse my body, like lemon water, basil seeds mixed with water and blended aloe vera and turmeric. A few hours later, I do some home workouts. After my daughter is awake, I'm with her when she is doing her school work. Following that, we tend to watch movies or

listen to music. In the afternoon, we go to the rooftop where I jog. I'm also trying to maintain a diary now to record my days. I'm reading books as well. The new things that we're all following are washing hands regularly and maintaining physical distance because we don't know who might be a coronavirus vector without exhibiting symptoms. We've also told our household helpers and chauffeur to not come during quarantine. Another thing that I've done is forbid any family member to visit now. This may seem extremely rude in our society's perspective, but desperate times call for desperate measures. I've also uploaded a video on how to properly wash our hands on social media.

Can you talk about the disinfectant you have been promoting?

I have a friend, Amin, Dr Md. Nuhu, who is an assistant scientist at icddr. He told me a few years ago that according to a study conducted by icddr, if we mix four teaspoons of detergent with 1.5 litres of water, it can be used as a great alternative for handwash. They also found out that the handwash we used isn't potent enough to kill some powerful germs. This soapy water is very cheap, only 5 taka per bottle. I thought that this should be known by people, especially now. I've also installed it outside our house, so that our neighbours can use it before entering their homes.

By Amina Hossain

POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

Here are some binge worthy movie and series you can spend your time watching while you stay at home social distancing, keeping yourself, as well as others, safe.



A Quiet Place Part II

A Quiet Place Part II is a horror film, written and directed by John Krasinski, produced under the banners of *Sunday Night Productions* and *Platinum Dunes*, distributed by *Paramount Pictures*, and stars Emily Blunt, Millicent Simmonds and Noah Jupe, among

others. The film, which is a sequel to *A Quiet Place*, was internationally released on March 8, 2020, revolves around the lives of the Abbott family as they tread in the outside world and discover threats far worse than creatures that hunt by sound.

THE VALHALLA MURDERS

The Valhalla Murders is a mystery-thriller television series on *Netflix*. It has been created by Thordur Palsson, produced by Kristinn Thordarson alongside others, and stars Aldis Amah Hamilton, Bergur Ebbi Benediktsson and Edda Björgvinsdóttir, among others. The story follows a detective who is out to catch a serial killer with the police. It was originally released on March 8, 2020.



FEEL GOOD

Feel Good is a comedy-drama TV series, following the life of a comedian, Mae, who is also a recovering addict, as she tries to balance every aspect of her life. It was created by Mae Martin and Joe Hampson, produced under the banner of *Objective Fiction*, and stars Mae Martin, Charlotte Ritchie and Lisa Kudrow, among others. It was first aired on March 18, 2020 on *Channel 4*, *All 4* and *Netflix*.



A PIECE OF YOUR MIND

A Piece of Your Mind is a South Korean romantic-comedy television series. It has been directed by Lee Sang-yeob, distributed by *tvN*, and stars Jung Hae-in, Chae Soo-bin, Lee Ha-na, and Kim Sung-kyu, among others. The story follows a classical music recording engineer struggling in life, falling in love with an AI programmer. It was released on March 23, 2020.

Self Made

Self Made: Inspired by the Life of Madam C. J. Walker is a drama miniseries, first aired on March 20, 2020 on *Netflix*. It was produced by DeMane Davis, Eric Oberland and Lena Cordina under the banners of *SpringHill Entertainment*, *Orit Entertainment*, *Wonder Street* and *Warner Bros. Television*, and stars Octavia Spencer, Tiffany Haddish and Carmen Ejogo, among others. The plot, which is based on A'Lelia Bundles' biography, *On Her Own Ground*, follows the life of America's first female self-made millionaire and her haircare empire.

Amina Hossain & Shreya Shomoyeeta



GRAPEVINE



SONG against the virus

Two singers from two different generation, Akhi Alamgir and Oishee have released a Rabintra Sangeet together. The reason for them singing the song together is to call for people to unite in the fight against the novel Coronavirus. Music director Kaushik Hossain Taposh made the piano track for the song. It was then sent to the artists, and then Akhi Alamgir and Oishee recorded the song, *Anondoloke*

Mongolaloke Satya Sundoro from their respective houses, and alongside them nine other artists have also given their voices to the song. Akhi Alamgir said, "When Taposh sent me the piano track, I loved how it sounded. I then sang along to it and recorded my parts. Oishee and the other singers then recorded their parts. In these troubling times, this initiative is surely going to give people courage."

Mamo's ventures before shutdown

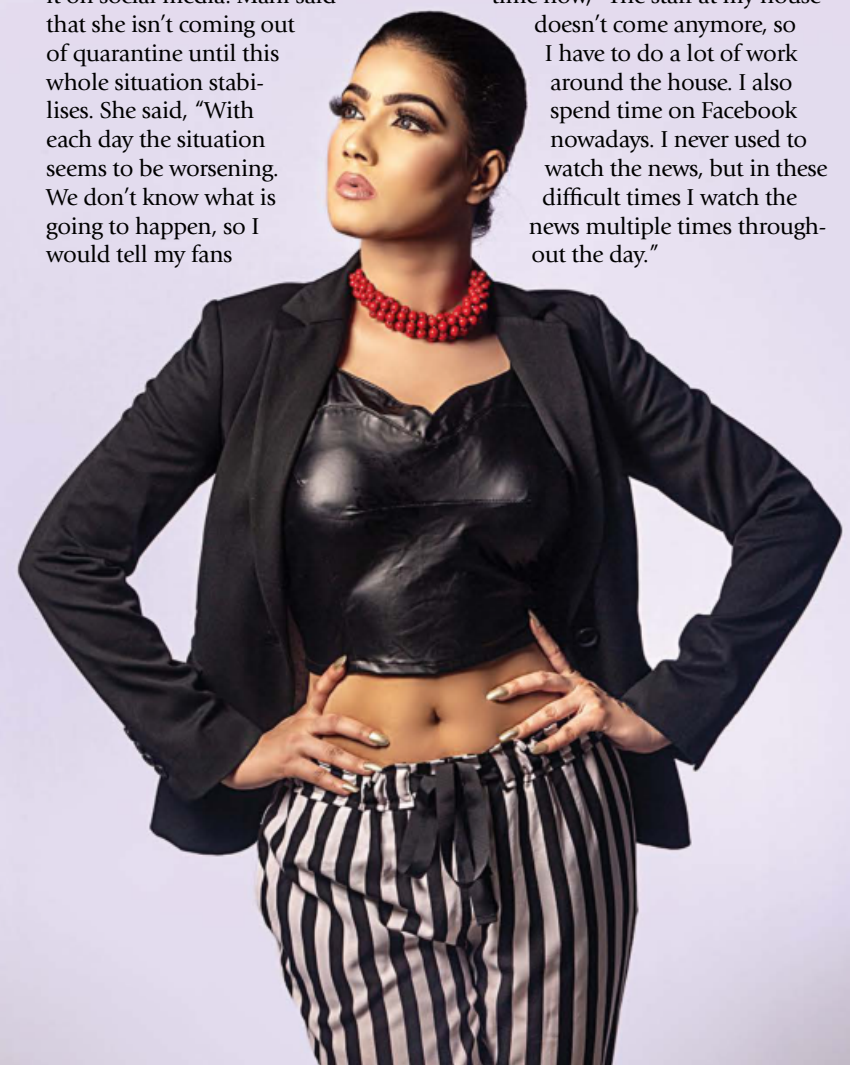
Before the ten-days shutdown, actor Zakia Bari Mamo completed the shooting for her two new dramas, *Ek Boishakhi Bhore Bonlata* and *Jonakir Golpo*, directed by Sagor Jahan, which will be aired during *Pohela Boishakh*. Mamo will be playing the roles of Rupa and Jonaki for the dramas. She will be starring opposite of Mosharrar Karim. Mamo said, "Sagor Jahan is one of my favorite directors and, not only do I like his stories, but I also enjoy working under his direction. He works professionally and maintains everything with care." The dramas for *Pohela Boishakh* will be aired on two different television channels.



Mahiya Mahi's TIME INDOORS

Actor Mahiya Mahi has put herself under home quarantine as a precaution against Covid-19. She has also been giving her fans advice on how to stay safe by posting videos about it on social media. Mahi said that she isn't coming out of quarantine until this whole situation stabilises. She said, "With each day the situation seems to be worsening. We don't know what is going to happen, so I would tell my fans

and followers to stay at home as going out might cause the virus to spread. That's why everyone should stay at home," aside from that, Mahi also said about how she spends her time now, "The staff at my house doesn't come anymore, so I have to do a lot of work around the house. I also spend time on Facebook nowadays. I never used to watch the news, but in these difficult times I watch the news multiple times throughout the day."



PADMA BRIDGE RAIL LINK PROJECT IS BEING BUILT WITH BSRM

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CORONAVIRUS SCARE

MCCI for Tk 1tn fund to tackle fallout

Says central bank can manage it from global lenders

Country's central bank should create a fund of Tk 1 trillion to mitigate the financial losses due to Covid-19 outbreak, says a leading business chamber.

Bangladesh Bank can manage the financial assistance from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank, and Islamic Development Bank, said a press release of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) on Thursday.

The chamber also suggested the government take some financial measures to tackle the crisis.

Banks and non-banking financial institutions can be financed from the proposed fund to disburse loans to the business entities, MCCI said.

It added that at present, the central bank should take steps to inject \$2billion to \$3billion into the domestic economy to deal with the crisis.

So, BB should also sit in meetings with the stakeholders of micro, small, medium and large enterprises, banks and business chambers to fix the required incentives to the businesses.

The government should stop collection of bills of utilities like gas, electricity, and water over the last six

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



People, mostly workers of Roads and Highways Department and their family members, wait on the footpath of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near the capital's Karwan Bazar before boarding trucks to Pirganj of Rangpur. They travelled to Narayanganj's Kanchpur from Cumilla by different modes of transport amid a countrywide shutdown. From there, they had to walk on foot to reach Karwan Bazar to catch trucks which brought vegetables to the capital from different districts. After unloading the goods, the trucks would carry them to northern districts for Tk 300 to Tk 600. Inset, people boarding a truck. The photos were taken around midnight on Thursday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Around 2,500 Bangladeshis to remain stuck in India

They have to wait until lockdown ends

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladeshis stranded in India amid the nationwide lockdown, imposed to curb the coronavirus outbreak, will have to wait till the lockdown is relaxed to return, said officials concerned yesterday.

Earlier this week, the Bangladesh foreign ministry had said it was weighing options of chartering a flight to repatriate the stranded Bangladeshis, mostly in Chennai and Bengaluru.

However, that is not possible now because many of those who had wanted to return home are not agreeing to the fare that Biman Bangladesh Airlines is asking, a foreign ministry official told The Daily Star requesting anonymity.

On Thursday, the Indian government decided to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Three die after showing virus-like symptoms

125 families under lockdown in 4 dists

STAR REPORT

At least 125 families have been kept in isolation in four districts after three people died with coronavirus-like symptoms.

Besides, in some cases, relatives or neighbours of these families were either infected or suspected to be infected with the virus, said authorities.

In Narayanganj, about 100 families were kept in isolation in Bandar upazila after a 45-year-old resident in the area died on Thursday after being tested positive for coronavirus.

Shukla Sarker, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Bandar, said the isolation was imposed in the area following directives of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

In Satkhira, at least 20 families were kept in isolation in Sadar upazila following the death of a college student who was suffering from fever and respiratory disease.

Hossain Safayat, civil surgeon of Satkhira, said they sent the sample of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

US recognises Bangladesh



Bangabandhu along with Syed Nazrul Islam visits tornado-hit areas in Mymensingh (April 4, 1972).

APRIL 4, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZZA SAJEN

US ACCORDS RECOGNITION

The United States of America today accords recognition to Bangladesh as a sovereign and independent state. The US is the 57th country and the fourth of the five big powers to recognise Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad welcomes the US recognition as a victory of the freedom loving people of America. The foreign minister hopes that the US recognition will contribute to the maintenance of peace in the region.

BANGABANDHU WARNS RACKETEERS

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman warns dishonest traders against malpractices. He says that he will cancel the licenses issued to distributors and wholesalers of essential commodities if the prices



SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Berthing of vessels delayed at Ctg port

DWAIPAN BARUA, Ctg

Chattogram port authorities have delayed scheduled berthing of three vessels due to acute space shortage at its yard designated to imported goods-laden containers.

The situation occurred due to limited transport coverage and slow delivery of containers amid the countrywide shutdown over coronavirus.

On Thursday, the port authorities canceled berthing of vessels named MV Tzini, MV MCC Danang and MV BLPL Grace, said sources.

In an unusual turn of events, the vessels were denied berth for space shortage and not for occupied jetties, they said, adding that three jetties were vacant on the day.

Meanwhile, a vessel -- MV Xpress Kaburu -- that

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Pie in the sky

Aussie plane delivers pizza to locked-down outback



AFP, Sydney

Pizza and beer are being delivered by plane to remote ranches in the Australian outback in an attempt to bring a slice of cheer to those in extreme isolation under the virus lockdown.

The Dunmarra Wayside Inn, a usually bustling roadside diner in Australia's Northern Territory, used a small fixed-wing aircraft for a trial run of what it hopes will become a weekly flying takeaway service to far-flung cattle stations.

"The station that we did send them to absolutely loved them, so much that they ate them for breakfast the next morning," Ben Anderson, the inn's manager and pizza cook, told AFP yesterday.

The business had tried to keep the service under wraps until it was certain the plane deliveries would work. "We've put in a massive

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Relief rice seized from AL leader's house

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Government officials have recovered a whopping five and a half tonnes of rice belong to vulnerable group development programme from the house of a local Awami League (AL) leader in Naogaon's Raninagar upazila.

Ayat Ali, 60, a member of Kaligram union AL, is also a rice trader, said Al Mamun, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of the upazila.

Khandaker Makammam Mahmuda, upazila women's affairs officer, came to know about the matter on Thursday when she was monitoring the distribution of VGD rice -- allotted for the ultra-poor women.

She immediately informed the matter to UNO Mamun, who then raided the house of the AL leader along with police and the local union parishad

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Pandemic may cause biggest emissions cut since WWII

REUTERS, London/Washington

Carbon dioxide emissions could fall by the largest amount since World War Two this year as the coronavirus outbreak brings economies to a virtual standstill, according to the chair of a network of scientists providing benchmark emissions data.

Rob Jackson, who chairs the Global Carbon Project, which produces widely-watched annual emissions estimates, said carbon output could fall by more than 5% year-on-year --

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

PRAYER TIMING APRIL 4

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:40 12:45 4:45 6:21 7:45
JAMAT 5:15 1:15 5:00 6:24 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Boats loaded with pineapples wait at Bonorupa Samata Ghat in Rangamati town. Farmers said they could not recover their production costs after selling the summer fruit for Tk 10-15 a pair yesterday, down from Tk 25-30 a month ago. The price dropped sharply due to a lack of customers amid a countrywide shutdown over coronavirus.

PHOTO: ANVIL CHAKMA

HELPING COUNTRIES FIGHT COVID-19

Google to publish user location data

AFP, Paris

Google says it will publish users' location data around the world to allow governments to gauge the effectiveness of social distancing measures, brought in to stem the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The reports on users' movements in 131 countries will be made available on a special website on Friday and will chart movement trends over time by geography", according to a post on one of Google's blogs.

Trends will display "a percentage point increase or decrease in visits" to locations like parks, shops, homes and places of work, not "the absolute number of visits," said the post, signed by Jen Fitzpatrick, who leads Google Maps, and the company's chief health officer Karen DeSalvo.

For example, in France, visits to restaurants, cafes, shopping centres, museums or theme parks have plunged by 88 percent from their normal levels, the data showed.

Local shops initially saw a jump of 40 percent when confinement measures announced, before suffering a drop of 72 percent.

Office use is possibly stronger than suspected meanwhile, as the decline in that area is a more modest 56 percent.

"We hope these reports will help support decisions about how to manage the Covid-19 pandemic," the Google execs said.

"This information could help officials understand changes in essential trips that can shape recommendations on business hours or inform delivery service offerings."

Like the detection of traffic jams or traffic measurement Google Maps, the new reports will use "aggregated, anonymised" data from users who have activated their location history.

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