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NGOs want govt to involve them in tackling Covid-19 fallout

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The non-government organisations want the government to engage them in tackling the crisis caused by Covid-19 which has far-reaching impacts on people, health and economy, especially on the poor and vulnerable communities across the country.

They said NGOs, which have their presence at the grassroots level and always worked hand in hand with the government in disaster management, should be incorporated in the activities for stronger coordination and greater reach.

The suggestions came at a virtual press conference hosted by COAST Trust and attended by the leaders of different alliances of NGOs -- National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors, Bangladesh (NAHAB), Bangladesh CSO-NGO Coordination Process, Network for Information, Response and Preparedness Activities on Disaster (NIRAPA), Disaster Forum, Association of Development Agencies Bangladesh (ADAB) and Federation of NGOs Bangladesh (FNB).

"The season of flood, cyclone and dengue is upcoming. With any of these taking place alongside the Covid-19 pandemic, the situation will be grave. So, we need to be prepared," said ADAB Director AKM Jashim Uddin.

He said the government has announced stimulus packages and is providing relief materials, but there are already many allegations of irregularities. If the actual target people are not listed for the benefits, the government assistance is not going to work effectively.

"Food production is going to be a major task. So, SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Ignoring all government directives on physical distancing, people still gathering callously to purchase essential commodities from TCB pickups. The photo was taken in the capital's Labagh area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Pray at home in Ramadan

Saudi Arabia's top religious body urges Muslims worldwide

REUTERS, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's highest religious body, the Council of Senior Scholars, urged Muslims worldwide to pray at home during Ramadan if their countries require social distancing to curb the spread of the coronavirus, state news agency SPA reported yesterday.

The holy fasting month of Ramadan begins later this week. During the month, believers usually break their fast with families and friends and perform an evening prayer, known as Taraweeh, in large gatherings at mosques.

"Muslims shall avoid gatherings, because they are the main cause of the spread of infection...and shall remember that preserving the lives of people is a great act that brings them closer to God," it said in a statement.

The kingdom's Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdulaziz Al al-Sheikh on Friday expressed the same sentiment, saying SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

THEFT OF RELIEF MATERIALS

3 UP chairmen, nine members suspended

AL leader arrested with 3.23 tonnes of subsidised rice in Rajshahi

STAR REPORT

The government yesterday suspended chairmen and nine members of three Union Parishads on charge of their involvement with irregularities in distributing relief materials amid the coronavirus outbreak.

The Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Ministry issued separate notifications announcing their suspension orders yesterday.

The suspended chairmen are Makhdoom Kabir Tanmay of Kishoreganj's Niyamtapur Union Parishad (UP), Mohammad Abdus Sattar of Natore's Arjunpur Baramahati UP, and Mirza Ghulam Hafiz Sohag of Bogura's Mazihotta UP.

The suspended members are Md Reza of Arjunpur Baramahati, Md Zakir Hossain and Md Rokonzaman of Barishal's Kodorpur UP, Md Abdur Rob Patwary of Bhola's Hazirhat UP, Sheikh Mosharaf Hossain and Rony Begum of Narail's Joynagar UP, Md Rafiqul Islam of Sirajganj's Khaskaulia UP, and Al Amin Chowdhury and Ms Asia Khatun of Bagmati UP.

Earlier, a total of five UP chairmen and SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Cabinet holds wide-ranging discussions



April 20, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

CABINET DISCUSSES DHAR'S REPORT

Bangladesh Cabinet today discusses the report presented to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by DP Dhar, chairman of the policy planning committee of the Indian external affairs ministry, on matters relating to the India-Pakistan emissary level talks. Bangabandhu presides over the meeting. The Cabinet also discusses the steps that are to be followed after Bangladesh's entry into the Commonwealth. Various other national problems also come up for discussion before the Cabinet.

\$21 MILLION SWEDISH AID FOR BANGLADESH Bangladesh and Sweden today sign an agreement on a 21-million-dollar grant to Bangladesh for reconstruction and development. The donation will be used by the government of Bangladesh for high priority imports of equipment, raw materials and food.

MULK RAJ ANAND CALLS ON BANGABANDHU Renowned Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand today calls on Bangabandhu at Gono Bhaban and presents him a manuscript titled 'History of Bangladesh: On Ancient Art and Culture' which SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



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5 more die with Covid-19 symptoms

STAR REPORT

Five people, including an eight-year-old girl, have died after showing coronavirus-like symptoms in Khulna, Khagrachhari, Gopalganj, Noakhali and Bogura since Saturday night.

In Khulna, a woman with fever and breathing problems who was undergoing treatment in the isolation ward of Khulna Medical College Hospital, died around noon yesterday.

The patient was admitted to the isolation ward on Saturday night and died around 12:00pm yesterday, Dr Shailendranath Biswas, spokesperson of the hospital, told our Khulna correspondent.

Her sample was sent to the PCR lab of the hospital to be tested for Covid-19, the doctor said.

In Khagrachhari, a 21-year-old male garment worker, who was quarantined at a primary school along with some others in his village of Gugrachari, died yesterday morning, our Rangamati correspondent reported SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

STAY HOME, STAY WELL

Build good relations with thy neighbours

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

In major cities of Bangladesh, people generally do not know much about their next-door neighbours even though they may have been living side by side for years.

In their busy metropolitan lives, people have very little time to pay attention to their neighbours. But during the countrywide shutdown to curb the spread of coronavirus, life has come to a standstill as schools and restaurants are closed, and a huge swathe of the workforce are stuck at home either working remotely or not working at all.

Roads are almost empty and doors are closed, but in these tough times the next-door neighbour can provide some succour and human connection, while maintaining social distancing of course, said the country's eminent psychologist Farida Akhtar.

She said neighbours can get to know one another in conversations from their respective doorways while keeping the appropriate distance.

The expert said this pandemic has prompted people to come closer in some ways, as they are reconnecting with old friends and neighbours have started to become like family.

"Humans have an essential need for social connection and next-door neighbours can be a good option during this coronavirus pandemic," she said.

Farida said knocking on a neighbour's door to borrow a cup of sugar or some other essential item was once a common practice in Bangladesh, but it is not so these days.

"But this pandemic has changed the whole scenario, if you need anything urgently, you can SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

'Drug dealer' killed in 'gunfight' with BGB

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A suspected drug trader was killed in a "gunfight" with Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) members in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Zafor Alam, 30, from Nayapara village under Sabrang union, a BGB official said.

BGB members challenged a boat coming from Myanmar when it was trying to get ashore at Gholarchar ghat in Shahparirdwip area around 2:00am, said Lt Colonel Mohammad Faysal Hasan Khan, commanding officer (CO) of BGB Battalion-2 in SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



PRAYER TIMING APRIL 20

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-35 12-45 4-45 6-24 7-45
JAMAAT 5-10 1-15 5-00 6-28 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A mobile court of Rab-10 yesterday fined a minimum of Tk 500 in the capital's Nayabazar area to those who unnecessarily went out of their homes amid the shutdown.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bangladeshi teenager shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A Bangladeshi SSC examinee was shot dead allegedly by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in Panchagarh Sadar yesterday.

The victim Shimon Roy, 16, son of Pares Chandra Roy, a resident of Chaklahat union in the upazila, was a student of Panchagarh Government Technical School and College.

Talking to the Daily Star, the victim's father said, "They shot my son in front of my eyes."

Pares, a schoolteacher by profession, said he and his son were erecting fence around their jute field near Shingroad Prodhannpara border around 4:00pm.

Suddenly, a BSF man entered inside Bangladesh SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



ABDULLAH AL MAMUN (TUHIN)

GAAN BANGLA TELEVISION DEEPLY MOURNS the untimely passing of prominent businessman Mr. Abdullah Al Mamun Tuhin (54), the elder brother of our Chairperson Ms. Farzana Munni. He had a massive cardiac arrest around 6pm on 18-04-2020.

OUR SINCERE AND HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES FOR HIS BEREAVED FAMILY.

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