

Usha Ganguly

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Kamalendu died several years ago. Her brother died three days earlier.

She founded the “Rangakarmee” theatre group in 1976 which became known for non-conformist productions like “Mahabhoj”, “Rudali”, “Court Martial” and “Antaryatra”.

Born in Kanpur, Ganguly, who is credited with introducing a new form of alternative Hindi theatre in Bengal, once said, “Theatre is my only life and passion and Rangakarmee is my family,” her friends recalled.

“Rangakarmee” gave a new language to theatre in Bengal and created a new audience, which had so far been familiar with Bengali group theatre and English theatre, in the late 1970s and 80s.

Usha Ganguly also worked with Rituparno Ghosh during the scripting for the latter’s film “Raincoat”.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee condoled Ganguly’s death and paid tributes to her contributions to theatre.

The West Bengal government conferred Ganguly with the Girish Samman honour in 2016.



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

People queue up for groceries at a TCB truck in Malibagh on Wednesday, with some parking their motorbikes right beside. As the shutdown continues, it's not just lower-income groups that are flocking to the truck that sells fairly-priced essentials.

CJ extends

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the bench of the High Court Division.
The judges will decide the timing and other relevant issues for dealing with the urgent cases.

In another circular, the SC registrar general said the courts of district and sessions judges, metropolitan sessions judges, chief judicial magistrates, and metropolitan magistrates will function for two days a week during the closure for dealing with

urgent matters like bail petitions.
One lawyer can participate in the hearing of a single case keeping social distance strictly, the notification said, adding that no accused prisoners can be brought to the court during this period.

The notification also said the ad-interim orders earlier issued by the courts granting bail, stay, directives for surrender and status quo will remain extended for two weeks after reopening of the courts.

Bangladesh

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“Bangladeshi journalists have been among the leading collateral victims of the tougher methods adopted by the ruling party.”

It added that reporters of the two leading dailies are not allowed to attend government press conferences.

It also said, “Ten journalists were attacked and badly beaten by supporters of the Awami League and its student wing, the Chhatra League, while covering municipal elections in Dhaka in early 2020.”

According to the report, radical Islamist militants meanwhile harass and even murder journalists and bloggers who dare to defend an overly secular vision of society in Bangladesh.

Criticising the Digital Security Act, the RSF said the government also has a judicial weapon for silencing troublesome journalists -- the 2018 digital security law.

In a general analysis of the situation of press freedom, the report said the coming decade would be decisive for the future of journalism.

“The next ten years will be pivotal for press freedom because of converging crises affecting the future of journalism,” the RSF said.

7 UP chairmen,

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M Rafiqul Islam of Gaokandia UP in Netrakona’s Durgapur upazila; Mohiuddin Sohel of Galachipa UP in Patuakhali; and Lipi Begum of Keshabpur UP of the upazila.

The notice also asked the suspended public representatives to explain through respective deputy commissioners why they shouldn’t be removed permanently from their posts.

Peru to release 3,000 prisoners under virus amnesty

AFP, Lima

Peru will release under amnesty about 3,000 prisoners including those who are particularly at risk from the coronavirus pandemic, the justice minister has said.

The disease has killed at least seven inmates, and infected more than 40 in Peru’s overcrowded prisons along with 26 wardens.

“We are going to amnesty approximately 3,000 detainees who fall into the groups vulnerable to the coronavirus,” Minister Fernando Castaneda said Wednesday on the ATV channel.

Things better than in US

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The minister said in the first 45-day period in Italy, some 11,000 people died and 1.30 lakh tested positive; in Spain, 10,000 died and 1 lakh tested positive; and in the US, 24,000 died and 1.20 lakh tested positive.

“If we compare, we can see that Bangladesh’s situation is far better,” said Zahid Maleque.

ARE THE SITUATIONS COMPARABLE?
The minister did not mention the number of people the three countries tested in the first 45 days.

Italy detected the first two cases on Jan 31. In the following one-and-a-half month period, it tested 148,657 samples, according to www.ourworldindata.org.

Spain also detected the first case on Jan 31 and by the following 45 days, it conducted 930,230 tests, according to the health ministry website of the country.

According to www.statista.com, as of April 23, the US performed over 4 million tests for Covid-19, the highest in the world.

In Bangladesh, a total of 36,090 samples have been tested so far, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Experts say the situations are not comparable especially when the number of tests is not considered.

Testing is one of the major parameters, they said, adding that many cases and even deaths in Bangladesh must remain unreported, thanks to the low number of tests.

They pointed to the fact that Italy and Spain reported their first cases at the beginning of the pandemic when scientists knew little about the virus.

“This [the minister’s comparison] is completely illogical. Because, they [the US, Italy and Spain] have done hundreds of thousands of tests by this time [45 days] while we tested far fewer people,” infectious diseases specialist Prof Ridwanur Rahman said.

“If we had done enough tests, we might have detected more patients than them since our population density is higher. What they [health department] are saying is unscientific,” he told The Daily Star.

There are unreported deaths from Covid-19 across the country, especially in villages, he said.

No import of luxury goods

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Corporation. Television will become an attached department of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

FARAKKA WILL BE DISCUSSED
BM Abbas, Chairman of WAPDA and adviser of Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on power and flood control, says that all aspects of the Farakka Barrage will be discussed at the high-level India-Bangladesh talks beginning in Dhaka on April 26, 1972 to safeguard the interest of Bangladesh. He adds that the interest of Bangladesh with regard to Farakka Barrage is to obtain from the Indian government a guarantee for a minimum quantity of water for use of Bangladesh. Referring to flood control, Abbas emphasises that joint action is essential to lower flood levels in Bangladesh and ensure increased dry weather flow in the rivers which may be

possible through construction of storage dams in upper reaches of the major rivers lying in India.

SSC EXAMS BEGIN
The Secondary School Certificate examinations begin throughout Bangladesh today. The examinations were due to commence on April 22, 1971.

The Pakistan occupation forces made an abortive attempt to hold the examinations in August 1971 in which a handful of candidates appeared. Results of the mock of examinations were also published in October that year. However, the Bangladesh government declared the results of that farcical examination void in January 1972 and decided to hold the examinations afresh on the free soil of Bangladesh.

SOURCES: April 25, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Daimik Bangla and Ittefaq

UAE considers reopening malls after shutdown

AFP, Dubai

The United Arab Emirates said yesterday it is looking into reopening its massive shopping malls, a month after they were closed as part of measures to curb the spread of coronavirus.

The restrictions have hit businesses hard, particularly retailers who had expected to cater to a rush of Ramadan shoppers.

Health ministry and crisis authorities have requested a study into “the possibility of reopening commercial centres with their

private sector partners while taking into consideration health requirements”, the official WAM news agency reported.

The move comes as Muslims prepare for the holy month of Ramadan, during which believers fast from dawn to dusk and traditionally gather around a family or community meal each evening.

Officials in the emirate of Dubai, whose vast shopping centres serve as its economic lifeline, said they were considering reopening malls “with necessary measures and precautions”, according to local reports.

Long-term package

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for people, need to be taken seriously, as well as implementing the lockdown.

They said the relief distribution process at the local level needs to be coordinated between government and non-government organisations.

The NGOs observed that day labourers in urban and rural areas, who were working in various informal sectors have become unemployed.

The organisations said that Boro farming has been in dire straits in terms of harvesting, bringing it to the shed and then to the government warehouse due to the lockdown. They said, the special measures taken by the government to provide labour for harvesting paddy should be extended to more areas.

The ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director said they have taken some short-term initiatives to help the marginalised people, working along with the local administration and through some 14 NGOs.

“To keep the day labourers and marginalised people at home, the government should deliver them food for at least two weeks so that they can stay home and maintain social distance,” Farah Kabir said.

The government should provide coronavirus testing kits at all district hospitals and ensure accessibility of the marginalised people from remote areas, the organisations said.

To protect perishable goods such as milk, eggs and fish from damage, these products should be included in the list of relief, they added.

Covid-19 adds to

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day and we somehow managed to survive with his meagre income. But that too has stopped following the shutdown. He cannot find any work now. Most of the time, we go hungry... I need medicine for my pain, which we cannot afford,” she said.

She too said she did not receive any relief. “This pandemic is also becoming a traumatising experience for me,” Nilufar added.

This correspondent talked to at least eight survivors, all of whom echoed Yanur and Nilufar’s sentiments.

Contacted, Khairul Mamun Mintu, organising secretary of Garments Workers Trade Union Centre, said they have been demanding for a long time that the government rehabilitate survivors.

“But no steps have been taken in this regard. In the meantime, they are suffering due to the shutdown. Most have no food or money to buy medicine. The government should make a list of the survivors immediately and help them,” he urged.

Watch over

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Rehnuma said the first task is to make a new routine for children.

“The new routine should be made up after consulting with the kids. So that they have a say in the process and it will help them to own the routine,” she added.

The physician also said that abruptly stopping the screen time is not a wise decision. There should be a schedule to phase out screen time gradually.

She suggested that an alarm could be set to signal beginning and ending of the time scheduled for playing video games online.

Afternoon

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yesterday.

Besides, the rain and thunder shower activity is likely to continue over the next 72 hours.

China rights lawyer barred from Beijing after prison: wife

AFP, Beijing

Chinese human rights lawyer Wang Quanzhang has not been allowed to reunite with his family in Beijing following his release from prison, his wife said yesterday, after Washington urged China to lift restrictions on his movements.

Detained in 2015 as part of a sweeping crackdown on hundreds of lawyers and rights activists, Wang was released earlier this month after serving a four-and-a-half year prison sentence.

Authorities then took him to a property in his hometown of Jinan, northeastern Shandong province, to undergo 14 days’ coronavirus quarantine as a precaution, according to his wife, rights activist Li Wenzu.

But yesterday marked 19 days since his release, and he has not been able to return to Beijing and reunite with her and their son, Li said.

“I think they are scared that their mistreatment of Wang during his prison sentence may be fully revealed,” Li told AFP.

“Regardless of their motives or plans, their restrictions on Wang’s human rights and liberty are against the law. This should be condemned by all.”

Numerous human rights observers have expressed concerns over alleged instances of torture experienced by Wang while under detention, and Li has previously told AFP that she is worried about the visible deterioration of her husband’s health.

Thousands to

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and 784 recoveries, according to worldometers.info.

Sheikh Mohammed Tauhaidul Islam, labour welfare counsellor at Bangladesh embassy in Manama, said around 2,000 Bangladeshis are in quarantine there until Wednesday.

Asked about the new measure, Tauhaidul said due to surge in coronavirus cases, Bahrain authorities are more concerned about its spread within migrant workers’ camps, because they live in congested conditions.

Most of the infected individuals are from the labour accommodations, Tauhaidul told this newspaper by phone.

“As per the measure, Bahrain government is not allowing more than five persons to stay in a standard living room. In some cases, 30 Bangladeshi workers share a three-room flat,” he added.

Tauhaidul said Bahrain government has created temporary living facilities at school buildings and stadiums.

Beside accommodation, the authorities will arrange food three times a day and provide free wireless internet, he added.

He said Bahrain authorities requested Bangladesh mission to inform Bangladeshi workers to avail the facilities, where they can stay until the situation turns normal.

The initiative started in Manama recently, and will start in other governorates gradually, he added.

In the video clips, a couple of social organisations of Bangladeshi expatriates were seen assisting embassy officials in a campaign to encourage workers.

Asked over phone, a member of one organisation said the opportunity is significant for many Bangladeshis because they are in hardship since their income opportunities have gone due to government imposed shutdown on economic activities.

‘Long way to go’ to end virus crisis

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against the pandemic, days after Washington said it would freeze funding.

The US, which is the WHO’s biggest contributor, accused the organisation last week of “mismanaging” the COVID-19 crisis, drawing ire from Beijing as both countries spar over the deadly virus.

Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said the new donation would be in addition to a previous \$20 million committed, and would help “strengthen developing countries’ health systems”.

In announcing the funding freeze last week, US President Donald Trump accused the WHO of covering up the seriousness of the coronavirus outbreak in China before it spread.

He has also charged the WHO with being “very China-centric” despite Washington’s heavy funding.

According to Trump, US taxpayers provided between \$400 million and \$500 million per year to the WHO, while “in contrast, China contributes roughly \$40 million a year and even less”.

Trump also claimed the outbreak could have been contained with “very little death” had the WHO assessed the situation in China accurately.

The deadly virus first emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, which was locked down in late January to curb the spread. China has denied Western suggestions that it covered up the extent of the virus outbreak, rejecting claims it has an overly cosy relationship with the WHO as well.

The comments came after the director of the US Centers for Disease Control asked Americans to prepare for a second, possibly more devastating, wave of coronavirus infections.

The United States is the hardest-hit country on the planet, with more than 46,500 coronavirus deaths and over 840,000 infections.

But pressure is growing on authorities to ease restrictions to boost the economy, which is reeling from the pandemic.

Trump, who is keen to restart the US economy, issued rare criticism of a Republican state governor on Wednesday, after Georgia allowed small businesses to reopen.

“It’s too soon,” the president said.

The explosion of coronavirus cases across the United States has overwhelmed healthcare facilities, from the most developed parts like New York City to the Native American territory of the Navajo Nation in the southwest, where a lack of running water and poor infrastructure has made the situation worse.

The WHO and other health experts have warned that strict containment measures like lockdowns should remain until there is a viable treatment or vaccine for the coronavirus.

There was a ray of hope on that front in Europe, where Germany announced Wednesday that human trials for a vaccine will start by next week.

It is only the fifth such effort to have been authorised worldwide, and is a significant step in making a vaccine “available as soon as possible”, Germany’s regulatory body said.

But even at the current, rapid pace of development, an effective prophylactic could be several months away.

In Europe -- where the death toll climbed past 110,000 -- some countries have slightly eased coronavirus measures, but bans on large gatherings have been extended.

Finland said it would maintain a ban on gatherings of more than 500 people until the end of July, while hard-hit Spain said it did not expect to lift its strict lockdown until mid-May.

“We must be incredibly careful in this phase,” said Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

In South Asia, coronavirus infections have crossed 37,000, with more than half in India, official data showed yesterday, complicating the task of governments looking to scale back lockdowns that have destroyed the livelihoods of millions.

4 of a family

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Station, said they rushed to the spot around 4:00pm on information and recovered the bodies.

Two knives were also recovered from the spot. The reason behind the killings could not be known immediately, he added.

 Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Bangladesh Railway Office of the Assistant Executive Engineer/I.C./CLW Parbatipur, Dinajpur				
No. Notice/AEN/IC/CLW/D/1/2019-20			Date: 23/04/2020	
Invitation for Tender				
e-Tender is invited in e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocurement.gov.bd) by Assistant Executive Engineer/Incharge/CLW, Bangladesh Railway, Parbatipur for the procurement of:				
Sl No.	Tender ID	Name of work	Tender/proposal document last selling/ downloading date and time	Last date and time for tender/ proposal security submission
1.	455331	In SSAE/Works/CLW/PBT/Through Repair and changing C.I. sheet roofing of force section paint shop building with other ancillary works at CLW Area.	07-May-2020 15:30	10-May-2020 10:30
2.	452909	In SSAE/Works/CLW/PBT/Construction of Proposed Reinforcement cement concrete R.C.C bank protection Palisade wall for pond in CLW Residential Area	07-May-2020 15:30	10-May-2020 10:30
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocurement.gov.bd). Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk helpdesk@eprocurement.gov.bd				
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GD-754				