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# Ensure six months' salary

*Dhaka urges OIC body to ensure jobless migrants get paid; asks workers to stay put*

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh wants labour-receiving countries to ensure that Bangladeshi migrants who lose their jobs amid the coronavirus pandemic get at least six months' salary.

Authorities also want the migrants not to return home during this pandemic unless they are in dire straits because, as Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said, "Good days will surely come back soon."

"We have instructed all our missions concerned to look after the safety of our people. First priority is to make sure they have food and healthcare," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We have also instructed them to make diplomatic efforts to ensure that our people are not unduly terminated. If there is no alternative, we need to make sure that they get at least six months' salary."

Momen said Bangladesh, in a virtual meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference Executive Committee on April 22, proposed creation of a Covid-19 pandemic recovery and response fund at OIC level to help the migrants.

"Migrants are part of development of us all -- both sending and receiving countries. If their jobs are suddenly terminated and they are sent home, they will be in trouble."

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Holding onto her crutch so that it does not get stolen, Nazma Begum, an elderly woman who lives on the street, falls asleep on a pavement in CRB area of Chattogram city around noon yesterday. She was waiting for relief materials in the area. Thousands like her in the port city have been facing an acute crisis of food amid the coronavirus outbreak.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## CLOSED FACTORIES RMG owners refuse to pay over 60pc salary

REEFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Despite repeated calls from the union leaders for paying the workers of closed factories at least 65 percent of their gross salaries for April, the owners at a meeting yesterday refused to offer any more than 60 percent.

The factory owners said they would have another meeting in the middle of this month and might consider increasing the amount next month.

The workers will receive 60 percent of their gross salaries for April as per last week's decision, said Mohammad Hatem, vice president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).

Hatem told this to The Daily Star after the meeting attended by union leaders, factory owners and government high ups with Monnojan Sufian, state minister for labour and employment, in the chair at Sramabhaban in the capital.

The association leaders asked the member factories not to terminate or layoff any workers during this crisis moment.

"We do not agree with the owners' decision to pay cut during the crisis. The decision is unlawful," said Amirul

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## Up to 100,000 may die in US

*Says Trump as more states ease restrictions, predicts vaccine will be ready by end of the year*

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Sunday he now believes as many as 100,000 Americans could die in the coronavirus pandemic, after the death toll passed his earlier estimates, but said he was confident a vaccine would be developed by the year's end.

Trump alternated during a two-hour virtual town hall broadcast by FOX News between forecasting a rapid recovery for the US economy and casting blame for the pandemic's spread on China, where the disease is believed to have originated.

The Covid-19 illness, caused by the new coronavirus, has sickened more than 1.1 million in the United States and killed more than 67,000 Americans, shut wide swaths of society, including most schools and many businesses.

"We're going to lose anywhere from 75, 80 to 100,000 people. That's a horrible thing," said Trump, who as recently on Friday had said he hoped fewer than 100,000 Americans would die and earlier in the week had talked about 60,000 to

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

### Ensure uninterrupted production in industries



May 5, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### BANGABANDHU REOPENS DHAKA COTTON MILL

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today reopens Dhaka Cotton Mill at Postogola. Addressing a meeting at the mill premise, the prime minister calls upon workers to devote themselves to increasing production in industries. He says, "We have to put our best effort to reconstruct the war-torn economy and thus realise the goal of building a Shonar Bangla."

Students of Khilgaon Girls' High School handing over Tk 201 collected by saving up their tiffin money to Bangabandhu for the Prime Minister's Relief Fund on May 5, 1972.



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## 'There is hope'

*Says WHO's top emergencies expert as world fights virus*

REUTERS, Geneva

Parts of the world are starting to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic and to cautiously resume some sort of normal life, but the new coronavirus will pose significant risks until vaccines are developed, the WHO's top emergencies expert said on Sunday.

Mike Ryan, executive director of the World Health Organization's (WHO) emergencies programme, said while many countries are still in the eye of the storm, others were beginning to show it is possible to contain the disease to some extent.

"In that sense, there's hope," Ryan told Reuters in an online interview from Geneva.

"At a global level the situation is still very, very serious but the pattern of the disease and the

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## Mummies found in burial shaft in Egypt



CNN ONLINE

Right now, most of us can only explore the pyramids and archaeological wonders of Egypt online, but excavations and explorations into the country's ancient past remain ongoing.

Egypt's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has announced the unearthing of five limestone sarcophagi and four wooden coffins containing human mummies. These incredible archaeological finds were inside a burial shaft stretching nine meters below ground.

This shaft is located in Sacred Animal Necropolis in Saqqara, an ancient burial ground that's about 20 miles south of Cairo and is also home to landmarks including the Step Pyramid, considered to be the world's oldest.

Details of the discovery were shared via a video

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## 'Child killer' killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A fugitive in a child murder case was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab in Gazipur's Konabari area early yesterday.

The dead Jewel Ahmed alias Sabuj, 22, was the prime accused in five-year-old Alif murder case, said Abdullah Al Mamun, company commander of RAB-1 Gazipur Porabari camp.

Before this incident, Rab arrested another youth Sagar, a friend of Jewel and also an accused in the murder, on Saturday night from Pubail area of Gazipur city, he said.

Following his confessional statement, Rab recovered the decomposed body of Alif wrapped in a plastic bag from a warehouse in Konabari, the Rab official said.

Sagar told Rab that Jewel was the mastermind behind abducting and killing the child.

Based on his information, Rab men conducted a drive in

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Two men riding cycles near the capital's Dhanmondi Road-32 yesterday on their way to deliver products to customers. They said the demand of their service has increased since shopping malls remained closed amid the shutdown.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Bananas rotting in orchards

*Unable to sell produce, growers in Madhupur incurring losses*

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Until the coronavirus crisis hit the country, banana grower Shamsul Alam was confident about making a profit of Tk 20 lakh to Tk 70 lakh from his banana plantation in Tangail's Madhupur upazila.

But now he is anticipating a loss of about Tk 30 lakh to Tk 35 lakh and is worried about repaying the Tk 20 lakh loan he took from banks and moneylenders.

A resident of Pargachha village in Madhupur, Shamsul had invested a total of Tk 80 lakh and leased 170 bighas of land for the plantation. He started cultivation last year in April.

Now in harvest time, the banana grower is struggling to market his produce. "Because of the lack of buyers, bananas are rotting in my orchard," he wailed.

"Due to the shutdown, wholesalers from cities, including Dhaka and Chattogram, are not coming to buy bananas. So, I have to sell my bananas locally at low prices," Shamsul told this correspondent on Sunday over phone.

"I normally sell a kadi [bunch] with 100 to 150 bananas for Tk 300 to Tk 350. Now, I am not getting more than Tk 100," he added.

Shamsul explained that bananas have to be harvested when the fruit's colour is still green, otherwise they ripen and develop cracks on the skin.

Around 60 percent of all commercial banana growers in Madhupur are facing the same problem as Shamsul, said Abdur Rahim, president of the Banana Growers' Association in Madhupur.

The plantation owners, who started cultivation in

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