



Wiping tears of middle class

Organisation discreetly helps out those who can't ask for it

NILIMA JAHAN

The Covid-19 pandemic has already pushed many middle-income families into poverty. Like many others, the ongoing crisis has hit Rafiqul Islam (not his real name), a clothing shop owner of Bogra, who recently had heart surgery, which required him to take expensive medicine on a regular basis. Rafiqul, however, never thought that he might face such a hurdle at least before the Eid-ul-Fitr, as most of his sales take place for this significant occasion. Like many others, he invested a large amount of money for Eid, but sadly, almost all the clothing remained unsold due to the countrywide lockdown. The pandemic not only blocked all his ways of income but his wife too has been affected. She would also support the family by giving private tuition, but due to the lockdown, she is not being able to earn any money. Rafiqul's elder son, who has a family of his own, used to work as a salesperson at a shop. However, due to the pandemic, he also became jobless as his employer failed to pay the salary without keeping the shop open. As far as Rafiqul can remember, he never had to ask for money from anyone. Instead, he would always help people in times of financial trouble. Now, he cannot even buy medicine for himself. His grandchildren too are in need of food, yet he cannot help them.

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A health worker collecting samples from a child for Covid-19 test as her mother looks on at a booth, run by JKG Healthcare, at Khilgaon Girls School and College in the capital yesterday. Samples are being collected without properly following safety and health guidelines. Both the child and her mother are holding sample collection tubes which they would put in a designated place. The health worker is not wearing PPE either.

CASH AID TO POOR Govt initiative runs into snag over database

STAR REPORT

In a mock test by the government for providing cash assistance to 50 lakh poor families, many listed national identification (NID) numbers did not match the ones on the national identification database of the election commission. The cash assistance programme is slated to be inaugurated tomorrow. "We are receiving lists from the district level but most of the districts are sending them in Bangla, so it is very tough to first translate and then try to match a bulk of the lists with the election commission database," said a senior official of the finance ministry who is involved in the process. According to the plan, the government will send cash assistance to 10 lakh families every day from May 14 to 18. Each family will get Tk 2,500, Md Shah Kamal, senior secretary of the ministry of disaster management and relief, had earlier told The Daily Star. "By any means we will try to disburse the amount within that time. In any untoward situation, we may consider other options. But the funds will be distributed before Eid, so that people can buy their food," he said. He said almost all the numbers they are

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COVID-19 CRISIS Modi declares Rs 20 lakh cr economic package

NDTV ONLINE

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday announced a Rs 20 lakh crore economic package for what he called "Mission Self-Reliant India" to tide over the coronavirus crisis. Stating that India could not be controlled by the virus, he also announced "lockdown 4" after May 17, which would be completely different, with new rules. "Details of lockdown 4 will be shared after suggestion from states, before May 18," PM Modi said. "Corona will be with us for a long time but our lives cannot revolve around corona. We will wear masks, we will follow doh gai doori (six-foot distance), but we won't let our focus stray," he stressed, indicating major relaxations after May 17. The special economic package would be the main component of "Atma-Nirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India)", he said. "This package is for migrants and farmers who work for the nation day and night, no matter the circumstances," the Prime Minister said, addressing the nation.

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

'If anyone interferes in our internal affairs we will resist them'



Bangabandhu poses for a photo with the players of Mohun Bagan and Dhaka Eleven at the Dhaka Stadium on May 13, 1972.

May 13, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU'S INTERVIEW WITH ABC

In an interview with the American Broadcasting Corporation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today says that some big powers have been trying to destabilise South East Asia and the Middle East. They are also active in Bangladesh, he adds. "I have made my countrymen aware of these conspirators. I want to catch them red-handed," says the prime minister.

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2 killed in 'gunfights' in Cox's Bazar, Jashore

STAR REPORT

Two men were killed in "gunfights" with police in Cox's Bazar and Jashore early yesterday. The dead are Sazzad Hossain, prime accused in a murder-rape case in Cox's Bazar and Babu, accused in 12 cases related to arms, explosives and drugs in Jashore, said police. AKM Safiqul Alam Chowdhury, inspector (investigation) of Chakaria Police Station, said locals in Pekua upazila of Cox's Bazar caught Sazzad and handed him over to them. During primary interrogation, Sazzad admitted that he raped an 18-year-old woman at gunpoint and then killed her by pushing her off a speeding vehicle, he added. On information, a police team, along with Sazzad, conducted a raid in Morongkhali area on

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Robot dog enforces social distancing



CNN ONLINE

Singapore is trying a new way to get its residents to stay away from each other. The government announced it would start deploying Spot, Boston Dynamics' famous yellow and black canine robot, at one local park. The four-legged robot "dog" will patrol the area and broadcast a pre-recorded message to visitors to remind them of the importance of social distancing, authorities said. The device will also be equipped with cameras that will scan the surroundings and help officials estimate the number of people gathering in parks, they said. "These cameras will not be able to track and

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Doctor sued over rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A physician of Dinajpur M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital was sued yesterday for allegedly raping a woman. The 30-year-old woman, a former student of Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University in Dinajpur, filed the case against Norodeb Roy, 33, with Dinajpur Sadar Police Station. The accused went into hiding after the case was lodged, said police. In the case statement, the plaintiff said she has been in relationships with the accused for the last two years. Promising to marry her, the physician raped her several times at his quarters inside the hospital compound. On Sunday, Norodeb called her over phone to come to his quarters. Around 2:00pm, she arrived there, where the doctor attempted to rape her again. But the girl resisted his attempt. Later, she asked him to marry her, but the doctor

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A worker drying vermicelli on the roof of a factory in Chattogram city's Rajakhali area yesterday. As the demand for vermicelli, locally known as shemai, goes up ahead the of the Eid-ul-Fitr, a section of unscrupulous businessmen produces low quality vermicelli, ignoring hygiene.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

New cases threaten reopening

Russia eases curb; US records fewer virus deaths

AFP, Moscow

World powers including Russia and India pushed on with easing coronavirus restrictions yesterday, despite upsurges in infections in parts of the world and warnings of a second wave epidemic. Chinese authorities, meanwhile, moved to test the entire 11-million strong population of the city of Wuhan, cradle of the global pandemic, after new cases were reported there. In Russia, the government began to gradually ease lockdown rules, after reporting more than 10,000 new cases of the novel coronavirus every day for over a week. And in India, the giant railway network ground back to life, in defiance of a recent surge in the number of infections, with 3,600 recorded on Monday, just below Sunday's record tally. Various economic and social lockdowns have paralysed much of the global economy, and many areas are now cautiously moving back to work, but world markets were trading cautiously amid fears of a second wave epidemic. The United States -- where at least 80,000 people have died -- has the world's highest case-load, but President Donald Trump is keen to reopen the economy quickly amid soaring job losses. He faces resistance, however, and Washington's top epidemiologist Anthony Fauci has warned of "needless

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