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ERRONEOUS LISTS OF IMAMS

People from other professions included in lists for cash assistance
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BANGLADESH UPDATE



2,828 New cases in 24hrs



60,391 Total cases



811 Deaths



12,804 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE



391,848 Deaths



6,682,531 Total cases

CORONAVIRUS IMPACT

Mega projects take the brunt

Most of them running behind schedule, slow down further due to shutdown; allocation in next budget to be less than last year's outlay

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Most of the mega development projects were already behind schedule before the pandemic. Then came several months of shutdown, deteriorating the situation to a great extent.

Moreover, allocation for the projects will be low in the coming fiscal year with 21.76 percent of the annual development budget, down from the current year's 25 percent.

This has happened despite two new mega development projects being added to the 15 ongoing ones.

The coming fiscal year's allocation will be Tk 44,640 crore for the 17 projects, down from this year's Tk 52,758 crore for 15.

The coming year's total development budget will be Tk 205,145 crore.

Officials failed to use the funds allocated in the current year for most of the 15 mega projects. And due to complications regarding foreign funds, absolutely nothing was spent for two of those projects, planning ministry officials said.

Poor planning, uncertainty over financing, and problems linked to land acquisition often result in missed deadlines, they said.

Tk 7,212 crore was allocated for Mass Rapid Transit-6 in last year's Annual Development Programme (ADP). It was the second highest amount for a single project. In the revised ADP, the project was allocated Tk 4,326 crore.

However, project officials were able to utilise only Tk 1,170 crore as of last February. In late March when the government enforced the shutdown to contain the spread of the coronavirus, physical work for the metro rail project almost completely stopped.

According to project documents, the work progressed by only 0.55 percent in the last two months and reached an overall 44.67 percent progress as of May.

Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL) is constructing the elevated metro lines from Uttara 3rd Phase to Motijheel at a cost of around Tk 22,000 crore. Once



Exhausted after waiting for hours to give samples for Covid-19 testing, Abu Sayeed, a recently retired banker, sits between two ambulances outside Mugda General Hospital in the capital yesterday morning. He left the area around noon after failing to get the test done. Several clinics have denied him treatment for fever, cold, and diabetics saying he must prove he is coronavirus negative. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

HEALTH SECY TRANSFER Internal feud in ministry key reason

MOUDUDD AHMED SUJAN

A picture of infighting within the health ministry has been emerging after the government removed health service division secretary Md Asadul Islam on Thursday, amidst widespread criticism of the health sector's failure to play a robust role in tackling the coronavirus outbreak.

He was transferred to the Planning Division while Md Abdul Mannan, who was the Land Reform Board chairman, has replaced him.

Although the government has not publicly said anything about the transfer, it is understood that the move has been aimed at fleeing out friction and lack of coordination in the health ministry among Health Minister Zahid Maleque, Md Asadul Islam and organs of the ministry like the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

Besides, ever since the Covid-19 pandemic hit the country in March, the health ministry has been blamed for

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Boro procurement far from target

Govt could buy less than 1pc of paddy, 6pc of rice in one month; farmers prefer to sell their produce in the market as prices there are higher this year

SOHEL PARVEZ

Around a month has passed since programmes to procure Boro paddy and rice began, but the government has been able to buy a very insignificant quantity against its target this year, raising concerns that efforts to provide food to the poor amid the Covid-19 crisis might suffer a setback without adequate stock.

Until Wednesday, the Directorate General of Food (DGF) purchased only 7,750 tonnes of Boro paddy from farmers, which is less than one percent of the target of 800,000 tonnes.

The drive, which began on April 26, would end on August 31.

Besides, the food office could procure only six percent of the target of 10 lakh tonnes of parboiled rice from millers after the drive was launched on May 7 to build a healthy public food stock and allow farmers to get fair prices for their main crop.

Food officials said farmers are interested in selling their produce in the market as prices there are higher this year compared

to the previous one. Also, they were opting not to supply the crop to public warehouses as the government does not buy paddy having over 14 percent moisture. While selling the paddy in the market, farmers do not have to remain bothered about the moisture issue, they said.

Rainfall, Cyclone Amphan and Eid holidays are also to blame, they added.

In the face of the sluggish procurement pace, the DGF, in a letter last week, directed its field offices to strengthen the purchase efforts to maintain a sound food stock at public warehouses.

It said the government this year fixed its highest ever paddy procurement target -- double of the last year's Boro paddy purchase -- apart from buying parboiled and sunburn rice, but the expected procurement speed has not been achieved yet.

"It is not desirable at all," DGF Director General Sarwar Mahmud said in the letter.

The directive came at a time when the public food stock is declining owing to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

GONOSHASTHAYA KIT Trial at BSMMU done; report by Wednesday

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) has already completed trial of the Gonoshasthaya Kendra-developed antibody test and may submit its report to the drug administration by Wednesday.

"The committee concerned is now processing data of the antibody kit's performance trial. We think we can submit the report by Wednesday," BSMMU Vice Chancellor Prof Kanak Kanti Barua told The Daily Star yesterday.

Gonoshasthaya Kendra officials say they are eagerly waiting for the report to be submitted to the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) and then for registration, which can allow mass production and distribution of the kit -- GR-Rapid Dot Blot.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Covid-19 cases top 60,000

30 more die; 2,828 test positive in 24hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a negative development, Bangladesh has become one of the top 20 countries in the world in terms of the number of population infected with Covid-19 as the country reported 60,391 positive cases until yesterday.

Bangladesh now ranks 20th, replacing Belgium which has so far recorded 58,907 cases. The western European country detected its first coronavirus patient in February and has been recording less than 400 cases every day since mid-May, shows data.

Prof Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said that a total of 2,828 people tested positive for Covid-19 in the 24 hours before 2:30pm yesterday.

"With them, the total number of infection has reached 60,391," she said. A total of 14,088 samples were tested in 50 labs across the country during this period, Dr Nasima said.

According to DGHS, 30 people died with coronavirus between June 4 and June 5.

Meanwhile, 643 Covid-19 patients have recovered since yesterday, taking the total number of recoveries to 12,804, the DGHS official added.

Among the deceased, 23 were male and seven female, she said, adding that 11 were from Dhaka, 12 from Chattogram, three from Sylhet, two from Rajshahi, one was from Barishal and another from Rangpur division.

Of them, three were aged between 31-40, seven between 41-50, 11 within 51-60, six between 61-70, two between 71-80 and another between 81-90 years old, Dr Nasima also said.

A total of 365 people were put under isolation in the last 24 hours, she added.

Meanwhile, the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) recommended that uninterrupted oxygen supply at the hospitals should be the top priority for the government.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Nasim has successful surgery

Infected with Covid-19, he suffered stroke

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Infected with Covid-19, former Health and Family Welfare Minister and Awami League senior leader Mohammad Nasim has undergone a successful surgery after suffering a brain stroke.

The surgery was conducted on him early yesterday at the Bangladesh Specialized Hospital, said Tanvir Shakil Joy, Nasim's son and a former AL MP.

Talking to The Daily Star, Awami League office secretary barrister Biplab Barua said, "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina talked to Tanvir Shakil Joy over phone. His family members sought prayers from people of all walks of lives for his recovery."

Biplab Barua also said that Mohammad Nasim has been transferred to the ICU of the hospital.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Protesters gather at Cadman Plaza in Brooklyn, New York on Thursday to condemn the killing of George Floyd. Floyd, a 46-year-old black man suspected of passing a counterfeit \$20 bill, died in Minneapolis on May 25 after Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, pressed his knee to Floyd's neck for almost nine minutes.

PHOTO: AFP

'Keep fighting'

US civil rights leader tells George Floyd memorial as protesters return to streets for 10th day; Trump sued over use of force against protesters

AGENCIES

Hundreds of mourners joined an emotional memorial service in Minneapolis Thursday for George Floyd, the black man killed by police last week, as civil rights leader Al Sharpton vowed mass protests will continue until "we change the whole system of justice."

Largely peaceful demonstrations took place later in cities from coast to coast. In New York, thousands marched over Brooklyn Bridge, while in Washington and Los Angeles curfews were lifted and crowds reduced.

In Minneapolis, Floyd's attorney told mourners he would find justice for the 46-year-old, who died during a May 25 arrest when a white police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

"It was not the coronavirus pandemic that killed George Floyd," said Benjamin Crump, who is representing Floyd's family. "It was that other pandemic. The pandemic of racism and discrimination."

The crowd stood in silence for eight minutes and 46 seconds -- the same length of time that officer Derek Chauvin spent with his knee on Floyd's neck, a scene captured on video.

Floyd's death has reignited long-felt anger over police killings of African-Americans and unleashed a nationwide wave of civil unrest unlike any seen in the US since Martin Luther King Jr's 1968 assassination.

With marches for racial justice stretching beyond the US and around the world, Sharpton said Floyd's death would not be in vain.

"It's time for us to stand up in George's name and say get your knee off our necks," said the 65-year-old Baptist minister.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Three of a family murdered at home

Police recover their decomposed bodies in Pabna; mother, daughter murdered at Moulvibazar home

STAR REPORT

Five members of two families in Pabna and Moulvibazar were found dead in their houses yesterday.

In Pabna, three members of a family were found dead at their rented house in Sadar upazila's Dilalpur area.

The dead are Abdul Jabbar, 60, a retired senior officer of Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank, his wife Summa Begum, 55, and their daughter Sanjida Khatun, 12.

Nasim Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Pabna Sadar Police Station, said they recovered decomposed bodies of the trio on information.

The victims were strangled to death and their bodies were chopped. Their house was ransacked too. They might be killed two to three days ago, the OC said.

The bodies were sent to Pabna Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsies, he added.

Jabbar's sister Nazma Begum said her brother retired a year ago and was staying at the rented house with his

wife for the sake of their daughter's education.

Nurul Islam Nuru, brother of Summa Begum, said this was a planned murder and sought proper investigation to find out the culprits.

Meanwhile in Moulvibazar, bodies of a mother and her daughter were found at their house in Sreemangal upazila's Purbo Jamshi area.

The dead are Jayeda Begum, 55, and her daughter Yeasmin Akther, 25, said Nayan Karkun, inspector of Sreemangal Police Station.

The mother and daughter were stabbed to death. Police recovered their bodies on information from the locals, he added.

Wahid Miah, son of Jayeda Begum, said, he was at his in-laws house when the murder took place. "My aunt informed me of the murder in the morning."

The bodies were sent to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies, Inspector Nayan said. Our Pabna and Moulvibazar correspondents contributed to this report.



Dismayed at not being able to give samples for Covid-19 testing, police constable Rokibul Islam leaning on his bicycle outside Muga General Hospital in the city yesterday. He left the area around noon after waiting for about five hours to collect a token for the test. Posted at the Bangabhaban, he has been on leave since late last month due to illness.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Mega projects

FROM PAGE 1

Another first track project is the construction of a single-line dual-gauge Railway Track from Dohazari to Cox's Bazar via Ramu. The long-drawn project also faces obstacles for lack of workers -- both Chinese and locals -- officials involved said.

Project director Mofizur Rahman said they have resumed work before the Eid and the number of workers was increasing gradually. "Most of the workers will start working from next week," he told The Daily Star.

"However, it's not possible to say now whether this problem would affect the deadline of the project."

Although the project was supposed to be implemented between July 2010 and June 2022, physical work from Dohazari to Ramu started in March 2018.

The project could spend TK 631 crore as of February, out of TK 1,135 crore. It would get TK 1,500 crore in the coming year.

Among other mega projects, Rooppur nuclear power plant will get the highest TK 15,691 crore, Matarbari coal power plant TK 3,670 crore, Karnaphuli river tunnel TK 1,550 crore, Dhaka-Ashulia elevated expressway TK 755 crore, Padma Rail Link TK 3,684 crore and Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport expansion (first phase) TK 2,900 crore in the next ADP.

Besides, installation of a single point mooring with double pipelines would get TK 752 crore, Payra port infrastructure development TK 350 crore, Payra port first terminal TK 350 crore, Rooppur Power Evacuation Line TK 585 crore and Kuril-Purbachal Canal TK 1,316 crore.

Three other mega projects would get allocation from ADP for the first time from next fiscal year. They are: Mass Rapid Transit (metro rail)-5 Tk 1,300, Mass Rapid Transit (metro rail)-1 Tk 791 crore and Matarbari Port Development project Tk 76 crore.

Asked, Prof Kanak Kanti Barua said performance trial of a drug or a kit was solely a scientific matter. "As a VC, I have nothing to intervene."

A team of Bangladeshi scientists -- Dr Bijon Kumar Sil, the lead researcher, Nihad Adnan, Raed Jamiruddin and Firoz Ahmed -- developed the antibody kit. They also developed an antigen kit.

RT-PCR, a test presently considered as the gold standard and suggested by the World Health Organization (WHO), is widely used for diagnosing novel coronavirus. It uses samples swabbed from the nose and throat to detect the presence of the virus, but the testing is expensive and time-consuming.

On the other hand, the antibody test takes less than 15 minutes. The kit can detect antibody that develops six to seven days after an individual is infected with Covid-19. The antigen kit can diagnose the infection soon after one is infected.

Dr Bijon Kumar Sil says results could be nearly 100 percent accurate if samples from each patient is run through both tests.

He also said Bangladesh could have gone for large-scale tests if approval had come earlier. It could have largely prevented the spread of new coronavirus infection, he said.

Last week, Dr Zafrullah said this is a time of grave crisis and the authorities should work on an emergency basis, especially when it is an issue of life and death.

There has, however, been a series of events that led to the delay.

When Gonoshasthaya first approached the drug administration on April 26 for validation of the kit, the latter suggested that Gonoshasthaya goes through the contract research organization (CRO), but Gonoshasthaya refused to do it saying it

would raise the price of the kit and that CROs were "a vehicle of corruption".

Later, on April 30, the DGDA allowed Gonoshasthaya to have the performance trial at the BSMMU, which then formed a committee and on May 12 wrote a formal letter asking Gonoshasthaya to supply kits.

Since May 13, Gonoshasthaya has supplied 500 antibody and 500 antigen kits to the BSMMU. The trial of antibody kit is over, but the trial of the antigen kit has been suspended as Gonoshasthaya Kendra found discrepancies in the process of collection of saliva samples.

Dr Mohib Ullah Khondoker, coordinator of the Gonoshasthaya's Covid-19 Rapid Dot Blot Project, said clear saliva was needed for the antigen test, but they found presence of cough, which was why they wrote to the BSMMU on June 2, requesting suspension of the antigen trial.

"We have, meanwhile, developed a device to properly collect saliva. We will supply those devices to the BSMMU in two to three days so that they can continue to work on that," he told The Daily Star.

He said as the antibody test was complete, Gonoshasthaya wrote to the DGDA seeking a preapproval on import of reagents so that once DGDA registers the antibody kit with it, they can immediately go for importing reagents.

Last week, Dr Zafrullah also said many countries like Britain, USA, European Union, Germany and India have already started antibody tests.

Many countries are considering mass antibody testing as a way to speed up the reopening of economies devastated by lockdowns and to introduce more tailored social distancing measures.

Health experts say Bangladesh, which had been in shutdown for nearly two months and now has partially reopened to save the economy, needs to go for antibody testing for the same reason.

"No one in the world has yet developed this combined [antibody and antigen] test. Now, just as we have developed it, other big foreign companies can also try and develop the combined testing. Then, we will fall behind others," he said.

Internal feud in ministry key reason

FROM PAGE 1

some missteps and its failure to provide necessary PPE to healthcare professionals in the early stages of the outbreak. The ministry has also been seen as culpable for not resorting to aggressive testing and tracing from the very beginning, ultimately contributing to community transmission and the present situation of deaths and infections rising every other day.

Although it was a collective failure, insiders and experts said the "internal feud" among Zahid Maleque and officials of the ministry played a major role for Asadul's removal.

Before joining the health ministry as the secretary, Asadul was the director general at Government Employee Welfare Board. Coming from the secretariat cadre (now defunct), Asadul worked in the health sector for most of his career. He was well-known and praised for his honesty, a DGHS official who worked closely with him told The Daily Star seeking anonymity.

The feud that created friction in the ministry came to light after allegations of supplying sub-standard personal protective equipment (PPE), in particular the N-95 masks to the government hospitals during April.

After that, the Central Medicine Store Department (CMSD) came under the scanner.

On April 20, the health ministry formed a three-member committee led by the ministry's Additional Secretary

(Development) Saidur Rahman. The committee submitted its report within three days.

The ministry, however, is yet to publish the report or announce what action it had taken as per the report.

"We have submitted the report within the deadline. I do not know what measures were taken [based on the report]," Saidur Rahman told The Daily Star.

On May 22, the public administration ministry announced the appointment of Additional Secretary Abu Hena Morsheed Zaman as CMSD director.

He replaced Brig Gen Md Shahidullah, who has been assigned to the Armed Forces Division and said after his removal that he was a victim of the machinations of a syndicate.

"When I joined here [CMSD], people said many syndicates are active here. There were requests from different high-ups to buy their products; [but] I did not consider those. When they saw there was no chance to serve their stakes, at that time [they removed] me. I am guessing [this is what happened]," Brig Shahidullah told a private TV channel after his removal.

Insiders said the ministry failed to take organised steps to contain the Covid-19 outbreak from the very beginning, although it had gotten enough time to take proper preparation.

As the top executive officer of the ministry, the health secretary was blamed for this along with the minister.

However, they said the government probably did remove Health Minister Zahid Maleque in the fear of possible backlash.

On April 6, less than a month after the first cases of coronavirus was reported in the country, the health minister aired his frustrations about the wider handling of the situation.

"I have been made the chairman of the national committee as the health minister. However, the decisions are taken on behalf of the committee without our [health ministry] knowledge," he had told a discussion of healthcare professionals on April 6.

"Nothing other than health issues is discussed with us. Even decisions like the closure of factories, prayers at mosques and suspension of transportation are not discussed with us. I cannot reply to journalists' questions... I am blamed for not knowing anything despite being the head of the national committee."

Prof Nazul Islam, former Vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University told The Daily Star, "It is a decision from the top of the government, so we do not know what happened. But such move during this crisis may create a bit of problem, I think."

About the failure of the health ministry to fight the coronavirus crisis, he said, "Actually it is a failure of the government where health ministry is a part of it. Our health system has not developed much since our Independence."

Boro procurement far from target

FROM PAGE 1

increased distribution of rice and wheat flour among low-income, poor and vulnerable people to protect them from hunger during the days of Covid-19 crisis.

The pandemic has left thousands of people in trouble, either cutting their wages or leaving them unemployed. The recent Cyclone Amphan also made the situation worse for many.

The government's food distribution under various schemes such as Gratuitous Relief, special Open Market Sale (OMS), food friendly programme to support the poor rose 12 percent year-on-year to 24.50 lakh tonnes between May 21 and July 1 this fiscal year from a year ago.

And the food stock at the state godowns dropped to 11.33 lakh tonnes on June 3, down 16 percent from the same day a year ago. The stock of staple food rice declined 29 percent year-on-year to 800,000 tonnes on June 3, shows food ministry data.

The DGF has a capacity of storing 19.5 lakh tonnes of food.

In the letter, the DGF directed its field offices to gear-up efforts to achieve previously-set target of buying 60 percent of the Boro paddy by June, 90 percent by July and 100 percent within mid August before the drive would end. It fixed the target last month and asked field offices to work to achieve the targets.

Besides, the government is going to increase food-based safety net operations the next fiscal year, according to finance ministry.

Talking on the matter, Akhter Ahmed, country representative of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI),

said the stock was set to decline further as the government would distribute more. So, replenishment of stock has become important, he said.

"Because of the Covid-19 crisis, maintenance of a good stock is vital this year compared to the past years as distribution has to increase to ensure food to the poor, including those who lost their livelihoods due to Covid-19," he said.

"Without a good stock, food-based safety operations would be affected. Besides, we saw in 2008 that private sector hiked prices of rice, taking the advantage of low stocks at public godowns," Akhter said.

Contacted, DGF Chief Sarwar said the government does not procure only to build stock.

"One of the main goals is to ensure fair prices to growers. Market has been buoyant this year. Farmers are getting better prices for their produce. They are not incurring losses. This is the target of the government," he said.

It has been possible to achieve the objective due to government declaration on buying higher quantity of paddy, he said.

Sarwar said millers were purchasing higher quantity of paddy assuming that because of the government purchase, they might not get enough grain later to supply rice to the public storages in line with their contracts with the DGE.

Department of Agricultural Marketing data shows prices of coarse paddy rose 51 percent year-on-year to Tk 770 each maund on June 3 this year from a year ago. Market prices are, however, below the government's purchase prices of Tk 1,040 for each maund.

'Keep fighting'

FROM PAGE 1

"You changed the world, George," he said. "We're going to keep fighting, George."

"We're going to keep going until we change the whole system of justice."

Members of Floyd's family were among several hundred people attending the North Central University service.

Minneapolis police chief Medaria Arradondo dropped to a knee as the hearse bearing Floyd's remains arrived for the service.

"NECESSARY AND OVERDUE" A vigil for Floyd was also held in New York and was attended by thousands of people, including Floyd's brother, Terrence.

"White Silence is Violence," a sign read. "Make America Not Embarrassing Again," read another.

Arrests were reported in Manhattan after the 8:00 pm curfew passed.

Upstate in Buffalo, two police officers were suspended without pay after a

video showed them pushing over an elderly protester who fell and suffered a head injury.

Reporting the suspension on Twitter, city mayor Byron Brown said he and the police commissioner were "deeply disturbed" by the video.

An earlier police statement said the man, who appeared unconscious and bled heavily from one ear, "tripped and fell."

"This incident is wholly unjustified and utterly disgraceful," New York governor Andrew Cuomo tweeted.

"Police Officers must enforce - NOT ABUSE - the law."

A Republican senator, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, broke ranks with her party meanwhile and revealed she was "struggling" with whether to support President Donald Trump's reelection.

Murkowski said her move was prompted by remarks from Trump's former defence secretary James Mattis, who a day earlier delivered a biting

assessment of a president who "tries to divide us."

"I thought General Mattis's words were true and honest and necessary and overdue," Murkowski told reporters.

Her comments mark a major break with Trump within the Republican camp, which has largely held together through various crises including his impeachment and current threat to use military force against protesters.

'FRANKLY CRIMINAL' While condemning Floyd's death, Trump has adopted a tough stance towards the protesters, saying they include many "bad people" and calling on governors to "dominate the streets."

US civil rights groups filed a case Thursday suing Trump, after security forces fired pepper balls and smoke bombs to clear peaceful demonstrators outside the White House before the president walked to a church for a photo op earlier this week.

DEATH FROM COVID-19 Doctor's family to get govt compensation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Family of Dr Md Moyeen Uddin, who died after being infected with coronavirus, is going to receive the government-declared compensation soon.

They will be the first to receive such compensation, said Md Habibur Rahman Khan, additional secretary (admin) to Health Services Division of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Dr Moyeen, an assistant professor of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College, tested positive for the infection on April 5.

He died on April 15, while undergoing treatment at Kurmitola General Hospital in Dhaka.

He was the first doctor to die in the country from Covid-19.

"All formal procedures regarding the claim filed by Dr Moyeen's family were completed and forwarded to the Ministry of Finance couple of days ago for the release of the compensation as soon as possible," said Md Habibur Rahman Khan.

On April 23, Ministry of Finance issued a circular stating that all government officials including doctors, nurses and health workers will be compensated if they are infected with Covid-19 while on duty.

The compensation amount for getting infected ranges from Tk 5 lakh to 10 lakh while the compensation for death with the infection ranges between Tk 25 lakh to 50 lakh, as per the salary grade of the employee.

Dr Moyeen's wife Dr Choudhury Rifat Jahan filed the claim on April 27 with all required documents and recommendation of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College authority.

Dr Rifat Jahan, an associate professor and head of the department of Physiology of Park View Medical College in Sylhet, said, "Everyone was very cordial during the process of claiming compensation. The medical college's principal, health ministry officials and others moved the claim promptly. I haven't yet been confirmed about the claim being cleared, but believe that the ministry will inform us soon."

Dr Mohammad Abu Yusuf, deputy secretary to the Ministry of Finance, said, "The claim of doctor Moyeen's family will be approved and handed over soon."

"It is our utmost priority to clear such claims as soon as possible so that the people serving the country in the frontline may be assured of financial safety," he said.

Syria Kurdish-led force launches new anti-IS campaign

AFP, Beirut

US-backed Kurdish fighters in Syria yesterday announced a fresh campaign to hunt down remnants of the Islamic State group near the Iraqi border following a recent uptick in attacks.

The Syrian Democratic Forces, a Kurdish-led paramilitary alliance that has spearheaded the ground fight against IS in Syria since 2015, said that the new campaign is being carried out in coordination with the Iraqi army and the US-led coalition.

"This campaign will target ISIS's hideouts and hotbeds," it said, using a different acronym for the jihadist group.

It said operations will focus on the vast east Syria desert near the border with Iraq where IS has conducted a spate of attacks in recent months.

Since the loss of its last territory in Syria in March 2019, IS attacks have been restricted to the vast desert that stretches from the heavily populated Orontes valley in the west all the way to Iraqi border.

Nasim

FROM PAGE 1

Physical condition of Nasim deteriorated following a brain stroke while he was undergoing treatment at Bangladesh Specialized Hospital at the city's Shyamoli.

Director and CEO of Bangladesh Specialized Hospital Imran Chowdhury said, "The Awami League leader suffered a stroke around 5:00 am on Friday. He is undergoing a surgery under Dr Rabiul Haque, chief of Neurosurgery Department of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital," reported UNB.

On Thursday, the condition of the politician improved and he was scheduled to be shifted to a cabin from ICU, he added.

On June 1, Mohammad Nasim was admitted to Bangladesh Specialized Hospital as he was feeling unwell. Later, he was tested positive for coronavirus.

Nasim has been acting as the convener of AL-led 14-party alliance.

Top leaders of 14-party alliance expressed deep concern over the deterioration of health condition of Nasim yesterday through a release.

Covid-19 cases

FROM PAGE 1

"We won't be able to fight back the disease without ensuring uninterrupted oxygen in the hospitals," said Dr Mohammad Shahidullah, chairperson of the NTAC.

The NTAC on Thursday night held a meeting with authorities concerned and the recommendation was made at the meeting.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Little Spiderhunters, Satchori, Bangladesh.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Spiderhunter

I saw my first Spiderhunter five years ago. I was looking for birds inside Satchori National Park in Habiganj. Although my guide and I had started early, we had scored few birds. It was close to noon and, knowing that birds are harder to find during mid-day, we decided to head out of the forest. With the sun directly overhead, the light inside the forest became dappled – mostly dark with spots of bright rounded patches where the sunlight broke through the foliage. The plants grew thick and tall on both sides of the trail and we kept scanning inside the forest for possible finds.

Suddenly we heard a sustained loud monotonous bird call, *which-which-which-which*, and presently saw fast movement on a rather thin branch of a medium-sized tree, a few yards into the forest. We stopped for a better look. There were two small birds with enormously long bills. They appeared to be playing with each other. After a few seconds, however, it became clear they were hunting as a team, searching and probing leaves and branches for insects, each covering a different direction. Darting from light to dark areas they were like a mirage and extremely difficult to photograph. One of them hovered in front of a flower while it probed inside with its bill. Then, for a brief moment, they sat on a thin branch and almost faced each other before resuming their search.

These were Little Spiderhunters, one of two types of Spiderhunters found in Bangladesh. Plainly coloured with olive upperparts and yellow underparts, their eyes have a pale, broken ring around them and their short brown tail has a thin white band. They are over 6 inches long, weigh about half an ounce with a bill that is 1.5 inches long. Year-round residents of Bangladesh, they dwell

in the forests and areas of dense vegetation, particularly in Sylhet and Chittagong regions. They feed on nectar, insects and – as their name suggests – spiders, often extracting them from the centre of their webs. To drink nectar, they insert their bills inside flower and use their tubular tongue to sip like a straw. Fine serrations on the edge of their bills help them catch and hold spiders and smaller insects. Their global range runs through South, East and Southeast Asia.

The Streaked Spiderhunter, the other species seen in Bangladesh, is harder to find. It is seen almost exclusively in the forests of Chittagong area.

Worldwide there are thirteen species of Spiderhunters. They belong to the same family, Nectariniidae, as our Sunbirds. But unlike Sunbirds, whose males and females differ substantially in appearance, the male and female Spiderhunters look alike. Other than the outsized bill, Spiderhunters are less distinctive looking than Sunbirds.

In my experience, Spiderhunters spend their time inside the forest, where they hunt while making their loud noise. Occasionally they do emerge from the darkness. I was able to see the bird once from the watchtower at Satchori. It was a treat, watching its long bill gleaming in the sunlight as it hovered around a bunch of wildflowers growing on a vine while maneuvering itself into acrobatic positions so it could reach inside the flowers. But it lasted only for a few seconds after which it disappeared once again into the depths of the forest.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow ihtishamkabar on Instagram.

'Turned away by 3 hospitals'

Says family of deceased Sylhet businessman

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

A 55-year-old businessman died yesterday from breathing complexities and chest pain, after allegedly being denied treatment at three different hospitals in Sylhet.

The deceased was proprietor of an electronics store in the city.

"He had breathing complexity since last night. We took him to Al Haramain Hospital around 6 in the morning but they turned us away. We then reached North East Medical College Hospital, who did the same," said his brother.

"Desperate, we went to Sylhet Saheed Shamsuddin Ahmed Hospital [the dedicated hospital for Covid-19 patients] but found one was there. Finally, we reached Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, where the duty doctor declared him dead around 7:30am," he said.

This was not the first such incident in Sylhet. On June 1, a 63-year-old woman died on ambulance after being turned away by six private hospitals. On May 31, a 70-year-old woman from Sreemangal of Moulvibazar died after being turned away by seven private hospitals in the city.

WHAT THE HOSPITALS SAY

Dr Sushanto Kumar Mahapatro, resident medical officer of Sylhet Saheed Shamsuddin Ahmed Hospital, said, "I checked CCTV footage of our hospital's entrance and found one ambulance came to the gate, stayed for a couple of minutes, and left."

"I heard that they alleged that the gate

was closed and someone turned them away saying everyone's asleep. These are false accusations," he said.

Dr Nahian Chowdhury, assistant director of Al Haramain Hospital, said, "The patient is our regular outdoor patient and they were hiding his medical history. He came to our hospital a couple of days ago with Covid-19 like symptoms and was advised by our doctors for testing."

"They brought him to the hospital again with severe breathing complexities, but we don't have any ICU facility in the isolation centre for suspected cases. We had to turn him away since we cannot place him in the regular ICU unit with other patients as we suspected he was infected with Covid-19 days before," he said.

Dr Nazmul Islam, director of North East Medical College Hospital, said, "I was on duty in the morning and admitted patients no matter what symptoms they had, as we have started dedicated service for Covid-19 patients. So far I have been informed that no patient had been turned away by us. We will still look into the matter."

WHAT GOVT OFFICIAL SAYS

Dr Anisur Rahman, assistant director of Sylhet Divisional Health Office, said, "We have warned all hospitals after such incidents took place earlier. Unfortunately, we cannot proceed without any written complaint."

He urged people to come forward whenever they are faced with such incidents.

168 killed in road crashes during Eid

Says Jatri Kalyan Samity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 168 people were killed and 283 injured in 149 road crashes across the country in 13 days while travelling during the Eid-ul-Fitr festival, according to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity.

Besides, the passengers' welfare platform said, at least 17 people died and 45 went missing in six waterways-related accidents in between May 19 and May 31. No casualties were reported in one train-related accident during the time, the organisation said.

The organisation prepared the report collating data from media reports. The organisation's Secretary General Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury presented the statistics at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium yesterday.

As per government directives, most public and private offices were closed and public transport service remained suspended from March 26 to May 30 to control the transmission of Covid-19 in the country.

But many people left Dhaka before Eid in private and other vehicles, ignoring authorities' "stay home" advice, posing a serious risk of getting infected.

At least 273 people were killed and 849 injured in 232 road accidents across the country during the same period last year, according to the organisation.

The organisation said motorcycles were involved in the highest 35.78 percent road crashes, while truck, pickup, lorry and covered vans were involved in 28.98 percent, private car, microbus in 12.07 percent, illegal three-wheelers in 6.28 percent and bus in 0.97 percent.

Kazi Md Shifun Newaz, assistant professor of Accident Research Institute of Buet, among other was present at the press briefing.



AWARENESS... Opu, a man with a rare birth defect called Amelia that causes deformed limbs, used to beg for alms near Moghbazar, but for the last two months, has been stuck at home due to the pandemic. However, he says he has been fortunate enough to receive support from the solvent of society. As he plays ludo with his children to pass the time outside his slum residence near Moghbazar Wireless Gate area, he makes sure they are all wearing masks.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Prof Dr Naseem K Rahman no more

CITY DESK

Prof Dr Naseem K Rahman, a physicist of international repute, passed away on Sunday in Treviso, Italy.

Born in 1943, he was chairperson at physics department of Trieste University in Italy. His academic career led him to be involved with St Gregory's High School and College, Notre Dame College and Dhaka University. He obtained his PhD in the US. His publications include "Photons, Continuum States and Molecules" and "Universality and Diversity in Science".

He left behind his daughter Michelle Rahman, granddaughter Victoria, and family and friends in five continents to mourn his death.



MISAPPROPRIATION OF COVID-19 RELIEF

87 public reps suspended so far

RASHIDUL HASAN

The government has so far suspended 87 public representatives for alleged corruption in relief distribution among the poor during Covid-19 pandemic.

Of them, 29 are UP chairmen, 52 UP members, one zila parishad member, four municipality councillors and one upazila parishad vice-chairman, said LGRD ministry Public Relations Officer Mahmudul Hasan.

Most of them belong to the ruling Awami League, ministry sources said.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, AL senior presidium member Abdur Razzaque said, "We thought people would not be involved in corruption during this critical time... As we saw that several people belonging to our party did so, the party must take

punitive actions against them," said Razzaque, also agriculture minister.

The LGRD ministry on Thursday suspended Rafiqul Islam Malai, chairman of Muriak Union Parishad in Habiganj, over irregularities and nepotism in preparing list for money disbursement through mobile banking, said the ministry.

In another case, Shafiqul Islam Taskir, a member of ward-9 of Rajiura Union Parishad in Habiganj, was suspended for embezzling rice meant for selling to the poor at Tk 10 per kg.

Ruling party high-ups on several occasions warned of stern action against those involved in such activities, but so far, no exemplary action has been taken.

On Tuesday, the ministry suspended a municipal councillor,

four UP chairmen and six members over irregularities in cash and relief distribution, and absence at offices.

The UP chairmen are Md Anwarul Haque of Singpur in Nikli upazila and Hazi Md Kajal Bhuiyan of Halimpur under Bajitpur upazila in Kishoreganj, and Md Shahnewaz of Baliatioli under sadar upazila and Humayun Kabir of Noltana of Barguna.

The suspended councillor is Solaiman Babul of ward-6 in Boalkhali municipality of Chattogram.

In the notice, the ministry has also asked the suspended public representatives to explain within 10 days through respective deputy commissioners as to why they should not be removed permanently from their posts.

Govt control over Ctg pvt hospitals demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The government has to take control of private hospitals with adequate ICU, ventilator, and centralised oxygen facilities in Chattogram, to deal with the increasing number of coronavirus patients, demanded a civil platform yesterday.

Participants of a human chain by "Action against Corona" in front of Chattogram Press Club also called on the government to bear patients' treatment costs.

Talking to The Daily Star, the platform's chief coordinator Dr Susanto Barua alleged that hospitals leave patients untreated, and helpless people are struggling to get seats at healthcare institutions. Under the circumstances, the government should come forward to take over the hospitals, he said.

Apart from this, testing capacity has to be increased at all levels -- including upazila and union -- to reduce people's suffering, demanded the participants.

Tavir Hossen, Advocate Amir Abbas and Bisumoy Dev, associate coordinators of the platform, were present at the human chain, among others.

Special train for a special fruit

Railways offering parcel service to transport mango at discounted rate

ANWAR ALI, RAJSHAHI

Mango is special.

With growers eyeing bumper yield and profit while buyers thronging markets to purchase these sweet delights, every year the "king of fruits" remains one of the best attractions of summer.

But this time around, amid the coronavirus scare, things are different. Mango growers had been suffering due to lack of transportation and buyers.

To ease growers' woes, the government has initiated a train service -- "Mango Special" -- to transport agricultural products, including mango.

The train began its journey on the route between Chapainawabganj and Dhaka yesterday at a reduced rate, said railway officials.

"We introduced the train for easing farmers' problems of transporting mango this season," said Md Nasir Uddin, railway's divisional transportation officer. The rates for booking parcels for the train was reduced to highest Tk 1.30 per kg from normal rate of Tk 3 a kg.

Both farmers and traders can use the



Workers load the summer fruit in a compartment of the train "Mango Special", which began its journey from Chapainawabganj to Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

facility, he said.

On the first day yesterday, around 1.64 tonnes of mango were booked from Chapainawabganj and six tonnes from Rajshahi, but each of the five coaches attached to the new train has the capacity of transporting at least 45 tonnes.

Appreciating the move, mango growers said this new train would reduce their sufferings, as they do not

have to book at different courier services at exorbitant prices any more.

Most growers refrained from attending to their orchards this year as they were anxious about how they would market their products. Besides, the weather was not favourable this year as rain occurred during flowering and fruiting periods, hampering production. Moreover, mango trees suffered two

storms this year including the cyclone Amphan that caused dropping of around 10 percent of the fruit.

Amid the situation, introduction of this new train is a sigh of relief for growers. "I consider this special train a blessing," said Anwarul Haque, president of Rajshahi Safe Mango Producers' Association. "The process of booking is easier and the fruits will face lesser damage on train than on trucks."

Growers will be able to save money on transportation cost too, he said. He said transportation of a kg of mango in train would require not more than Tk 2 including expenditures for porters whereas they used to spend more than Tk 16 for booking mango with courier services and Tk 6 in private trucks.

Starting from Chapainawabganj, the train would stop at different stations for loading the fruit. Other than Amnura, Rohonpur, Sitalai, Rajshahi, Sardaha road, Arani Abdulpur, the train will stop at Sirajganj, Tangail, Mirzapur, Mouchak, Joydevpur, Tangi, and Airport stations before reaching Kamalapur in the capital. Starting from Chapainawabganj at

4pm, the train will reach Rajshahi at 5:20pm and Dhaka at 1am. It will then start from Dhaka at 2:15am and reach Chapainawabganj at 10am.

But the train will continue to carry other goods including agricultural products round the year until further notice, said railway official Nasir Uddin. "We named the train after mango as a homage to the region, which is known for the summer fruit," he said.

Against a capacity of 22 trains, at least 34 trains ply the routes of Western zone in normal times. Movement of the "Mango Special" has become possible as many trains are suspended over coronavirus situation.

Meanwhile, Directorate of Posts introduced a service called "Krishak Bandhu Dak Seba" from June 2 to transport mango to Dhaka free of cost.

The service is meant for only mango growers, said Md Shafiqul Alam, post master general of Rajshahi division. Only growers can transport at least 5 tonnes of mango free of cost daily from Puthia, Charghat, Bagha upazilas of Rajshahi under the service, he said.

COVID-19 Ctg-16 MP, family test positive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Lawmaker Mostafizur Rahman of Chattogram-16 has tested positive for Covid-19, along with a number of members of his family.

The affected include the lawmaker's wife, three daughters, one son-in-law, grandchild, his personal secretary and three domestic helps.

Their reports came positive on June 2, said AKM Mostafizur Rahman Russel, personal secretary of the lawmaker.

"All members of the family, including myself, have tested positive for Covid-19. My boss and others are in isolation and in good health", he told this newspaper.

Embarrassing errors taint Kulaura lists

FROM PAGE 12
Jame Mosque.

But Farid Uddin is the imam of Chakapan North Faridpur Mosque in Kadipur union. "I used to be the imam of Karergram Jame Mosque in 2016," he said.

Similar mistakes were found in the list for Kulaura municipality.

Nazim Uddin, an expatriate living in Qatar for the last five years, was listed as the imam of Dakshin Joypasha Jame Mosque of ward-8 of the municipality, said a resident of the area, requesting anonymity.

The mosque secretary, Kalim Uddin, told The Daily Star that the current imam of the mosque is Maulana Hafiz Selim Ahmed. And they were not informed while the list was prepared, he added.

Former Chhatra League activist Abdul Latif's name was included as the imam of Chakapan Noorani Mosque in Kadipur Union.

"I do not know how my name came up [in the list]," Latif told The Daily Star.

"There are eight mosques in ward-1 of our union, but 12 mosques were listed. Around four names are fake," he added.

Names of four people, listed as

imams of Chakapan Jame Mosque, East Chakapan Mosque, Chakapan Rail Station Mosque and Dakshin Chakapan Jame Mosque, were identified as activists of a local Islamist party by Abdul Latif.

Locals claimed they never led any prayers in any of the mosques.

Examining the lists, The Daily Star found that names of seven mosques were mentioned more than once. On the other hand, names of a number of mosques were left out.

Baradal and Kanehat Jame Mosque's names were not included in the list, said Mahfuz Hamid, a resident of Karera village under Bhuksimoil union.

Mafuz, who runs a citizens' group on Facebook, alleged that 80 percent of the information in the lists is flawed.

Abdur Rakib, field supervisor of Kulaura Islamic Foundation, told this correspondent that they received a phone call from their Dhaka headquarters on May 15 morning to prepare and complete the lists by the afternoon.

Earlier on May 14, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made an announcement about providing financial assistance to imams and muezzins of all mosques to cope with

the crisis created by the coronavirus-induced shutdown.

Because of the haste, there were so many mistakes and misinformation in the lists, Abdur Rakib admitted.

He said the lists were prepared by some teachers of the foundation at the union level. However, as the matter has become known in various quarters, the lists are being checked and rectified through the upazila nirbahi officer's (UNO) intervention.

UNO ATM Farhad Chowdhury of Kulaura said a total of Tk 38,55,000 has been allocated for 771 mosques of the upazila at the rate of Tk 5,000 for each mosque.

Admitting to the information discrepancy in the published lists, the UNO said those were provided by the Islamic Foundation and the irregularities have been reported to the higher authorities.

There is no scope to misappropriate money by making fake lists, he added.

Farhad also said the chairmen of the 13 unions of the upazila and the mayor of the municipality were instructed to prepare a new and accurate list after checking and sorting out the lists prepared by the Islamic Foundation.

Monsoon

FROM PAGE 12
The met office, in its one-month climate outlook, said there was a chance of one or two depressions in the Bay of Bengal.

Rivers in northern, north-eastern and South eastern part of the country would overflow and cause flood and flood like situations as the Monsoon will be active throughout the month, reported the climate outlook.

Almost all areas of the country will experience more shower than usual, the climate outlook mentions.

In May, the country experienced 17 percent more rainfall than usual, states the climate outlook.

Socialism

FROM PAGE 12
TAJUDDIN'S APPREHENSION ABOUT AMERICAN AID

Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmad says today that socialism cannot be established with the assistance from imperial powers like the USA. He asks people to be aware of the motives of the imperialist forces and says that they always try to interfere in the internal affairs of a country on the pretext of providing aid. The imperialists should not be given any chance to halt Bangladesh's march towards socialism, adds the finance minister.

CASES FILED AGAINST SUSPECTED WAR CRIMINALS

The government has filed war crimes charges against more than a thousand people for collaborating with the Pakistan army during the Liberation War and committing crimes against humanity, informs Home Minister Abdul Mannan. Many of them have already been arrested, he adds. The minister further says that all the accused persons will be given adequate time and facilities to prepare their defence.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad reiterates at a press conference in Malaysia that the government will hold trials of war criminals at any cost. This will be an open trial and all the international norms will be followed properly, he adds.

SOURCES: June 7, 1972 issue of Purbodesh.

Zafrullah's condition

FROM PAGE 12
this newspaper.

Zafrullah's lungs have been affected, which can be called an earlier stage of pneumonia, Tanvir said, adding that his chest X-ray reports were also not good.

"He requested everyone to pray for him," he said.

Zafrullah tested positive for Covid-19 on May 25. Plasma therapy was also administered on him and he had no major complications since he tested positive.

Gonoshasthaya Kendra in a Facebook post said it was seeking blessings from all for the recovery of Dr Zafrullah.

"We hope he will recover soon and start working again to build a Bangladesh he dreams of," it said.

Zafrullah made significant contributions to the country's health sector since the Liberation War in 1971. He was behind Bangladesh's drug policy that helped flourish its pharmaceutical industry.

The physician, also a freedom fighter, has been demanding fast approval of Gonoshasthaya Kendra-developed rapid test kit for Covid-19.

Testing with this kit would be cheaper and it would enable the authorities to go for large-scale testing and isolation measures, said Gonoshasthaya Kendra.

Human rights

FROM PAGE 12
Frontline health workers are the worst-hit amid the crisis because they do not have adequate access to health safety measures. They have also been restricted from talking to the media, said the report, detailing a list of incidents where health workers were penalised for speaking out.

The report presented a holistic picture of the plight of workers from all sectors. "Between February and May 20, garments workers staged demonstrations almost every day for their wages. On the other hand, entire neighbourhoods and residences were put under lockdown ... No factory was locked down, even though 97 RMG workers had tested coronavirus positive until May 7, 2020," it said.

"Labour organisers in Ashulia alleged that they received phone calls from law enforcers warning them not to write anything on social media regarding unpaid wages," the report stated. It said five labour leaders were taken to the Ashulia industrial police lines in May, were interrogated throughout the day, and released only upon signing an agreement swearing that they would not write anything on their social media accounts.

Meanwhile in Moulvibazar's Kulaura, tea workers who only earn Tk 102 per day to begin with, had not been getting paid for 12 weeks, mentioned the report. "The full-time staffers of a tea garden have not been getting paid for 11 months either."

Transport workers have been going hungry as well, in spite of paying "fees" to different societies and associations throughout the year, the report stated.

"Around 70 lakh transport workers are in peril, even though there are 300 associations whose yearly earnings from "fees" is Tk 2,000 crore.

"The workers' welfare foundation collected Tk 400 crore from the transport workers over the years, but that money cannot be used because the labour and welfare ministry said there is no legal scope to spend it for relief works."

On April 16, thousands of indigenous workers trying to go back home after the lockdown left them unemployed, were stopped at the Khagrachhari-Fatikchhari border by law enforcers, the report noted. "Most of those stopped were women. The police charged at them with batons, grievously injuring five, of whom four were women."

Private university teachers are not being paid properly either, the report said. "Only 32 of 96 private universities paid their staff in full in April."

The report also noted that in such a situation, relief is far and few in between. "Between March 29 and April 28, there were 12 protest programmes for relief in Jashore, 11 in Dhaka, 9 in Chattogram, 8 in Rangpur, 7 in Nilphamari, 7 in Gaibandha, 6 in Pabna, 6 in Rajshahi, 5 in Lalmonirhat, 5 in Sirajganj, 4 in Jamalpur, 4 in Panchagarh, 4 in Dinajpur, 4 in Thakurgaon and 4 protests in Barisal."

The plight of migrant workers also featured in the report. "The sudden loss of jobs and inability to send money home affected the well-being of migrant workers. A Kuwaiti newspaper reported that at least nine migrant workers died by suicide and four attempted it."

946 Bangladeshis brought home

FROM PAGE 12
chartered flights, Md Mahbubur Rahman, a doctor at the health desk of HISA, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The rest 203 migrants returned from Russia by another special flight, Mahbubur said.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen in early April said different Middle Eastern countries, especially the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq, are likely to send back around 29,000 Bangladeshi workers in the next couple of weeks.

Many of these Bangladeshis are now in prisons or detention camps,

foreign ministry sources said, adding that they have, however, been granted general amnesty due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Of the 29,000, several thousand Bangladeshi workers have already returned from different ME countries in the last three weeks, said the sources.

All the Bangladeshi workers and others who returned to the country recently were sent to home quarantine after they showed health certificates proving they have tested negative for Covid-19.

But public health experts have

raised questions about the certificates.

Earlier, a government-appointed expert committee warned that the country might face a second wave of coronavirus infections if the government failed to ensure strict institutional quarantine for the 29,000 Bangladeshi workers.

Prof Muzaherul Huj, former adviser (Southeast Asia Region) of the World Health Organization, yesterday said in the recent past we had a bitter experience by allowing migrant workers to go into home quarantine.

"Therefore, we should not make the same mistake."

OBITUARY

Our beloved Iftekharul Islam Asad (Mirju) died in his sleep, from hypoglycemia, on 03/06/2020. He was laid to rest in Sirajganj. Iftekhar was a crack platoon commander in Dhaka during 1971. His bereaved family requests prayers for his soul.

Cambodia police refuse probe into Thai activist 'disappearance'

AFP, Phnom Penh

Cambodian police yesterday ruled out a probe into the alleged disappearance of a self-exiled Thai democracy activist after a rights group said he had been abducted in broad daylight from outside his Phnom Penh apartment.

Wanchalearm Satsaksit, a sharp critic of the Thai government led by ex-general Prayut Chan-O-Cha, was dragged into a black car on Thursday evening, according to Human Rights Watch.

Citing several witnesses and CCTV from security cameras, HRW says he was on the phone with a colleague when he was taken by "a group of armed men".

EU presses

FROM PAGE 12
Brazil's death toll topped 34,000, overtaking Italy's to become the third highest in the world, while cases in Mexico, Peru, Ecuador and Chile continued to mount.

Impoverished Haiti, with its fragile health system, is also seeing worrying trends as infections and deaths rise in the face of swirling rumours and disinformation about the severity of the disease.

When 25-year-old Jonel Cadet tested positive, he said: "I didn't believe it, and I even said the president was talking nonsense."

"It was only by coming here that I really started to believe, because I saw people who were much worse off," he told AFP from a hospital in Cite Soleil.

OXYGEN SHORTAGES

Since emerging in China late last year, the virus has infected at least 6.6 million people, killed more than 391,000 and wreaked havoc on the global economy by forcing millions to stay inside their homes.

After Brazil reported a new 24-hour record death toll, its fatalities stand behind only the United States, with more than 108,000 deaths, and Britain, with nearly 40,000.

Far-right President Jair Bolsonaro has fiercely criticised coronavirus stay-at-home measures, arguing that they are needlessly hurting the economy.

Brazil is the hardest-hit country in Latin America, though Mexico reported a record number of new infections for the second straight day, with 4,442.

And in Peru, desperate residents lined up to buy oxygen tanks for their loved ones, as the government declared oxygen a "strategic health resource" amid an acute shortage.

'GLOBAL PUBLIC GOOD'

With the pandemic starting to hit the developing world with full force, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said a new vaccine had to be available to everyone across the world.

"A vaccine must be seen as a global public good - a people's vaccine, which a growing number of world leaders are calling for," he said in a message to a virtual summit hosted by Britain.

RFP Ref. No.: LRPS-BAN-2020-9158792

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Pre-bid Meeting date: **Please see the schedule mentioned in the RFP**

The deadline to submit proposal is **Monday, 29th June 2020; Time: 11:00 hrs**

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প্রথম পুরস্কার	টাকা ৬,০০,০০০	০৯৬২৩০৭
দ্বিতীয় পুরস্কার	টাকা ৩,২৫,০০০	০৫৮১৬৬৩
তৃতীয় পুরস্কার	টাকা ১,০০,০০০	০৫৯২৫৪৫
চতুর্থ পুরস্কার	টাকা ৫০,০০০	০৫৯২৫৪৫
পঞ্চম পুরস্কার	টাকা ১০,০০০	০৫৯২৫৪৫

Largest ancient Maya

FROM PAGE 12
exceeded ancient Egypt's Great Pyramid of Giza built 1,500 years earlier.

There were no signs of sculptures depicting high-status individuals, suggesting Maya culture at this early stage was more communal and only later developed social inequality and a hierarchical society led by royalty, the researchers said.

"Because it is so large horizontally, if you walk on it, it just looks like natural landscape," said University of Arizona archaeologist Takeshi Inomata, who led the research published in the journal Nature. "But its form comes out nicely in lidar."

Lidar, short for Light Detection and Ranging, is a remote-sensing technique that employs a pulsed laser and other data obtained flying over a site to generate three-dimensional information about the shape of surface characteristics.

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Zandrotex Fashion GmbH Liaison Office Bangladesh Mourns with deepest sympathy

Zandrotex Fashion GmbH Liaison Office Bangladesh extends our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Mr. Riazul Alam (Riaz) who passed away on 27th May 2020, Wednesday in a tragic fire incident at United Hospital while taking treatment as a suspected COVID 19 patient. Innaillaha Wainna Ilaihe Rajiun. May Allah shower His choicest blessings and grace on the departed soul.

Mr. Riazul Alam has been working with our company since August 1, 2006. He started his career in Zandrotex Fashion GmbH as a merchandiser and have developed into Manager- Merchandising over the years through his remarkable achievements. He was very trustworthy, dedicated and professional both as an employee as well as a human being. He was very supportive, energetic and motivating as a colleague. He would always keep his company and colleagues before himself which is such a rare quality to find. His contribution to the company will be always appreciated.

He will be missed dearly and fondly remembered for his compassion and dedication to the company. We will surely miss him each and every day at work and Zandrotex Fashion will always wish that he could be there with us to share his creative thoughts with us.

Our prayers and thoughts will always be there with his family in these challenging times.

Zandrotex Fashion GmbH Liaison Office Bangladesh

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Madaripur
Phone and Fax: 0661-61266
e-mail: eemrdrhd@gmail.com

Memo No: _____ Date: _____

E-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tender is being in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Madaripur for the procurement of:

Sl No.	Tender ID	Name of work	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
1.	465828	Preliminary Survey, Detailed Topographical Survey & Preparation of Land Acquisition plan of Kotallipara-Rajoir (Z-8032) road under Madaripur Road Division during 2019-2020.	15-06-2020 at 17:00	16-06-2020 at 16:00	16-06-2020 at 16:00
2.	465829	Preliminary Survey, Detailed Topographical Survey & Preparation of Land Acquisition plan of Proposed Mahisherchar-Kulpadbi-Gagonpur new bus stand connecting road under Madaripur Road Division during the year 2019-2020	15-06-2020 at 17:00	16-06-2020 at 16:15	16-06-2020 at 16:15
3.	465830	Installation of reflecting road studs at major curve portions & speed breaker location (different chainages) of Bhanga-Bhatiapara-Mollahat National Highway (N-805) & Dhaka-Jatrabari-Mawa-Bhanga-Barishal National Highway (N-8) under Road Division Madaripur during the year 2019-2020	15-06-2020 at 17:00	16-06-2020 at 16:30	16-06-2020 at 16:30

1. This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the e-GP Portal.
2. To submit e-Tender registration in the e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.
3. For further information, please contact e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Rafiqul Islam
ID No. 601951
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Madaripur

GD-953

Libya's GNA seizes last LNA stronghold near capital

Forces loyal to Libya's internationally recognised government captured the last major stronghold of eastern commander Khalifa Haftar near Tripoli yesterday, capping the sudden collapse of his 14-month offensive on the capital. Military sources in Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) said their forces had withdrawn from the town of Tarhouna. They headed towards Sirte, far along the coast, and the airbase of al-Jufra in central Libya. The advance extends the control of the Government of National Accord (GNA) and allied forces across most of northwest Libya, reversing many of Haftar's gains from last year when he raced towards Tripoli. The GNA has been backed by Turkey, while Haftar, whose LNA still controls the east and oil fields in the south, has been supported by Russia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

Three dead, 7 wounded in China market stabbing

Three people were killed and seven wounded in a stabbing spree at a supermarket in rural southeast China, police said yesterday. The suspected attacker, a 35-year-old man, was arrested shortly after the incident late Thursday in Fujian province, they said in a statement, without specifying the kind of weapon used. The injured were in stable condition in hospital, they added. The attack came hours after 39 pupils and staff were wounded in a knife attack at a rural primary school in south China's Guangxi region. The attacker, reportedly a 50-year-old security guard at the school, was apprehended. Violent knife crime is not uncommon in China, where firearms are strictly controlled, with a number of similar attacks at schools in recent years.

Trump shares letter that calls protesters 'terrorists'



President Donald Trump on Thursday shared a letter on Twitter that referred to the peaceful protesters who were forcibly dispersed from a park near the White House on Monday evening as "terrorists." The letter from veteran attorney and former Trump lawyer John Dowd appears to be addressed to former Secretary of Defense James Mattis and rebuts Mattis' Wednesday statement castigating Trump's response to the nationwide protests after the death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer. "The phony protesters near Lafayette were not peaceful and are not real," Dowd's letter claimed, without citing any evidence. "They are terrorists using idle hate filled students to burn and destroy." CNN has reached out to the White House for comment on the description of the protesters as "terrorists."

US conducts first air strikes against Taliban since truce

The US conducted its first air strikes against the Taliban since a rare ceasefire between the insurgents and Afghan forces ended more than a week ago, the US military said yesterday. The two assaults took place on Thursday and Friday in separate provinces in Afghanistan, spokesman Sonny Leggett said on his Twitter account.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



A young Palestinian woman runs from tear gas fired by Israeli forces and a Palestinian man wave a national flag on face of Israeli forces during a protest near the town of Tulkarm, West Bank, yesterday. Palestinians in the West Bank rallied to mark 53 years of Israeli occupation and protest against the Jewish state's plans to annex part of the territory. PHOTO: AFP

IMMUNISATION PLANS FOR POOR COUNTRIES Vaccines alliance raises \$8.8 billion

Gets \$567m for Covid-19 vaccine for all

REUTERS, London

The GAVI vaccines alliance has raised \$8.8 billion from international donor governments, companies and philanthropic foundations to fund its immunisation programmes through to 2025.

At a funding summit in London, GAVI said the pledges had exceeded its target of \$7.4 billion, and would "help immunise 300 million more children in the world's poorest countries against diseases like measles, polio and diphtheria."

The vaccines alliance also said it had raised \$567 million towards an initial goal of \$2 billion from international donors for an Advanced Market Commitment to buy future COVID-19 vaccines for poor countries.

The deal would help secure enough COVID-19 vaccine doses - when the shots have been developed - for poor countries to immunise healthcare workers and those at high risk, it said.

GAVI, the World Health Organisation and UNICEF have warned that 80 million children under the age of one are at risk of disease due to disruptions to vital immunisation programmes because of the COVID-19 pandemic caused by the new coronavirus.

Britain, which hosted the summit, was among the largest donor to GAVI's core \$8.8 billion funding, pledging the equivalent of 330 million pounds (\$416 million) per year over the next five years, GAVI said. Other top donors included the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which gave \$1.6 billion for the period up to 2025, and the governments of Norway, Germany and the United States.



Kerala makes first arrest in elephant death case

AGENCIES

A man has been arrested in India's Kerala state for his alleged involvement in the death of a pregnant elephant and others are being questioned, the state's Forest Minister K Raju has said.

He said more arrest likely to follow and vowed to take exemplary actions to prevent similar incidents.

The government previously said they have identified 3 suspects.

The death of the elephant, which reportedly ate a pineapple filled with explosives, led to widespread outrage and triggered a political controversy involving federal ministers.

A preliminary post mortem report indicated the elephant suffered injuries in its mouth and was not able to eat for days. The pregnant animal eventually died standing in a river on May 27.

CO2 hits record high amid pandemic

A key measure of carbon dioxide emissions in the Earth's atmosphere hit a record in May even as a global pandemic brought the world's economies to a virtual standstill this year, according to US government data published on Thursday. Carbon dioxide recorded at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii reached 417 parts per million (ppm) in May, higher than the record of 414.8 ppm set last year, according to the report.

The drop in worldwide emissions due to the coronavirus outbreak -- estimated to be as much as 26 percent in some countries during the peak of government confinement orders -- fails to cancel out the large natural variations in carbon emissions caused by how plants and soils react to temperature, humidity and other factors,

scientists said. It would take carbon dioxide reductions of 20% to 30% for six to 12 months to slow the rate of increase in the measurements at Mauna Loa, Scripps said in a statement. Last month, research published in the journal Nature Climate Change predicted that global emissions could fall by up to 7% this year.

"It will decrease the rate of increase of CO2 by a little bit, but it will still be increasing," Pieter Tans, chief scientist at NOAA's greenhouse gas monitoring lab, said in an interview. "So a 10 percent change -- it's even hard for us to measure."

May is the annual peak for the world's carbon dioxide emissions, which are at levels not experienced by the atmosphere in several million years.

SOURCE: REUTERS

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One million Thai heroes

REUTERS, Saladang

Nearly every day, 77-year-old Surin Makradee goes door-to-door in her village in Thailand, visiting every home to check people's temperatures in a routine repeated in communities across the country during the coronavirus pandemic.

"I consider people in the village my family. If I don't educate them, they will not understand the risk of getting infected," Surin said in her village of Saladang in Ang Thong province, about 90 km north of Bangkok.

She is a member of the Village Health Volunteers, a long-overlooked network of more than 1 million community workers dating back to a Cold War-era hearts-and-minds programme.

The volunteers have been praised by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "unsung heroes" in Thailand's relatively successful efforts to fight the novel coronavirus.

Thailand was the first country outside China to detect a case of the coronavirus, in January, but it has

reported only about 3,000 cases and 58 deaths since then.

"Thailand's village health volunteers are unsung heroes working to support the prevention, detection and reporting of COVID-19," said Daniel Kertesz, WHO representative for Thailand, referring to the disease caused by the coronavirus.



Apart from the temperature checks, the front-line health volunteers help the government collect daily health information and watch for flare-ups in infections.

Surin, who has been a volunteer for 38 years and does her rounds by motorcycle, said she is also

responsible for monitoring people who have returned from other provinces and need to be in quarantine for 14 days.

Created in 1977, the Village Health Volunteers were set up as part of government efforts to help rural communities at a time when communists insurgents roamed through many parts of the country.

With basic health training, the volunteers help provide rudimentary care and initial diagnoses in areas that are often a long way from a clinic or hospital.

Their role, however, had become less prominent over the past 10 years - at least until the coronavirus emerged.

One person under quarantine in Surin's village, Ticompon Kingpet, 60, who recently returned home from the resort island of Phuket, said he was impressed with the volunteers' work.

"They're like a group of small ants working together. They are giving very good advice to the people," he said.

Locust brings India, Pak closer

AGENCIES

Pakistani and Indian authorities are working together to combat the worst invasion of desert locusts in decades in the region, which is threatening crops in both countries, Pakistan's foreign office has said.

The two countries - also bitter regional rivals - have been coordinating through the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), on controlling the locust activity, sharing data and attending weekly meetings.

During a weekly briefing on Thursday, a spokesman from Pakistan's foreign office said a decision to work together was made at a ministerial-level meeting of Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and Iran in March.

The participants decided to revive communication between the regional countries through the FAO's Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in South-West Asia (SWAC).

Pakistan is facing its worst locust infestation in two decades, prompting authorities to declare a national emergency.



Millions of locusts have also engulfed India's seven heartland states, including the western desert of Rajasthan, and threaten vegetable and pulse crops such as lentils and beans.

The last major locust surge was in 1993, when heavy rains created favourable breeding conditions for the insects along the India-Pakistan border.

Locust swarms can fly up to 150km (90 miles) a day, and the adult insects can consume roughly their own weight in fresh food each day. A small swarm can eat enough food to feed 35,000 people in one day, according to the FAO.

Siberia 10C hotter in May!

AFP, Paris

Temperatures soared 10 degrees Celsius above average last month in Siberia, home to much of Earth's permafrost, as the world experienced its hottest May on record, the European Union's climate monitoring network said yesterday.

It said May 2020 was 0.68C warmer than the average May from 1981 to 2010.

This has accelerated melting of Greenland's kilometres-thick ice sheet, resulting in a net loss of 600 billion tonnes of ice mass for the year -- accounting for about 40 percent of total sea level rise in 2019.



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Dated: 04 June 2020

INVITATION FOR INTERNATIONAL TENDER

01	Procuring entity name	Dockeyard & Engineering Works Ltd, BN, Narayanganj
02	Materials name and Quantity	All Terrain Mobile Crane with Telescopic Boom and accessories, Capacity: 100 Ton Quantity: One complete crane
03	Procuring method	Open Tender
04	Budget & source of funds	Own finance
05	Tender document last selling date	06 July 2020
06	Tender closing date and time	07 July 2020 time: 12:15 PM
07	Tender opening date and time	07 July 2020 time: 12:30 PM
08	Name & Address of the office: a. Selling tender document.	Cash Section, Account Department, Dockeyard & Engineering Works Ltd, Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj. Or Account Name: Dockeyard & Engineering Works Ltd, Bank name: Thrust Bank Ltd, Account no: 00350320000056, Branch: Narayanganj, deposit slip submitted by tender document. (If tender schedule document download from website)
	b. Receiving tender document	Dockeyard & Engineering Works Ltd, Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj.
	c. Opening tender document	Dockeyard & Engineering Works Ltd, Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj. Tenderers and their authorized representative are allowed to attend.
09	Price of tender document	TK 5,000.00 (Taka five thousand only) (Non-refundable)
10	Contact details official	Mobile: 01769719887 Web: www.dewbn.gov.bd E-mail: commercial@dewbn.gov.bd
11	Eligibility and tender	1. Tenderer must be OEM/ distributor / local agent. 2. Experience of supply, supply of goods as mentioned. 3. Document required: a. Trade license b. TIN certificate, c. VAT Registration d. Bank Statement e. Experience certificate if any
12	Special instructions	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all or any part of the tender prior to acceptance without showing any reason.

GD-952

Managing Director



1. Mustafa Kamal Syed (L) working with Afzal Hossain (2-L) and Suborna Mustafa (3-L) at BTV Studios. 2. Renowned actor Shabana Azmi with Mustafa Kamal Syed. 3. Tariq Anam Khan (2-L) on the sets with Mustafa Kamal Syed (3-L) and Abdullah Al Mamun (4-L). 4. Mustafa Kamal Syed (R) shares a light moment with renowned artist Mustafa Monwar and musical legend Pandit Ravi Shankar.

The glorious journey of Mustafa Kamal Syed

A tribute to the legend

SHARMIN JOYA

Prominent television personality and former Deputy Director General and Chief of Programmes of NTV, Mustafa Kamal Syed, breathed his last on May 31 at the capital's Square Hospital. He was admitted at the ICU of the hospital after being diagnosed with COVID-19. His wife, renowned singer Zeenat Rehana, was also infected with the virus. However, she later tested negatively, informs their daughter Rehnuma Kamal Ahmed, a news presenter at BTV.

Mustafa Kamal Syed graduated from the University of Dhaka. He went on to attend the TV Producers Training and Certificate Course in the Central TV Institute in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, in 1966, Television Training Course in Federal Republic of Germany in 1969, Broadcasting Management Course held in Japan in 1979, and Media Management Training Course held in Australia in 1981. His academic experience and creative knowledge helped shape him into an iconic media personality.

He joined the then Pakistan TV's Dhaka wing, known as Dacca Television, as a producer in 1967, before it was officially named Bangladesh Television in 1971. He was one of the most experienced television officials in the country. The golden era of the television industry was built in the hands of masterminds like Abdullah Al Mamun, Khaleida Fahmi, Atiqul Haque Chowdhury,



Mustafa Kamal Syed, Nawazish Ali Khan, Mustafizur Rahman and Barkatulla. They played a great role in lifting up the content of the small screens from plays and musical programmes to magazine shows. Mustafa Kamal Syed announced the historic 1970 national election result.

Some of the landmark productions in the history of television industry, including the tele-fiction *Kul Nai Kinar Nai* (1985) and a number of musical programmes were



Mustafa Kamal Syed (L) with Momtajuddin Ahmed and Ferdousi Majumdar.

produced by the legend. He is also known for works like *Niloy Na Jani* and *Sneho*. He was also an established voice caster for National Radio and Television and a director of TV and radio plays. Throughout his splendid journey in television, he served in various roles. His brilliance in every position amazed everyone who directly worked with him. He was Programme Executive, Programme Manager, General Manager, Director International Relations and Deputy Director General (Programme) at different times in his career.

Mustafa Kamal Syed was honoured with the National Award for the Best Music Producer for Television in 1975. He retired from Bangladesh Television on 14 January 2004 and joined the private satellite channel NTV (International Television Channel Limited) as Chief of Programmes.

He left behind numerous well-wishers in the industry. Amongst them, renowned personalities and artistes shared their fond memories with him.

"He was a man of principles" - Asaduzzaman Noor

I have known him since the early days of BTV. I started my acting career on television post the Liberation War. We have worked in many productions together. He was punctual, health conscious and strict about his ethical beliefs. He was a man of principles.

He preferred working behind the camera. I tried to bring him in my programme at Desh TV on many occasions, but he never agreed. Most of my landmark projects are from BTV, and he inspired me to keep pushing myself out of my comfort zone to play various roles. He had a keen eye for talent, and could discover hidden potential in just about anyone. Losing an iconic personality like him due to the deadly virus is extremely heartbreaking. I convey my deep condolences to his family and friends.

"I had the privilege of acting with him on radio" - Suborna Mustafa

It was mid 70s when I started working at BTV. Afzal Hossain and I collaborated on multiple productions with Kamal bhai. He was at the station during my debut in *Boraf*

Gola Nodi, by Abdullah Al Mamun. It was an adaptation of the timeless novel by Zahir Raihan. He would always come to see if I am comfortable. He was one of a kind -- a perfect gentleman and always punctual. He played an integral role in airing cricket on television. I still remember how much effort he had put to convince the ministry for the permission to telecast cricket with Bengali commentary.

I had the privilege of acting with him on radio. In fact, when our radio station was moved to Agargaon, the first recorded play, written by Momtajuddin Ahmed, featured Mustafa Kamal Syed and me.

There are a few people that I consider to be true stalwarts of television, including



Young Mustafa Kamal Syed announcing the historic 1970 national election result.

Abdullah Al Mamun, Atiqul Haque Chowdhury and Mustafa Kamal Syed. They played vital roles in building the television industry from the ground up. I am upset that I could not pay my last respects to him because of the virus.

"Kul Nai Kinar Nai was a landmark for our television industry" - Afzal Hossain

Mustafa Kamal Syed was one of the greatest personalities ever in the television industry. He was immensely tasteful and creative. He always maintained discipline, and was an honest person, who always had a smile on his face. He could understand the pulse of the audience.

Kul Nai Kinar Nai was a landmark for our television industry. Written by Momtajuddin Ahmed, it was one of the finest productions ever made. The national television of Japan, NHK, bought the tele-fiction, and aired the dubbed version several times. It was also televised from CCTV in China. The legendary duo of Mustafa Kamal Syed and Momtajuddin Ahmed have produced some excellent shows together and I feel privileged to have worked in most of them.

"Kamal was an iconic media personality" - Nawazish Ali Khan

Mustafa Kamal Syed was one of the pioneers of the television industry. I joined Karachi Television from its first day. He joined

Dacca Television, which is now Bangladesh Television, in 1967. We would exchange ideas, and even had disagreements that we overcame with good reasoning. I never saw him engaging in any unethical matters, like nepotism or personal interests in his professional life. Kamal's creative ability mingled with his administrative skills made him an iconic media personality.

"He was the most honest person in television" - Shykh Seraj

From mid 70s until 1996, I have worked in Bangladesh Television. We worked together at that time, and have many memories together. Until his last breath, I was aware of his condition, and I was one of those taking decisions about him in his last moments. He was one of the pillars, and the most honest person in television.

He prioritised quality over quantity. He had an extremely powerful voice, and he had done so many voiceovers and radio plays. His last voiceover was done for Channel i, a translation of the Azan in Bengali. In the 80s, one day Kamal asked me after watching an episode of *Matti O Manush* (aired on BTV at that time) if I could make such kind of episodes with short durations. From that time, the trend of presenting social messages and creating health awareness sketches between programmes began. We shared a strong bond. I will miss him.

"He was an idol to the young generation" - Redoan Rony



(From left) Runa Laila, Alamgir and Mustafa Kamal Syed.

I met him after my first production, *Shunchhen Ekti Radio Jockeyr Golpo*, back in 2007. He called me and said that he was very happy with my work. We used to have hours of conversation in his office. He would point out the flaws in my work in a beautiful and eloquent manner. He used to preview every piece of content that would

run in the channel, so that the quality does not get compromised. He was really good at constructive criticism. He was an idol to the young generation. He loved to guide others and was open to new ideas.

"I have lost a mentor because of this pandemic" - Masuma Rahman Nabila

I started my career in 2006, and I met Mustafa Kamal Syed in 2008. NTV held a strong position amongst the television channels because of him. I was a newcomer, and it was a big deal for me to get the opportunity of working at such a prestigious channel. At that time, there were only a few private channels. He would always encourage me and taught me to handle criticism. I will always remember his words. I have lost a mentor because of this pandemic. I pray for his departed soul to rest in peace.

"Land Phoner Dingulote Prem was made because of him" - Ashfaq Nipun

I met him in 2007 when one of my fictions was aired on NTV. After that, we met again in 2013, and he still remembered me and asked me why I did not make more projects. I went to his office with the plot of *Land Phoner Dingulote Prem*. He immediately told me to go ahead with it. I later became busy with other works and forgot about it. As Eid Ul Azha arrived that year, Kamal bhai contacted me and asked if I had made this project for any other channel. When he learned that I didn't make it yet, he told me to finalise it so that the channel can include it in their Eid schedule. *Land Phoner Dingulote Prem* was made because of him. I believe that this tele-fiction, featuring Tahsan Khan and Rafiath Rashid Mithila, was the turning point in my career. He always appreciated the young generation of artistes. His demise is an irrecoverable loss for the industry.

"Mustafa Kamal Syed made me who I am today" - Shafayat Mansoor Rana

Shunchhen Ekti Radio Jockeyr Golpo was the first script I wrote. It was directed by Redoan Rony. I went to NTV for some work, and there I met Mustafa Kamal Syed. When I was introduced to him, he stared at me for about a minute, and to my surprise he hugged me. He told me that after long time he saw a witty story, which he absolutely loved. He also said that he has been looking for me. At that time, I was planning to start directing, and I shared the thought with him. He told me to come up with a story and start making a production. I told him that I do not have any previous experience of shooting. However, he had such confidence in me that he gave me a slot on the third day of Eid for my first directorial, *Uchhomaddhomik Poribar*. Mustafa Kamal Syed made me who I am today.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF WWW.MYSYED.COM

"Masud Rana is my dream role"

-ABM Sumon

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

ABM Sumon started his journey as a model with international fashion companies. He entered Bangladesh's film industry with *Ochena Hriday* (2015) and was well appreciated for his performance in *Dhaka Attack* (2017). The actor will soon appear on screen as Masud Rana, the protagonist from Qazi Anwar Hossain's spy thriller novel series of the same name. *MR-9*, jointly produced by Jaz Multimedia and Silver Nine, is helmed by Bangladeshi-born Hollywood director and actor Asif Akbar. In a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, ABM Sumon talks about landing the role, his expectations from the film and more.

After a rigorous process, Qazi Anwar Hossain selected you for the character of Masud Rana. How do you feel about being chosen by the writer of the book series himself?

I have been a *Masud Rana* fan since my school days. Needless to say, the fact that Qazi Anwar Hossain chose me for the role himself was a pleasant surprise. Masud Rana is my dream role and *MR-9* will be a milestone in my acting career.

Have you met or spoken to Qazi Anwar Hossain after you were finalised for this role?

I have not spoken to him yet. However, I plan to meet him as soon as things around us get better. I want to seek his blessings in person.

When will the shooting begin?

We were set to begin shooting the film

from January this year, but unfortunately, the coronavirus pandemic brought our plans to a halt. We are now looking to start filming in August and our first location will be South Africa.

How are your preparations for the role? Are you nervous?

Of course, I am! Getting to play Masud Rana is a privilege, but at the same time, living up to people's expectations will be a big challenge, because he is such an iconic character. I have not taken up any other projects at the moment, as I just want to focus on this role. I have been re-reading the novels and trying to study Masud Rana's psychology, body language and mannerisms.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

"We cannot solely rely on television anymore"

- Mizanur Rahman Aryan



SHARMIN JOYA

Celebrated television director Mizanur Rahman Aryan reflects on the issues of family and contemporary relationships through his work. His shows, *Boro Chhele*, *Life Insurance* and *Sublet*, were widely acclaimed. This Eid season, his tele-fiction *Upohaar*, starring Afran Nisho and Mehazabien in the lead roles, was a massive hit with audiences. *The Daily Star* recently caught up with the director, to discuss his upcoming ventures, his take on the state of the television community and more.

Aryan has already come up with a script related to the coronavirus pandemic. He also looks to work on family-oriented and thriller stories. "As the risks of the coronavirus are still lingering in the country, my decision to start shoots will depend on how things unfold in the coming days," he adds.

Several of Aryan's tele-fictions, which were previously shot, aired during Eid-ul-Fitr this

year. The director and his crew did the post-production work for those projects online.

Aryan further addressed how the television community is going through a crisis these days, in terms of storytelling, as conflicts often come up between writers, directors and producers. "Everyone is right from their own perspectives," he says. "A producer thinks about revenue and a director wants to be creative. A scriptwriter prioritises the story above all else. In meeting their different interests, the production gets affected, on the whole. We can hardly take any risks and we also need to take factors like money and time into account at all times." Aryan also added that scriptwriters need to understand the limitations of the directors. They need to take the budget into account and visit the premises physically, when a tele-fiction is being shot.

"In the era of digitalisation, we cannot solely rely on television anymore. We also have to count our surpluses on YouTube

channels, which look at the number of views on a tele-fiction," he shares. As a result, producers are interested in projects that have statistically similar content and can bring in more commercial success.

Aryan also addressed the economic downturn that the television community is faced with in these critical times. "I feel that the current circumstances demand for directors to help out struggling crew members, especially the teams that they have most recently worked with," he says. "It is not the ultimate solution, but it is a starting point."

Aryan is hopeful that the rise in the consumption of alternate media will in turn, create an increase in the demand for variety in content.

"I think audiences will look for comic relief once these difficult times come to an end. They may also lean towards family-oriented stories, as I believe that the isolation period has brought families closer together," he concludes.



My terrible #Blackout Tuesday experience

OSAMA RAHMAN

I want to go on the record and explain why I had the worst #Blackout Tuesday in history. Yes, I saw the hashtag on my socials. But no one had taken the time to explain what it really meant. From where I am standing, #Blackout Tuesday was something like my favourites -- #Blackout Thursdays and #Blackout Birthdays.

Turns out I gravely misread the channeling of the outrage. Don't get me wrong, though. I understand the most nuanced points of the latest discussion on racism. I am well-versed in the culture, even if I do say so myself. I know all about the pigs in the blue. I have heard NWA's 1988 release on this matter a total of 17 times. I consider 2Pacalypse Now one of my favourite albums. My favourite movie? Denzel Washington. Yes, exactly. Denzel Freaking Washington. Favourite Actor? Robert Downey Jr, but only in Tropic Thunder. Am I getting my point across? So, yes, while I did not quite grasp what the hashtag expected me to do -- thanks corporates for coming into the game too late -- I was thoroughly aware of the reality I was living in. And after my embarrassing faux-pas, I picked up pace. I got more engaged in the protests. Petitions, posts, song lyrics, what have you. But then, out came the Woke. You know, those who always point out how everything I am doing is wrong? Hey, if you feel about this, you must feel about this. You don't like American policies then why do you even eat ice-cream. People like that. Folks who say those things. So, now there I was, head dulled heavy from last night's misunderstanding, now being made to feel

miserable for trying to partake in something which is apparently connected to every other damn thing in the universe. Apparently, I can't use all the trending hashtags because of that one time when I posted the China Covid-19 joke. But, let's be honest, I am very "with it". Yesterday, when my friend asked me to get on Skype with him, I even came back with a witty "Everyone uses Zoom now, welcome to 20-20". I also know you can scroll on your laptop if you use three-fingers on the mouse-pad thingy. Why was I being made to feel that I was hijacking a movement for my own gains? What do I even have to gain from all this? But I was made to feel this way. At one point, I even decided to change it up and asked why we needed violent protests. I honestly felt, given the large number of moderates -- the worst of the bunch by the way -- a pacifist opinion would earn me major brownie points. Boy, was I wrong. Apparently, protests are the most effective way to bring about widespread changes. Now, bear with me, at this point I am seething. My head still hurts and I am dehydrated. So what do I do in the most cranky of all states? I take up another moral position: "WHAT ABOUT THE RMG WORKERS PROTESTS WHEN THEY BREAK CARS". And then. From 453 friends to 429.



CEO asks everyone why they can't work as hard as him

NONE-OF-YOUR-BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

We recently sat down with Tanvir Sultan, the CEO and founder of a wide range of startups and initiatives such as eyeQ, PosiTBT, bMor (Bashundhara), aMor (Amtoli), kAmor (Kakoli), Rest-o-rent, The Big Think Project, Sjitr and Okokola. "How do I define myself? I think I am a mix of a dreamer, and a workaholic," he said already, before anything could be asked. "But people often wonder how do you even mix the two? When I dream, I am working and when I work and I am dreaming because I am living my dream! Fantastic." NBC: That sure sounds like a recipe for success. What's your usual day like? Tanvir: "Actually, you know what, here, let me take your laptop. I think it's best I write my own interview. Like Gandhi said, if you want something done, do it yourself! When I start the day, the first thing I do is avoid smartphones and head straight for breakfast with the afternoon's Ditiyo Alo. When my maid brings me my coffee, I always ask her how her robotics training is going and the empty expressions in response remind me why only some are visionaries, not all. The household-help industry will absolutely be decimated by robotics and AI and yet, my bua is doing nothing about it! After my daily humbling experience, I start for work and remind myself that inspiration never stops. I have been blessed with the singular vision of innovation and thus it is my duty to spread it. I used to tell my chauffeur that he needs to learn Python and build his own



ride-sharing app but I stopped after he brought a live python into my car saying he's ride-sharing with the snake according to my advice. Another lesson in life for me that's already on my Facebook cover photo -- not everyone envisions the vision that's visible to your visage. Yes, I wrote that quote and it might just be the title of my next book which is a collection of my Facebook statuses. It's only when I enter my office that I feel a little less inspired. Don't get me wrong, inspiration is a part of my JD [job description] but I can't help but feel a little sad when I see my colleagues miss out on that last 10% that makes the difference. I did not become their CEO by just counting the hours from nine to five; I had to work day and night to prepare the business plan for months! No one was paying me a salary for that. All that sweat and labour finally made sense when

my father agreed to loan me my seed fund. But then again, I remind myself that not everyone has had the opportunity to experience a successful pitch in their lives. Hard work and dedication are the only two ingredients that bring success. Even though I have achieved so much through sweat and tears, I always keep wondering why I can't inspire my employees to work as hard as I do? In fact, last year when I asked a manager the very same question, they retorted back with why they should work extra when they don't own the company? Just think how preposterous the question is! Was my company worth anything when I started out? Anyone can start a company but they have to be worth something in the first place. If you don't have the hard work and dedication, how can you even have a successful company? When I started out, no one was paying me! I had to earn all of this myself through hard work only to hear from a manager that they should be handed what they want without the dedication and labour. Imagine the gall of saying that to an investor who owns a chain of readymade garments factories. My father would not invest a single penny if someone asked flat out like that! Finally, I'd like to stress upon charisma. Inspiration cannot happen without charisma. That's why I always make it a point to speak at events all around the city. At least once a month, no matter where it is. It could be the Intern Summit at Note South University or it could be my cousin's baby shower. What's important is that you change your profile picture every month to a new picture of you with a microphone in hand or on a podium. That way everyone knows that you are important enough to speak to an audience. I will end the article with a message to my young followers: don't be bogged down by inconsequential things such as your results, your relationship situation or unimportant matters such as your businesses turning any profit. The route to becoming a self-made man is one that is often lonely where no one will help you. What's important is that you carry the fire to inspire others into action. If you work, you only work one person's work. However, if you inspire a hundred people, that means you are working through a hundred people! That is the secret to the CEO success Bill Gates, Jack Ma and Guy Fieri won't tell you."

Funds from mask fines to be used to build new bridge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The amount generated from the fines on people not wearing masks in public will be used to build the Grand Bridge, the largest bridge in Southeast Asia. The bridge will connect the capital of the country to the Coral Reef Islands, boosting the island's economy, but not really. "This bridge has been a dream of my cousin sister," the grand leader of the country said via teleconference. "This bridge shows how amazing our country is. It's also what the people want the most. This bridge will be the brightest spot in our development story," the grand leader said. The source of money from the bridge, however, is the controversial mask fine. Citizens who go out in public without masks on are fined Tk 5,000. Failure to pay the amount means one will have to work for a year in the construction of the Grand Bridge. Earlier, the mask fines were clandestinely kept in so-called police welfare fund. But the latest uproar over transparency in police forces around the



world forced the government to formalise the fines. As the country's people still refuse to listen to most things, the fines on maskless citizens has sky-rocketed. While the government blames the people for the spike, critics point out that the mask fine has been followed by a slew of others, which have gone under the radar as they targeted a less vocal segment of the population. Apart from the fines on violating quarantine and not wearing a masks, the government also imposed heavy fines on spitting, urinating, gargling, spitting out betel leaf (which got its own category), three people sitting on a rickshaw, holding hands while walking, kissing, staying out late, not focusing on studies and getting less than GPA 5 in exams. Some citizens also point out to something more sinister happening below the surface. We will now use a quote to justify the previous statement. "The taking away of the welfare fund is nothing but optics. This is the same force that has been engaged in crossfires on a massive scale during the shutdown. They have targeted many drug dealers. I have found five of their phones switched off and there's another who charges twice what he used to. Something has disrupted the market and if the whispers are true, then it's the crossfires," Salman Rahman, a resident expert on black market matters, said. For now though, the public seems to have been placated by news of the Grand Bridge. Many, who had been repulsed by the idea of travelling on a ferry to reach the Coral Island, can now finally reach what promises to be a dream destination. All is well.



Post-Covid development must incorporate preservation of nature

Stop the destruction of forests and rivers

YESTERDAY was World Environment Day, the theme was, "Time for Nature", which entails saving our natural resources. But reports in the media and by environmentalists give us a grim picture of how we have made ourselves more vulnerable by our disregard for conservation and preservation of one of our most precious natural resources—our forests. For Bangladesh we must also add our rivers as part of the national treasure.

According to a report in this paper, Bangladesh has lost around five lakh acres of forestland or 10 percent of forests since independence and the loss continues due to illegal forest grabbing. For forest department records show that over the years, the government has allocated 1.60 lakh acres of forestland to various government and non-government agencies for infrastructure construction. Meanwhile district administrations have leased out around 50,000 acres of forest, and vested quarters have grabbed 2.87 lakh acres of forestland across the country. There is no question that development has to take priority for a country like ours but it cannot be at the cost of our natural resources.

So while we are trying to combat a deadly pandemic we cannot forget about our need to address such man-made environmental degradation. Environmental experts have repeatedly reminded us how important it is to minimise the negative impacts of cyclone, storms, floods, river erosion and landslides intensified by climate change. We have already seen how the Sundarbans took the brunt of Cyclone Amphan that would have had far more devastating effects and taken many more lives had it not been for our mangrove forest. An expert in an opinion piece has emphasised the need to enhance nature-based management initiatives using modern approaches to manage disasters. These are sustainable solutions that make sure that both nature and livelihoods are protected. The Sundarbans absorb the shocks of storms and cyclones and erosion while providing livelihoods to the communities living there and providing habitats for precious wildlife and plant-life. Forested slopes reduce the risk of mudslides and absorb the toxic carbon. The need to preserve whatever forest area is left cannot be emphasised enough.

Then we have our rivers and water bodies—the lifelines of our country. This paper has relentlessly campaigned for protection of our rivers as have environmentalists and citizens groups. Even the High Court has declared rivers as living beings that must be protected. But despite the glaring effects of river encroachment, riverbanks continue to be grabbed and killed with toxic waste, water bodies filled in or dumped with garbage, blocking natural drainage systems, causing floods and stripping away livelihoods.

Such blatant decimation of our natural resources has to stop if we are to survive. While illegal land grabbing and tree cutting can be prosecuted, how do we deal with such activities under the legal banner of developmental activities? It is therefore up to the state to revise development projects and put a stop to those activities that will entail denuding our grossly diminished forest coverage further, kill or maim our rivers and make our other crucial water bodies disappear. Thus all post-Covid-19 development must incorporate protection of the environment.

Poor medical waste management will increase infections

Indiscriminate dumping must be stopped

WE are horrified by the flagrant disregard for proper disposal of medical waste at a time when Covid-19 infections are increasing along with the number of deaths per day. A recent photograph published in this daily shows discarded personal protective equipment (PPE) lying on the ground near Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) corona-isolation unit. Another photograph shows gloves, masks and other waste floating in the murky water of the fountain there. Dumping of such hazardous materials on the premises has been a common practice near many hospitals.

Being disposable in nature, gloves, masks, PPEs and nasopharyngeal swabs, etc. are all essential items to tackle the virus, but they are also highly contaminated after use. According to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 5.2 million people (including 4 million children) die due to medical waste related diseases each year. This paper has continuously reported on poor medical waste management even before the pandemic struck. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the need for proper medical waste disposal is now more important than ever.

Authorities of hospitals and other healthcare organisations along with city corporations and municipalities must be meticulous about managing medical waste—which needs to be collected, transported, treated, and disposed of in separate containers. While a few hospitals throw their waste into a ditch and burn it in their backyards, most of it seems to end up out in the open or in the landfills. In the absence of state-of-the-art medical waste management systems across the country, the government immediately needs to issue guidelines regarding the matter for the sake of public health safety and strictly ensure that they are being followed.

It is absolutely essential to prevent the spread of infection. Every worker who manages medical waste needs to be provided with safety gear. Special incineration plants can be set up. Halting the recycling of all waste materials during the pandemic may also be needed. In the meantime, the government must initiate construction of modern medical waste management systems nationwide.

Breathe, Breathe in the Air



BLOWN' IN THE WIND
SHAMSAD MORTUZA

THE Amazon rainforest, spread over 2.1 million square miles, is dubbed as the "lungs of the planet" as it produces 20 percent of the oxygen in our planet's atmosphere. In August 2019, thousands of fiery infernos raged through the forest, and the resultant fuming smokes blocked the sun. Even from Sao Paulo, a city that was 2,000 miles away from the forest fire, the sun could not be seen. The lungs of the world was on fire, and the earth was being suffocated by the carbon-dioxide it produced.

In December, China reported the outbreak of a pneumonia with unknown cause to the World Health Organization. The clinical signs and symptoms include patients having breathing difficulty, with their chest radiographs showing invasive lesions of both lungs. The breathing problem became a global phenomenon, and morphed into a pandemic that is being experienced by 213 countries and territories of the world. The populace of the world are suffocating and gasping for breath. One possible cause for the outbreak is human encroachment on nature, making wild animals come in contact with humans. We are being exposed to diseases of the animal kingdom against which we have no immunity.

But there is one silver lining. The lockdown and immobility due to coronavirus pandemic has stopped the world from consuming fossil fuel and reduced the amount of CO2 emissions. As a result the ozone layer above Antarctica has started showing signs of recovery. Mother earth has her own way of healing. The jet streams in the southern hemisphere are patching up the ozone hole. Science Alert reports, "Before the turn of the century, ozone depletion had been driving the southern jet stream further south than usual. This ended up changing rainfall patterns, and potentially ocean currents as well."

Now we are waking up to a wound of a different kind. A wound that makes us grasp for breath. A wound that has caused others to breathe to suggest that they are alive.

On May 25, a white police officer in Minnesota pressed his knee to a detainee George Floyd's neck for almost nine minutes. Floyd was allegedly guilty of handing in a fake USD 20 bill in a store. Police made him lie face down with his hands handcuffed, with one officer mounting pressure on his neck that eventually strangled him to death. Floyd's last words were, "I can't breathe!" America is burning in protest, reverberating, "Black Lives Matter." The protesters are highlighting one vital sign of the living: breathing.

The suffocation of George Floyd is a stark reminder of the 2014 killing of Eric Garner. A NYPD officer used a banned technique of chokehold while detaining Garner for selling loose cigarettes. An asthmatic Garner died, and his last words were, "I can't breathe."

Thousands of protesters have taken to the streets, amid the fear of Covid-19 contamination, to protest the killing of a

man whose death unfolded before their eyes. "I can't breathe" has once again become a rallying cry of protest. It seems the Civil Rights movement participated in by all marginalised racial groups is an unfinished project.

The Black Power movement in the 1960s was inspired by the Algerian French intellectual Franz Fanon (1925-1961), whose *The Wretched of the Earth* became a revolutionary bible for them. Fanon has suddenly become more relevant than ever. He wrote in *Black Skin, White Mask*, "When we revolt it's not for a particular culture. We revolt simply because, for many reasons, we can no longer breathe."

George Floyd and Eric Garner's last words find strange echoes in Fanon's conception of revolution's causal connection with breathing. Their dying words, on the surface, appear to be a literal plea for help as they struggled for their last breaths with the police on their back. At

independence of persons on the other. It is the country as a whole, its history, its daily pulsation that are contested, disfigured, in the hope of a final destruction. Under these conditions, the individual's breathing is an observed, an occupied breathing. It is a combat breathing. From this point on, the real values of the occupied quickly tend to acquire a clandestine form of existence. In the presence of the occupier, the occupied learns to dissemble, to resort to trickery."

The protest is a sign of a fissure that lacerates the lungs of America. The protesting bodies are longing for a breathable atmosphere. It is informed by a desire to wiggle out of the knees of the oppressors. It is a protest to remind all that breathing is essential for both the individual body and the collective body. Fanon quotes Aime Cesaire who compares breaths with consciousness to argue for a world where minds are permeable to

you get choked—but you don't complain. But once light shines on the air, you get to see those particles choking you. Events like the murder of Eric Garner and George Floyd throw light on the invisible dusts that carry the memory of the sweated labour of slavery. The dusts have never settled. Jabbar uses another metaphor of a bus to explain the race issue. People at the back feel the fume and jerks, while others sitting in the front seats have no reason to complain as the bus is wheeling along without any apparent obstacles. The riot has brought the fumes forward, and the country is feeling the burn.

Let me wrap up with an anecdote shared by Taslima Nasrin in one of her earlier books. She once saw her younger brother pinning a lizard with a pencil. The creature was struggling to wrestle away. Her brother said, "Have you seen bubu, the more I press, the more it dances."

The people who are on the streets are in



Ariel view of protestors gathered near the makeshift memorial in honour of George Floyd marking one week anniversary of his death, on Monday in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

PHOTO: CHANDAN KHANNA/AFP

the same time, they constitute a Fanonian expression of Black experience of racism in the United States. I can't breathe is a ventilation of the corporeal, systematic and daily violence imposed on Black bodies. And now breathing is being used as a strategic counter response.

In *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon uses breathing as part of his vision of a new humanism. In this book Fanon talks about the inferiority complex suffered by a racially subjugated group or a colonised entity. To overcome this psychological barrier, colonised subjects must realise that their breath and heart beats "are the same as those of the coloniser."

Later in his book *A Dying Colonialism*, Fanon furthers the notion of breathing (or, rather, of non-breathing) by devising a new term, "combat breathing." Fanon writes, "There is not occupation of territory, on the one hand, and

diverse visions of the world: "porous to all the breaths of the world". The revolt then is a similar call of the living, it is the sign of taking a stand, "quite simply...because it became impossible...to breathe, in more than one sense of the word" (*Black Skin, White Mask*).

It is no surprise that the pro-establishment media is focusing on the looting and the disorder that has ensued. The riot rhetoric has made the president of the US present himself as an avatar of Law and Order against the opportunists and the downtrodden. Instead of getting into the root cause of the riot, the POTUS has added fuel to the fire by reminding his supporters of the second amendments that allows US citizens to take up arms in self-defence.

I was listening to Kareem Abdul Jabbar on CNN recently. The basketball star used an analogy to explain race relations in America. Racism is like dust in the wind;

a combat breathing. They are not dancing, they are expressing their pain and anger. They are saying, enough is enough. The police officer who killed Floyd is a case of a bad tooth; but a single bad tooth is connected to the entire nervous system of a country. If a tooth aches, the whole body aches. If a forest burns, the whole earth gets affected. If a forest is encroached upon, it hits back sending its army of viruses. Nature is revolting, and it will keep on revolting until equilibrium is restored. It is within human nature to seek for the same balance in life. A system that privileges one skin colour over the other is not a fair system. The breath of a white man is the same as the breath of a black or brown man. Black lives matter, because human lives matter.

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The ethnic face of Covid-19 in UK



SO far, the focus of the Covid-19, commonly known as coronavirus, in every country has rightly been on health issues—expanding testing, tracing the infected, how to deal with infection, and combatting deaths. Issues of disaggregated profiling of its various aspects including the diverse socio-economic impacts were put on the back burner. But as time progresses, those issues are emerging as important concerns, as they have serious implications for future strategies to address the coronavirus. In that context, the United Kingdom has brought a report on the ethnic issues as they related to the virus. Published by Public Health England, the report looks at the disaggregated dimensions, including ethnic aspects of the pandemic, in the United Kingdom.

Let us revisit some of the non-ethnic dimensions first. For example, in Britain, people aged 80-years or more are 70 times more likely to die from corona than those under 40. Or, working-age men diagnosed with Covid-19 are twice as likely to die as women. The risk of dying with coronavirus is higher among those living in more deprived parts of the country. People in certain occupations—security guards, taxi or bus drivers, and construction workers and social care staff—are at higher risk.

If the ethnicity lens is used, there is direct evidence, and there is indirect evidence. The indirect evidence is by association. As security guards, taxi or bus drivers, and construction workers and social care staff—are at higher risk, so are BAME people. This is because these are the occupations that a significant number of Asians, black and Caribbean are engaged in.

In terms of direct evidence, so far 200 healthcare workers (e.g. doctors,

nurses, paramedics, etc.) have lost their lives to the coronavirus. Among them, more than 6 out of 10 were from Black, Asian, Minorities and Ethnic (BAME) background. Asian workers account for 34 percent of the death toll and the Black staff 24 percent of deaths.

For the general population, for ethnicity, coronavirus death rates were highest among BAME when compared to white British ethnicity. People from Bangladesh are twice more likely to

economic issues and health concerns, among other things. Bangladeshis in the United Kingdom live as extended families under one roof. In many cases, families live in cramped rooms of houses provided by the Councils. The living conditions of these houses including their sanitation facilities are not good. So the implications are varied: i) the issue of social distancing is neither possible, nor practised; ii) even when someone is infected, isolation becomes difficult.



Commuters wearing protective equipment travel in the morning rush hour on London Jubilee Line underground trains from Canning Town towards central London on May 13, 2020.

PHOTO: DANIEL LEAL-OLIVAS/AFP

die from coronavirus compared to white British ethnicity. Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, other Asian Caribbean and other black ethnicity had between a 10 percent and 50 percent higher risk of death when compared to white British ethnicity. Thus, in United Kingdom, the Bangladeshis have the highest risk of being infected with coronavirus.

Question may be asked as to why the Bangladeshis are more vulnerable. The reasons are related to lifestyle and culture,

The culture is also one of more togetherness, rather than isolation. Social distancing and isolation are not valued. There are issues of personal hygiene. Furthermore, disregard of science is also part of the Bangladeshi culture. All these make Bangladeshis highly vulnerable.

In economic terms, Bangladeshis are also engaged in work where working from home is not an option. They mostly work in shops, run corner groceries, work as security guards and bus drivers. Therefore,

for jobs and economic reasons, they have to go out of their homes almost on a daily basis. As a result, they are more prone to coronavirus infection.

A large number of Bangladeshi men have health conditions, which are reflective of their lifestyles. They smoke a lot, consume betel leaves, do not exercise and eat oily and fatty food including red meats. As a result, they become victims to hypertension and heart problems, diabetes, asthma and other respiratory problems. Under such conditions, if they are infected by the coronavirus, it becomes fatal.

It is also important to indicate that the government is also not sensitive to the needs of ethnic minorities, including Bangladeshis. Provisioning of quality public social services, particularly hospitals and other health services, is still an issue in the localities where ethnic minorities live. Efforts to sensitise and to raise awareness among ethnic minorities are also questionable. The lack of quality public services provided by the state to ethnic minorities is also a reason for higher infection among Bangladeshi people.

The results of the report mentioned above is rather preliminary. Yet, they provide a basis for three things: first, initiating a discussion by the Bangladesh High Commission in London vis-à-vis the UK government on the needs of the Bangladeshi community in the country; second, starting a community debate on all these issues and starting a social movement; and lastly, more work and detailed analysis are needed on all these issues. Again, the Bangladesh High Commission in London can initiate such work by reaching out to Bangladeshi researchers and experts working in the United Kingdom. The report is an opportunity to extend the frontiers on all the relevant issues mentioned in this article.

Selim Jahan is former Director, Human Development Report Office, UNDP, New York, USA.

What should be the focus of the upcoming budget?

DR MOHAMMED PARVEZ IMDAD

THIS year's budget clearly needs to focus on addressing the emerging issues and challenges of the current pandemic. In addition, priorities in continuity with previous budget exercises should also cater to addressing the structural and operational constraints that exist, to better achieve targeted objectives of inclusive growth and economic efficiency. Despite strong and viable economic progress made over the past decade, currently the key economic indicators reflect a downward trend. Taking present circumstances into account, it may be necessary to temporarily shift away from the conventional approach of budget as an annual exercise, and concentrate more towards the mid-term perspective.

This year's budget should be based on a three-year framework with six-monthly components. For better implementation within the current constraints, structure and size of the budget may not exceed that of last year's. The budget, on the one hand, needs to prioritise critical challenges due to Covid-19, and on the other, support growth momentum and development sustainability.

The three core objectives of this year's budget could be: Recovery, stabilisation and sustaining economic growth. Recovery will include short and medium-term initiatives to meet deficits arising from weakening of the key drivers of growth—readymade garments and overseas remittances. Recovery will also relate to increasing aggregate demand (through increased access to income and credit) as well as efficient retention of supply. Stabilisation will relate to addressing urgent priorities such as implementing stimulus packages, cash transfers, and broadened social safety nets. Sustained economic growth will cover mainly medium to long-term programmes for increased resource mobilisation, financial sector improvements, strengthened monetary and fiscal instruments, and fostering potential growth

sources through economic diversification.

Our development partners have projected a moderate slide in the GDP growth for the current year. However, based on the trends as of now, our projection expects GDP growth to be in the range of 5-6 percent. Assuming reactivated performance of the current growth drivers, GDP growth is expected to pick up and move towards normal level by 2022. Having new growth drivers, even from a medium-term perspective, would not only enable double digit GDP growth by 2023/2024, but also expedite Bangladesh's transition to middle income and high income levels within the envisioned timeframe.

The anticipated decline in GDP growth this year would be a common phenomenon for almost all countries due. A well-managed economy can adequately steer itself, despite reduced growth in the short to medium-term (like the Southeast Asian countries did during the Asian Economic crisis in 1997-2000).

RMG exports and overseas remittances are currently struggling due to structural and functional constraints and the Covid-19 impact. Budget 2020 should have provisions to provide significant support to these sectors. Current growth stimulants could be reinvigorated through several measures such as enhancing skills, expanding demand and supply linkages and access to new markets. Deriving gains from potentially new growth drivers would require extensive policy support, fiscal incentives, as well as enhanced entrepreneurship and skills broadening. Strategies and programmes that can push GDP growth forward through efficient expansions in agriculture and infrastructure, ICT products and services, small and medium enterprises and pharmaceuticals, should be prioritised. In addition, mega-projects that are currently being implemented and expansion of the manufacturing base through planned special economic zones and other logistical development would also stimulate growth, and facilitate diversification and competitiveness.

Resource mobilisation has always been a critical challenge for countries at different stages of development. For Bangladesh, the current tax-GDP ratio (around 8.6 percent) is expected to slacken to around 6 percent this year. Corporate taxes as well as personal income tax will reduce further in the current year. Similarly, revenues from VAT, customs and supplementary duties will be lower due to reduction in overall trade volume. Despite these constraints, the budget should support a strong fiscal framework and try raising the

Whitening undeclared money or funds from undeclared sources aimed at obtaining additional resources to meet current resource deficits (as on previous occasions), could be an option.

However, the effectiveness of these processes could be further reviewed based on past experiences to ensure more efficient outcomes. As regards to external resources, the government may ask its development partners for priority lending on extremely concessional terms outside the ambit of

massive private investments for improved health infrastructure and healthcare. This should be followed by increased allocations in the following sectors: social protection and safety net, agriculture and food security, education and skills enhancement, infrastructure, ICT and energy. In addition, enhancing government stimulus packages and cash transfers could also be considered with priority, in order to mitigate income erosion and unemployment and contraction in economic activities. Social protection and safety nets could be broadened to transform these into "protection and welfare net".

ADP implementation for the current year is about 40 percent. That tells us that the government should focus on efficient implementation of priority projects, as well as clear up pending backlogs from previous ADPs. Side by side, new programmes under the umbrella of safety nets and food security should aim at meeting deficits in income and losses in employment. For food security and prevention of food scarcity, the budget should focus on increasing the volume of food availability, storage and distribution.

The government had earlier projected fiscal deficit for FY2020 to stay within 5 percent of GDP. This may be difficult to ensure. The government needs to strengthen its effort to avoid higher fiscal deficit in the next few years to ease recovery and efficient expenditure.

As compared to several countries in South Asia, Bangladesh has managed its external debt with significant success. Improved debt management (overall debt being less than 15 percent of GDP) and reasonably reduced proportion of overall external assistance to GDP (currently 3-4 percent of GDP) adds to the momentum of Bangladesh's economic resilience and development sustainability. Retaining and strengthening these gains would propel growth prospects both in the medium and long-term.

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tax-GDP ratio within the proposed three year mid-term budget period.

Enhanced revenue in the medium-term and beyond would also depend on tax reforms, and on the pace of diversifying the economy. The government needs to assess its options on curtailing portions of non-development related spending, rationalise expenditure, and divert more funds to priority sectors. The government may resort to bank borrowing, incentives as savings certificate, and activating the informal sector.

country partnership.

The health sector should be given the highest priority and adequate resources to combat the virus. In past years, despite moderate numerical increases, the share of the health sector as a proportion of GDP continued to decline. The proposed increased allocation for health should cover expansion of health infrastructure and improved health management. Special provisions should be in place for public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the health sector to facilitate and promote

How well is your child coping during Covid-19 crisis?

MEHTAB GHAZI RAHMAN

AS the Covid-19 pandemic rages on, the world continues to focus on the economic impact and the mortality and transmission rates of the coronavirus. Thankfully, the impact of the current lockdown on the mental health of adults has gained significant attention, but very little has been said about the impact it has had on the mental health of children. The Covid-19 pandemic is seriously disrupting the development of children in many aspects of their lives—their learning, behaviour, physical and mental health.

As with adults, children are prone to suffering a wide variety of mental health issues during the pandemic, particularly anxiety and stress. The pandemic will cause most individuals to feel helpless, lonely and socially excluded; in children, the social isolation, boredom, stress and the lack of outdoor play may lead to increased levels of anxiety and depression that may last for years after the pandemic is over. Children are exposed to a plethora of information about the virus from different sources—television, internet, social media, friends and family. With schools being closed and social distancing being practiced, the normal routines and social interactions children are used to have changed drastically. Across the world, children are struggling to cope with the lack of daily structure and routine, having difficulties with sleeping patterns, and are more likely to suffer separation anxiety once the lockdown is lifted.

The current pandemic is an overwhelming, anxiety-provoking and stressful time for parents themselves, and this may make it difficult for them to recognise and address their children's mental health needs adequately. Seeing a caregiver suffer a labile mood and be constantly in stress can cause anxiety in children and make them believe their safety is at threat from the outside world. In some cases, the absence of regular caregivers, such as grandparents, may further fuel their anxiety levels. Children express anxiety and stress in different ways; rather than

being tearful and being upset, their anxiety is often expressed through challenging and disruptive behaviour, such as acting out or becoming argumentative with others. They may complain of headaches and nonspecific body pain, appear drowsy and sleepy more than normal, show apathy to everything around them, and their appetite may be poor.

Children will suffer a wide range of anxious thoughts during the pandemic. Will they be able to meet their friends ever again? Will they fall behind in class? Will they have to repeat a school year again? Will the family have enough financial security to make it through the pandemic? What if a loved one falls sick and/or dies? For many children, the pandemic will make them reflect on the concept of death for the very first time.

Many adults avoid talking to their children about the pandemic as they assume this will cause distress and parents may hesitate to talk openly about their own difficult feelings with their children during this period of lockdown and uncertainty. However, communicating with children openly is absolutely essential. Research shows that children as young as two become aware of changes that occur around

them, and benefit psychologically when they are communicated to and informed about things going around them in a caring, sensitive manner.

What parents and caregivers need to understand is that if children are not spoken to about things that have changed around them during this pandemic, they will try to make sense of the situation on their own. Between the ages of four and seven, children's interpretation about the outside world is often informed by "magical thinking", whereby they believe a thought they have had or an action they have carried out is directly attributable to a specific life event. During this pandemic, children are highly vulnerable because such thinking may lead them to believe they are somehow responsible for the negative events occurring around them, and start blaming themselves for the events. This emphasises the importance of parents exploring their child's understanding and beliefs about the coronavirus pandemic and providing them with an accurate explanation that is meaningful and allays their fears and guilt.

An easy error that many parents make when speaking to their children about the pandemic

When parents don't allow their children to have access to their emotional state, children are left confused and distressed. If parents are not open about their own thoughts with their child, the child will avoid sharing their thoughts and anxieties with the parent, leaving the child to cope with difficult emotional feelings on his/her own.

help allay their anxieties. Children feed off the energy their parents radiate, so instead of being negative and appearing irritable, parents should model confidence when speaking to their children.

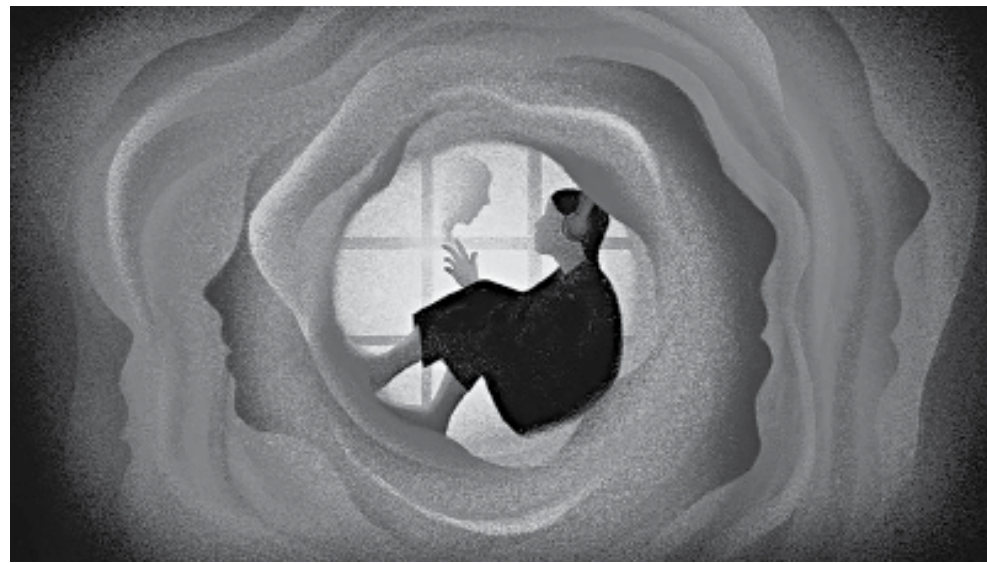
An important part of the government's public health campaign during the pandemic should include psychoeducation that equips parents and caregivers with information on communicating with and relaying information to children about the pandemic in a safe, contained manner.

One important question to ponder on is the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of children in the long term. A recent review conducted by the University of Bath, Somerset, United Kingdom, suggests that long periods of social distancing can cause depression and anxiety in children, even after lockdown restrictions are lifted, with the impact on mental health lasting for up to 9 years.

A group of children will be significantly affected during this pandemic more than others due to their existing vulnerabilities. These include children who face physical and sexual abuse at home, those with special needs and those with pre-existing mental health difficulties. Children growing up in challenging home environments, such as those who witness domestic violence or face poverty, are also at a higher risk of suffering mental health difficulties in the long term.

Good communication and providing accurate information to children in a safe, comforting manner is essential to avoid an adolescent mental health pandemic over the next decade. The current mental health provisions during the pandemic appear to be geared towards adults, and the urgent psychological needs of children during this time should be given equal importance. Ignoring the long-term psychological effects of the pandemic, especially in children and young adults, will lead to a mental health tsunami that the world will reel under for years to come if not dealt with appropriately.

Dr Mehtab Ghazi Rahman is a Consultant Psychiatrist working for the National Health Service of the United Kingdom.



is to talk in a concrete and practical manner about the illness, rather than focusing on the feelings and emotions they experience, and not exploring the same in their children. When parents don't allow their children to have access to their emotional state, children are left confused and distressed. If parents are not open about their own thoughts with their child, the child will avoid sharing their thoughts and anxieties with the parent, leaving the child to cope with difficult emotional feelings on his/her own.

When talking about the pandemic, parents need to be honest about the psychological challenges of the pandemic without being overwhelming; this will encourage a child to open up about his/her own feelings in a safe space. Explaining to children that their worries and stresses during this pandemic are a normal reaction, and reassuring them with hope that things will gradually improve will

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

NORMANDY INVASION BEGUN
June 06, 1944

Led by US General Dwight D Eisenhower, an Allied armada of ships, planes, and landing craft and some 156,000 troops began the invasion of northern France from England this day in 1944—the famous "D-Day" of World War II.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Prince of India
- 6 Cardiff's land
- 11 "Hello" singer
- 12 Texas landmark
- 13 Nick of "48 HRS"
- 14 Low point
- 15 Ore source
- 17 Memory unit
- 18 Some babies
- 20 Seth's father
- 22 Crunch targets
- 23 Man or monkey
- 26 Energy choice
- 28 Braves legend
- 29 Shore embankment
- 31 Dr.'s field
- 32 Convoy truck
- 33 Pert talk
- 34 Salamanders
- 36 Spot for laps
- 38 Captain's superior
- 40 Scoundrel
- 43 Heat setting
- 44 Speed checker
- 45 Ready for war
- 46 Sports spot

DOWN

- 1 Operated
- 2 Fuss
- 3 Tony-nominated musical of 1992
- 4 Some singers
- 5 Listen to
- 6 Pale
- 7 Crimson Tide's home
- 8 1974 Labelle hit
- 9 Give off
- 10 Ticked off
- 16 Cochlea setting
- 18 Game fish
- 19 Clarinet's kin
- 21 Tuning knob
- 23 Brit's baby carriage
- 24 Low digits
- 25 Cuts off
- 27 Impressive
- 30 Pert talk
- 33 Ping producer
- 34 Jane Austen book
- 35 Ump's call
- 37 Gumbo base
- 39 Relieve
- 41 Big truck
- 42 Pitching stat

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

C	A	W	S	L	U	I	C	E
A	L	O	E	P	O	R	K	E
M	I	N	E	A	N	G	E	L
P	E	D	I	G	R	E	E	
E	N	E	R	O	W	E	R	
L	A	R	G	E	S	N	A	R
A	L	I				N	I	P
V	A	N	E	S	N	U	D	E
A	N	G	S	T	A	T	E	
B	U	T	A	N	E	P	I	N
U	S	O	P	E	N	I	N	T
D	E	T	E	S	T	A	G	E

Panel 1: "I'VE HEARD OF PEOPLE LAUGHING ON THE OUTSIDE AND CRYING ON THE INSIDE"

Panel 2: "BUT HE'S THE FIRST TO SMIRK ON THE INSIDE!"

Panel 3: "DAD, OUR SCHOOL'S SPRING CARNAVAL IS COMING UP!"

Panel 4: "UIH-LUH. THE MONEY RAISED FOR THIS FUN EVENT GOES TO BUY BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY AND SUPPLIES FOR OUR UNDERFUNDED CLASS-ROOMS, AND—"

Panel 5: "JUST GIVE ME A DOLLAR AMOUNT."

Panel 6: "THE COOL PARENTS GIVE FIFTY BUCKS."

Our Anis Sir: A Tribute

SYED MANZOORUL ISLAM

In the space of just a few months, Bangladesh has become a land of vanishing greatness. First came the news of the passing of Sir FH Abed, then in early April we lost architect Bashirul Haq, a few days later Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury, and finally Professor Anisuzzaman who died on May 14 from multi organ failure, aggravated by COVID 19 infection. I have had the privilege to know all of them closely, and came to admire their professional integrity, sincerity and dedication to duty.

It is hard enough to bear the loss of a colleague or mentor one has known for a long time and enjoyed the company of, but it is harder when the loss happens

in the last few years, but he never lost his cheer. Ever the optimist, he even joked that a few days in the hospital was good for his health, as it kept him away from his regular chores, some of which -- like presiding over long and rambling discussion meetings--were downright tedious. Even when I had a brief talk with him over phone when he had come back from Labaid hospital in the second week of April, he dismissed any serious threat to his health. "Just the usual complications," he said cheerily, "nothing to worry about."

My association with Professor Anisuzzaman -- or Anis Sir -- began immediately after he joined Dhaka University in the mid-1980s. His office

wide ranging conversations enlivened by his wit and wisdom. Not many could match his good humour and generosity and his intelligent and disarming use of gentle irony. I was once invited as a discussant to a seminar on Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose *Tractatus* had given me many a sleepless night during my Ph.D. course work. The main speaker had written a dense and jargon filled paper, which he read in a monotone, often leaving his audience puzzled about what he was driving at. Anis Sir was the chair, and when his time came to deliver his address, which he usually did in five to six minutes, with clarity and completeness, he smiled indulgently at the speaker, who had realized by that time that he had failed to connect with the audience. "Didn't Wittgenstein say that the meaning of a word is its use?" Anis Sir said, "It's not what you say, but how you say it, and the context in which you say it, that produces meaning. So have no worries. There was no shortage of meaning today." I was surprised that Anis Sir had read the other mind-blowing book of the philosopher, *Philosophical Investigations*. When I asked him, he said with a shy smile, "Part of the job, you know."

Job indeed! I've seen him excel in every "job" he had been entrusted with -- teaching, which was his lifelong passion, researching, compiling, editing, even proofreading, chairing, being at the vanguard of protest movements, campaigning for the rights of religious and ethnic minorities and women, and defending freedom of conscience. He was committed to liberal educational ethics and lamented the impoverishment of our public universities; he regretted that humanistic values were on the wane and tolerance was receding. He was never openly critical of anyone though, not even those who opposed his coming back to his *alma mater*, which was Dhaka University, but I have seen him to be a little impatient with ideologues without issues and academics currying favours with political leaders.

Professor Anisuzzaman was an outstanding thinker and a public intellectual who maintained a critical engagement with issues that impacted our lives, ranging from loss of political freedom and the rise of communalism to commercialization of education. He joined Jubo League, at the time a cultural rather than a political outfit, in 1951 when he was only fourteen and

actively participated in the language movement of 1952. In an interview with me which I took for Deepto TV on the occasion of his 80th birthday, he told me how the language movement had taught him the value of culture in establishing a social order where everyone could participate on an equitable basis. It was this realization that later inspired him to study and write on cultural pluralism, which he saw as a way out of the essentialism and reductive logic of monoculturalism. He was a pioneer in this field in the country, having articulated his thoughts in public platforms long before multiculturalism was accepted as an academic discipline.

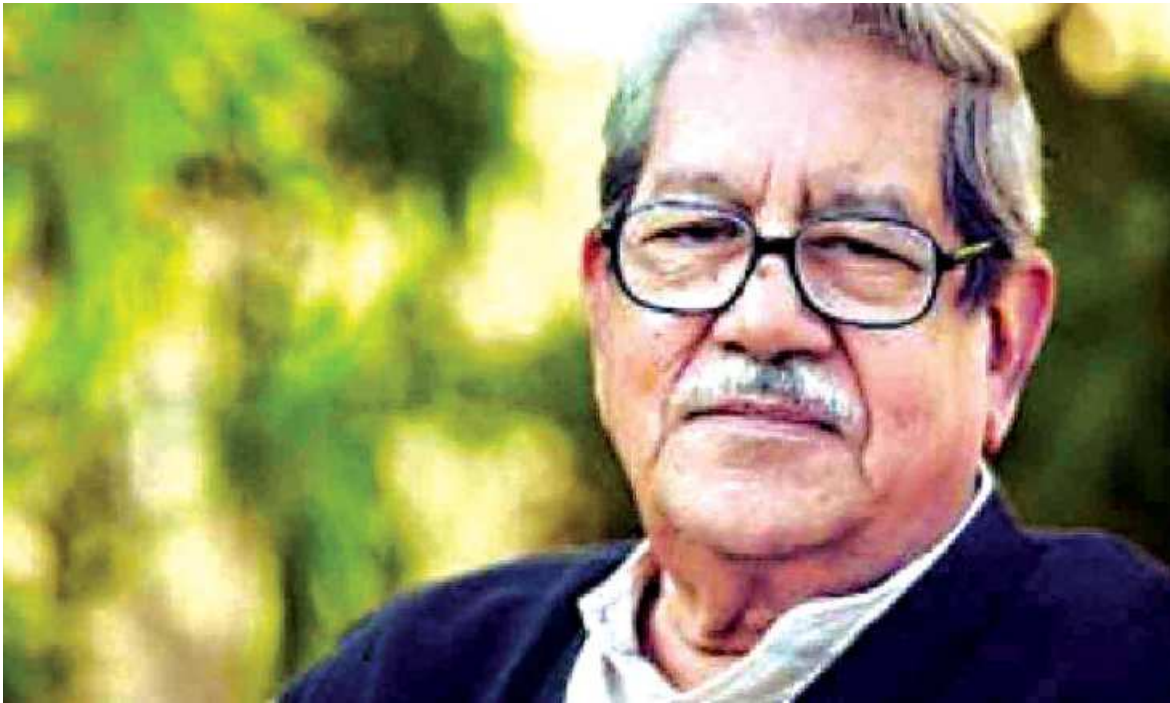
Professor Anisuzzaman came to prominence in the 1960s, a decade marked by an ascendancy of left-liberal values and literary and cultural nationalism that aimed at a re-ordering of our world. The period saw our commitment to liberation and social justice. Culture, including popular culture, became central in our counter-attack against repression and denial of rights. As the Pakistani colonial state apparatus, backed by a ruthless military-corporate alliance, began a systematic marginalization and disenfranchisement of the Bengalees, the identity struggle that ensued led to a renewed sense of nationalism. Professor Anisuzzaman, along with other intellectuals, not only helped shape its cultural contours but also its spheres of activism. One of his significant contributions has been a redefinition of the Muslim mind away from the monolithic, pan-Islamic one promoted by the Pakistani state. His seminal work, *Muslim Manosh O Bangla Shahitya* (1964)-- his Ph.D. dissertation-- showed the evolution of the Muslim mind (or consciousness) from the beginning of British colonial rule as reflected in the literature of the time, and examined the marginalization of Muslim writers in academic and scholarly discussions. Apart from the general bias against Muslim authors that existed among Hindu literary historians, one reason why they were ignored, he believed, was their separation from the syncretic tradition that the literature of the middle ages advanced, which was largely the result of the rise of Islamic purificatory movements in the 18th century -- although Muslim and Hindu writers had equal participation in the literature of the middle ages. Another reason was the confusion that existed

among many Muslim writers about which Bangla to use since, as Muslims, they needed to use a language that reflected their beliefs, customs and cultural practices. This prompted them to liberally borrow from Persian and Arabic languages, creating, what the historian WW Hunter called a "Musalman Bengali." The confusion about language remained for quite a while, as Professor Anisuzzaman has shown in a separate study on the journals of Muslim Bengal, because of a persistent identity crisis. It was the 1952 language movement that finally resolved the crisis by asserting a changed self-image of the Bengalees as a secular, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural community with the possibility of unlimited self-realization. It was indeed the moment Bengalees as a nation stepped into the modern world.

An outstanding memoirist, Professor Anisuzzaman has described in detail the developments that changed the cultural and political landscapes of Bangladesh from the 1950s. The three volumes of his memoirs, *Amar Ekattor* (1997), *Kaal Nirobodhi* (2000) and *Bipula Prithibhi* (2015), which loosely form a trilogy, record, in his own words, "the significant events" that he witnessed and his "encounters with some very important persons." With an authorial honesty that is not usually seen in self-writing of this kind, he has given more importance to objective documentation than to matters relating to subjective expression. In this he was helped by a prodigious memory and an exemplary power of observation. *Ekattor* begins with the mass movement of 1969 and narrates the events of 1971; *Prithibhi* begins where *Ekattor* ends, but concludes with the end of the millennium, while *Nirobodhi* deals mostly with his family history but takes the reader right to the war of liberation. These are books one has to read to discover the real Anisuzzaman, our Anis Sir, whose life long pursuit has been the re-education and regeneration of the Bengalee mind. History will judge to what extent he has succeeded, but when asked the same question in a conversation on his last birthday, he smiled and shook his head, then added, as an afterthought, "Well, I tried."

With Anis Sir, humility was endless.

SMI edited the festschrift *Anisuzzaman Shommanona Gmatha* (Chandrabati, 2017) on Professor Anisuzzaman's 80th birthday.



at a time when paying one's last respects is made impossible by a lockdown. When Professor Anisuzzaman was laid to rest in Azimpur graveyard, instead of hundreds of grievers, only his close family members and a couple of well-wishers were present. The eerie silence was broken by the desolate notes from bugles played by a police team giving him a guard of honour. If the scourge of the pandemic hadn't touched us, his remains would've been carried to the Shahid Minar where a huge assembly of mourners would've converged, but then we wouldn't have lost him so early. Professor Anisuzzaman had been in and out of hospital several times

was only a few steps down the hall from mine, and one day as he made his way to the teachers' lounge downstairs, he invited me to join him. In our academia, senior professors usually maintain an "appropriate" distance from their junior colleagues. Having recently returned from Canada with a Ph.D. and with memories fresh of bonhomie and cheerful *addas* with most professors there, it was difficult to adjust to the uncomfortable status-divide. Anis Sir was clearly an exception. From day one, he placed me in my comfort zone, and I found it immensely rewarding to interact with him, share his insights about many issues that engaged him and take part in

POETRY

Maruful Islam's Anisuzzaman

TRANSLATED BY TUSAR TALUKDER



I can never use the past tense verbs in your case
Let this be a deviation from grammatical rules
How can I bring myself to say
Rest in eternal peace hereafter?

Every day I sought out your company
And you've been there, always
How is it that all on a sudden
I've to say now you're no more... no more?
Here's still your radiant presence
Voice as glowing as diamond
Smile as pleasant as *Parijat* flowers
In your eyes are embedded
The dreams and hopes of fifty-six thousand square miles
The fountain of love flowing in every expression
Your existence, to me, is abundant sunshine
And the mellow moonbeams of night.

The translator is Assistant Professor at Central Women's University.

FOREST TEACHING

JOHN DREW

[for Samuel on his 15th birthday]

A woodlouse makes its way
Through the jungle of the grass.
Past sunlit drops of dew. And daisies.

Bees are abundant on forget-me-nots.
It is high spring and Death locks down the land.
The mind is autumn, turning winter.

The dawn is the head of a horse.
Its flaring nostrils, the wind.
Its bloodshot eye, the sun.
It knows it is to be sacrificed.

When the sun and moon have set,
The fire gone out and all voices stilled,
There remains a lamp. So says the forest teacher.

Is there a song no nightingale can match?
A breath too deep for us to feel its touch?

The woodlouse crawls past fading drops of dew.

April 2020

John Drew has lived on
both sides of the Himalayas.



NEYMAR GETS LUCKY

Neymar, the world's most expensive footballer, was approved to receive a \$120 welfare payment meant for low-paid Brazilian workers affected by the coronavirus pandemic, in an apparent case of identity theft, a report said Thursday. The star's name, date of birth and Brazilian ID number were used to register for the stimulus payment from the federal government. With a contract at PSG and estimated earnings of \$95.5 million this year Neymar does not qualify. Yet according to UOL, the application in his name "was initially approved and scheduled for payment... before being frozen and placed 'under evaluation' due to indications it failed to meet the requirements." — AFP



Changes inevitable when playing with the virus

NABID YEASIN

"Football, like life in general, I think will never be the same," Lionel Messi told Spanish daily El Pais as he discussed La Liga's impending return to action after the coronavirus pandemic earlier this week. Messi's words hold true not only for football, but all sport, and some would say life in general, in the post-pandemic era.

While playing behind closed doors in empty stadiums -- save a few members of management and groundstaff, fully equipped in protective gear -- is now a reality, drastic changes will also be seen in training protocols, celebrations and even in the financial aspects.

Postponement of sporting events have impacts ranging from a plunge in teams' revenue to economic troubles of athletes and stakeholders. Therefore, it was never viable that there would be a long-term halt and so it inevitably

brings the sporting world, much like the world in general, to a new reality -- living and playing while fighting with the virus. Addressing this new reality, sporting bodies around the globe have chalked out guidelines for resumption.

Almost all major European football leagues have now set dates or are in talks about resumption following a halt since March. The Bundesliga was the first major league to resume on May 16 but only after the German Football League (DFL) set a 51-page safety guideline.

The Premier League, set to return on June 17, has also laid down a strict testing and training regime for players. Starting from the need to sanitise corner-flags, balls, cones, goalposts and even playing surfaces to twice-weekly testing, a daily pre-training questionnaire and temperature check of players -- football seems now to have more activity off the field than on it.

It will not just be injuries that

will see players missing games in the post-pandemic era. Headlines reading, "Hattrick hero sidelined after showing symptoms of coronavirus", may be the new normal as rules include isolating positive players for seven days.

Players also have to comply with protocols on the field. Goals in football or fall of wickets in cricket may not see players converging for a traditional team celebration for the foreseeable future.

Cricketers may just have to give up the age-old trick of shining the ball with saliva and sweat. The sport will see many more changes, with the ICC's 16-page guideline for the safe resumption of cricket also discouraging the shared use of drink bottles, towels and equipment.

In terms of revenues, Premier League clubs are set to lose up to an estimated 350 million pounds despite finding a way to finish the season. Elsewhere, Cricket Australia has projected a nearly 50 per cent

dive in revenue, which was forecast to be around 400 million USD.

Financial constraints of boards may in turn impact players in the form of pay cuts. After accepting to tour England in July, Cricket West Indies has mentioned that all players and staff will have to accept a 50 percent pay cut.

Sporting bodies also need to arrange extended schedules as travelling players and management may have to go under quarantine. Such measures have already been taken for the West Indies' upcoming tour of England. The West Indies are set to arrive in England on June 9 and will then be based at Old Trafford for a three-week period of quarantine and training before travelling down to Southampton.

Not only in football and cricket, adhering to norms and the emphasis on 'social distancing' will be seen in every sport and sporting culture in the post-pandemic era will, like Messi said, not be the same.

A decade on, fixing still haunts Pakistan

AFP, Karachi



When Mohammad Amir bowled a no-ball against England on the opening day of the 2010 Test at Lord's, no one could have imagined his long stride past the crease marked the first step in a historic fixing scandal.

Two days later it was revealed that three no-balls -- two by Amir, and one by his pace partner Mohammad Asif -- had been part of a shady betting deal.

Pakistan's captain Salman Butt had orchestrated the deliberate no-balls in return for money offered by undercover journalist Mazhar Majeed posing as a bookmaker. The scandal, exposed in the sting by Britain's now-defunct News of the World tabloid, rocked the cricketing world, and aftershocks can still be felt a decade on in Pakistan.

Not only did that dark morning at the revered 'home of cricket' derail the careers of three players who were banned and jailed, the saga also led to calls for Pakistan to be booted from international cricket.

reintegrated into the team.

Asif, who received a seven-year ban and a one-year prison sentence, is now 37 and in the twilight of his career. Butt, 35, still harbours hopes of a comeback after consistent domestic performances.

As the orchestrator of one of the darkest episodes in the cricket-mad country's history, that seems unlikely, especially with match-fixing still haunting the game.

Sharjeel Khan and Khalid Latif were banned after a PSL spot-fixing case in 2017. And in April this year, Umar Akmal was banned for three years for failing to report fixing offers. The cases have led to calls for the country to criminalise fixing, a campaign taken up by the PCB.

"We need to make match-fixing a criminal offence... I have talked to the government to bring in this change and make a law related to match-fixing," PCB chairman Ehsan Mani said.

Former Pakistan captain-turned-commentator Ramiz Raja went a step further, recommending tainted players should not play again for the national team.



Butt, Amir and Asif were tried in a London court for offences under the Gambling Act and were jailed in November 2011. Announcing the sentences, the judge underscored the severity of the crime.

"The image and integrity of what was once a game, but is now a business, is damaged in the eyes of all, including the many youngsters who regarded three of you as heroes," Justice Jeremy Cooke said.

It marked a new low for Pakistan cricket, already reeling from the aftermath of terror attacks in Lahore on the Sri Lankan team a year before, which triggered the suspension of home internationals.

Because he pleaded guilty earlier than his two teammates, and on account of his youth, the 18-year-old Amir received worldwide sympathy. He was allowed to play international cricket again in 2016 and, now 28, has been successfully

"We have suffered numerous times from bringing back tainted players yet we continue to welcome them just because of their talent," Raja told AFP. "We should avoid being desperate and rather give new talent a chance to prosper. Cricket cannot condone such behaviour and fans need to realise that rooting for tainted players is harming Pakistan cricket and its image."

On the field at least, Pakistan have managed to lift the clouds. They found an astute skipper to replace Butt in Misbah-ul-Haq, who had been contemplating retirement after being left out for the infamous England tour. He led Pakistan to number one in the Test rankings in 2016.

A tentative return of international touring sides has followed, culminating in Azhar Ali having the honour of leading Pakistan in their first Test on home soil in 10 years when Sri Lanka played in Rawalpindi in December.

Werner heading to Chelsea for £53m?

AFP, London



Chelsea are closing in on a deal to sign striker Timo Werner from RB Leipzig, British media reported Thursday.

The 24-year-old had been thought to be attracting interest from Premier League champions-elect Liverpool but it appears Chelsea have in fact met the German's reported release clause of some £53 million (\$67 million).

Were Chelsea to bring Werner to Stamford Bridge it would be a major feather in the cap of the west London club.

For the past year there has been speculation linking Werner with a move to Anfield but time appears to be running out for the Reds, with the forward's release clause expiring on June 15 -- two days before the Premier League is set to restart after a coronavirus-enforced break of several months.

The Germany international has scored 31 goals for Leipzig in all competitions.

Chelsea have already agreed a deal to sign Ajax winger Hakim Ziyech.



'Bale could finish career at Real'

REUTERS

Real Madrid forward Gareth Bale does not want to return to the Premier League and could finish his career at the Spanish club, the Welshman's agent Jonathan Barnett has said.

Despite winning four Champions League titles with Real, Bale divides opinion due to a perceived lack of commitment and a poor injury record.

"He has a very nice lifestyle. I don't see why he doesn't see his career out at Madrid probably," Barnett told the BBC. "... To come back and play (in the Premier League) would be unbelievable -- a big thing. I don't think he wants to do that at the moment. He's quite happy to play at Real."

Real host Eibar on June 14 when La Liga resumes.



Benfica goalkeeper Odisseas Vlachodimos (C) clears the ball with a header during their Portuguese Primeira Liga match against Tondela at the Luz stadium in Lisbon on Thursday. Benfica, the league leaders, were held to a goalless draw.

PHOTO: AFP

Benfica bus stoned

REUTERS, Lisbon

A bus carrying the Benfica team was stoned on Thursday, breaking the glass and injuring two players, after they had played their first game since coronavirus halted the season, broadcaster RTP reported citing Portuguese police.

German midfielder Julian Weigl and Serbian winger Andrija Zivkovic were taken to hospital to be treated for injuries as a precaution. The attack on a major motorway between the club's Estadio da Luz and training ground followed Benfica's first game in three months.

The Portuguese champions missed the chance to move clear at the top of the table after being held to a 0-0 draw by lowly Tondela. The top two are now level on 60 points with nine rounds of matches remaining.



Barcelona players continued to sweat it out at the Joan Gamper training ground ahead of La Liga's slated June 11 restart, but Lionel Messi has sat out training since Wednesday with a thigh strain.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

AFC Cup at centralised venue from Sep?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) is planning to resume the AFC Cup from late September or early October and playing all remaining matches at a single venue, officials said after an online meeting between the AFC Competition Division and representatives from the four clubs that make up Group E of the tournament as well as three member associations -- Bangladesh, India and Maldives.

On March 9, the AFC had issued a letter to its member associations to consider suspending fixtures of the AFC Cup as well as the World Cup and Asia Cup Qualifiers following travel bans due to the coronavirus pandemic. In light

of that, the Bangladesh Football Federation suspended all fixtures in March and June.

However, Bashundhara Kings still went ahead and hosted TC Sports Club of Maldives at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on March 11, thrashing them 5-1. They currently top Group E with three points, followed by Maziya SRC of Maldives and Chennai FC of India, who have one point each. TC Sports are bottom with no points.

The domestic seasons in Bangladesh and India were called off due to the pandemic and the Maldivian league was completed beforehand, leaving teams struggling to retain services of players.

"Some proposals were presented to complete the rest of the AFC

Cup but no concrete decisions were taken. The Competition Division discussed three points while clubs gave their opinions," BFF Competition manager Zaher Bin Taher Ansari told The Daily Star after attending the meeting yesterday.

"Participating teams were informed that they are planning to restart the AFC Cup in the third week of September or in October, with all remaining matches taking place in a single venue. The Competition Division gave their nod to the clubs' demand of a new registration window as clubs either released their players following the cancellation of leagues or the players' contracts expired," Ansari added.

"The Competition Division proposed playing at a centralised/

neutral venue and all four clubs agreed," Ansari said, adding that they did not specify a venue.

"We were also informed that new rules and regulations would be introduced for the 2021 AFC Cup. There may be some relaxation following an incomplete season."

The details of the AFC Cup are to be ironed out within this month so that each club gets time to prepare and sign new players for the remaining matches.

"The matches have to be completed within 13 days because it will be tough to play home-and-away matches while maintaining the guidelines of 14-day quarantine periods. It will take too much time," Bashundhara Kings president Imrul Hasan said.




INCENTIVES FOR IMAMS

Embarrassing errors taint Kulaura lists

MIN TU DESHWARA

A number of people, who do not lead prayers at mosques, have been named in the lists for the government's cash assistance to imams in Sylhet's Kulaura during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The lists include names of an expatriate, an officer of the Islamic Foundation as well as former and current political activists.

The Daily Star found such anomalies, along with repetition and omission of names of mosques, in at least four of the lists prepared by the Islamic Foundation in Kulaura for the 13 unions and one municipality under the upazila.

The lists, published on the Kulaura upazila administration's Facebook page on May 24, include the names and addresses of 771 mosques, the number of imams and muezzins in each mosque, the name and contact number of the imam in charge, and the mosque type.

In the list for Kulaura Sadar union, the name and mobile number of SM Shihab Uddin, office assistant of Kulaura Islamic Foundation, was listed as the imam in charge of Dasermahal Fultali Bari Mosque.

Contacted, Shihab said his name and phone number were mistakenly included in the list prepared hurriedly.

"The list will be revised," he added. In the same list, Farid Uddin's name appeared as the imam in charge of Karegram Jame Mosque and Gututi

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Relatives of patients sleeping in close proximity under mosquito nets in the driveway of Dhaka Shishu Hospital at dawn yesterday. As part of measures to curb the spread of coronavirus, only mothers are allowed as attendants inside the hospital to maintain social distancing, but it has had the opposite effect outside the institution's walls as this scene is repeated daily with 40-50 people crowding together.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Human rights violations on amid Covid-19 pandemic

Alleges a group of academics, professionals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A team comprising academics and professionals has alleged that widespread human rights violations were taking place in the country amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

It came up with the allegation in a report circulated to the media yesterday. The report was prepared analysing reports of 19 newspapers and five television channels run between April 11 and May 31.

The team members include photojournalist Shahidul Alam, Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua, women's rights activist Farida Akhter, independent researchers Sydia Gulrukh, Rezaur Rahman Lenin and Chittagong University Assistant Professor Maidul Islam.

"At least 122 people from 41 districts died allegedly without treatment. The deaths can be attributed to four broad causes: hospitals not admitting patients, not getting treatment after admission, negligence by the management, and obstructions to treatment by relatives, community members and neighbours," said the report.

"On April 24, an indigenous woman named Ronika Chakma died in labour allegedly when the launch which was taking her to a hospital in Rangamati was stopped at 3:15am for over 45 minutes by law enforcers for a search. The launch was only let go when Ronika Chakma's condition deteriorated badly. She and her unborn baby died when they were taken to a hospital," it said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



PRAYER TIMING JUNE 6

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-05 12-45 5-00 6-45 8-15
JAMAAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-50 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

946 Bangladeshis brought home by special flights

Asked to remain in home quarantine; most of them were in detention camps in Kuwait, Oman, UAE

RASHIDUL HASAN

A total of 946 Bangladeshi citizens, most of whom are migrant workers, returned to the country by four special flights from Kuwait, Oman, the UAE, and Russia in the 24 hours since Thursday morning.

All of them were placed in home quarantine for 14 days.

Public health experts warned that allowing these workers to stay in home quarantine might give rise to a further spread of coronavirus as most of them do not have the facilities at their home to follow the quarantine guidelines.

Of the returnees, 743 Bangladeshi expatriate workers, who had been either jail or detention camps of Kuwait, the UAE and Oman, returned as part of the deportation of 29,000 Bangladeshi workers who are supposed to be sent back from different Middle Eastern countries during the pandemic, sources at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) said.

They were brought by three separate

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Socialism can't be established with American aid

Monsoon to arrive a bit early

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The current spell of rain may continue today and the Monsoon may begin a week early in Bangladesh this year, says the meteorological office.

The rainfall the countrymen are experiencing may continue today and the dwellers of Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions may experience heavier shower than other parts of the country, the met office said.

Although the Monsoon usually arrives on June 15 every year, the met office said, this year the Monsoon is set to come on between June 9 and June 10 through Teknaf area.

Abdur Rahman Khan, meteorologist from Dhaka Met office, yesterday told The Daily Star, "In the last month, there was more rainfall than usual. We are expecting a good rainfall in this month as well. The Monsoon is set to arrive next week."

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Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin calls on Bangabandhu at his official residence on June 2, 1972.

June 6, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

SAVE FREEDOM FIGHTER MANIK'S EYES AT ANY COST

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today gives directives to physicians to try their best to save the vision of young freedom fighter Manik Ali. If necessary, the government will send him abroad, says the prime minister. The young freedom fighter calls on Bangabandhu today at his official residence. Manik Ali, a student of class 10, joined the Mukti Fouz and fought valiantly against the Pakistan army. He was badly injured during the war.

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Zafrullah's condition 'not fully stable'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The condition of Gonoshasthaya Kendra Founder and Trustee Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury is "not fully stable", an official of Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital said yesterday.

"We can't say his condition is critical. But it is not fully stable. He was suffering from breathing problems Thursday night while undergoing kidney dialysis. The dialysis could not be completed. He was then given oxygen," the official told The Daily Star in the evening.

Earlier in the day, Dr Tanvir Chowdhury, assistant registrar at the hospital, said, "I just visited Dr Zafrullah in his hospital room. He still needs 6-7 litres of oxygen a day and he has breathing problems," he said.

"We are not calling his condition entirely risky, but he is not out of danger as well," the physician told

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Three children on the Dhaka University campus yesterday are seen amusing themselves by climbing into the vehicle in which filmmaker Tareque Masud and Mishuk Munier were travelling before a fatal road accident in 2011. The mangled vehicle forms part of a memorial installation assembled in 2015, dedicated to the memory of road accident victims but amid the coronavirus pandemic there is no one to look after it.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

EU presses for reopening of borders

France says pandemic under control as Brazil's virus death toll surges to third-highest in world

AGENCIES

Brazil's death toll from the new coronavirus surpassed Italy's to become the third-highest in the world, as Europe emerged from punishing lockdowns and the EU pressed for a reopening of borders.

The bleak figures from Brazil underlined the toll the virus is taking in Latin America, the latest epicentre in the pandemic, even as Europe was emerging from its darkest days -- with the latest help coming from a new 600-billion-euro (\$674 billion) economic stimulus measure announced by the European Central Bank.

In a bid to further boost growth, the EU Commission called for member states to lift all border restrictions by the end of June.

"We are coming very close to a situation where we should lift all the internal border restrictions and border checks," Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson said late on Thursday.

France had positive news, with a top immunologist saying yesterday the outbreak had abated as daily deaths and new cases had fallen far below their March peaks.

"We can reasonably say the virus is currently under control," said Jean-Francois Delfray, the head of the government's scientific advisory council.

But across the Atlantic, the pandemic continued to gather pace.

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