

### 3 Rohingya

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through the border around 4:00am, the BGB men signalled them to stop. But the smugglers opened fire, forcing them to retaliate, triggering a “gunfight”, said Haider.  
At one stage, the yaba smugglers managed to flee the scene.  
Later, BGB members found the trio with bullet wounds. They were declared dead after being taken to Ukhia Upazila Health Complex, he added.  
BGB members also recovered three lakh yaba pills, two pipe guns and five cartridges from the spot, the official said.  
The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the BGB claims.

### Rodents feel

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One or two bystanders, who were rendered unhelpful by giving them a low dose of the anti-anxiety drug mizadolam, were then added to the scenario.  
In the presence of these unhelpful bystanders, a rat that had previously been helpful in a one-on-one interaction now stood by idly and did not rescue the subject.  
On the other hand, when undrugged, helpful bystanders were placed at the scene, a rat that had been helpful one-on-one became even more keen on being a good Samaritan.  
“I think this is a very apt study for the times,” said Mason, pointing to how during recent US protests against police racism, protesters rushed to aid injured peers while police stood by.  
“In the George Floyd case, there were three other police officers, including one who went into the police force to change the narrative about police brutality against black people -- and nonetheless, he stood by and did not intervene,” she added.  
Mason likened these officers to the drugged rats, “except they didn’t take the chill pill, they took years of training.”  
If a person does not help, “that individual is less likely to be a bad apple and more likely to just be an apple in the orchard, the orchard of mammalian behavior. This is what we do.”  
The term “bystander effect” was first coined by psychologists after the 1964 murder of Catherine “Kitty” Genovese in New York, whose death was reportedly witnessed by more than 35 of her neighbors, none of whom intervened.  
The story was later found to be highly misleading -- but the basic finding held up in controlled experiments where human subjects were placed in distressing situations, such as smoke entering the room or a person having a seizure.  
When bystanders were added to these scenarios, members of the public who weren’t a part of the experiment often failed to respond.  
This led psychologists to hypothesize that perhaps people weren’t willing to take responsibility when others were present.  
Mason’s team believes that in humans, as for rats, the decision to help or not is more likely linked to the brain’s internal reward circuitry than it is to notions of who should be responsible.

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TDS: You recently said he was arrested as a businessman, not lawmaker. What did you mean by this?

AAM: According to our information, he was not travelling with a diplomatic passport. Our ambassador was aware that he was doing business in Kuwait. I did not say he is a Kuwait citizen.

When a lawmaker travels abroad, they usually carry a diplomatic passport. I don’t know why he did not do that.

TDS: Regardless of the type of passport being carried, doesn’t the identity as a lawmaker give one’s actions some level of significance?

AAM: A lawmaker, elected by the people, is a respectable person. They have responsibilities. It is really unfortunate when such a responsible person gets involved in corruption.

We have a zero-tolerance policy against human trafficking and money laundering.

TDS: You are talking about zero-tolerance. Is there any legal action being taken against Shahid Islam alias Papul?

AAM: You better ask the law ministry. The foreign ministry is involved here because he is now in a foreign country.

TDS: It is happening at a time when Bangladeshi expatriates are facing difficulties. Around 2.5 lakh of them face the grim prospect of being deported from Kuwait. You have spent most of your time abroad over the years. As the foreign minister, what will you do to overcome this crisis?

AAM: We are doing a lot. Most of our expats, nearly 80 percent, are in the Middle Eastern countries. We, along with the expatriates welfare and other ministries, have taken a number of steps. Firstly, we have talked with the expatriates, and told them to stay put despite the difficulties posed by such trying times. We told them better days will come. We talked to the government of those countries. We requested them to ensure that these people do not die of hunger during the pandemic. They agreed to provide healthcare and food support [to our workers]. We have also sent money and relief goods for them.

TDS: How much money has been distributed so far?

AAM: Several crore Taka. Besides, the embassies have also distributed food.... during lockdowns. Our migrants -- both legal of illegal ones -- never register their contact details with our foreign missions. Our mission officials worked day and night to reach as many people as they could and distributed the goods.

TDS: Bangladeshi expatriates largely remain detached from our missions across the world.

AAM: It is the responsibility of every migrant to register their name with our mission office in the country they have travelled to. For example, if you are an American and have travelled to another country, it is your responsibility to inform the mission office how long you will be staying there.

TDS: The US embassies take their citizens’ responsibilities. There are



Medical volunteers wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) gear take temperature reading of a woman as they conduct a door-to-door medical screening inside Dharavi slums to fight against the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, in Mumbai, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

### MP’s arrest abroad

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TDS: I have recently talked with some Bangladeshis in Italy. They appeared to be embarrassed because some Bangladeshis tested positive for Coving-19 when they returned to Italy. Our national flag carrier was termed a ‘coronavirus-carrying-bomb’. What is the reason? Do we lack the precautionary measures?

AAM: Ask the people who are sending them to the airport. I’m really embarrassed, it is unfortunate. We do not have strict surveillance at our airport. Rather, we try to get landing permission in that country.

TDS: But, some responsibilities fall on you because you are the one who will do the negotiation.

AAM: Recently, it was decided that only the IEDCR’s Covid-19 negative report will be accepted from a person wishing to travel abroad... I believe it will work.

TDS: But the number of Bangladeshi expats ready to travel abroad is around a few lakhs while the daily testing capacity of IEDCR is limited. How is it going to help the expats?

AAM: We will look into the matter. We will have to start somewhere and it is not possible to solve all the issues overnight.

TDS: You have talked about citizens staying connected to the foreign office. When some expats in Vietnam went to our foreign office, it was alleged that the expats tried to seize the facility. Did they really go there to seize the foreign office? Or, did they go there to press their demand to return home?

AAM: Those who turned up at our embassy in Vietnam went to that country with visitors’ visas. According to our mission office, it was a Friday and 11 Bangladeshis were returning home from Vietnam on a flight that day. At that time, 27 Bangladeshi expats turned up to our small embassy office where only six officials were posted. They told that they will not leave the embassy if their demand for a special flight to return home was not met. They placed their demand through a video conference and gave a 24-hour deadline. Our mission then informed us of their demand. The

allegations that our embassies do not do that.

AAM: I think that is an exaggeration. You go to any of our foreign missions. You will get respect from them. The allegations are baseless. Anyways, let’s talk about what we actually are doing. We have told the government of those countries that if a worker gets fired, make sure the worker gets six months’ salary and other benefits. And if possible, employ the workers in other jobs. After the pandemic, food crises might become an issue. Our workers can be employed in farming.

TDS: Please name the countries you have talked to and the ones that agreed to give what you asked for.

AAM: I have talked with most governments of the Middle Eastern countries. Talked with Malaysia and Singapore. We have also talked with countries where there is a large number of Bangladeshi expats.

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### Of long wait

FROM PAGE 12  
Dr Suzat Ahmed, civil surgeon of Khulna, told this correspondent on Tuesday, “In the division, 44 percent of the positive cases are in Khulna district, and 1,900 are in the city. The virus is also spreading in the surrounding villages. This is very alarming.”  
Till yesterday, the total number of Covid-19 cases in the district was 2,751 while the total in the other nine districts of the division was 3,518.

NO COORDINATION AMONG LABS  
Besides the one at KMC, Khulna division has two more RT-PCR labs -- one at the Genome Centre of Jashore University of Science and Technology (JUST) and other at Kushtia General Hospital.

Neither of these have any backlog, according to the lab authorities.

Earlier this week, HM Anwarul Islam, civil surgeon of Kushtia, said, every day around 180 to 230 samples come to the district for testing from

Meherpur, Chuadanga, Magura and Jhenaidah, and between 270 to 280 samples can be tested per day.

“No sample remains pending [for test] here,” he said, “But sometimes, report delivery is delayed by about two days.”

From April 25 to July 9, Kushtia’s lab tested 10,928 samples, of which only 803 or about 7 percent were positive.

Compared to the other two, the lab in JUST tested only 7,862 samples, mostly from Jashore and Magura, between April 17 to July 9. Among those 1,546 or 20 percent came out positive.

Md Iqbal Kabir Zahid, professor of JUST’s microbiology department and associate director of the Genome Centre, said they run three shifts testing 270 samples per day now.

If more samples are received one day, they accept fewer samples for testing on the following day, he said.

When asked why they are not

ministry responded by saying that the rules for the arrangement of return is applicable only for those legally working as expatriates. We don’t offer the same service for those who work there illegally. It agitated the expats present there and they demanded that an arrangement must be done for their return.

They went there with visitors’ visas and their visas expired six months or so ago.

TDS: Were they stuck in Vietnam while travelling?

AAM: They were working there. I have heard that they did not like the job they were offered and fled from their workplaces. They also demonstrated in front of a police station, prompting the law enforcers to follow them. Then they took shelter at the mission.

TDS: If they had taken shelter there, why was it alleged that they tried to seize the mission office? DUCSU VP Noor also appeared in discussions about the allegations.

AAM: They told the mission officials that they would not leave the premises. Before that, they said in a video conference that they would take hold of the mission office. They also said that an expatriate rights body was also with them.

TDS: Do you think it is believable that a student leader can seize a mission office by instigating the expatriates?

AAM: No, I don’t want to believe it. But the information came from there.

TDS: Bangladeshis for the time are not eligible for Schengen visas. Italy has suspended flight operations from Bangladesh. Is it the beginning of the world closing its doors to Bangladesh citizens?

AAM: Only 44 out of 193 countries have come into the purview of the Schengen visa. They said it is a temporary measure. Only a few countries outside the European Union have got the permission. They told us they were updating the list. Some of our neighbouring countries were also not granted the permission. Besides, not many people in our country will be interested to travel to Europe during the pandemic. We will get permission, if we can contain the coronavirus outbreak.

TDS: Do you think the recent incident in Italy puts us in more trouble?

AAM: There is a chance. Those who are travelling also need to be more responsible. They can think of travelling only after making sure they do not have the coronavirus. Those who are sending them also cannot deny their responsibilities. It is not only with Italy. Before that, four passengers who travelled to Japan under the supervision of the Japanese government tested positive there. Three consecutive flights to South Korea saw coronavirus positive cases among the Bangladeshis.

Those who are travelling have responsibilities. Why were they travelling knowing that it was forbidden?

helping out with KMC’s backlog, the professor said, “We do not accept old samples. There are chances of getting false negative from such samples. The results of these types of samples are not reliable.”

Samples are tested within 24 hours of collection at the Jashore’s lab, he claimed on Monday.

However, the JUST lab often remains closed for cleaning. It was closed for the same purpose from last Friday to Sunday, said Md Iqbal.

When the KMC’s principal was asked why pending samples are not sent to Jashore for testing, he alleged that the test result of Jashore’s lab is not reliable.

About the efficacy of old samples, he said if the samples are preserved in a proper manner, results are not affected. “We preserve the samples properly in our lab,” he claimed.

A total of 114 patients died of Covid-19 in Khulna division and 2,230 have recovered, as of yesterday.

## Iran to bolster Syria air defences, counter US ‘pressure’

AFP, Tehran

Iran has said it will strengthen Syria’s air defences as part of a bilateral military deal aiming to “fight terrorism” and counter American pressure.

Key US ally Israel, Iran’s arch-enemy, has launched hundreds of strikes in Syria since the start of a civil war there in 2011, including against Iranian forces.

Iran, one of President Bashar al-Assad’s main allies in the conflict, has always denied sending forces to fight in Syria, saying it only has military advisors there.

Under the latest deal, “we will strengthen Syria’s air defence systems in order to improve military cooperation between the two countries,” Iranian state TV quoted armed forces chief Major General Mohammad Bagheri as saying.

## Over Tk 100cr embezzled

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Tk 60.6 million from Satkhira Medical in conjunction with Messrs Mercantile Trade International and Universal Trade Company.

Bengal Scientific embezzled money from Chittagong Medical College Hospital as well, but the amount was not clearly specified in the DGHS statement. A case was however filed by the ACC against Bengal Scientific and M/S Ahmed Enterprise in this regard on November 25, 2019. In addition, three cases were filed against the company in Rangpur and Satkhira between July and October last year.

M/S Ahmed Enterprise was also named for embezzling funds from Faridpur Medical College Hospital, along with M/S Amin Traders. The amount of money misappropriated by these two contractors was Tk 10 crore according to the DGHS statement. A case was filed in this regard in November last year.

Rangpur Medical College Hospital had another case of misappropriated

funds -- when Messrs Manila Medicine, Messrs SK Traders, MH Pharma, Messrs Ovi Drugs, M/S Albira Pharmacy and SM Traders, embezzled Tk 51 million for equipment, Tk 35.1 million for pharmaceuticals, and Tk 95.4 million in unapproved purchases. A case was filed by the ACC in July 2018 in this regard.

The infamous DGHS accountant-turned millionaire Abzal Hossain’s wife Rubina Khanam was also named in the statement for embezzling money. Khanam’s company Rahman Trade International misappropriated Tk 37.5 crores meant for purchase of equipment at Cox’s Bazar Medical College and a further Tk 59 million of DGHS funds. Two cases were filed against the company in April and June of last year.

Blair Aviation misappropriated Tk 7.5 million and pocketed Tk 8.75 million from Dinajpur Medical College Hospital, said the statement, adding that a case was filed in 2015.

## Thousands out of work

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the remote chars like Nawapara.

Contacted, the district’s deputy commissioner Ziaul Haque said he would talk to UNO about this issue.

Sariakandi Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Rasel Miah said he would look into the matter.

In Nilphamari, most people of Char Kharibari village live on catching fish from the Teesta, but now all are unemployed and somehow maintain family with relief goods given by generous people, organisations or

government.

Shahidul, 52, of Char Kharibari village in Dimla upazila, said he could not go for fishing as on rush of water in the river could sink his boat.

Dimla Upazila Nirbahi Officer Joyoshree Rani Roy said they had identified 3,125 families as flood victims and supplied 49 metric tonnes of rice and Tk 3 lakh to ease miseries.

Our Lalmonirhat, Bogura and Nilphamari correspondents contributed to this report.

## Italy bars entry

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on board a transit flight of Qatar Airways -- into the country and sent them back to Dhaka.

“Upon request of the Italian health ministry all flights/passengers from Bangladesh with final destination to Italy are forbidden,” Qatar Airways said in a statement today.

“Effective from July 8 and valid till October 5, passengers are not allowed to travel to Italy from Bangladesh irrespective of any nationality and irrespective of any routing involved where flight originates from Bangladesh,” said the statement.

Meanwhile, the 151 Bangladeshi passengers are likely to return to Dhaka by last night, sources at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport said.

On July 8, an official of Qatar Airways at the HSA said they did not know the Italian government’s decision that no passengers from

Bangladesh would be allowed to enter into Italy.

The 151 passengers were on their way to Fiumicino International Airport in Rome from Dhaka via Doha, Qatar.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines recently operated several chartered flights from Bangladesh to Italy and a number of passengers of those flights tested positive for Covid-19 after they landed at the airport in Italy.

After resumption of international flight operation on June 16, Bangladesh government allowed a limited number of foreign airlines including Qatar Airways to operate transit flights from Dhaka.

Earlier in June, Japan put restrictions on special flights between Dhaka and Tokyo after four passengers who had travelled from Bangladesh tested positive for Covid-19 while in quarantine in Japan.

## Owner of Mayur-2 arrested

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investigating officer of the case.

The six other accused in the case are Mayur-2 master Abul Bashar Molla, 65, master Jakir Hossain, 54, engine driver Shipon Hawlader, 45, driver Shakil Hasan, 28, sukani (launch staff) Nasir Mridha, 40, and Ridoy, 24. All the six are on the run.

The accused were charged with negligence that caused deaths and also with some other offenses under sections 280, 304 A, 437, and 34 of the Penal Code.

At least 34 people drowned in the Buriganga as a novice was allegedly at the helm of Moyur-2 around 9:15am on June 29 when the vessel slammed into a smaller launch -- Morning Bird -- causing the latter to sink in the river in the capital’s Shyambazar area.

Rezaul Karim Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Sadargaht River Police Station, said the master of Mayur-2, Abul Bashar Mollah, was in the launch but sukani Nasir Mridha was driving the vessel when it hit Morning Bird.

“We are investigating the incident thoroughly. The Mayur-2 was scheduled to leave the terminal at noon on that day [June 29]. The vessel was supposed to go to the terminal about one hour before its departure. But on that day, it was arriving near the terminal much earlier than its scheduled departure time.... So we are investigating whether there is any conspiracy,” the OC told The Daily Star.

The authorities seized Mayur-2 following the incident.

## WHO sets up review panel

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Union, called for an “impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation”.

It said the investigation should probe “the actions of WHO and their time-lines pertaining to the Covid-19 pandemic”.

The United States on Tuesday formally started its withdrawal from the WHO, making good on Trump’s threats to deprive the UN body of its top donor over its management of the pandemic.

Public health advocates and Trump’s political opponents voiced outrage at the move.

‘THIS HAS TO STOP’

Tedros hit out at divisions in the international community and warned of severe consequences if this were not rectified.

“Make no mistake: the greatest threat we face now is not the virus itself -- rather, its lack of leadership and solidarity at the global and national levels,” he said.

“We cannot defeat this pandemic as a divided world. The virus thrives

on division but is thwarted when we unite.”

The novel coronavirus has killed more than 550,701 people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to an AFP tally yesterday.

“How is it difficult for humans to unite to fight a common enemy that’s killing people indiscriminately? Tedros said.

“Together is the solution, unless we want to give the advantage the enemy, to the virus that has taken the world hostage -- and this has to stop.”

Tedros said it was time for honest reflection, and stressed it was important to remain vigilant.

“We’re in the midst of this battle. The battle of our lives, and we have to do better, not just now but for the future. Because these threats will never stop and, in all likelihood, they will get worse,” he said.

The panel will stage one mission briefing per month to give updates, while it will present an interim report to the next World Health Assembly gathering in November.