

# BLOOD HEROES IN PANDEMIC

## Donors carry on altruistic work

Facebook groups proved big help  
NILIMA JAHAN

One night in May, around 11:00pm, Milon Hossain got a call from a Facebook-based blood donation group. He was asked to donate his O positive blood for a woman, who fell unconscious from bleeding at Pabna Sadar Hospital. Milon immediately started for the hospital, 35 kilometres away from his village in Pabna, on his motorbike. "After the donation, when I returned home, it was around 1:00am," he recounted. The 30-year-old motor mechanic and his brother had taken an oath two years ago to donate blood for saving the lives of critical patients. They took the vow when Roktadaner Opekkhay Bangladesh, the same group that called Milon in May, helped save his sister-in-law's life with 10 bags of blood in 2018. "Although many fear to donate blood nowadays, I believe if we keep conscious, maintain hygiene and proper distance, there is nothing to be worried about," said Milon. Like him, hundreds of volunteers of social media-based blood donation groups have continued their altruistic work during this pandemic, risking coronavirus infection. Asif Ahmed, a diploma engineering student of Brahmaputra Polytechnic Institute of Mymensingh, is another daring volunteer of Roktadaner Opekkhay Bangladesh.



A young boy is fast asleep on a table containing vital coronavirus prevention products like face masks and hand sanitizers at the capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday. Such items are in high demand amid the ongoing pandemic, but a slow Friday left the boy with little to do but to get some shut-eye.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## US imposes sanctions on Hong Kong leader Lam

REUTERS, Washington  
The United States yesterday imposed sanctions on Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam, the territory's current and former police chiefs and eight other officials for their role in curtailing political freedoms in the territory. The sanctions were imposed under an executive order US President Donald Trump signed last month to punish China for its moves against dissent in Hong Kong and are the latest action by his administration against Beijing in the run-up to his November re-election bid. As well as Lam, the sanctions target Hong Kong Police commissioner Chris Tang and his predecessor Stephen Lo; John Lee Kachiu, Hong Kong's secretary of security, and Teresa



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## US BAN ON TIKTOK, WECHAT

### China vows to protect interest

REUTERS, Beijing  
China's foreign ministry firmly opposes executive orders announced by US President Donald Trump banning US transactions with the Chinese owners of messaging app WeChat and video-sharing app TikTok, Beijing said yesterday. Beijing will defend the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese businesses and the United States would have to bear the consequences of its actions, ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters during a daily briefing, without giving details. "The US is using national security as an excuse and using state power to oppress non-American businesses. That's just a hegemonic practice. China is firmly opposed to that," he said. The US executive orders, which will be effective in 45 days, come after the Trump administration announced its efforts to purge "untrusted" Chinese apps from US digital networks and called WeChat, controlled by Tencent Holdings Ltd, and ByteDance's TikTok "significant threats." Wang said that the United States was sacrificing the interests of users and companies and engaging in political manipulation and oppression, adding that it "will only lose its moral high ground".

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

### Step up relief work

August 8, 1972  
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN  
BANGABANDHU'S DIRECTIVE  
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has expressed his deep sympathy for the flood-affected people of Bangladesh and instructed the government to undertake relief work on an emergency basis. In a message to the acting Prime Minister Syed Nazrul Islam from his sick bed in London Clinic, Bangabandhu said all resources should be mobilised for the relief of the suffering people. He added that money should not be a problem and asked the cabinet ministers to visit the affected areas and remain there for relief work. He further directed that all means of communication, including planes, should be commissioned in the task of relief operation on priority basis. UN MEMBERSHIP SOUGHT  
Bangladesh formally forwards her application for the UN membership in a cable to the UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim today. Bangladesh has so far been recognised by 86 members of UN. The date for moving the application was approved by the cabinet yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has given his concurrence. Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad has requested the UN Secretary General to place the application before the Security Council. The Security Council is meeting this month while the General Assembly session will begin next month. The foreign minister has also sent appeals to all members of the UN seeking their support for Bangladesh's membership in the UN.

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## Virus hastens newspapers' slide to shaky digital future

AFP, Paris  
The coronavirus crisis has weighed heavily on print newspapers already battling for survival around the world, with the number of copies sold tumbling while less profitable digital readerships surge. Simply delivering printed papers to the shops -- or having customers come in to buy them -- has become a challenge, worsening a years-long decline in sales and advertising revenue. "Consumption of printed newspapers has fallen as lockdowns undermine physical distribution, almost certainly accelerating the shift to an all-digital future," the Reuters Institute's 2020 annual report said. Major dailies in Brazil and Mexico have already switched to online-only or dropped some days.

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## New Guinea has most diverse island plant life on earth



MAIL ONLINE  
New Guinea has the most diverse island plant life in the world, according to researchers, who found it has 20 percent more flora than Madagascar or Borneo. Experts from the University of Zurich examined 700,000 plant specimens from the southwestern Pacific island as part of a study into its ecosystem diversity. Two-thirds of the species of plants found on New Guinea by the research team are only found in that region - an area almost 20 times the size of Switzerland.

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## SHIMULIA-KATHALBARI

### Strong currents in Padma halt ferry services at night-time

STAR REPORT  
The authorities have been forced to suspend operations of ferry services on the Shimulia-Kathalbari route at night for the last one month due to strong currents in the Padma. Ferry services are running only during daytime to avoid any accidents, Shafiqul Islam, assistant general manager of Bangladesh Inland Water

PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 8  
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-20 12-45 5-00 6-47 8-15  
JAMAAT 4-55 1-15 5-15 6-50 8-45  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## KABIKHA SCHEME

### UP chairman lands in jail over plunder of wheat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore  
A union parishad chairman and a member landed in jail on Thursday following allegations of stealing large amounts of wheat from the government's food for work programme in Natore. Chhatani Union Parishad Chairman Tofazzal Hossain Sarkar and Member Shahnaz Parveen in the sadar upazila were accused in a case filed by the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC). Police on Wednesday found 100 sacks of wheat belonging to the programme at the house of Tofazzal's relative Qurban Ali, said Liton Kumar Saha, superintendent of police in Natore. Qurban told police that the chairman asked him to store the wheat at his house, officials said. The government

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A man inspects a bunch of bananas on the sidewalk of Manik Mia Avenue in the capital yesterday. A nonprofit organisation under the agriculture ministry collects safe vegetables and fruits directly from farmers to sell online. The fresh produce is also directly sold at Manik Mia avenue.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Covid cases in India double in three weeks

Hit 2m-mark; US sees 2,060 deaths in 24 hrs as global cases top 19m  
AGENCIES  
India's official coronavirus case tally hit two million yesterday, doubling in three weeks as the pandemic sweeps into smaller cities and rural areas, with experts warning the real toll could be much higher. A record daily jump of more than 60,000 fresh infections was recorded, according to health ministry data, making the South Asian giant only the third country to surpass the two million milestone after the United States and Brazil. The rate of spread in the world's second-most populous country also appears to be increasing. India logged its first one million infections by July 17 and crossed the 1.5 million mark just 12 days after that. Official figures show the country has now recorded 2.03 million infections and 41,585 deaths. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government imposed one of the world's strictest lockdowns in late March. But with Asia's third-largest economy reeling from the impact -- tens of millions of migrant workers lost their jobs almost overnight -- the restrictions have been steadily eased. Previously the main hotspots have been the teeming megacities of New Delhi and Mumbai, home to some of the world's biggest slums. But now smaller cities and rural areas -- where 70 percent of Indians live -- have begun to see case numbers rising sharply. At least 19,127,000 coronavirus cases and 715,000

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