



KAMALA HARRIS
On the cusp
of US election
history
SEE PAGE 6

The Daily Star

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Your Right to Know

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"Leaders and activists of political parties should also be brought under dope tests."
AL LAWMAKER AND FORMER STATE MINISTER FOR HOME SHAMSUL HAQUE TUKU



"Now is the time to take action because there's no alternative. We have got to be humble in the face of nature."
BRITAIN'S PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON WHILE ANNOUNCING A FOUR-WEEK LOCKDOWN IN ENGLAND



"All the stars are aligned in the wrong place. ... You could not possibly be positioned more poorly."
US'S TOP INFECTIOUS DISEASE EXPERT ANTHONY FAUCI OPENS UP AGAINST TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S FAILURES



Bids to silence journo's deafening

ZYMA ISLAM and MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Shortly before this story went to print last night, missing journalist Golam Sarwar was found unconscious beside a canal at Sitakunda's Kumira.

On October 24, Sarwar, a journalist at www.ctnews.bd, a Chattogram-based news portal, published an article alleging that a minister's family member is involved in land grabbing.

On the morning of October 29, he went missing while on his way to work. His family members told our correspondent that in the 96 hours since his disappearance, they had been contacted at least five times by his abductor, through Sarwar's cell phone.

Each time, the abductor instructed the family to be prepared to pay the ransom, before switching off the phone.

In spite of the fact that Sarwar's own cell phone had been used, police could not locate him.

"We are trying our best to locate the journalist," Md Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, told The Daily Star when Sarwar was missing.

Sarwar is currently undergoing treatment

at Chattogram Medical College Hospital and details about his disappearance are yet to emerge.

A video emerged on social media of a terrified Sarwar repeatedly saying "I won't write news anymore!" after regaining consciousness. The Daily could not independently verify the video.

Police officials said Sarwar did not reply to any queries till this report was filed around 9:30pm.

His family told our correspondent that they believe Sarwar was targeted for his work.

There is precedent for this suspicion -- the 53-day enforced disappearance of Shafiqul Islam Kajol, the editor of The Daily Pokkhokhal, who went missing immediately after being prosecuted under the Digital Security Act by ruling party lawmaker Saifuzzaman Shikhor and party activist Usmin Ara Beli.

Any legal step to investigate the conditions of his disappearance is yet to be taken, even though Kajol reappeared on May 3. Instead, he is undergoing trial for the three active cases against him filed under the controversial Digital Security Act

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

"I won't write news anymore!"

JOURNALIST SARWAR WAS HEARD REPEATEDLY SAYING IN VIDEO ON SOCIAL MEDIA

INTERNATIONAL DAY TO END IMPUNITY FOR CRIMES AGAINST JOURNALISTS

CASES UNDER THE DIGITAL SECURITY ACT

34 in 2018

63 in 2019

111 in first six months of this year -- (205 people sued; 53 of them journalists; 20 political activists, 5 teachers and 8 students)



A mural painted on a blast wall in downtown Kabul in 2016 commemorates the 35 journalists killed in Afghanistan since 2001. PHOTO: UN.ORG



"If we do not protect journalists, our ability to remain informed and make evidence-based decisions is severely hampered. When journalists cannot do their jobs in safety, we lose an important defence against the pandemic of misinformation and disinformation that has spread online."

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

AROUND THE GLOBE

495 journalists were killed between 2014 and 2018, an **18%** increase over the previous **5** years.

Only **131** cases of journalists' killings are reported as being resolved since 2006, representing an overall impunity rate of **88%**.

Beyond fatal attacks, journalists endured other violations such as physical attack, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, imprisonment and torture.

Harassment and other harmful acts are increasingly prevalent in the online sphere, and are especially dire for women journalists.

38 JOURNALISTS ARRESTED BETWEEN JANUARY AND OCTOBER THIS YEAR

"DSA has become a plaything in the hands of a vested quarter who use this anti-press and anti-freedom of expression law whimsically and at will to harass and intimidate journalists and to prevent them from exposing corruption and misuse of funds that the government is presently allocating for the people, especially the poor."

--EDITORS' COUNCIL

SOME OF THE JOURNOS SUED UNDER DSA



SHAFIQUUL ISLAM KAJOL
editor of Daily Pokkhokhal



MOHAMMAD SHAHIDULLAH
a journalist from Cox's Bazar



IKHTIYAR UDDIN
Naogaon fixer of various national dailies



ARIFUL ISLAM
Kurigram-based journalist



RUHUL AMIN GAZI
president of a faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists

PM for testing people coming from abroad



UNB, Dhaka

The time has come to reintroduce coronavirus tests for every inbound passenger at all ports in the country as the globe again facing a massive outbreak, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

"The time has come again. From now on, there should be tests for incoming people from abroad, put in quarantine and steps have to be taken like the previous time in all ports, including airports," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said this while addressing the "Bangabandhu National Youth Day 2020" virtually. The function

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Trump launches campaign blitz

Republicans say Election Day turnout will make the difference

AGENCIES

Two days before Election Day, President Donald Trump yesterday launched a sprint of campaigning across battleground states crucial to the outcome of the US election in an effort to defy the polls and fend off Democratic challenger Joe Biden.

Trump, aiming to avoid becoming the first incumbent president to lose a re-election bid since fellow Republican George HW Bush in 1992, has a frenetic schedule for Sunday, with stops planned in Michigan, Iowa, North Carolina, Georgia and Florida. Biden is due to campaign in Pennsylvania.

Biden's national lead in opinion polls has stayed relatively steady in recent months as the coronavirus pandemic has persisted. The former vice president was ahead 51 percentage points to 43 percentage points in the latest Reuters/Ipsos poll, taken Oct. 27-29.

According to a RealClearPolitics average of polls Biden is leading the race with 51.1 percentage points to 43.9 percentage points.

Trump faces what appears to be a narrow path to re-election. Polls show him close to Biden in enough battleground states that could give him the 270 votes needed to win in the state-by-state Electoral College that

MORE ON PAGE 2, 6

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

No mask, no sale

Traders body decides to prevent second wave of Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a bid to curb the possible second wave of Covid-19, Bangladesh Dokan Malik Samity yesterday banned customers without masks from all markets, shops and malls.

The announcement came into effect from yesterday and would remain valid till February next year.

At a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club, Helal Uddin, president of Bangladesh Dokan Malik Samity, said, "Bangladesh Dokan Malik Samity announcing ban on entrance of customers without wearing masks at all shops, markets and malls from November 1 till

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Mere accidents or murders?

Court says unskilled drivers, reckless driving, unfit vehicles behind rise of road crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unskilled drivers, reckless driving, poor roads and unfit vehicles are behind the rise in the number of road crashes, a Dhaka court said yesterday.

The court also gave four observations on how to reduce the number of crashes that have become "routine".

"More and more road accidents are taking place.... There are questions in people's mind about whether the deaths of so many people on the road every day are mere accidents or murders," said Judge Abu Zafar Md Kamruzzaman of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka.

"The number of casualties on roads is rising due to some unskilled and careless drivers," he added.

"When will we be conscious [about road crashes]?" The judge was delivering the verdict in the case filed over the murder of North South University student Saidur Rahman Payel.

A driver, a supervisor and a helper of a Hanif Paribahan bus were given death penalty for killing Payel and hiding his body.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

3 to walk the gallows for Payel murder

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced three staffers of Hanif Paribahan to death in a case filed over the murder of North South University student Saidur Rahman Payel in July of 2018.

The convicts are: driver Jamal Hossain, his brother and helper Faisal Hossain, and supervisor Md Johny.

Judge Abu Zafar Md Kamruzzaman of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka handed down the sentence in presence of the trio in the courtroom.

Dhaka Metropolitan Special Public Prosecutor Abu Abdullah Bhuiyan said the prosecution was satisfied with the verdict.

Defence lawyer Hazzatul Islam said they would challenge the verdict at

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

COVID-19 TREATMENT

Govt spent Tk 15k-47k for each patient hospitalised

Claims health minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On average, the government has so far spent Tk 15,000 for each regular Covid-19 patient and Tk 47,000 for each coronavirus patient who required ICU treatment, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

"Covid-19 treatment in government hospitals has made free for all. Besides, nominal fees are charged for the tests," he said, while addressing a meeting on Shasthya Surakhsha Karmasuchi (Health Protection Scheme) at his ministry yesterday.

He added that the government was "completely ready" to tackle any possible second wave of the Covid-19 outbreak.

"The government has been providing the people with the best possible

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



A young visitor interacting with one of the attractions at the National Zoo in Mirpur yesterday. Inset, a long line of visitors outside the zoo, which opened yesterday after seven months of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic. The zoo authorities have made mask-wearing mandatory for entrance.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DHAKA-SYLHET HIGHWAY EXPANSION

Not enough overpasses

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government has planned to expand the Dhaka-Sylhet highway into four-lane without keeping adequate overpasses and underpasses, which may reduce the service and productivity of the road.

The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) recently submitted the Development Project Plan (DPP) of the long-drawn project worth around Tk 17,400 crore to the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges.

The two-lane national highway will have four main lanes and two more lanes for slow-moving vehicles under the project to be implemented with Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan in four years.

Although the consultant had laid out the design keeping 23 overpasses/flyovers on each of the major intersections of the highway, the DPP brought down the number to only six "due to fund constraint", officials involved with the project said.

Besides, only two underpasses would be constructed on this 210-kilometre road. The number is much lower than the underpasses built on similar four-lane roads under SASEC-1 and SASEC-2 projects, show RHD documents.

The 70km road from Joydevpur to Elenga in Tangail will have seven overpasses and 11 underpasses under SASEC-1 while 190km highway from Elenga to Rangpur will have six overpasses and 39 underpasses under SASEC-2. Both projects are being implemented with the ADB loan.

"The absence of adequate number of overpasses will create interruption at all intersections [of Dhaka-Sylhet highway], which will reduce the level of service and productivity of the road," Prof Shamsul Hoque of Buet Civil engineering department, told The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3