

Tikka Khan

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issued some new directives authorising banking transactions for the purchase of industrial raw materials for running of mills and also for bona fide personal withdrawals of up to 1,000 rupees. Relevant government offices were directed to remain open for the purpose of supplying fertiliser and fuel to power pumps.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO AL
During the non-cooperation movement the whole government machinery in East Pakistan was in liaison with the Awami League to ensure a modicum of continuity in their day-to-day functioning. Ninety-eight representatives of the Coordination Council of Associations- Unions of the Public Employees of Pakistan, after an emergency meeting on March 8, issued a press release formally pledging their allegiance to Awami League.

The radio station in Dhaka began broadcasting at 8:30am by airing Bangabandhu's March 7 rally's speech. Other stations in the then East Pakistan followed suit.

Citing a member of the Indian diplomatic mission in Dhaka, a New York Times report said, "Gandhi at the height of his popularity during the struggle against British rule in India was never able to get more than 1 or 2 per cent of Government workers to go out on strike. Here every body has quit." | The Political Tidal Wave That Struck East Pakistan, May 2, 1971

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She could

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The girl was behind her mother when the buses -- of N Mullick Paribahan and Aram Paribahan -- crushed her mother while competing to make U-turn at the intersection, said Jane Alam Jahid, a Red Crescent member who was volunteering to manage traffic there.

As the gap between the vehicles narrowed, Parveen was caught between the buses and collapsed on the ground only after one of the drivers reversed, he said.

With critical injuries, she was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead.

The body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy, Bachchu Mia, in-charge of police outpost at the hospital, said.

Mamun-or-Rashid, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, said they seized the two buses and detained one of the drivers from the spot. Another driver is on the run.

Willing to engage with all parties

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Protesters demand the release of Suu Kyi and respect for November's election - which her party won in a landslide but which the army rejected. The army has said it will hold democratic elections at an unspecified date.

Israeli-Canadian lobbyist Ari Ben-Menashe, hired by junta, told Reuters the generals are keen to leave politics and seek to improve relations with the United States and distance themselves from China.

He said Suu Kyi had grown too close to China for the generals' liking. Ben-Menashe said he had also been tasked with seeking Arab support for a plan to repatriate Muslim Rohingya refugees, hundreds of thousands of whom were driven from Myanmar in 2017 in an army crackdown after rebel attacks.

An official from the NLD died overnight in police custody, associates said.

The cause of Khin Maung Latt's death was not known, but Reuters saw a photograph of his body with a bloodstained cloth around the head.

Sithu Maung, a member of the dissolved parliament, said in a Facebook post that Khin Maung Latt was his campaign manager and was arrested on Saturday night in the

Pabedan district of Yangon. Police in Pabedan declined to comment.

Police fired stun grenades and tear gas to break up a sit-in protest by tens of thousands of people in Mandalay, the Myanmar Now media group said. At least 70 people were arrested.

Earlier, troops occupied a university in the city after firing rubber bullets at people there, it said. Two people were injured.

Police also launched tear gas and stun grenades in the direction of protesters in Yangon and in the town of Lashio in the northern Shan region, videos posted on Facebook showed.

A witness said police opened fire to break up a protest in the historic temple town of Bagan, and several residents said in social media posts that live bullets were used.

Video posted by Myanmar Now showed soldiers beating up men in Yangon, where at least three protests were held despite overnight raids by security forces on campaign leaders and opposition activists.

The United Nations says security forces have killed more than 50 people to stamp out daily demonstrations and strikes in the Southeast Asian nation since the military overthrew

and detained Suu Kyi on February 1. "They are killing people just like killing birds and chickens," one protest leader said to the crowd in Dawei, a town in Myanmar's south.

"What will we do if we don't revolt against them? We must revolt."

An alliance of influential worker unions in Myanmar has called for an extended nationwide strike starting today, with the intention of causing the "full, extended shutdown" of the country's economy in an attempt to stop a military coup.

In a statement, nine labour organisations called on "all Myanmar people" to stop work in an effort to reverse the seizure of power by the military.

According to figures from the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners advocacy group, well over 1,700 people had been detained under the military junta by Saturday. It did not give a figure for overnight detentions.

"Detainees were punched and kicked with military boots, beaten with police batons and then dragged into police vehicles," AAPP said in a statement. "Security forces entered residential areas and tried to arrest further protesters, and shot at the homes, destroying many."

SC clears way of trial

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SC headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the dismissal order after hearing the petition yesterday.

Ariful's lawyer Ishrat Hasan told The Daily Star that the High Court on March 23 last year directed police to immediately record Kurigram journalist Ariful Islam's assault and attempted murder case against Sultana and the other officials.

The HC also stayed the proceedings of the case filed by the mobile court against Ariful, his conviction, and sentencing.

In the early hours of March 14 last year, a mobile court of Kurigram administration, led by three assistant commissioners allegedly following DC Sultana's orders, convicted and sentenced Ariful to one year in prison after arresting him at his home.

Nine days later, the HC issued a rule asking the authorities concerned of the government, Sultana, Nazim, and assistant commissioners Rintu Bikash Chakma and SM Rahatul Islam to explain in four weeks as to why the mobile court's action against Ariful should not be declared illegal.

Kurigram Sadar Police Station recorded the case against Sultana and the other officials on March 30 for

assaulting Ariful. Sultana and the executive magistrates were suspended following the incident, lawyer Ishrat said.

In the leave to appeal petition, Nazim requested the Appellate Division to stay the HC order that asked the police to record the case against him.

The suspended officials are fugitives in the eye of the law as they have yet to surrender to the trial court, the lawyer said.

Lawyer Shahanara Begum represented Nazim during the virtual hearing on the petition.

Lawyer Ishrat said Ariful and his family members were about to go to sleep when several Ansar members, accompanied by magistrates Nazim, Rintu Bikash Chakma and Rahatul Islam, stormed the house and tortured him.

The mobile court sentenced him around 1:30am.

The incident happened after Ariful reported on alleged corruption by Sultana, said Ishrat.

Ariful later went to Kurigram Sadar Police Station to sue Sultana, Nazim, Rintu, Rahatul and the Ansar personnel for torturing and attempting to kill him. But police refused to record the case, the lawyer added.

Hundreds of houses destroyed by twin tremors in Greece

AFP, Athens

Twin earthquakes in Greece last week have left around 900 houses uninhabitable, media reported yesterday, while strong aftershocks continue to strike fear into people made homeless and looking for shelter.

Wednesday and Thursday's quakes, rated at magnitude 6.3 and 5.9, damaged hundreds of buildings in the villages of Larissa, Ellassona, Tyrnavos and Farkadona and injured 11 people.

After inspecting around 1,800 structures, engineers said 898 homes would have to be demolished along with some hospitals, schools and churches, Athens News Agency reported.

The mainly agricultural area has many stone buildings that are over 70 years old.

Authorities are rushing in caravans and tents to shelter those left homeless from low temperatures and rainy weather.

Thessaly regional governor Kostas Agorastos said yesterday that temporary

housing units and caravans would be hooked up to electricity and water supplies in Damassi and Messohori villages, with at least 100 caravans expected in the coming week.

On Saturday, deputy Interior Minister Stelios Petas said that each earthquake-hit municipality would receive 300,000 euros (\$360,000) today to fund emergency spending.

Meanwhile seismologists have warned people not to return to damaged homes, forecasting many months of aftershocks.

"It's a given that post-earthquake activity will be long, at least for 4-5 months, so the best solution is to move earthquake-stricken families to containers," the director of the Greek Geodynamic Institute, Akis Tselentis, told Kathimerini newspaper.

A magnitude 4.2 aftershock hit late Saturday near the town of Ellassona in Thessaly.

Greece is located on a number of fault lines, and is sporadically hit by earthquakes. But they mostly occur at sea and do not cause casualties.

S'pore builds

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"After exhausting the rooftops and the available land, which is very scarce, the next big potential is actually our water area," said Jen Tan, senior vice president and head of solar in Southeast Asia at conglomerate Sembcorp Industries, which is building a project.

An island-state threatened by rising sea levels because of climate change, Singapore is aware of the urgency of cutting emissions, although critics say authorities' environmental commitments have thus far fallen short.

The government last month unveiled a wide-ranging "green plan" that included steps such as planting more trees, reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills and building more charging points to encourage the use of electric cars.

11 more die

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recoveries now stand at 5,03,003 and the recovery rate at 91.40 percent.

Among the deceased, nine were male and two were female. One was between 31 and 40 years old, one between 41 and 50, two were between 51 and 60, and seven were above 60 years old, added the release.

Oral drug yields promising

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The findings of this study -- a quicker decrease in viral load among individuals with early-stage Covid-19 who are treated with molnupiravir -- are promising, said William Fischer, lead investigator of the study and a professor of medicine at the University of North Carolina.

"If supported by additional studies, (they) could have important public health implications, particularly as the SARS-CoV-2 virus continues to spread and evolve globally," Fischer added.

Merck is also working on another oral Covid treatment called MK-711.

Preliminary results from clinical trials with it show a more than 50 percent reduction in risk of death or respiratory trouble in patients hospitalised with moderate to severe Covid-19, the company said in January.

The coronavirus has killed at least 2,589,408 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP yesterday.

The US Senate on Saturday voted to approve a \$1.9 trillion relief package in what President Joe Biden called a "giant step" towards reviving the pandemic-stricken American economy, capping frenzied negotiations and a marathon overnight voting session.

"I promised the American people help was on the way," said Biden in an address from the White House, after the plan was approved along strict party lines.

In Britain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the reopening of schools to all pupils will mark the first step back towards normality and is only possible because of the efforts of the public to bring Covid-19 infection rates down.

Johnson has announced a roadmap for lifting lockdown measures that sees schools open first from today, followed in later stages by the gradual easing of restrictions on mixing with other people and the reopening of non-essential shops and other venues.

Auckland, New Zealand's biggest city, yesterday emerged from a strict weeklong lockdown imposed after a community cluster of the more contagious British coronavirus variant.

There were no new local cases recorded yesterday, health officials said, marking a full week of no community transmissions across the country, reports Reuters.

Footage on TVNZ, New Zealand's state-owned television network, showed people lining up at coffee shops with many saying they were feeling relieved.



"Our village gets inundated every day during the tidal surges, water breaks in through the damaged part of the embankment" - Rahima Khatun (43), Day laborer



"I want my normal life back, I want to go back to school, please help us" - Sagor Mia (11), Student, Class 5



"I want to eat a decent meal two times a day every day, I just do not want to starve anymore" - Sadia Afrin Tuli (09), Student, Class - 4



Honorable Prime Minister,

You are particularly aware that main problems of the districts Satkhira and Khulna in the south-west coast of Bangladesh are cyclones, subsequent tidal surges and long-term waterlogging. Over the last 20-25 years, these problems have been linked together, making the area uninhabitable and causing major crises in people's livelihoods. Waterlogging is a pressing concern at this time of global climate change that became worse day by day for the people of southwest Bangladesh. The prolonged waterlogging has caused significant displacement and created challenges in safe drinking water supply, sanitation, shelter, food security, and employment opportunity. There are areas where people have to live in waterlogged conditions for the whole year; even many cultivable crop lands are inundated for major part of the year, losing valuable agricultural production especially rice. It is painfully true that Khulna and Satkhira districts are economically backward from the other parts of Bangladesh. Despite the various disaster risk reduction initiatives of the government, a large number of people are migrating every year only due to superficial disasters.

Cyclone SIDR which was one of the most powerful cyclones to impact Bangladesh left behind a horrific death toll, damaging crops and infrastructures. Cyclone Aila and Bulbul followed in its footsteps and created unthinkable havoc. The catastrophic super cyclone Amphan made landfall on May 20 last year. Massive destruction took place in Shyamnagar, Asashuni upazilas of Satkhira and Paikgachha, Koyra upazilas of Khulna. The floods followed by the cyclone caused severe damage to houses, livestock and agriculture. Most of the fish farms and crop lands in those regions have been washed away and majority of the roads were flooded for days. About 30,000 families have been affected by the cyclone, and more than 5,000 families have been forced to live under the open sky on the embankments. In addition to these damages, many of the major embankments have been destroyed by the cyclone making hundreds of other coastal dams vulnerable. As a result, waterlogged conditions due to the flood and tidal surge still prevails in those areas. Many of the schools are still inundated, making them unusable.

Despite the implementation of various useful and praise worthy plans and people-oriented development projects by the current government, the poor and miserable people are still living a half-starved life. They have no more assets left to sell, nowhere to go to beg for, no more savings to deplete rather than helplessly migrating from those areas in search of livelihood. In this situation, if the poor and helpless people are not given continuous and effective assistance, a large section of the poor people will be forced to leave their homes.

Due to your efficient and far-sighted leadership, Bangladesh has come this far today. You are the true worthy daughter of our father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, you are the Mother of Humanity, our Savior. It is our earnest request to you to continue the food aid for the poor for at least one year, to help build houses for those people who are still living on the embankments and to provide feasible livelihood restoration opportunities so that the starving and helpless people can stand back on their feet again. With this, we request to take necessary steps to repair the high-risk dams before the next monsoon season. We wish Bangladesh to become a more prosperous country under your leadership, to become the Sonar Bangla of Bangabandhu's dream.

- From the affected people.



"It is high time we take necessary steps to reconstruct the damaged parts of the embankments, otherwise during the next cyclone the effect will be catastrophic" - Ripon Kumar Mondal, Chairman, Deluti Union, Paikgachha



"The Government has taken many initiatives but to extirpate the waterlogging problem permanently we need more assistance" - GM Abdullah Al Mamun, Chairman, Moharajpur Union

Humanitarian Assurances Provided by START FUND Bangladesh and UKaid for the Vulnerable People of the South Western Regions of Bangladesh

<p>Cyclone Bulbul GBP 48,571 6,300 Vulnerable People March 2020</p>	<p>Cyclone Amphan GBP 249,537 19,516 Vulnerable People September 2020</p>	<p>Enhanced Humanitarian Assistance for Waterlogging GBP 248,460 18,271 Vulnerable People November 2019</p>	<p>Waterlogging & Tidal Surge GBP 500,000 21,383 Vulnerable People December 2020</p>
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