



## OPERATION SEARCHLIGHT



## Never seen so many bodies

Jagannath Hall massacre witness recalls March 25 horror

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and WASIM BIN HABIB

Rabindra Mohan Das spent the entire evening yesterday watching live on television the programmes celebrating 50 years of the country's independence.

He was enthralled to see the colourful events held in the presence of global leaders who were lauding the socio-economic progress of Bangladesh.

Yet he was continuously distracted by the memories of the horror unleashed by the Pakistan army on the students and staff of Dhaka University's Jagannath Hall on the night of March 25, 1971.

"How could I forget it? The atrocities of the Pakistan military are flashing through my mind. As March 25 arrives every year, I feel restless. I

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"If we work together for the betterment of our people, South Asia will surely flourish as one of the most prosperous regions in the world."

PRIME MINISTER SHEIKH HASINA URGES SOUTH ASIAN LEADERS TO WORK TOGETHER

"I've come here to listen to the story of Bangladesh that too seated next to HE Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, an inspiring leader and a mother-like figure to me."

BHUTANESE PRIME MINISTER LOTAY TSHERING



## 50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Bhutanese counterpart Dr Lotay Tshering walking towards the programme celebrating Mujib Borsho and the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence at the National Parade Square. Yesterday was the eighth day of the 10-day national celebrations.

PHOTO: PID

## Infections gallop amid slow response

Experts yet again urge govt to act fast

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

In the wake of the second Covid-19 wave in the country, the government's efforts to check virus transmission and ensure treatment are still inadequate in view of the ground reality.

Despite the health directorate's recommendations for enforcing a lockdown and taking other strict measures, the government's efforts remain limited to distribution of masks and directives for following health safety guidelines.

The government has not been able to strictly enforce the health safety rules, a key instrument in the fight against virus transmission. A large section of the population is still reluctant to wear masks though it is mandatory to use those in public places.

Its preparations fall short of the required level in case the health system gets overstretched due to a surge in infections.

The health directorate has not been successful in increasing the number of Covid tests and providing central oxygen supply, ICU support and necessary equipment to public hospitals across the country.

Meanwhile, the directorate yesterday reported 3,567 new Covid cases -- the highest in nearly nine months. It recorded 28 more deaths from the virus.

Speaking at a programme in the city, Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday said that if Covid infections keep spreading this fast, the existing health system will not be able to handle the situation.

Against this backdrop, experts have recommended enforcing health safety rules strictly, increasing the number of daily tests, and ensuring that the Covid patients are kept isolated to check virus transmission.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Dr Mushtuq Hussain, consultant at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, said, "The government has

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## Acute gas crisis continues to hit city parts

HELEMLU ALAM

Sazzad Hossain was waiting to buy food for his family of four at a restaurant in Mohammadpur's Zakir Hossain Road. They could not cook anything at home because of a gas crisis.

"There has been no gas in our home for the last two days. I have already spent more than a thousand taka for breakfast, lunch and dinner items," he said, standing at the restaurant yesterday afternoon.

Sazzad, a 55-year-old service holder, also said since food from outside was expensive and oily, he was thinking about getting an electric cooker.

Asif Iqbal, another man who lives in the same area, was a bit luckier than Sazzad. His family was being provided with food by a relative, who is using a gas cylinder to cook.

"But how long can this continue?" Asif asked.

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## We can improve the fate of S Asian people: PM

Tshering lauds Bangladesh's achievements: the Pope, Sonia Gandhi congratulates nation

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged political leaders and policymakers of South Asia to work in unison.

"We can easily improve the fate of the people of South Asia by utilising the resources we have been endowed through exhibiting mutual cooperation," she said.

While addressing the auspicious moment of celebrating the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence, Hasina, said, "I call upon the political leaders and policymakers of South Asia to work hand in hand to build a peaceful and prosperous South Asia."

Pointing out that the people of this region possess unbelievable spirit, innovation, and the ability to survive against natural disasters, she said, "If we work together for the betterment of our people, South Asia will surely flourish as one of the most prosperous regions in the world."

Hasina, who chaired the function, noted that South Asia is home to about a quarter of the world population and said as much as there are challenges, there are a lot of possibilities as well in this region.

Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering joined as the guest of honor on the eighth day of the 10-day grand celebrations at the National Parade Square yesterday afternoon.

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## Waive import duty on newsprint, cut corporate tax

Noab urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newspaper owners yesterday urged the government to waive import duty on newsprint and cut corporate tax on the industry for the next fiscal year.

The Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) made the call during a virtual meeting with the National Board of Revenue.

The NBR organised the meeting to know the views and recommendations of businesses, professional bodies and other stakeholders concerned ahead of the formulation

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## It's safe, no risk of blood clot

Bangladeshi-British scientist says on AstraZeneca vaccine

STAR REPORT

The Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine is safe and effective and has no serious side effect like blood clot, says Bangladeshi-born British scientist Dr Khondoker Mehedi Akram.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star's Golam Mertoza, Akram talked about various aspects of the vaccine named Covishield and the recent rise of infections.

About the reports on blood clot from AstraZeneca vaccine in Europe, which also created concern in Bangladesh, he said in normal circumstances one in 10 lakh people may develop blood clot.

Akram, a research fellow at the University of Sheffield, said around 50 lakh people received shots in Bangladesh and in that case five out of these 50 lakh were supposed to face such a problem.

"But no one has so far complained [of blood clot]. After

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## 3 killed in Gaibandha explosion

Bomb disposal unit rushes to the spot

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Three people were killed in an explosion inside a house in Gaibandha's Gohindaganj upazila yesterday afternoon.

The explosion happened at 4:20pm, moments after the owner of the house and three others went into one of the rooms. The explosion blew off the corrugated-iron sheet roof of the house in Noyapara village.

Owner Borhan Uddin, 40, his neighbour Wahedul Islam, 32, were among the dead. Police could not immediately identify the other person.

Police cordoned off the area over suspicion

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Titas gas authorities repairing a gas pipe damaged during the construction work of Salehpur Bridge on Dhaka-Aricha highway. The bridge is being constructed by the Roads and Highways Department.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Government plans 258km underground rail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has plans to build an underground railway network with 258 kilometres of tracks in Dhaka and ease congestion on the roads.

There will be 11 subway routes in the city and its outskirts, according to the draft of a feasibility study by Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA).

The 50-year plan will be implemented in three phases. Four routes of a combined length of 102km will be constructed in the first phase. In the second and third phases, 85km and 71km lines will be constructed.

There will be a 29.35km route called "O" from Jhilmil Project area in Keraniganj to Tongi. It will be the first

to be implemented at an approximate cost of \$8 billion, officials said.

BBA officials and consultants revealed the information yesterday at a seminar at a hotel on the feasibility study and preliminary design for construction of the Dhaka Subway.

Several experts, including a few present at the seminar, questioned the feasibility of the mega project in Dhaka.

Building a subway network has long been in discussion, but it was not mentioned in the revised strategic transport plan for Dhaka, approved in 2015, they said.

Besides, the cost of the subway project would be more than the undergoing MRT projects, according

to the document.

The cost of MRT-1, which has a 19.87km underground section and an 11.36km elevated section, is Tk 52,561.43 crore. But the proposed cost of the 30km subway route is around Tk 68,000 crore.

Addressing the event, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said there should be proper coordination among different development projects to avoid overlap.

THE SUBWAY PLAN

Instructed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, BBA started the feasibility study in September 2018.

Led by Spanish firm TYPSA, a

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### মুজিব চিরন্তন

জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের  
জন্মশতবার্ষিকী ও স্বাধীনতার সুবর্ণজয়ন্তী  
উদ্‌যাপন উপলক্ষ্যে অনুষ্ঠানমালা

স্থান: জাতীয় প্যারেড স্কয়ার  
২৫শে মার্চ ২০২১, বুধসন্ধ্যা

বিষয় (Theme): গণহত্যার কাল রাত্রি ও আলোকের অভিযাত্রা

সময়	কর্মসূচি
বিকাল ৪.৪৫	জাতীয় সংগীত পরিবেশনা মুজিব চিরন্তন থিমের ওপর টাইটেল এ্যানিমেশন ভিডিও আবহ সংগীত (থিমসং ভিডিও প্রদর্শন) স্বাগত সম্বাষণ ও সঞ্চালনা: জনাব আসাদুজ্জামান নূর এম. পি থিমভিত্তিক ভিডিও/ ডকুমেন্টারি প্রদর্শন থিমভিত্তিক আলোচনা: জনাব মফিজুল হক, ট্রাস্টি, মুক্তিযুদ্ধ জাদুঘর বিদেশি রাষ্ট্রের সম্মানিত অতিথিদের ধারণকৃত ভিডিও বার্তা আলোচনা পর্ব সমাপ্তি
সন্ধ্যা ৬.৩০	বঙ্গবন্ধুকে উৎসর্গ করে বন্ধু রাষ্ট্রের সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠানের ধারণকৃত ভিডিও পরিবেশনা (দক্ষিণ কোরিয়া/ ইন্দোনেশিয়া) মুজিব চিরন্তন থিমের ওপর টাইটেল এ্যানিমেশন ভিডিও থিমভিত্তিক সিজি এ্যানিমেশন ভিডিও ভাটিয়াপি: কোরিওগ্রাফিক পরিবেশনা জোয়ান বায়েজ: এ প্রজন্মের শিল্পীদের পরিবেশনায় জোয়ান বায়েজের গান বীরাদনা কন্যা ও শিশু স্বর্গ: চট্টগ্রামের 'যুদ্ধ শিশু' দলের পরিবেশনা বনি কাপুচিনো এবং যুদ্ধ কন্যার বক্তব্যের একটি ভিডিও ক্লিপ শরণার্থী সেন্টেয়ার অন যশোর রোড: অ্যালেন গিলবার্গের "সেন্টেয়ার অন যশোর রোড" তিত্তিক সংগীতানুষ্ঠান সেই ভয়াবহ রাতের কাহিনী (বঙ্গবন্ধুর কন্যাশয়) স্বাধীন বাংলা বেতার কেন্দ্রের এবং পরবর্তী প্রজন্মের শিল্পীদের যৌথ পরিবেশনা কমোডিয়ানের পারফরমেন্স: লোকময়ব্রাবান ও একটি কোরিওগ্রাফি প্রদর্শন মুক্তাপরাধের বিচার: বিভিন্ন বহুভূমিতে শহিদ পরিবারের সদস্যের প্রদীপ প্রজ্জ্বলনের মাধ্যমে সম্মান প্রদর্শনের ভিডিও নাট্যাংশ- নিমজ্জন: ঢাকা থিয়েটার পরিবেশিত উড়িয়ে ধরুন অসহযোগী রথে: স্বদেশ প্রত্যাবর্তনের ভিডিও পরিবেশনা স্বাধীন বাংলা বেতার কেন্দ্রের গান সমাপ্ত

জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের জন্মশতবার্ষিকী উদ্‌যাপন জাতীয় বাস্তবায়ন কমিটি