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Your Right to Know

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"Many people are getting the scope for being indifferent to health guidelines (on Covid-19) due to BNP's reckless statements and provocations."

AWAMI LEAGUE GENERAL SECRETARY OBAIDUL QUADER



"The Modi government has mismanaged the Covid situation. It has exported the vaccines and allowed a shortage to be created in India."

INDIAN CONGRESS PRESIDENT SONIA GANDHI



"We owe it to the generation and indeed future generations not to spiral back to that dark place of sectarian murders and political discord."

IRISH PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MARTIN AS SECTARIAN CONFLICT FLARES AGAIN IN NORTHERN IRELAND



Trader ends up dead in AL leader's house

Police allegedly handed him over to local AL leader

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

Gaibandha police has allegedly handed over a trader to a ruling party leader for his failure to pay debt. The leader allegedly kept him confined to his house, and almost a month later, the man was found dead there.

The body of Hasan Ali, 45, was found hanging in a toilet of ruling party leader Masud Rana's home in Bollowmhar area of Gaibandha town yesterday.

Police detained Rana, deputy office secretary of Gaibandha Awami League, around noon yesterday.

The cops were seen dealing with the matter rather casually.

Rana was being taken to the police station on a motorbike and with no cuffs. It was only after locals protested and blocked the policemen that the cops put handcuffs on him.

Police claimed that a murder case was going to be filed against Rana.

Hasan, son of late Hazrat Ali, resident of Thanapara area, was an owner of a shoe store in the town.

Mahfuzar Rahman, officer-in-charge of Gaibandha Sadar Police Station, said on information that a body was hanging in



Hasan Ali

the toilet of Rana's house, a police team went there and recovered the body. They sent the body to Gaibandha General Hospital for autopsy.

He said the family of the deceased complained that Rana killed Hasan Ali. "Besides, we recovered the body from Rana's house that's why we detained him," he said.

While talking to reporters during the recovery of the body, the victim's family alleged that Rana abducted Hasan from Lalmonirhat on March 5 and kept him confined to the house.

"Rana also tortured Hasan," AKM Mamunur Rashid Kollol, brother-in-law of the deceased, told The Daily Star.

"Hasan owed some money to Rana. He was putting pressure on him to pay the interest, which is around Tk 5 lakh. But Hasan could not pay. That's why he took cover at his younger brother's home in Lalmonirhat," said Kollol.

He alleged that Rana and his people abducted Hasan from his younger brother's house on March 5 and kept him confined to Rana's house.

After learning about the matter, Hasan's

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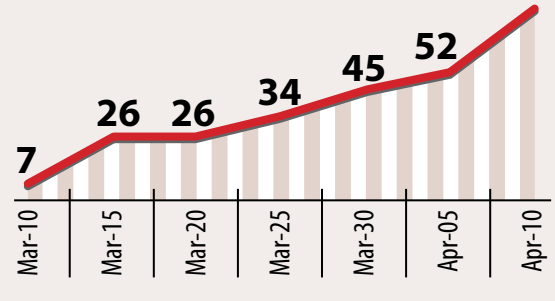


Abdur Rashid, an ex-director of Bangladesh Bank, is given oxygen support at Mugda Medical College and Hospital while his worried grandson Shaheen tries to speak to him. The man in his seventies has Covid-19 and he was relatively well before his condition suddenly deteriorated yesterday morning. Family members said they tried to get him admitted to several other hospitals before going to Mugda.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Three died every hour

RISE IN COVID DEATHS



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Exactly one month ago, the number of people dying of Covid-19 per day was around seven. The public thought the pandemic was at an ebb and they carried on with a semblance of a normal life.

A month later, yesterday, the number was 77. The deaths saw an eleven-fold increase just over the span of a month.

This is the record-highest number of deaths to ever occur since the beginning of the pandemic. Every hour yesterday, over three people died across the country. This number was two people per hour just five days ago.

Over the past week, from April 4 till yesterday, the death

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COVID RESTRICTIONS ON APRIL 12-13 Confusion reigns supreme

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

With no directive about the two days between the "lockdowns", many said they were confused as to what would happen on April 12 and 13.

Even transport regulators and companies do not know whether buses, trains, launches, and domestic flights will operate during the two days.

Many social media users have asked if anyone knew about the government decision so that they can make plans before a stricter lockdown begins on April 14.

However, sources said a meeting of secretaries of the ministries concerned would be held today over the situation with the cabinet secretary in the chair where decisions regarding the two days and the next lockdown would be made.

A state minister and two senior officials said that the government is not likely to lift the restrictions imposed on long-haul transport services for the two-day period.

Another source, however, said the government might give a window for people

to leave Dhaka before April 14.

Meanwhile, people were seen leaving Dhaka on smaller vehicles throughout yesterday as they believed that the government would keep extending the lockdown. Stores selling essential goods saw a deluge of shoppers hoping to stock up on daily necessities.

On April 4, the Cabinet Division issued an 11-point directive mentioning the restrictions to be effective from 6:00am on April 5 to 12:00am on April 11 to contain the spread of coronavirus. It said violations of the restrictions would result in punishment.

Different offices, mills and factories were exempt from the restrictions and the government allowed resumption of bus services in the 11 cities of the country from April 7.

On April 8, the government announced that shops and malls can be kept open for eight hours from April 9 to 13 despite concerns from health experts.

People in large numbers were seen coming out on the streets to buy

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COVID SPREAD IEDCR finds 17 high-risk thanas in city

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

At least 17 thanas in the capital are at high risk of Covid-19 transmission, says government data.

When the Covid-19 infection rate in the country is 13.65 percent, at least 17 spots in the capital witnessed a positivity rate above 30 percent.

According to the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), 23 other areas have a positivity rate above 20 percent.

Officials said the infection rate above 30 percent means highly risky and above 20 percent means medium risky and those can turn highly risky anytime.

Data were analysed from March 27 to April 2 in both the city corporation areas.

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ABDUCTION AND RANSOM 4 were hired to kidnap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three Rab and one air force members, who have been arrested in the capital on charges of abducting a man and demanding ransom for his release, were hired by a woman for the job.

The victim owed the woman money and she approached one of the four through another man to realise it, investigators told The Daily Star yesterday.

The four arrestees have been handed to their respective forces, which are now looking into the matter.

Investigators said the four allegedly picked up Tamzid Hossain, 27, on Thursday and demanded money from his family over phone. The four did this after the woman, Ranu Begum, 45, hailing from Gazipur, approached one of them through a man named Rony.

The next day, Tamzid's family informed police about the abduction and police then made the arrests. Initially, police thought the four were fake members of the Rab and the air force, said police sources.

Police sources said Lance Corporal Dulal Mridha, 32, posted at operations wing of Rab headquarters, planned and led the abduction. Soldier Rokon Mia, 34, of intelligence wing of Rab HQ, Corporal Rony, 26, from the air force, and soldier Md Sagar, 28, of investigation, forensic wing of Rab HQ, aided Dulal in the crime.

Police found involvement of two more Rab members -- soldier Rakib of intelligence wing of Rab HQ, and soldier

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

JMB in-charge held in Badda

Reza planned to visit India

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

He planned to travel to India and take charge of the JMB wing of the neighboring country.



For this purpose, Rezaul Haque alias Reza, 37, had long been trying to arrange a passport and last attempted in 2020.

Ameer of the mainstream JMB Salahuddin Ahmed alias Salehin, who is now in India and operating outfit activities, instructed Reza to visit the country and take charge.

Salehin went into hiding and take shelter in the country after he was snatched from a prison van in February 2014.

Salehin asked Reza to hand over the charge and go to India as his identity was revealed and he became familiar to many people.

Reza disclosed the plan of the banned militant

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The ruins of a Sultanate-era building inside the old central jail compound in the capital's Chawkbazar area. The wall is thought to be a part of a fort. Even though a technical committee formed in 2016 appointed an archaeologist to excavate the site, no report of the work has yet been published.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

CHAWKBAZAR JAIL

Ruins offer trip deep into Old Dhaka history

Researchers call for further study while report of government-initiated excavation unpublished

TARUN SARKAR

The ruins of a Sultanate-era building have been found inside the old central jail compound in the Chawkbazar area of Dhaka.

The authorities have taken necessary measures to preserve the archaeological evidence, including a wall thought to be part of a fort, but study and excavation of the historic site remain halted, sources said.

A government technical committee formed in 2016 appointed an archaeologist to excavate the site but no report of the work has been published so far.

Historians and archaeologists think more

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO



BANGLADESH UPDATE 5,343 New cases in 24hrs	6,78,937 Total cases	9,661 Deaths	5,72,378 Recoveries	GLOBAL UPDATE 2,934,601 Deaths	135,791,710 Total cases
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'Modi govt mismanaged Covid situation: Sonia'

Says decision to export vaccines allowed shortage at home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Congress President Sonia Gandhi yesterday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi government of mismanaging the Covid-19 situation in India and said India must focus on its own vaccination drive first before exporting them.

"The (Narendra) Modi government has mismanaged the COVID situation. It has exported the vaccines and allowed a shortage to be created in India," she said while addressing a virtual meeting with Chief Ministers of Congress-ruled states and ministers of the party in states where it is in power in alliance with others.

"We must focus on India's vaccination drive first and foremost and then only export vaccines and gift them to other countries," Sonia said.

She also reviewed the efforts to fight Covid situation, including the availability of vaccines, access to medicines and ventilators, chief spokesperson of the party Randeep Surjewala said.

"Mass gatherings for elections and religious events have accelerated COVID for which all of us are responsible to some extent. We need to accept this responsibility and keep the interest of the nation above our own," Sonia said and wanted all poll rallies to be cancelled.

Her remarks about cancellation poll rallies came four days after assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry came to an end.

Congress is a key player in Assam and Kerala seeking to return to power in the two states.



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

People, who struggle to make ends meet, sitting on a footpath under a scorching sun as they wait for a truck of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh to arrive with essential goods that will be sold at prices lower than that of the kitchen markets. The photo was taken yesterday near Badda Government Primary School in the capital.

Trader ends up dead

FROM PAGE 1

wife Beethi Begum, 35, went to the police station on March 6 and filed a complaint. She demanded Hasan be rescued from Rana's home.

"Police rescued Hasan from Rana's home on March 12 and kept him in custody for that night. The following day, police asked us to go to the police station with Tk 2 lakh to free Hasan," said Kollol.

"On March 13, my wife Lipi and Beethi went to the police station where ASI [assistant sub-inspector] Md Mossaraf and inspector [investigation] Mojibur Rahman demanded the money be paid to Rana. But they had no money.

"Lipi and Beethi wanted to bring Hasan home but the police did not let him go."

Kollol alleged that police later handed Hasan over to Rana.

Beethi claimed that Rana, aided by police, put pressure on her to sign a blank cheque and a blank piece of paper to have Hasan released.

"As I refused, police handed my husband over to Rana again," she added.

Inspector Mojibur refused to talk

about the matter. He suggested this paper contacts OC Mahfuzar.

OC Mahfuzar refuted the allegation.

He said they held a meeting with Hasan, his wife, and Rana at the police station. During the meeting, the couple failed to pay the debt and all of them left the police station, he said.

"We did not hand Hasan over to Rana," he said.

Md Elius Ziku, additional superintendent of police (Gaibandha sadar circle), told The Daily Star yesterday that police tried to broker a settlement at the police station.

Regarding the allegation, Ziku too said police did not hand Hasan over to Rana.

"Police wanted to hand Hasan over to his wife Beethi but she did not take him. Later, Hasan went out of the police station and we do not know where he went after that," said the additional SP.

Kollol said that they would file an abduction, torture, and murder case against Rana and another case against ASI Mossaraf and Inspector Mojibur for harassment.

IEDCR finds 17 high-risk

FROM PAGE 1

The data was collected and then the residents of the areas were reconfirmed via phone calls.

"Analysing the information, it was found that Dhaka's Rupnagar and Adabar thanas are the riskiest. Positivity rate was 46 and 44 percent respectively," the IEDCR report said.

"It is tough to enforce zonal lockdown in Dhaka but we have good examples of Tolerbagh and Razabazar. Those two were successful.

"Seeing the data, the authorities can think of taking special measures in those areas," Mushtaq Hossain, an adviser to the IEDCR, told The Daily Star.

He also said community mobilisation can play a vital role in tackling transmission in any specific area.

"Local lawmakers and ward councilors can take action based on this information," he suggested.

A total of 14,332 tests were conducted in the Dhaka South City Corporation area where 5,103 were

infected. The infection rate was 36 percent.

On the other hand, a total of 36,771 tests were done in the Dhaka North City Corporation area where 10,483 were tested positive. The infection rate was 29 percent.

Places with a positivity rate above 30 percent included Rupnagar, Adabar, Shah Ali, Rampura, Turag, Mirpur, Kalabagan, Tejgaon, Mohammadpur, Mugda, Ganderia, Dhanmondi, Hazaribagh, Newmarket, Chawk Bazar, Sabujbagh, Motijheel, Darus Salam, and Khilgaon.

Places with an infection positivity rate above 20 percent included Shahbagh, Bangshal, Lalbagh, Shahjahanpur, Ramna, Kamrangirchar, Shyampur, Badda, Banani, Uttarkhan, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Sutrapur, Jatrabari, Pallabi, Kafrul, Demra, Wari, Bhatara, Dakkhin Khan, Khilkhet, Kadamtali, and Paltan.

The current positivity rate is 20.49 percent while the total positivity rate stands at 13.65 percent.

Confusion reigns supreme

FROM PAGE 1

commodities from shops or to go to offices and businesses. People began to hangout at neighbourhood tea-stalls. Very few steps by the authority were visible to enforce the restrictions.

Experts wondered whether the half-hearted enforcement of restrictions would be effective at all.

Then two ministers on Friday announced that the country will be under a strict lockdown for a week from April 14.

Except for emergency services, all government and private offices and factories will remain closed during the lockdown and public transport services will be suspended, said State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain.

CONFUSION OVER

APRIL 12 AND 13

As per the April 4 circular, the current restrictions will end today.

A government official on Friday night called this correspondent asking about the government decision for April 12 and 13 and wanted to know whether long-haul buses would operate.

Many members of the popular Traffic Alert page on Facebook also asked whether public transport would resume for the two days.

Contacted, Khondaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, said the association had yet to receive any directive in this regard.

"I have talked to the BRTA chairman,

but he could not give any decision either. Transport association leaders from different districts are also asking me about the decision," Enayet told The Daily Star yesterday.

Contacted, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder said a circular regarding restrictions is likely to be issued following a meeting today.

"I think everything will be clear once the circular is issued," he added.

Commodore Golam Sadeq, chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), said, "We did not get any directive [about April 12 and 13]. However, I think restrictions on [long-route] public transport will remain in force."

"We may know about it tomorrow [today]," he told this correspondent.

Jahangir Hossain, general manager (east) of Bangladesh Railway, said passenger trains were unlikely to operate in the two-day period. "We are expecting to get the directive tomorrow," he said.

State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain said, "I have no idea about any decision about the two days."

"Our main goal is to reduce the infection rate. So, I think there is no scope to relax the restrictions. So, the restrictions may remain unchanged [in the two days]," he told The Daily Star, "However, the prime minister will give a directive tomorrow [today]," he added.

Ruins offer trip deep into Old Dhaka history

FROM PAGE 1

archaeological evidence from the Mughal, Sultanate and Sen eras or before these can be found at the old central jail.

Chawkbazar itself is archaeologically significant among other places in Old Dhaka, researchers say.

For example, an ancient Basudev statue was recovered during an excavation on the Churichhatta Mosque premises in the area in 1906.

An inscription about the renovation of Urdu Road Mosque was found in the late 19th century. According to the inscription, this mosque in Chawkbazar was built in 1459.

In 2011, a Nateshwar statue was recovered at Sarangodhor monastery in the area, opening up a new horizon of research. The Daily Star ran a report on this last year.

According to different books, Chawkbazar was the political and commercial hub during the Sultanate, Mughal, and Nawab periods.

The Chawkbazar Fort was constructed during the rule of the Bengal Sultanate between the 14th and 16th centuries. Besides, palaces, treasury, courts and administrative offices were constructed in this region from the Sultanate-Nawab period.

The area's political and commercial importance started to decline with the beginning of East India Company rule. The office of the then naye-e-nazim, who was the administrative chief of Dhaka, was relocated to Nimtoli Palace from Chawkbazar Fort.

The fort eventually became a mental asylum and prison. The mental asylum was shut after a certain time but the prison was in operation till 45 years after Bangladesh's independence.

This jailhouse has a significant place in history -- it bears memories from events of the anti-British

movement, Language Movement, and the Liberation War.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and many key important figures in the country's politics served time here as political prisoners. The assassination of four national leaders took place here in 1975.

After July 2016, inmates were shifted to the newly built jail in Keraniganj and the government then took initiatives to preserve this historic site.

The government formed a technical committee comprising representatives from the home ministry, the prison authorities and Department of Archaeology of Bangladesh, architects, planners, and historians in 2016. It is now overseeing the work of converting the old prison into an urban oasis.

The committee organised an open competition to draft a design for preserving the history structure, landscape design, and overall development and three architects ranked top in this competition.

The old prison stands on around 38 acres of land. The urban oasis has been designed to be built on 25 acres of the southern part.

The whole place will be divided into three zones -- A, B, and C. Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, memorial museum for national four leaders, a prison museum, and a library will be set up in Zone C.

Some 35 old structures, which have much historical significance, will be preserved and 95 other old and semi pucca structures, which have comparatively less historical significance, will be demolished.

The technical committee has approved a proposal to preserve the Sultanate-era structure. Its members, including eminent historian Muntasir Mamun and architect Prof Abu

Sayed M Ahmed, visited the spot in 2017 to chalk out a conservation plan.

"We proposed to preserve the wall and an adjacent building," said architect Prof Abu Sayeed.

"Normally, the age of an object containing organic material can be determined through a scientific process called radiocarbon dating. But the process is not applicable in case of bricks. Rather, the age of bricks and brick-built walls can be determined by examining its design and bonding patterns. After examining bricks of the wall, it can surely be said that the wall was constructed in the Sultanate era," he added.

Prof Muntasir Mamun said, "We have come to know about the existence of a fort in Chawkbazar during the Pathan [Sultanate] era. Many wrote about the fort in books. The wall might be part of that fort."

Prof Abu Sayeed opined that more ancient archaeological evidence could be found in the area if the excavation could be done properly.

"Any kind of new construction is not allowed in the proposed design of the central jail area, as the foundation of new construction work might affect and destroy the archaeological evidence."

The technical committee proposed the name of Sufi Mostafizur Rahman, a professor of the archaeology department at Jahangirnagar University, as the supervisor of the excavation and it was approved.

Contacted, Prof Sufi said he conducted the excavation for around three months at four spots in the prison between 2017 and 2018.

"I have got some significant ancient archaeological evidence there. But the technical committee asked me not to publish my findings. Even, they are now barring me from

Three died

FROM PAGE 1

toll increased by 45 percent, while 488 people died last week.

With the latest death count, the total number of casualty due to Covid-19 reached 9,661, which was 1.42 percent of all detected cases in the country.

From March 10 to 16, there was a 271 percent increase in the death rate.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, the number of new Covid-19 cases has risen by more than 26 percent.

In the previous week, a total of 38,471 people were detected as Covid-19 patients, while the number of detection was 48,660. Experts apprehended that the number of new cases, as well as deaths, will continue rising for next few months unless physical distancing is ensured.

Incidentally, during the same week, the number of people recovering has also increased just as much as the death rate. Meanwhile, the number of recoveries has risen by more than 42 percent.

In the previous week, 38,471 Covid-19 patients recovered while this figure was 22,603 last week till yesterday.

Meantime, the number of total confirmed cases has reached 6,78,937. During the past 24 hours, the number of tests has decreased to 26,077 and of those, 20.49 percent were positive.

4 were hired to kidnap

FROM PAGE 1

Moharok of operation wing of Rab HQ, in the incident, said police sources, adding the two were on the run.

A high official at the Rab HQ said Tamzid borrowed money from many and never paid them back. Ranu was one of them.

Unable to get her money back, Ranu sought help from Rony, a man she knows. Rony contacted Dulal, who planned the abduction and realise money from Tamzid, said the official, wishing not to be named.

On Friday, police arrested the three Rab members and the member of the air force on charges of abducting, torturing, and demanding ransom from Tamzid. Ranu got arrested as well and is now on remand.

Police later handed the three arrested Rab officials to the elite force. Rab will now primarily investigate the allegations, said Rab officials.

The air force member was handed to the force concerned as well.

"You have heard it ... we also got to know many things. Our officials are verifying those information. The investigation is at a preliminary stage...We can't say anything conclusive now," Rab Legal and Media Wing Director Commander Khandaker Al Moin told The Daily Star yesterday.

About the investigation against the Rab official, he said, "The force currently employing the accused will investigate the incident on its own. If the investigation finds them guilty, they will be sent to their main forces for further probe. Based on the probe findings, legal action will be taken against them."

Rab members are drawn from police, army and other forces.

Meanwhile, the victim Tamzid gave a statement under section 164 of the CrPC before a Dhaka court yesterday evening. According to court sources, Tamzid gave a description of the abduction before the court. He described how he was held inside a

vehicle that roamed around various parts of the city.

On Friday, the victim's sister Rayana Hossain filed a case with Hatirjheel Police Station. However, she didn't mention the names and designations of the accused.

According to the First Information Report (FIR), Tamzid went out of their Mirbagh residence around 9:00am on Thursday for Uttara. Around noon, a man called the victim's sister from an unknown number and introduced himself as a senior Rab official and told her that her brother was in their custody. The caller also threatened to kill her brother if they informed police about the matter.

The caller called again around 1:30pm on Thursday and informed Rayana that her brother was being interrogated at Rab office by senior officials and that he might be killed in "crossfire" if they did not pay Tk 2 crore.

The man on the phone also let the plaintiff hear her brother's screams as he was being tortured. Tamzid then told her that he was blindfolded right after he was picked up. Later, two-three other men called her from the same number and wanted to know whether she had the cash.

Finally, they agreed to let Tamzid go for Tk 12 lakh. They told the victim's sister to go to Jamuna Future Park with Tk 12 lakh, according to the FIR.

Although the Rab has been successful in apprehending several high-profile criminals, the allegation of various abuse of human rights against the elite force is nothing new.

Earlier, the Rab found involvement of 21 of its staff including its former Commanding Officer Lt Col Tareque Sayeed and Maj Arif Hossain in the sensational seven murders of Narayanganj. The top officials were expelled from respective positions in the elite force and armed forces concerned.

Limon Hossain, a college student at Jamaddarhat at Rajapur Upazila in Jhalakati, was shot at

by Rab personnel near his house on March 23, 2011, triggering local and international outcry. His left leg had to be amputated as a result. The battalion filed two cases that day with the Rajapur police implicating Limon in an arms case and accusing him of obstructing police duties. In the face of protests at home and abroad, the government in July 2013 withdrew the two cases.

TAMZID'S STATEMENT

In his statement at the court, Tamzid Hossain said he met Ranu Begum last year. They later met three times and discussed starting a business of garment products. Around a week before the incident, he told Ranu that he would buy garment products worth Tk 25 lakh. On Wednesday, Ranu called him and asked him to be in front of Rajlaxmi Market in Uttara on Thursday morning.

Tamzid said Ranu called him when he went in front of the market around 10:00am and she went there with a man named Rakib. A little later, another man named Iqbal went there. Rakib then said they should sit and talk at a nearby hotel called the New VIP.

Tamzid said Ranu then asked him if he would buy the goods that very day. Tamzid replied, "Yes, you will get the money as soon as you deliver the goods." Right after that, six or seven men in Rab uniform appeared with handcuffs and walkie-talkies. They wanted to know who Rakib was. As Rakib raised his hand, the Rab men grabbed Tamzid and Iqbal by the collar and asked Ranu and Rakib to come with them.

"We were handcuffed and blindfolded. They slapped us and threatened to kill me if I said anything. They took us into a microbus which drove for one and a half hours. A Rab officer then told Ranu to get down. After five-six minutes, they got on the vehicle again. Someone told me that they will file an arms and narcotics case against me. He demanded money from my father. I asked how much. He

said Tk 2 crore.

"They called my father's number from my phone. My father asked whether I was okay. I said I was okay, but I got in trouble. They demanded Tk 2 crore. Then a man took the phone away and beat me up. I came to know that they had spoken to my sister. They settled for Tk 12 lakh and asked my sister to go to Jamuna Future Park. He threatened that he would put me in a crossfire if the money didn't appear.

"Just before the evening, two of them named Rokon and Rony got out of the vehicle. After a while, two more people got down. Then Ranu's phone rang and she gave the phone to me. A man named Dulal said my sister had got two of their men detained. If they didn't release the two in five minutes, they would kill me and throw the body in the Turag river.

"Then I told my sister about it... When she asked where I was, I said -- 300 feet [road]. Then they took away the phone and drove to Uttara. Once there, all of them got down, except the driver, Ranu, Iqbal and me. I opened my eyes. A boy came and picked up the Rab equipment and left. Then a man named Mubarak came and said that there was no point in keeping these two alive. After that, I was taken to Hatirjheel where police rescued me."

Police sources said the microbus driver was in their custody and he may testify in the case.

Rights activist Nur Khan Liton told The Daily Star that this was not the first such incident. Among the sensational cases, he said there were the seven-murder case in Narayanganj in 2014 and embezzlement of over Tk 2 crore at a Chattogram shrine in 2011.

"We don't know about the incidents that weren't reported. After every such incident, the accused are sent to the forces they belong in for further probe. But these are criminal offences. There should be transparency and accountability," he said.

working there."

However, Prof Muntasir Mamun, a member of the technical committee, denied the allegation, and said Prof Sufi personally published a brochure containing information on the excavation.

Prof Sufi wanted to hold a press conference to disclose the findings without taking the consent of the technical committee, he added.

"We repeatedly asked him [Sufi] to submit a report with the findings before the technical committee. But it is a matter of great regret that he did not do it."

Prof Muntasir added, "The old prison area is historically significant. That is why, I emphasised on the importance of excavation. The technical committee approved my proposal and subsequently the excavation began."

"But it is a matter of great regret that the task is half-done. The next step may be taken after getting a report of the excavation."

But Prof Sufi said a complete report cannot be published without further excavation. It needs more funds to conduct further excavation and research. The funds are yet to be allocated.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Sufi admitted that he published a brochure that was submitted to a government department.

He, however, did not make any comment over his alleged attempt to hold a press conference.

Asked about this issue, Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Md Mominur Rahman Mamun called the issue an "unsolved problem" and said they were trying to solve it.

He declined to make any further comment.

[Taru Sarkar is a freelance researcher and journalist who writes for The Daily Star]

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"We repeatedly asked him [Sufi] to submit a report with the findings before the technical committee. But it is a matter of great regret that he did not do it."

Prof Muntasir added, "The old prison area is historically significant. That is why, I emphasised on the importance of excavation. The technical committee approved my proposal and subsequently the excavation began."

"But it is a matter of great regret that the task is half-done. The next step may be taken after getting a report of the excavation."

But Prof Sufi said a complete report cannot be published without further excavation. It needs more funds to conduct further excavation and research. The funds are yet to be allocated.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Sufi admitted that he published a brochure that was submitted to a government department.

He, however, did not make any comment over his alleged attempt to hold a press conference.

Asked about this issue, Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Md Mominur Rahman Mamun called the issue an "unsolved problem" and said they were trying to solve it.

He declined to make any further comment.

[Taru Sarkar is a freelance researcher and journalist who writes for The Daily Star]

DEATH OF PRINCE PHILIP

Bangladesh lost a true friend: PM

UNB, DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said Bangladesh and the British Bangladeshi community have lost a true friend and ally with the demise of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

"With his passing away, Bangladesh and the British Bangladeshi community have lost a true friend and ally," she said in a condolence letter, signed on April 9, to Queen Elizabeth II, according to a release from the Press Wing of the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

In the letter she said, "To the People of Bangladesh, HRH The Duke will always remain an example of duty and honour, and a pillar of strength and support to Your Majesty, and to the Commonwealth People."

She recalled the Queen's two historic visits to Bangladesh accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh.

"May the Almighty bequeath courage and fortitude to Your Majesty, the member of the bereaved Royal family and the People of United Kingdom to bear with this irreplaceable loss."



With the sharp rise of Covid-19 cases, patients of all kinds, including this baby -- suffering from respiratory complications since birth -- cannot avail essential medical care, as hospitals are already running beyond capacity. The little one's family had been running from one place to another in search of available healthcare facilities, and were seen waiting in an ambulance at Chattogram Medical College Hospital yesterday, hoping for some service.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

It's unfortunate, some SC verdicts not being implemented properly

Says Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain yesterday said some of the Supreme Court verdicts are not being implemented properly even after contempt of court proceedings are initiated to this effect, which is very unfortunate.

All the authorities concerned of the state are constitutionally obligated to comply with the SC directives, he said.

The chief justice said this while speaking as the chief guest at a meeting, organised virtually to launch two books on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Liberation War written by two SC judges.

Of the books, "Bangabandhu Bangladesh: Ekjon Juddhoshishur Golpo O Onyanya" (Bangabandhu Bangladesh: Story of a War Child and Others) has been written by Justice Obaidul Hassan, a judge of the SC's Appellate Division.

Another book titled "Bangabandhu: Sangbidhan Ain Adalat O Onyanya" (Bangabandhu: Constitution, Law, Court and Others) has been written by Justice M Enayetur Rahim, a judge of the SC's High Court Division.

The chief justice said there is no necessity for setting up a cell to ensure implementation of the SC judgements as all the authorities are bound to abide by the verdicts as per article 112 of the constitution.

Article 112 states, "All authorities, executive and judicial, in the Republic shall act in aid of the Supreme Court."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Ekushey Book Fair to close tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday decided to conclude Amar Ekushey Boi Mela (book fair) tomorrow instead of Wednesday, the scheduled closure date, as another seven-day countrywide lockdown will start from Wednesday.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid made the announcement through a press release yesterday.

The decision came at a time when the government is going to enforce another weeklong strict lockdown all over the country from Wednesday to curb the rising Covid-19 infections.

"We had no alternative but to bring down the curtain on Boi Mela on April 12... Besides, number of Covid-19 infections and casualties are increasing every day," the state minister for cultural affairs ministry told The Daily Star.

Earlier, several public health experts spoke in favour of closure of Boi Mela, a major annual event of the country held with much fanfare and festivities, as the number of Covid-19 infections has been increasing, especially from the end of March.

Although Boi Mela is taking place in an open area majorly, many visitors and staffers of book shops seemed oblivious regarding maintaining health safety measures and social distancing.

The book fair, which started on March 18 amid the resurgence of Covid-19 and was scheduled to end on April 14, failed to get its usual momentum with publishers and sellers.

Although the government enforced a weeklong lockdown from April 4, the fair was allowed to continue.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

No dedicated doctors, staff for ICU at RMCH

Backup power took 'too long' to start during April 4 nor'wester, alleges family after Covid suspect patient dies

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

When the season's first nor'wester hit on the afternoon of April 4, the thought of a potential power blackout made Mokarram Hossain worried as he was attending to his brother Muhibullah Bahar at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

Bahar, a principal officer of Agrani Bank's Pabna branch, was on oxygen support at the hospital's 20-bed ICU as a suspected Covid-19 patient.

His elder brother Hossain, a teacher of Pabna Sudhir Kumar High School and College, felt relieved when he learnt that RMCH has a generator and the ICU was supported by two electricity connections and a system of instant power backup in case of a failure.

But Hossain's peace of mind was short-lived as the entire city of Rajshahi witnessed around seven hours of blackout following the

almost two-hour storm since 3:55pm.

He switched on the flashlight of his phone as darkness fell over the ICU room. Attendants of other patients did the same.

"All of us panicked. Some even started to cry thinking about what will happen to their loved ones," he told this correspondent recently.

Doctors and nurses rushed in, tried to restore power, but they appeared to be helpless, he said, adding that some staffers were running around with portable machines not sure of what to do.

This is not an isolated situation at the ICU of RMCH. Even though the hospital's ICU was upgraded to 20-bed from 5-bed last year to cope with the coronavirus pandemic, it has been functioning without a single skilled and full-time dedicated or specialised staff member.

As a result, patients' attendants constantly remain at the ICU to look after them, even though no one other

than skilled professionals is supposed to be inside such a special department of a hospital that provides intensive care medicine -- that too at a time of the pandemic.

In addition, an outage longer than a few minutes can become life threatening for patients, said senior doctors, adding that further treatment is rarely useful when oxygen saturation level of a patient fall even for once.

Authorities, however, say they have backup power supply to deal with the crisis, but have other limitations, which they are trying to address.

The ICU has been staffed with less than 100 doctors, nurses, technicians and cleaners from other departments of the hospital, RMCH director Brig Gen Shamim Yazdani told The Daily Star on Thursday.

"A 20-bed ICU requires at least 150 skilled staff members -- each patient requiring a doctor and two nurses on standby," he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Obaidul Quader blames it on BNP

Says the party's statements, provocations behind people's apathy to follow health rules

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Calling upon BNP to stand by people instead of doing politics over the Covid-19 pandemic, Awami League general secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said many are getting scope to show indifference towards health guidelines due to BNP's reckless statements and provocations.

Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, came up with the remarks at a press conference at his official residence in the capital.

"BNP is spreading rumours against the government every day...," said Quader.

Saying the Awami League government welcomes any constructive criticism not rumours or propaganda, the party's general secretary called upon BNP to give constructive advice to the government instead of engaging in "blind criticisms".

"At present, opposing everything has become BNP's politics. I urge BNP to stand beside people instead of doing politics over coronavirus," the minister said.

The minister said BNP did politics over Covid-19 vaccines and now they are spreading misleading information regarding the lockdown.

"What did BNP do for the welfare of people apart from criticisms and spreading falsehood during the pandemic?" he questioned.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Those involved in anarchy to face stern action

Warns law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday warned that the government will take stern action against those who will try to create anarchy, chaos and damage the lives and properties of the people in the country.

"The people have voted the government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to discharge the responsibilities for serving them. If anybody makes any attempt to hamper that, the government must take action in accordance with the law," he said.

He said this while replying to queries from reporters after receiving the second dose of Covid-19 vaccine at Armed Forces Medical College Hospital in the capital.

Mentioning that the government has capability to provide vaccines to all, the law minister urged all to get vaccinated, saying that the rapid surge of Covid-19 cases will be reduced if people receive vaccines.

A distress call on FB brings him back home

Man who fell ill in Saudia Arabia after performing Umrah returns to country after one year with help of police HQ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Sir, please help me. I do not want to die here. If I die here, my body will remain in a mortuary fridge as an unknown body."

Mohammad Ibrahim (25), who went to Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah but failed to return home in time after he fell sick and became an illegal immigrant there, sent this message to the Facebook page of Bangladesh Police.

The Media and Public Relations Wing of Police Headquarters (PHQ), that runs the social media account, intervened. Officials of the wing communicated with the Bangladesh Embassy in Saudi Arabia there through a foreign ministry official, personally known to an officer of the media wing.

Finally, the embassy arranged legal documents for Ibrahim who flew back home in a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight on April 9 after about an year of nightmarish life in Saudi Arabia.

"Ibrahim was severely sick for a long time, but could not even go to hospital for treatment due to lack of money and legal documents. He even could not return to the country. So, he wanted the cooperation from us to bring him back to the country," Assistant Inspector General (Media) of the PHQ Sohel Rana told The Daily Star last night.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Heat has set in well as 2021 rolls into mid-April. It's an exhausting time to be a citizen of Dhaka, and perhaps equally draining to be a crow as well. Luckily for these ones in front of the Central Shaheed Minar, a couple of half-eaten watermelons were there to help them quench their thirst. This photo was taken on Friday.



A newborn foal and the mother Zebra at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park in Gazipur. Though the park remained closed for most of 2020, one silver lining can be found in its increasing zebra population. In the last two years, 11 foals were born, while another eight zebras are waiting to give birth. Park authorities credit the increase in the animals' comfort during the closure as the most important contributing factor to the rise in breeding. The photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BUET HONOURS ADMISSION Application process to start on Thursday

DU CORRESPONDENT

Application process for Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology's (BuEt) admission test for 2020-21 honours academic session will begin on Thursday and will continue till April 24.

Admission seekers will be required to sit for preliminary selection exams, from which candidates will be selected for the final exam, scheduled to be held on June 10.

Eligibility list for preliminary admission test, scheduled to be held on May 31 and June 1, will be published on May 5. Eligibility list for the final exam will be released on June 5.

List of selected candidates and waiting list will be published on July 1.

The dates may change, considering the Covid-19 situation.

A circular with all necessary information, including admission eligibility, has been published on BuEt's website (buet.ac.bd). Application fee can be paid via selected online banking portals or mobile financial services within April 24.

USAID to launch project to promote clean energy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

USAID will soon launch a multi-year project with allocation of up to \$17 million to promote clean energy, said the US embassy yesterday, a day after US President's Special Envoy for Climate John Kerry's visit to Dhaka.

The project titled "Bangladesh Advancing Development and Growth through Energy" will work to expand Bangladeshis' access to affordable clean energy, support clean energy entrepreneurship, foster transparent and efficient energy markets, and advance innovation.

"It [project] is also critical to curbing the country's carbon emissions, which nearly quadrupled over the past two decades. Not only will it reduce emissions, but will also improve living standards for the people of Bangladesh and will support continued rapid economic growth," the statement said.

For more than two decades, USAID has helped Bangladesh transform the country's energy sector and protect its natural resources, including more than 2.5 million acres of wetlands and forest areas, which contain habitats for the iconic Bengal tiger in the Sundarbans, it added.

John Kerry was in Dhaka to invite Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to attend the Leaders' Summit on Climate to be hosted by Joe Biden on April 22-23.

At least 40 world leaders from major economies and climate vulnerable countries will attend the summit, ahead of COP26, which is scheduled to be held in Glasgow, UK in November this year.

US' return to Paris Agreement, from which the former president Donald Trump pulled out, generated hopes among scientists and world leaders to protect the world from climate change.

John Kerry on Friday told reporters in Dhaka that the US will pay \$2 billion to the Green Climate Fund and will play leadership role in mobilising \$100 billion annually for the fund meant to promote mitigation and adaptation.

DoE chief Rafique Ahmed succumbs to Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

AKM Rafique Ahmed, director general of the Department of Environment (DoE), died yesterday with Covid-19 while undergoing treatment at Central Police Hospital in Dhaka. He was 55.

Mohammed Nurullah Nuri, director of Chattogram (Metro) DoE, told The Daily Star that Rafique Ahmed breathed his last at ICU of the hospital at around 4:14pm.

He tested positive for Covid-19 around two weeks ago. He was on life support for the last two days.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at Goribullah Shah Mosque in the port city at 3pm. He was later buried next to his father's grave, Nuri added.

CANCELLED PAHELA BAISHAKH CELEBRATIONS

Artisans of south bear the brunt of lockdown

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Pahele Baishakh is just three days away. But for the second year in a row, the day is set to be less of an occasion for joy and more like just another day spent at home.

But that's for regular people. For artisans and traders of the south, who look forward to the day to pocket a big portion of their yearly income, this year's Barshoboron will be an occasion for frustration and despair.

Buli Rani Pal, a potter of Gaila village in Barishal's Agailjhara upazila, said though she has made a few clay toys, but she's yet to find any takers as of yesterday, and it's unlikely that she'll find many buyers in the coming days.

Besides, Artisans from Barishal say beyond the money, they'll also miss the happiness the day always brought them.

"It's become a habit, so I have made some clay dolls and toys, even if only for my family and close ones," said Purnima Rani Paul of Ujirpur upazila. "It's not just about the money, the very act of creating the toys used to bring me a lot of joy."

Like her, more than five hundred families from the division's Paul Paras (potter's villages) will be left in similarly dire situations as no



Every year, this family workshop at Barishal's Ujirpur is cramped for space ahead of Pahele Baishakh. But on Wednesday, this potter was applying herself to craft a bare minimum of her clay elephants. She knows all too well that they won't sell.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

fairs will take place this year.

As a result, many are considering leaving the profession. "Traditional products like ours depend on social gatherings to sell. We are suffering immensely," said Bishweshwar Pal, advisor of Barishal Mritshilpi Shammelon o Shammanana, an artisan's collective.

On top of this, the lack of public transportation means people will be discouraged to move around, while intercity transportation is not possible as well.

Member secretary of the

collective Bappi Majumder said, "Around 300-400 potters scattered around south used to make products worth Tk four to five lakh, centering Pahele Baishakh festivities. But this time, they made only a few products," he further said.

Apart from Barishal, the situation is similar across the greater south too. Kamal Pal of Madanpura Palpara in Baufal upazila in Patuakhali said they cannot even send their goods to Dhaka, due to vehicular restrictions

during the lockdown.

As a result, around 10-12 potters and traders from Madanpura and Boga areas in the district stand to lose more than half a crore taka combined.

Over in Jhalokathi, Tapan Pal of Shimuleshwar village is worried over how he's going to pass the next year. His clay-made tea cups and toys used to bring in a substantial money, which helped him pass the off peak months in relative comfort.

Hasanur Rahman Maksood, District Cultural Officer of Barishal, said Tk 10,000 was given to 230 folk artists, including some artisans, each to 230 folk artists to help cope with the difficulties of last year.

However, potters said this paltry amount doesn't really help solve their financial woes. Besides, only a few of them received it, whereas thousands of people in the south are involved with the craft.

Nazmul Hossain Akash, president of Barishal Shangkritik Sangathan Samannoy Parishad, said all folk artists suffering due to the lockdown should be given allowances by the government, otherwise soon they'll start leaving the craft and the country will be at risk of losing a big part of its cultural heritage.

Ten-year-old electrocuted in Chattogram

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A boy was electrocuted while scavenging garbage in the DC Road area of the port city yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Md Emon (10), son of Tazul Islam, hailing from Kishoreganj district.

Shamsul Islam, sub-inspector of Chawkbazar Police Station, told The Daily Star that the boy died after he came in contact with a live electric wire while scavenging at the abandoned ground floor of a building at Goni Colony of DC Road.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the body, he added.

Obaidul Quader

FROM PAGE 3

He said the government is making an all-out effort to save lives and livelihoods.

About BNP's demand to take opinions from all parties over Covid-19, Quader said coronavirus is not a political issue. He said there is a national advisory committee on Covid-19 and the government is taking decisions on basis of recommendations of that committee and health experts.

Saying there is no instance in the world of forming an all-party committee to contain coronavirus, he said the opinions of health experts are more important in this regard.

On the occasion of the historic Mujibnagar Day, the AL general secretary paid tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and all the martyrs of the 1971 Liberation War.

Earlier, the minister virtually inaugurated the construction project to upgrade connecting road of Karnaphuli tunnel (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel) and Anwara upazila to a four-lane one.

No dedicated

FROM PAGE 3

The other districts in the division are not faring any better either.

Out of eight districts, only two districts -- Rajshahi and Bogura -- have 51 beds in four ICUs; all of those are lacking skilled staffers, said Dr Habibul Ahsan Talukder, Rajshahi divisional director of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Other than the 20-bed ICU at RMCH, Bogura has eight-bed ICU at Mohammad Ali Hospital, 13-bed ICU at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital and a 10-bed ICU at Combined Military Hospital, he said.

Meanwhile, Mokarram Hossain's brother Muhibullah Bahar was admitted to the ICU on April 2.

He became sick a week before he was taken to Pabna General Hospital on April 1. As his condition deteriorated, he was shifted to Rajshahi that very day.

His samples, taken on April 2, showed he was Covid-19 negative, but RMCH doctors recorded his case as a suspected Covid-19 one. They said infected patients, in most cases, were found negative in their last stage of infection.

His brother and wife stayed with him at the ICU in shifts.

RMCH authorities said as there were no skilled doctor or staff members, the ICU authorities allow patients' relatives to attend patients round the clock.

During the April 4 storm, Hossain was with Bahar.

Standing beside Bahar's bed, Hossain looked outside through the ICU's windows, and saw the storm getting stronger.

He noticed that his brother was sleeping peacefully in his bed and his oxygen saturation level hovering near

the normal 95 percent.

When the outage occurred, Bahar became restless. Hossain saw Bahar's oxygen level rapidly dropping and at one moment, it went down to 35 percent, he said. "He [Bahar] started sweating... I felt panicked..." he said.

"The power was out for nearly eight minutes, but it felt a lot longer," he said. "That day, the power at the ICU went out at least 10 times. Sometimes it returned quickly, and at one time it took at least eight minutes... I think the damage was done at that time," he said.

Bahar's oxygen level went up to 92 percent soon, when the authorities managed to get the backup power running.

But since 2am the next day, Bahar's oxygen level started to drop again.

Bahar, father of a three-year-old son, died at 5am on April 5. He was 32.

"I don't want to accuse anyone for his death. All I want is the system to get better. All supplies were there, still my brother had to pass time without oxygen. They need more skilled staffers at the ICU," said Hossain.

This correspondent also managed to speak to an attendant of a patient at the ICU on April 4. Wishing anonymity, the attendant said that day during the storm at least for one time, it took a while for the backup power to start running.

The attendant did not want to elaborate any further fearing it may affect their patient's treatment.

This correspondent tried to get in touch with the doctors and staffers working at the ICU, but they refused to talk. When this correspondent talked with hospital's director, he took time to inquire about the issue from the ICU.

RMCH director later told The Daily Star that the ICU department said they did not have any power backup failure during the storm and that the outage did not have any effect on the oxygen supply.

"If the ICU was out of power for eight minutes (as told by Hossain), all the patients would have died," he said.

"Our system is modern and programmed to switch on power backup within 26 seconds of any failure. The patient you're talking about may have been frightened when the lights went off. The lights can go off for some time during an outage, but the oxygen supply and ventilators have built-in functions to run those smoothly," he said.

He, however, did admit that Bahar's oxygen level dropped during the storm, and said that it regained after a while.

About the manpower issue, the director said, it's getting tougher for them to handle the pressure with the coronavirus infection rate increasing in Rajshahi and surrounding districts.

"We have asked for dedicated staff at the ICU from the government. But we have to keep in mind that the condition is worsening all across the country. Hopefully, we will get an answer from them soon," the director said.

On April 4 and 5, at least three Covid-19 and suspected patients died at the ICU, where at least 23 patients, both Covid-19 positive and suspected, died in the last eight days till Thursday, according to a report of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police.

However, the official data of the health services recorded a total nine deaths from Covid-19 in eight districts of Rajshahi division while 950 people were detected with the infection.

A distress

FROM PAGE 3

He said immediately after they saw Ibrahim's message, they contacted him at his home address in Teknaf of Cox's Bazar through the local police station.

His family and locals said he went to Saudi Arabia to perform the holy Umrah. After performing Umrah, he fell ill and was forced to stay over there, AIG Rana said.

At that moment, on someone's suggestion, he sent a message to the Bangladesh Police Facebook page, seeking cooperation.

Sohel Rana said though it is not a job for police, they stood by him for humanitarian reasons after they confirmed his illness and helplessness.

The PHQ did not disclose further details about Ibrahim.

It's unfortunate

FROM PAGE 3

"We can initiate contempt of court proceedings for non-implementation of our verdict. But, we are tired of doing so," he said.

"The government is the custodian of the people's properties and the court is bound to protect those. I hope each and every judgement of the Supreme Court will be executed properly with the assistance from the executive," the chief justice said.

He said this in response to a request from historian and researcher Prof Muntassir Mamoon for forming a cell to ensure implementation of the SC directives. Prof Mamoon told the event that many SC directives on the public interest cases were not executed and urged the chief justice to form a cell to ensure proper implementation of those.

The chief justice said it is a great achievement that trials of Bangabandhu killing and 1971 war crimes have been completed, which need to be presented before the international communities.

The spirit of the Liberation War needs to be implemented for building the country as dreamt by Bangabandhu, he said, adding that the judiciary will play its due role in this regard.

Speaking on the occasion, Justice M Imman Ali, senior judge of the Appellate Division, said corruption is everywhere still now, although Bangabandhu had raised his voice time and again to eradicate corruption from the country.

He also mentioned that the country's courts have a backlog of 40 lakh cases.

"The judicial system has to be changed as Bangabandhu had emphasised on it. The key to bring the change is in our hand. We must bring the change. This is the high time," Justice Imman Ali added.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin, eminent actor and member of parliament Asaduzzaman Noor, member of Liberation War Museum's board of trustees Mofidul Hoque, editor-in-chief of Ekattor TV Mozammel Haque Babu and writer and Prothom Alo deputy editor Anisul Hoque, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Doctor dies of Covid-19 in port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A doctor died of Covid-19 at a private hospital in Chattogram city on Friday night, aged 65.

The deceased -- Abdul Latif -- was an 18th batch MBBS student of Chattogram Medical College Hospital and passed in 1981, said Dr Mujibur Haque Khan, president of Bangladesh Medical Association, Chattogram chapter.

Dr Latif, a private practitioner, was undergoing treatment at the ICU for nine days after he tested positive for coronavirus, he said.

With Latif, a total of 20 doctors in Chattogram died of Covid-19, said Dr Faisal Iqbal Chowdhury, general secretary of BMA, Chattogram.

According to Chattogram Civil Surgeon Office, five people died of Covid-19 and 523 tested positive out of 2,791 samples in Chattogram in the last 24 hours till 10pm on Friday.

SIBL Social Islami Bank Limited
Head Office: City Center
90/1 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000

IFT FOR EXTENDING WARRANTY AND SUPPORT SERVICE PERIOD FOR HSM

Sealed tenders are hereby invited for Extending Warranty and IT Support Services periods required for 3 (three) Hardware Security Module- HSM SafeNet 7000 & 1700, model "Luna SA 7000 & 1700" from locally Gemalto Authorized, reputed and experienced enterprises. Please visit tender link of our website: www.siblb.com for detail schedule, instructions, guidelines, eligibility and specifications etc.

Vice President & Head
Logistic Support Division
Phone- 09612001122 Ext- 50292,50299
E-mail address: lsd@sib-bd.com

☎16491

Rajshahi City Corporation
Engineering Department
Nagar Bhaban, Kadirgonj, Rajshahi

Invitation for Tenders (IFT)-03/2020-21(Re-tender)
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Supply of Different Types of Spare Parts for Different Type of Vehicles of Rajshahi City Corporation.

1. Invitation for Supply of Different Types of Spare Parts for Different Type of Vehicles of Rajshahi City Corporation.
2. Invitation Ref No. & date 46.12.5081.006.26.583.20.89. Date: 08.04.2021

KEY INFORMATION

3. Procurement Method Open Tendering Method (NCT).

FUNDING INFORMATION

4. Budget and source of funds GOB & RCC's Own Resource.

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

5. Tender publication date 11.04.2021
6. Tender last selling date 25.04.2021 During Bank hour

Date	Time
26/04/2021	Upto 01.00 PM
26/04/2021	At 2.00PM

7. Tender closing date and time
8. Tender opening date and time
9. Name & address of the office(s) Agran Bank Ltd., Nagar Bhaban Branch, Rajshahi City Corporation.

NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

10. Receiving & opening tender document Office of the Secretary, Nagar Bhaban, Rajshahi City Corporation.
11. Place/date/time of Office of the Executive Engineer (Mechanical), Nagar Bhaban, Rajshahi City Corporation.

12. Pre-tender meeting (Optional)
13. Date 19.04.2021
14. Time 11.00 AM

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

13. Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer	As per TDS.
14. Brief description of goods	Tyre, Battery & Spare Parts of Different Types of Vehicles.
15. Price of tender document (Tk)	2,000.00 (Two Thousand) (Non-refundable).

Lot No.	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender security	Completion time in months
1	Supply of Different Types of Parts for Different Types of Vehicles of Rajshahi City Corporation	Rajshahi City Corporation	2% of the Total value of the Items Quoted	12 months after contract agreement

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

17. Name of official inviting tender	Md. Rezaat Hossain.
18. Designation of official inviting tender	Executive Engineer (Mechanical).
19. Address of official inviting tender	Nagar Bhaban, Rajshahi City Corporation.
20. Contact details of official inviting tender	0721-772215

21. The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.

১৯/০৪/২০২১ (১৯/০৪/২০২১)
১৯/০৪/২০২১
১৯/০৪/২০২১

Sd/-
Md. Rezaat Hossain
Executive Engineer (Mechanical)
Rajshahi City Corporation

Body found in Ctg pond

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A man was found dead in a pond in Sitakunda upazila of Chattogram yesterday.

Police recovered the body of Joynal Abedin (30) from the waterbody near his house at Telipara in Barabkunda union.

Sitakunda Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abul Kalam Azad said the recovery was made following information from 999.

"The body bore several stab marks and mutilation," he said.

"Joynal used to sell fruits in the port city of Halishahar area. We detained his wife for interrogation following some information given by the neighbours," said the police officer.

"The motive behind the incident is not clear yet. We have started our investigation," he said.

Police sent the body to Chattogram Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Ekushey

FROM PAGE 3

This year, 834 units of space were allocated to 540 publishing houses and organisations to facilitate sale of books.

The authorities allotted 154 units on Bangla Academy premises to 107 organisations, and 680 units in Suhrawardy Udyan to 433 organisations.

Considering social distancing requirements, the land earmarked for this year's fair was expanded to 1,500,000 square feet.

LP GAS LIMITED
(A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
North Patenga, Chattogram-4204, Bangladesh

Invitation for Tenders

1	Ministry / Division	Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources / Energy & Mineral Resources Division
2	Agency	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC)
3	Purchaser Name	LP Gas Limited (LPGL), A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation
4	Purchaser Code	N/A
5	Purchaser District	Chattogram
6	Invitation for	Supply of 30,000 LPG cylinders for domestic users
7	Invitation Ref. No.	28.27.0000.001.07.001.20-648
8	Date	08/04/2021
KEY INFORMATION		
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method
FUNDING INFORMATION		
10	Budget & Source of fund	LP Gas Limited (own fund)
11	Development Partners	None
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
12	Project / Programme Code (if applicable)	N/A
13	Project / Programme Name (if applicable)	N/A
14	Tender Package No.	Cyl-21
15	Tender Package Name	Supply of LPG cylinders
16	Tender Publication Date	11/04/2021
17	Tender Last Selling Date	23/05/2021
18	Tender Closing Date & Time	24/05/2021, Time- 14:30 Hrs (BST)
19	Tender Opening Date & Time	24/05/2021, Time- 14:35 Hrs (BST)
20	Name & Address of the Office(s)	Address
	- Selling Tender Document (Principal)	LP Gas Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram-4204, Bangladesh
	- Selling Tender Document (Others)	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road, Chattogram-4100
NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS		
	- Receiving Tender Documents	LP Gas Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram-4204, Bangladesh
	- Opening Tender Documents	-Do-
21	Place / Date / Time of Pre-Tender Meeting (Optional)	Place: LP Gas Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram-4204, Bangladesh Date 26/04/2021 Time 14:30 Hrs (BST)
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
22	Eligibility of Tenderer	As per Tender Schedule
23	Brief Description of Goods & Works	Supply of 30,000 LPG cylinders of 26.6 Litre water capacity fitted with valve (22 mm version) and protection cap
24	Brief Description of Related Services	Related Services are as per Tender Schedule
25	Price of Tender Documents	BDT 10,000 or US\$ 125 (Non-refundable)
26	Lot No. Identification of Lot Location Tender Security Amount Completion Time in Weeks	1 N/A (Single Lot) LP Gas Limited BDT 17 (seventeen) Lac or US\$ 20 (twenty) thousand 16 (sixteen) Weeks
PURCHASER DETAILS		
27	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Engr. Md. Siddique Hossain
28	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Deputy General Manager
29	Address of Official Inviting Tender	LP Gas Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram-4204, Bangladesh
30	Contract Details of Official Inviting Tender	Te: +88-031-2501220, Mobile: +88-01715-694093 E-mail: sidd_hossain@yahoo.com
31	This Tender Notice will be available at LPG website: www.lpg.gov.bd and CPTU website: www.cptu.gov.bd	
32	The Purchaser reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.	

GD- 727

'Doing more than ringing bell'

Bell ringer transforms govt pry school in Tangail into a fairyland

MIRZA SHAKIL

The duties of Harun-or-Rashid, bell ringer cum security guard of Barapusha Government Primary School in Tangail's Nagarpur upazila, are to perform few simple tasks including ringing the bell during schooltime and keep the institution under watch at the night.

However, besides performing his regular duties, he has worked hard to make the school more friendly and attractive to the students.

As a token of his love and affection to the school and students, he has given the institution a new look through some creative works.

Harun has done the works during the shutdown of the school for coronavirus outbreak.

He has written and painted different things— alphabets, natural sceneries, important quotes regarding education, pictures of national memorial and shaheed minar—in and outside the school building and walls.

Apart from these, he has also constructed a concrete flower vase keeping the national flower water lily on the middle of it, drew a map of the country, created murals of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, Shaheed Minar and National Memorial with board, and also made earthen statuette of different animals, including national animal tiger in the school premises.

He has also nurtured beautiful gardens in the premises and on the rooftop of the school building comprising fruits and flowers trees. In order to make the play corner of the school more vibrant and attractive for the students, he has added colourful playthings.

Harun has also decorated a room of the school with two corners. One is Bangabandhu corner with historical pictures of Bangabandhu Sheikh



Harun-or-Rashid, bell ringer cum security guard of Barapusha Government Primary School in Tangail's Nagarpur upazila, insert, paints different things—alphabets and natural sceneries to make the school more attractive to the students.

PHOTO: STAR

Mujibur Rahman and other is a book corner for the students. The office room of the school has also got a new shape after getting his touch.

Although the school remains shut for long for corona, many nearby students, children as well as local people come to see Harun's works and also spend some times there.

Harun, 25, son of a farmer of the village, said he loves the school so much as he also took primary education in it. Passing class VIII from another school, he took job at the primary school as bellman and security guard in 2014.

"I have known from the teachers that the students get more inspired if they get entertainment along with the education. However, there was no scope to play and amusement for them due to lack of necessary playground and entertainment facilities in the school surrounded by houses," Harun said.

When the school was declared shut for coronavirus outbreak, Harun expressed his willingness to the headmaster for doing some decoration and beautification works in the school and the headmaster encouraged him.

"Actually, the headteacher has made

it possible. No matter whether there was money in the school fund or not, he has provided the expenditure for the works immediately after I asked to him. The five other female teachers of the school also extended their supports to me," Harun said.

Mohammad Aktaruzzaman, headmaster of the school, said Harun has been active to make the school beautiful since joining the job. "He is not only a good staff of the school but also a man with good heart. We are very happy for his commendable works," he said.

Meanwhile, students, teachers and employees of other nearby schools have been inspired after visiting or hearing the works of Harun. They also took plans to replicate Harun's work in their respective schools.

Commenting on the creative works of Harun, GM Fuad, assistant upazila education officer in Nagarpur, said none can do such beautiful works if not having a lot of love to the institution.

"Each of the works of Harun for the school shows his deep love to the institution," Fuad said adding that he has set up a unique example for all.

Mayor's wife burnt in blast dies

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Mirkadim Municipality Mayor Abdus Salam's wife, who sustained severe burn injuries during an explosion caused by gas leakage at their residence on Tuesday, died at a hospital in the capital yesterday.

Deceased Kanun Begum, 40, was undergoing treatment at Sheikh Hasina Burn Institute in Dhaka with 80 percent burn injuries, police said.

At least 13 people, including Kanun, were injured in the blast that occurred inside a kitchen on the second floor of the building on Tuesday.

Man stabbed dead in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Criminals stabbed a locally influential man to death in Sirajganj's Kamarkhand upazila.

The victim was Khoka Sheikh, 65, of Sholpo Mahamudpur village.

Police said unidentified goons waylaid Khoka while he was returning home around 10:00pm on Friday and stabbed him, leaving him critically injured.

He was admitted to a hospital in Bogura, where he succumbed to his injuries early yesterday.

Freedom fighter fights for recognition, survival

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

At the age of 18, Protap Chandra Roy risked his life when he went all out and joined the 'Mukti Bahini' to free his motherland from Pakistani occupation forces.

Fifty years later, the country Protap fought for has made remarkable economic achievements and the government in power has been playing its part by disbursing monthly allowances and providing housing facilities to the freedom fighters.

But thanks to bureaucratic red

tape and an inefficient process of scrutinising the list of freedom fighters, Protap Chandra Roy -- from Kazirchawra village in Harati union of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila -- never received any allowance or housing from the government.

The 68-year-old still wakes up in the morning and paddles around on his bicycle in surrounding areas to sell spices from door to door. When he comes home -- a derelict one-room tin structure -- in the evening, nearly half of his daily earnings are spent to buy medicines for his ailing wife Bimala

Rani, 58.

"I joined the Liberation War when I was 18. I fought in battles. We've freed our motherland from the Pakistani occupation forces. But my life struggle has not stopped yet. I struggle every moment to survive," said Protap.

"In my pursuit of attaining the government benefits for freedom fighters, I am still going door-to-door," he said choking back tears.

Documents validating his authenticity as a freedom fighter were examined in February of 2019 by a committee formed by the Muktiyoddha Sangsad in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

Although Protap received a provisional certificate (serial number 205944) as a freedom fighter from the relevant ministry, his benefits are being collected by one Protap Chandra in Gangachara upazila of Rangpur.

Abu Bakkar Siddique, former commander of freedom fighters and an official of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila Muktiyoddha Sangsad, said the freedom fighter benefits are no longer being given to the other Protap Chandra in Rangpur's Gangachara and the real freedom fighter Protap Chandra Roy will definitely get all available government benefits.

The necessary documents in this regard have already been sent to the department concerned, he also said.



Freedom fighter Protap Chandra Roy.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Man Kills father

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A man, who was injured by his son allegedly over a family feud in Jashore Sadar upazila on Thursday, died at a hospital in Khulna yesterday.

The deceased, Sarwar Hossain, 45, was son of late Syed Amjad Ali of Basundia village in the upazila.

Deceased's sister Manjila Begum said my brother was beating up his wife Hasina Begum over a family feud on Thursday.

Hearing Hasina's screams, her son Jasim Uddin rushed to the spot and hit his father on the head with a bamboo stick, leaving Sarwar injured.

Locals rescued him and admitted him to Jashore General Hospital the same night, from where he was referred to Khulna Medical College Hospital yesterday early morning as his condition deteriorated.

He, however, died on the way to the hospital.

Pirojpur sees hike in fruit farming

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Riding on higher profitability than other conventional crops such as rice, fruit farming has been increasing steadily in Pirojpur. Consequently, fruit orchards are being visible in the district more than ever before.

Farmers said that while their investment on Aman rice has been producing diminishing returns, cultivating fruits has yielded larger dividends in recent years.

"Last year I bought eight decimals of land and cultivated three varieties of jujube (Kul) there. I made good profit this year as the yield [of the fruit] has been good," said farmer Younus Ali Howlader, from Pattashi village in Indurkani upazila.

Encouraged by his success, many others in the area have been showing interest in fruit cultivation, he also said.

"At the beginning of fruit cultivation, a good amount of money has to be spent on land preparation and planting of saplings. But then, we are set for at least the next ten years when we continue to get fruits," said Ayub Ali, another fruit farmer from the same village.

Among all other fruit choices, cultivation of malta has seen the highest jump in Pirojpur over the past decade.

According to data from the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Pirojpur, malta cultivation in the district has reached to 127 hectares of land in 2019-20 fiscal year, from 5 hectares in 2010-11 fiscal year.

In the meantime, production of other fruits has also increased in the district. Currently, there are mango orchards on 532 hectares of land, litchi on 36 hectares, jujube on 130 hectares, guava on 866 hectares and hog plum on 429 hectares of land.

Ibrahim Sarder, sub-assistant agriculture officer in Indurkani upazila, said that along with number of fruit orchards, its production has also increased in the upazila.

"There are nearly 50 jujube orchards in Indurkani upazila now and all of those were made in the last two to three years," he said, adding that the number of other fruit orchards such as malta and litchi has also been on the rise in the upazila.

Chinnoy Roy, deputy director of DAE in Pirojpur, said with demand for fruits as well as returns on investment on fruit farming continues to grow, more and more farmers have been choosing to try their hand at fruit farming. "Subsequently, we have been providing every possible support to the farmers."



THE SECURITY PRINTING CORPORATION (BANGLADESH) LTD.
GAZIPUR-1703.

LOCAL e TENDER NOTICE
Web site: www.spcbl.org.bd

Ref: 74/2021

Dated: 11/04/2021

NAME OF WORK: SUPPLY OF BANK NOTE PACKING BOX MADE OF MANGO WOOD AND GP SHEET

Electronic tenders (e-tender) are hereby invited from the Supplier having experience of supply work in the departments of Government, semi Government/Autonomous organizations/Bank/Insurance organizations for the supply of above mentioned goods for this Corporation as per under noted schedule. Tender documents showing terms and conditions with specification will be available at the website <https://spcble-tender.bb.org.bd>. It is to mention here that this is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted and no hard copy will be accepted except price of tender schedule and earnest money. To submit e-Tender the Supplier need to register on e-Tender.spcbl.org.bd. For more details please contact cell: 88-01534002183 & 88-01534002184. Necessary information is given below:

- Price per e-Tender schedule** : 1000.00 (One Thousand) Taka only (Not Refundable)
- Date of publish of e-Tender** : 11/04/2021.
- Last date & time for submission of e-Tender** : 09/05/2021 up to 11.00 A.M.
- Date & time for opening of e-Tender** : 09/05/2021 at 11.15 A.M.

Supplier may collect the e-Tender schedule from the above mentioned website. Supplier need to submit earnest money @ 3% (three percent) of the total quoted price in the form of Bank Draft/ Pay Order in favour of the "Managing Director, The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd." alongwith the price of e-Tender schedule in the form of an account payee cheque/pay-order/DD in the tender box kept at Corporation's office in Gazipur on or before the scheduled deadline for submission of e-Tender. e-Tender(s) without earnest money and price for procurement of e-Tender schedule shall not be acceptable. The e-Tender shall have to be submitted as per e-Tender guidelines mentioned at above website. Offer(s) shall be opened as per schedule mentioned above in presence of the tenderer(s) if any. 01 (One) e-Tender schedule is applicable only for one Supplier firm submitting one offer along with earnest money and price of e-Tender schedule. The authority reserves the right to reject or accept any e-Tender without assigning any reason whatsoever. Submission of e-Tender after the specified time shall not be acceptable under any circumstances.

(Md. Mustafizur Rahaman)
Additional Chief Engineer Incharge
(Engineering Office)
Phone : 88-02-9205110-15, Ext.-250/268

GD-709

Pabna University of Science and Technology
Office of the University Engineer
Memo No: PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/2020-21/03(A) Date: 10/04/2021

Corrigendum e-Tender Notice (FY/2020-21)
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works of under "Pabna University of Science and Technology", PUST, Pabna.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	APP ID	Package No. & Invitation Ref. No.	Name of work	Tender publication date & time	Tender closing date & time	Method
1	558756	173160	PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/OTM/Lab equipment	Supply - Installation and Commissioning of Lab Equipment for different Department of Pabna University of Science and Technology. FY 2018-2019	08-Apr-2021 10:30	29-Apr-2021 11:30	OTM
2	560983	173160	PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/OTM/Computer/2020-21/1	Supply - Installation and Commissioning of Core i9 Customized Computer for Physics & Chemistry Department of Pabna University of Science and Technology. FY 2020-2021	08-Apr-2021 10:30	29-Apr-2021 11:30	OTM

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Engr. Md. Aminul Islam
University Engineer
Pabna University of Science and Technology
Mail: maislam@yahoo.com
Telephone: 0731-64970

GD-728



(From top, anti-clockwise) The Death Gun Salute is fired by the Honourable Artillery Company to mark the passing of Britain's Prince Philip at the The Tower of London, in London, yesterday, the day after his death at the age of 99; a grieving couple embrace outside Buckingham Palace; in this file photo taken on July 11, 1947 Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip pose on the day of their engagement; and a well-wisher waits in line to lay a floral tribute to Prince Philip in central London.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

'What a life!'

With artillery guns and flowers, Britain salutes Prince Philip; Prince Harry to attend April 17 funeral

REUTERS, Windsor

Gun salutes were fired across Britain yesterday to mark the death of Prince Philip as tributes flooded in for a man who was a pillar of strength for Queen Elizabeth during her record-breaking reign.

Messages of condolence have poured in from world leaders to the Duke of Edinburgh, as Philip was officially known. Members of the public laid flowers outside royal residences, paying their respects to the 99-year-old prince.

The funeral of Queen Elizabeth II's husband, Prince Philip, will take place next week, Buckingham Palace said yesterday, announcing a stripped-back ceremony due to coronavirus restrictions, and a return for exiled royal Prince Harry but not his wife, Meghan.

The Duke of Edinburgh - the 94-year-old queen's husband of 73 years -- died peacefully on Friday just two months short of his 100th birthday, triggering eight days of national mourning.

Royal officials said his funeral, which will be televised, will take place at 1400 GMT on Saturday, April 17 in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, west of London.

It will be preceded by a national minute's silence. The armed forces marked Philip's passing at noon (1100 GMT) with a Death Gun Salute. Artillery units in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast and Gibraltar, and some navy warships, fired their guns. Flags government buildings across Britain were lowered to half-mast and billboard operators replaced adverts with a photo and tribute to the prince.

"We're all weeping with you, Ma'am," read the front page of the Sun tabloid, while its rival the Daily Mail ran a 144-page tribute to Philip.

Despite a request from the royal family for the public to obey pandemic social distancing rules and avoid visits to its residences, people laid cards and bouquets outside Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace through the night. "What a life! Thank you for serving our country," read one tribute outside Buckingham Palace.

NEWS IN BRIEF

India protests US ship patrol in its waters

India protested a US Navy warship conducting a patrol in its waters without prior consent, in a manoeuvre Washington defended as an "innocent passage" consistent with international law. The US Navy said earlier this week that the USS John Paul Jones had asserted "navigational rights and freedoms" in the vicinity of Lakshadweep Islands inside India's exclusive economic zone. The Navy also said that it did so without prior consent in a challenge to India's "excessive maritime claims" in the area, prompting New Delhi to say Friday it had conveyed concerns through diplomatic channels. The spat comes as ties between Washington and New Delhi are on the upswing, bolstered by the so-called "Quad" alliance that also includes Japan and Australia.

53 killed in 24 hours in Yemen's Marib

Fighting for the key Yemeni region of Marib has intensified, with 53 pro-government and Huthi rebel fighters dead in the past 24 hours, loyalist military officials said yesterday. The Huthis have been trying to seize oil-rich Marib, the government's last significant pocket of territory in the north, since February. "The rebels have managed to seize a bit of territory" in the latest fighting northwest of the city, a pro-government military source said, adding that they did not threaten the city of Marib itself. The same source said 22 government soldiers including five officers had been killed, along with 31 rebels. Loyalist military officials yesterday said that coalition aircraft had carried out strikes against the rebels, but the Huthis had pushed on with their offensive. The rebels have stepped up missile and drone strikes against neighbouring Saudi Arabia in recent months, rejecting a Saudi proposal for a ceasefire.

Aides dismiss Duterte's death rumours

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte has not made any public appearance for close to two weeks now, fuelling speculation that his health is declining, with some even claiming that he has died. His aides and sources have dismissed the rumours - one was that he had suffered a mild stroke and was taken to Singapore where he purportedly died, another was that plans were being drawn up for a military junta to run the Philippines. Senator Christopher Go, who remains Duterte's closest aide and confidant, has been posting photos and short clips that showed himself and Duterte in good health and working in his office in Manila. His spokesman Harry Roque said the President would be addressing the nation on Monday. Sources also told The Straits Times that Duterte was never in Singapore, much less died there. The last time Duterte was seen in public was on March 29, when he was on hand to receive the shipment of a million doses of a vaccine made by Chinese firm Sinovac.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

POST-COUP MYANMAR

Rebel attack kills at least 10 policemen

AGENCIES

An alliance of ethnic armies in Myanmar that has opposed the junta's crackdown on anti-coup protests attacked a police station in the east yesterday and at least 10 policemen were killed, domestic media said.

The police station at Naungmon in Shan state was attacked early in the morning by fighters from an alliance that includes the Arakan Army, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, media reported.

Shan News said at least 10 policemen were killed, while the Shwe Phae Myay news outlet put the death toll at 14.

TNLA's Brigadier General Tar Bhone Kyaw said the military retaliated with air strikes on their troops, killing at least one rebel soldier.

the Arakan Army (AA) -- also a prominent rebel group based in western Rakhine state -- yesterday issued a statement reiterating their support for the anti-coup movement.

Two other outfits -- the Karen National Union (KNU) and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) -- have stepped up attacks on military and police in recent weeks. The military has retaliated with air strikes in KNU's territory, which the rebel group says has displaced more than 10,000 civilians in Karen state.

Vaccine worries deepen woes

Lockdowns, curfews return as India, South America, Europe see surging cases

AGENCIES

Fresh lockdowns and curfews were imposed on tens of millions of people from India to Argentina yesterday, as Covid-19 infections surged again and vaccine roll-outs were hampered by shortages and scares over side effects.

In India, the worst-hit state of Maharashtra was running out of vaccines as the health system buckled under the weight of the contagion, which has killed 2.9 million people worldwide.

Every weekend from yesterday until the end of April, Maharashtra's 125 million people will be confined to their homes unless travelling or shopping for food or medicine.

The crisis is being exacerbated by a shortage of vaccines.

India has so far inoculated 94 million of its 1.3 billion people, but The Times of India reported Friday that states on average had just over five days of stock left, citing health ministry data, with some regions already grappling with severe shortages.

Stay-at-home orders were also set to



come into force for the eight million inhabitants of Bogota, as the Colombian capital battled a third wave of infections, adding to curfews already covering seven million across four other major cities.

Elsewhere in South America, Argentina entered a night-time curfew Friday running from midnight to 06:00 am every day until April 30.

Both Argentina and Colombia have recorded about 2.5 million coronavirus cases, numbers surpassed only by Brazil in the region.

All of France is subject to restrictions of some form, while the German government's attempts to curb movement and commerce

have been stymied by several states refusing to go along with the proposals.

Now Berlin is changing the rules to centralise power, adjustments likely to usher in night-time curfews and some school closures in especially hard-hit areas.

As in India, Europe's stuttering vaccine roll-out faced multiple hurdles Friday as EU regulators said they were reviewing side effects of the Johnson & Johnson shot and France further limited its use of the AstraZeneca jab over blood clot fear.

France said it will now administer a different vaccine to under-55s who had been given a first shot with AstraZeneca's one.

But shortly after he spoke, the World Health Organization said there was "no adequate data" to support switching Covid-19 vaccines between doses.

As for the J&J shot, the European Medicines Agency said four "serious cases" of unusual blood clots had been reported -- one of them fatal -- with the vaccine, which uses similar technology to the AstraZeneca one.

US INTEL REPORT ON INDIA, PAKISTAN

Rivals may stumble into large-scale war

DAWN/ANN

India and Pakistan may stumble into a large-scale war neither side wants, warns a US intelligence report while exploring the possibilities of miscalculations leading to a war in South Asia.

The assessment is included in a Global Trends report produced every four years by the US government's National Intelligence Council, released in Washington. The report, released on Wednesday, focuses on both immediate and distant futures and is designed to help policymakers anticipate the forces likely to shape the world in the next five to 20 years.

"India and Pakistan may stumble into a large-scale war neither side wants, especially following a terrorist attack that the Indian government judges to be significant," the report warns.

The ability of some militant outfits to conduct attacks, New Delhi's resolve to retaliate against Islamabad after such an attack, and Islamabad's determination to defend itself "are likely to persist and may increase" in the next five years, the report adds.

"Miscalculation by both governments could prompt a breakdown in the deterrence that has restricted conflict to levels each side judges it can manage."

The US policy in Afghanistan and its impact on the neighbouring countries is top on a list of key uncertainties in South Asia that are underlined in the report. This would be "especially true" if a security vacuum emerges in Afghanistan that results in a civil war, expanded freedom of manoeuvre for regional terrorist networks, or criminals and refugees flowing out of the country, it adds.

The report predicts that such an outcome would exacerbate political tensions and conflict in western Pakistan and sharpen the India-Pakistan rivalry by strengthening longstanding judgments about covert warfare in Islamabad and New Delhi.



This handout photo taken and released by Dawei Watch yesterday shows protesters holding flags as they march in a demonstration against the military coup in Launglone township in Myanmar's Dawei district.

PHOTO: AFP



A service member of the Ukrainian armed forces is seen at fighting positions on the line of separation from pro-Russian rebels in Donetsk region, Ukraine, yesterday. The United States will send two warships to the Black Sea next week, Turkey said on Friday as Russia, which has boosted its military forces near Ukraine, accused Nato powers of increasing naval activity in the region.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Iran starts up advanced centrifuges

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday announced it has started up advanced uranium enrichment centrifuges in a breach of its undertakings under a troubled 2015 nuclear deal, days after the start of talks on rescuing the accord.

The United States had said Friday that it had offered "very serious" ideas on reviving the accord but was waiting for Tehran to reciprocate, something yesterday's move signally failed to do.

President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated a cascade of 164 IR-6 centrifuges for producing enriched uranium, as well as two test cascades -- of 30 IR-5 and 30 IR-6S devices respectively -- at Iran's Natanz uranium enrichment plant, in a ceremony broadcast by state television.

The television aired no images of the injection of uranium hexafluoride gas into the cascades, but broadcast a link with engineers at the plant who said they had started the process and showed rows of centrifuges.

Rouhani also launched tests on the "mechanical stability" of its latest-generation IR-9 centrifuges.

Under the nuclear deal, Iran is currently only



allowed to use "first-generation" IR-1 centrifuges for production, and to test a limited number of IR-4 and IR-5 devices.

Iran's latest move to step up uranium enrichment follows an opening round of talks in Vienna Tuesday with representatives of the remaining parties to the deal on bringing the United States back into it.

Then-president Donald Trump withdrew from the agreement in 2018 but his successor Joe Biden has said he is ready to return, arguing the deal had been successful in dramatically scaling back Iran's nuclear activities.

The Vienna talks are focused not only on lifting crippling economic sanctions Trump reimposed, but also on bringing Iran back into compliance after it responded by suspending several of its own commitments.

All sides said the talks, in which Washington is not participating directly but has the European Union as intermediary, had got off to a good start.

Iran has demanded that the United States first lift all sanctions imposed by Trump, including a sweeping unilateral ban on its oil exports, before it falls back in line with obligations it suspended.

The "US -- which caused this crisis -- should return to full compliance first," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted, adding that "Iran will reciprocate following rapid verification."

The US official indicated the major stumbling block in the initial talks was not the order of compliance but rather which sanctions were under discussion, as Iran is demanding an end to all US restrictions. The deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, covers only nuclear sanctions and not US measures taken in response to human rights or other concerns, the official said.

Recommendation for the gap between two doses of COVID-19 vaccine

DR MUSHTAQUE CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh Health Watch is a civil society body. It is composed of individuals with illustrious backgrounds in public health. One of its technical committees is exclusively working on the different issues related to COVID-19 vaccination in the country and is headed by Dr A M Zakir Hussain, a former Director of Primary Health Care and Disease Control, Government of Bangladesh and former Regional Advisor for Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO), World Health Organisation (WHO).

Based on our detailed review of the scientific basis of the Oxford - AstraZeneca vaccine, as reported in reputed global journals, we would like to propose the Government of Bangladesh to kindly consider the adoption of a gap of 12 weeks (or 3 months) between the two doses of the said vaccine, instead of 8 weeks (or 2 months) as has been decided for now. The following is the rationale for our recommendation.

1. The Lancet published a paper of 71 scientists which found that in the participants



who received two standard doses of the said vaccine, efficacy was higher in those with a longer prime-boost interval (vaccine efficacy 81.3% at ≥ 12 weeks gap, than 55.1% in whom vaccine gap was less than 6 weeks).

2. A review paper in the British Medical Journal based on 17,177 vaccinated people in the United Kingdom, Brazil

and South Africa, support the British Government's approach of leaving 3 months gap between the two doses of the vaccine. A single standard dose of the vaccine was noted to provide 76% protection against symptomatic COVID-19 in the first 90 days after vaccination. This is in line with the previous research that found greater

efficacy with longer intervals with vaccines like influenza and ebola (which are also RNA viruses).

3. 21 scientists in the USA found that spike-specific memory B lymphocyte cells (B type white blood cells, which produce antibody) were more abundant at 6 months than at 1-month post-infection (akin to a dose of vaccination). SARS-CoV-2-

specific CD4+ T lymphocyte cells (T type white blood cells or helper cells, which activate B cells to produce antibody) and CD8+ T lymphocyte cells (T type white blood cells, which act as cytotoxic cells, i.e. kill infected cells) declined with a half-life of 3-5 months, indicating that a booster, i.e., the second dose of vaccine would work better if given at this half lifetime (i.e. 3 months). This paper was published in the prestigious journal 'Science'.

4. The three-month gap is a better strategy as more people can be protected more quickly, as even with one dose, people may reduce their risk of getting severely infected and also reduce their transmissibility. Based on the above scientific justifications and based on discussion with selected key scientists in the country, the technical committee of Bangladesh Health Watch urges to kindly consider the three-month gap between the two doses of Oxford - AstraZeneca vaccine in Bangladesh.

Dr Mushtaque Chowdhury is the Convener of Bangladesh Health Watch.

WORLD HEALTH DAY

Building a fairer, healthier world for everyone

In recent years, countries in the Western Pacific have experienced rapid economic growth, migration and urbanisation. This created opportunities for better lives for many, but left others behind. The COVID-19 pandemic has undercut recent health gains, pushed more people into poverty and food insecurity, and amplified gender, social and health inequities.

This year's World Health Day (April 7) campaign is calling for action to eliminate health inequities, as part of a year-long global campaign to bring people together to build a fairer, healthier world. The world is still an unequal one. The places where we live, work and play may make it harder for some to reach their full health potential, while others thrive. Health inequities are not only unjust and unfair, but they also threaten the advances made to date, and have the potential to widen rather than narrow equity gaps.

However, health inequities are preventable with strategies that place greater attention to improving health equity, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalised groups. COVID-19 has hit all countries hard, but its impact has been harshest on those communities which were already vulnerable, who are more exposed to the disease, less likely to have access to quality health care services and more likely to experience adverse consequences as a result of measures implemented to contain the pandemic.

Leaders must ensure that communities are at the forefront in decision-making processes as we move forward to a new future, and that everyone has living and working conditions that are conducive to good health. At the same time, leaders are urged to monitor health inequities, and to ensure that all people can access quality health services depending on their needs and values within their communities.

Source: World Health Organisation (WHO)

HEALTH bulletin



CDC updates travel guidance for people fully vaccinated against COVID-19

People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 do not need to get tested before or after travel within the United States — unless their travel destination mandates testing, according to updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued recently. People are considered fully vaccinated once they are 2 weeks past their final vaccine dose.

Fully vaccinated people also do not need to self-quarantine after travel in the U.S. For international travel, the guidance differs, as international destinations may pose additional risks, such as greater exposure to SARS-CoV-2 variants. Fully vaccinated people do not need to get tested before their international trip unless their destination requires it, but they should get tested 3 to 5 days after they return to the U.S. (they are also still required to have a negative test result within 3 days before boarding their return flight). They do not need to self-quarantine upon return.

The CDC does advise delaying all travel until a person is fully vaccinated, and all travellers, including the fully vaccinated, should continue to wear masks, maintain physical distance from others, and wash their hands frequently.

Controlling the COVID-19 pandemic effectively

DR SYED ABDUL HAMID, DR ABU JAMIL FAISEL, DR NASRIN SULTANA, DR SHAFIUN NAHIN SHIMUL, DR MOFAKHAR HOSSAIN, JAMAL UDDIN, MUHAMMAD IHSAN-UL-KABIR

To tackle the ongoing second wave of COVID-19 in Bangladesh, a week-long lockdown had been announced with the possibility of extension recently. Hopefully, if the lockdown is properly maintained, its purpose will be served. Experts from the Initiative for Health and Development (IHD) have suggested the following guidelines to make the lockdown more effective, control COVID-19 transmission and improve patient management.

What to do until COVID-19 is controlled

- Make sure that people use masks everywhere. Take firm action if necessary. Places like bazars, bus and rail stations, launch terminals where there are gatherings of people - wearing masks be enforced strictly.

- To increase awareness regarding health safety rules, comprehensive communication programmes should be undertaken. Proper communication materials should be prepared and a befitting campaign should be carried out.

- COVID-19 vaccination registration should be simplified and on-spot registration services should be set up.

- A mass campaign should be undertaken to encourage people to vaccinate for COVID-19 with support from local administration and social workers.

- Regularising the study of genome sequencing and seroprevalence to understand the real situation can be understood. Especially, the situation of hospital bed occupancy should be shown with help of real-time updates on dashboards.

Things to do in the lockdown period

- Collection centres for COVID-19 sample testing should be established at the union level and efforts should be given to bring them closer to the urban population.

- The government determined COVID-19 test fees should be eliminated.

- Limited level mass transport should function under government control so that doctors and other health workers, emergency service givers and patients can commute with ease.

- Normalise the banking schedule to avoid crowding created by the limited bank transaction hours.

- Along with treatment for COVID-19, all other health services including maternity services should be kept functioning. Triage should be conducted in hospitals to better manage patients.

Things to be done after the lockdown

- All kinds of public gatherings, assemblies and meetings should be completely banned until COVID-19 is under control.

- All tourist places and entertainment centres should remain closed until it is deemed

safe to open.

- People should be barred from leaving severely infected areas like Dhaka, Chattogram, Gazipur and Narayanganj during Eid and/or other festivals.

COVID-19 patient management

- High-flow nasal cannula or rebreather masks must be made available in all district, general, government and private medical college hospitals. Treatment for COVID-19 should be ensured in district and division levels to avoid unnecessary referrals to Dhaka.

- An effective oxygen supply system should be established within the next three months in all district, general, government and private medical college hospitals.

- Less serious and non COVID-19 patients should be encouraged to be at home care, get their treatment and advice from local doctors.

By proper implementation of these suggestions, Bangladesh can achieve notable success controlling COVID-19 and patient management.

Dr Syed Abdul Hamid is a Professor at the Institute of Health Economics, University of Dhaka; Dr Abu Jamil Faisal is a Public Health Expert; Dr Nasrin Sultana is a Professor and Director at the Institute of Health Economics, University of Dhaka; Dr Shafiqun Nahin Shimul is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Health Economics, University of Dhaka; Dr Mofakhar Hossain is an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Toronto, Canada; Jamal Uddin is a Development Worker; and Muhammad Ihsan-Ul-Kabir is a Research Assistant at the Initiative for Health and Development (IHD).



PHOTO: COURTESY

United Hospital conducted the first chronomodulated chemotherapy

A patient with advanced colon cancer has successfully completed a chronomodulated chemotherapy, and has been discharged with an uneventful hospital stay from the United Hospital, making it the first such chemotherapy to be conducted in Bangladesh, says a press release.

Chronomodulated chemotherapy means time-controlled chemotherapy. There are few specific 'clock-related' genes in our brainstems that control our time-dependent biological functions including sleeping and eating patterns, heart rate, body temperature etc. Similarly, cancer cells also divide and rest at different times of any given day. In chronomodulated chemotherapy, the chemotherapy drugs are administered at the specific time when cancer cells divide making the cells more vulnerable to cell death. This is beneficial for healthy cells which are at rest as they are then least sensitive to toxicity from chemotherapy.

Dr Ashim Kumar Sen Gupta, Consultant of Oncology at the United Hospital says this special type of time-controlled chemotherapy administration improves treatment tolerance, and also can improve treatment response and survival. This can be given to patients who previously needed to discontinue a chemotherapy protocol - either because it was ineffective or it was too debilitating for the patient to tolerate.

In case of metastatic colon cancer or advanced metastatic ovarian cancer, studies show that administering chemotherapy at the optimal time can halve toxicity and double treatment response.

Facebook Twitter /StarHealthBD



24/7

United Hospital
Laboratory
Quality in every step

United Hospital

- ✓ ISO 15189:2012 accreditation
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Police arrests four Rab members for abduction, torture

Justice must be seen through

POLICE arrested four Rab members and a civilian woman on Friday in the capital's Hatirjheel on the charges of abducting, torturing, and demanding ransom from one Tamzid Hossain. The arrests took place after the victim's sister informed the police about it. On Thursday afternoon, Hossain was kidnapped, blindfolded, and tortured while his sister was called by his sister asked which Rab office he had been taken to. The men later settled for a Tk 12 lakh ransom, which police later held two of them with.

While we highly commend the police taking swift action regarding this case, we must also insist that justice be ensured for the victim. Given the profession that most of the accused belong to, it is more than likely that they may slip through unscathed, with only a slap on the wrist. But we believe that this incident needs to be made an example of, so that those belonging to the same and similar professions may not be under the misconception that they can commit these crimes against civilians and face no justice.

There is no doubt in regards to Rab's superb contribution to reducing crime across the country—not the least of which include their deradicalisation programme and launching the country's first On-site Identification and Verification System (OIVS) for criminal profiles—but the unit is also known for being involved in many incidents similar to what took place on Thursday. In November of last year, for instance, one man died while in custody of Rab-7 as he was hit with blunt objects. While Rab claimed after his death that his injuries were results of a mob beating, such a beating was not mentioned in the case that they had filed with the police. As such, we would urge the police, Rab, and other relevant authorities to see this case through to a just end for the victim and the accused. There should also be a thorough investigation of all of Rab's activities, so that no one—regardless of their profession—can feel that they are above the law. It is unacceptable for an organisation such as Rab to have its members be involved in abducting and torturing members of the general public, when it is their duty to protect those same citizens from such situations.

Nationwide lockdown has to be enforced rigorously

Govt can't backtrack from its decision this time

WE welcome the government's latest decision to impose a week-long strict lockdown to curb the rapid transmission of the Covid-19 virus, starting from April 14. With both the daily death and infection rates caused by coronavirus at 63 and 7,462, respectively as of Friday morning, something more than just restrictions on public movements had to be initiated. We sincerely hope that the upcoming nationwide lockdown will turn out to be a timely move in the fight against the deadly virus.

According to a report published by The Daily Star on April 10, 2021, all public and private institutions except emergency services will remain closed during the lockdown. Also, public transport services will be suspended. Although these directives seem very convincing, the government has to ensure that they do not become a farce, as we are witnessing right now. Following the surge in Covid-19 cases since the second week of March, the government issued a 11-point directive and also, a seven-day restriction on public movement on April 4. While public transport and shopping malls were initially to be suspended, the former started to operate on the city streets again within just three days of the imposition of the restrictions, while the later has also reopened two days ago.

Concerned authorities have to be strict and forceful this time to make the lockdown effective. They have to give public health safety their topmost priority and be uncompromising against demands made by various quarters. Also, the aforementioned report mentions a former director (Disease Control) of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) as saying, "The ongoing restrictions were unplanned and they have failed to contain the transmission of the virus. Goals were not fixed, so nothing was achieved."

The government has to implement the upcoming lockdown in a planned and systematic way this time so that it can create a lasting impact on the ongoing Covid-19 crisis. Also, there has to be strong and clear public communication from the government's side regarding the goals that it wants to achieve through the imposition of the lockdown, so that people feel encouraged and motivated to abide by the official directives.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Law enforcers involved in law breaking

When the Rapid Action Battalion was first formed in 2004, people had high expectations of the elite force. However, their expectation soon turned into disappointment, as members of Rab started to become involved in various law breaking and anti-people activities.

Just recently, four members of Rab were arrested on charges of abduction, torture, etc. We hope that they are punished in accordance with the law, so that others are deterred from doing the same.

Nur Jahan, Chattogram

Bangladesh's Covid emergency needs to be recognised as one



A CLOSER LOOK

TASNEEM TAYEB

BANGLADESH has been under lockdown since 6am April 5, 2021. This is the first time the nation is under lockdown to curb the spiralling spike in Covid-19 cases. While last year the nation took a similar—and perhaps more effective measure to flatten the curve—the government called it a general holiday. Although this time around the country is officially under a lockdown, given the mounting statistics, its effectiveness has been limited at best.

Covid cases are increasing by the day, the healthcare system is overloaded with patients seeking medical support, and there are people who are dying due to lack of treatment. There is an acute shortage of medical facility for Covid patients, including ICU facilities and medical care staff. People are practically dying in cars and ambulances as their loved ones take them from one hospital to another in search of treatment. And even for those who are seeking treatment at home, oxygen supply remains scarce. At a glance, this looks like a scenario from last year when the healthcare system almost collapsed under the pressure of the mounting Covid-19 cases.

While why this nightmare has been allowed to bog the nation down once again remains a major question that needs to be answered in the long-run; what is a more pressing question is how effective and practical are the measures that are currently being taken to address this situation.

Earlier in April, the cabinet division of the government issued a circular with a set of 11 directives defining the scope of the ongoing lockdown. The directives unfortunately seemed hastily penned, to say the least. The result: people blatantly ignored these directives and went about their usual business.

Over a period of just three to four days a lot of these directives have been reversed. While as per directive one, all public transport services remained initially suspended, the book fair remained open for public visit. On the third day of the nationwide lockdown, city buses were back on the roads. On the fourth day of the lockdown, the cabinet division allowed operation of shops and shopping malls from 9am to 5pm.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) itself, has requested businesses to submit their VAT returns in their respective VAT offices during the lockdown, albeit while maintaining safety measures. One can only wonder why government offices are themselves not fully adhering to the lockdown measures, or why can the VAT returns not be submitted online. And this is just one case.

Also the first few two days of the lockdown were marked by anti-lockdown protests from various quarters across the country, with protests turning violent in some areas of the country, including



Customers throng Noor Mansion Shopping Centre in the capital's New Market area on the first day of reopening of malls after a brief four-day closure during the ongoing 'lockdown'.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Faridpur.

Moreover, the failure to clearly define the underprivileged and vulnerable communities—whose income would be significantly affected due to the "lockdown"—have forced them to come out of their homes in search of livelihood.

"We know where the slums are, we know where the vulnerable people live; it is possible to geographically identify these areas, there is clear segregation of the rich and the poor by geography in every city and if we could provide them with cash support or food assistance then they will not go out," suggested former World Bank lead economist, Zahid Hussain.

Zahid Hussain suggests that while people are under lockdown (if such a lockdown can actually be enforced), the authorities will need to "study the Covid-19 cases and trace which behaviour triggered the spread so that in the long-run those behaviours can be discouraged

through policy." For instance, if the Covid spike has been due to a lack of sufficient quarantine of people coming from abroad, then measures need to be taken to rectify this. Or if the cases had been a result of people nonchalantly visiting tourist spots, then precautions can be taken to avoid such scenarios in the future. And the list goes on.

The government on Friday announced that the nation is moving towards a week-long hard lockdown from April 14. But one might be pardoned for asking, why this week-long delay in announcing the "hard lockdown"? If the hard lockdown

affected people are getting social safety support. For one, the government can utilise the 113 million Euro grant by EU and Germany provided to Bangladesh's "Social Protection Programme for Unemployed and Distressed Workers in the RMG, Leathergoods and Footwear Industries" late last year, to support workers whose income will be impacted by the pandemic.

The initial plan was to bring "laid-off, disabled and insolvent workers of export-oriented garment, leather and footwear manufacturing factories" under a scheme whereby they would be given Tk 3,000 per month for three months as part of financial support. The EU-Germany grant was meant to back this up. 80 million Euro (around Tk 800 crore) had been transferred to Bangladesh in December 2020 to support in strengthening the social security system.

Eligible workers under Social Protection Program for Unemployed and Distressed Workers in the RMG, Leathergoods and Footwear Industries managed by the Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour and Employment, received the first monthly instalment of Tk 3,000 on December 22, 2020.

While how much of this grant has been spent is not clear, whatever of it remains can be used to support workers who will be affected by the hard lockdown. And the government also needs to announce and implement a well-defined social safety package during the hard lockdown to make sure people stay indoors.

And a hard lockdown should be enforced like a hard lockdown, symmetrically applied to all, irrespective of people's political, social or financial muscle. If a rule is applicable for one, it should be applicable for all. Otherwise, the hard lockdown will only be as good as the apparently relaxed lockdown the country is now undergoing.

This is a serious situation, that demands serious, people-friendly and decisive action by the government. The people responsible for running the nation must realise that people's lives and livelihoods are at risk, and this is not the time for stop-gap, kneejerk, half-hearted measures. The government has already been late in its response to contain the second wave. Nothing would be more unfortunate for the nation right now than being led by people living in a world of half measures.

Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her Twitter handle is: @TayebTasneem

Adopting state capitalism to compete against China



ANDREW SHENG

LATE last month, the Biden Administration unveiled a USD 2 trn infrastructure programme that aims to modernise American infrastructure. The American Jobs Plan has four major spending components over the next eight years. First, invest USD 621 billion on clean energy, upgrading and repairing highways, railways, bridges and city transit systems. Second, focus USD 650 billion on improving life in homes, schools with water and broadband systems. Third, spend USD 400 billion on caregivers for elderly and disabled people to create jobs. Finally, invest USD 300 billion in research, development and manufacturing, including USD 50 billion on semiconductor manufacturing. Underlying is a strategy to deliver green lifestyle to combat climate change.

Coming on top of the USD 1.9 trillion stimulus package and USD 0.9 trillion approved under Trump, the US is committing USD 4.8 trillion or 22.9 percent of 2020 GDP, setting the stage for Big State competition with China. To fund this, the corporate tax rate would be raised to 28 percent from the current 21 percent, which Trump slashed from 35 percent in his 2017 tax package. The Biden package would also plug US corporate taxation evasion through capturing offshore income at domestic tax rates.

This attention to infrastructure and jobs is long overdue. Furthermore, the world needs this large fiscal stimulus to help global recovery from the pandemic. The OECD estimates that up to 1.5 percent would be added to global growth from the US stimulus package.

The downside is whether US can implement such investments without inflation and whether the rest of the world will fund this without higher interest rates. On inflation, LSE Professor Charles Goodhart and Manoj Pradhan have already documented that since the 1980s, global benign inflation was due to China becoming the world's new source of cheap goods and services. They think that this will not last. University of Texas Professor James Galbraith warns that "China is missing from the Great Inflation Debate." He, however, thinks that China will not rock the boat by pushing up prices.

On US debt funding, out of US net foreign liability to rest of the world of USD 14.1 trillion at end-2020, just under three quarters are funded by East Asian surplus economies (Japan, China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan), with the balance by Europe (Germany, Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland). As Harvard Professor Kenneth Rogoff put it, "it seems an article of faith among US policymakers and many economists that the world's appetite for dollar debt is virtually insatiable."

What could totally disrupt both assumptions? Worsening US-China relations! By retaining Trump's tariffs on China and hardening rhetoric on China, the Biden Administration thinks it can pump up the US and fight China and Russia at the same time.

Is this unipolar hubris justified? The latest China Academy of Social Science (CASS) 2020 National Balance sheet report showed that by 2019, China amassed national net wealth and GDP at market value at 80 percent and 65 percent of the US respectively. China is a net lender to the world with USD 2.2 trillion or 14.4 percent of GDP, running current account surpluses, whereas the US is a net borrower to the tune of USD 14.1 trillion or 66.9 percent of GDP, running growing twin fiscal and current account deficits and debt.

The real race is which form of state capitalism is more sustainable and effective—a marathon rather than a short-term dash. State capitalism has evolved from managerial and financial capitalism of recent years because financialization and technology created growing income and job disparities that only government intervention can correct. There may be ideological differences, but ideology does not ensure performance outcome.

The Chinese use state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to implement long-term national goals, such as modernisation of Chinese infrastructure, stabilisation of jobs, regional development and provision of social utilities. Although less efficient than the private sector, by keeping sufficient reforms to ensure profitability, SOEs contributed to China's growing net national wealth to USD 88.6 trillion. With the state owning one quarter of such wealth, there is more than ample reserves to address Chinese modernisation without higher taxation on the citizens. A 40-year review of Chinese SOE

performance consider that SOEs are best labelled as "social enterprise", created to achieve social goals through business methods, not wholly-for-profit.

In contrast, the combination of shareholder capitalism and frequent elections induces the US to act for short-term considerations. With contentious domestic politics and complicated Federal State relations, infrastructure projects have hitherto faced formidable obstacles and delays. Money politics have reached the stage where everything depends on monetary creation, but that

competitiveness, as well as creating an economic system that is vastly more inclusive, the United States can only tread water while China continues to march toward the future."

As governments assume larger roles in the US, Europe and China, the issue is how to deliver performance along the whole range of military, economic, social, technological and organisational dimensions, without capture, corruption, concentration and widening social injustices. So far, American free markets have allowed the 1 percent to increase



Chinese and US flags flutter outside the building of an American company in Beijing, China, January 21, 2021.

PHOTO: REUTERS

in turn relies on growing net foreign debt.

In short, one state capitalism relies on domestic savings and the other relies on foreign savings.

The US has been running down its public infrastructure, because the bulk of net wealth is in private hands. In contrast, China uses SOEs to own and build infrastructure, but allow private sector to innovate and compete across usage rights. Over the last two decades, China has reduced state-ownership of assets and allowed the private sector to push market innovations. Despite criticisms that privatisation was slow, sufficient SOE reforms were made to hold back growing SOE leverage and ensure that they remain profitable and deliver on national objectives.

As CSIS Jude Blanchette argued, "Absent a deep and enduring commitment to rebuilding internal

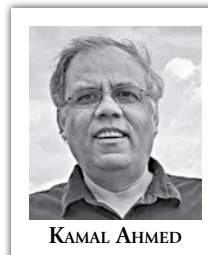
concentration of wealth and power, including capture in politics. The Achilles' heel of procedural democracy is the enormous difficulty of reforming itself when captured.

In contrast, China seems able to lift the majority out of poverty and deliver modern infrastructure and living standards, at the cost of individual freedom. The competition is, therefore, between different forms of state capitalism that may in practice look like market socialism.

Who wins in this competition is not about wishful thinking that the other side will collapse or falter. It's about who makes the least strategic mistakes.

Andrew Sheng is an honorary adviser with the CIMB Asean Research Institute and a distinguished fellow with the Asia Global Institute at the University of Hong Kong. He writes on global issues for the Asia News Network (ANN), an alliance of 24 news media titles across the region, which includes The Daily Star.

Do police really need to use more powerful weapons?



RECENT incidents of violence, including attacks on public establishments, seem to have unnerved our police. As a result, the Inspector General of Police has instructed senior law enforcement officials to firmly address such incidence, even with the use of "more powerful weapons"—should firing rubber bullets prove ineffective in bringing the situation under control, according to the *Prothom Alo*. The report, quoting officials, said that the IGP expressed his dissatisfaction, as the "Hefazat-led violence" could not be brought under control by firing rubber bullets. The virtual meeting held on April 7 was attended by senior officials at the police headquarters. Within 24 hours, the media published pictures of light machine guns being put up at police stations in Sylhet, one of the districts that had witnessed some degree of mob violence in recent weeks.

These developments came after violence in Dhaka, Chittagong and Bhraminbaria left at least 17 people dead, during protests against the visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Moreover, on April 5, Saltha upazila of Faridpur district witnessed mob attacks on some public establishments, during protests against the government-run anti-Covid-19 drives. The scale of violence and damage caused by activists of Hefazate-Islam and other groups, whether provoked or planned, are unacceptable and should be condemned. But, simultaneously, we need to have an in-depth review of police practices, instead of opting for more lethal tactics.

Fortification of key public installations, particularly police stations, is understandable

and perhaps justifiable, especially amidst increased levels of hostility from certain sections of society against the administration and law enforcing agencies—though some critics suspect politics is behind this. These critics argue that putting up heavy arms at police stations will unnecessarily scare off common people. They find it a convenient ploy to gain support from western countries to counter their complaints about the government's high-handed approach against dissent. But, more disturbing is the instruction given to law enforcing units to use "more powerful weapons". Using deadly force in policing has never been a good idea. In fact, it is counterproductive and fuels further discontent and anger among the wider society which makes policing even harder.

The latest instruction is even more problematic since Bangladesh police, in recent years, has increasingly been criticised by human rights groups and observers for brutality and lack of accountability. Even the United Nations' Committee on Torture in its observation in 2019 said that, "The Committee is deeply concerned at persistent allegations of excessive use of force by members of the security forces, intelligence services and the police, including the practice of shooting persons at short range in the knee, leg or elbow called 'kneecapping', which often results in permanent disability, including amputation."

Principles laid out in various international conventions and legal instruments clearly make it obligatory for police in every country to "never knowingly use more force than is reasonable", nor "abuse their authority". They are also required to obey all lawful orders and abide by the regulations of their organisation.

Though it is quite astonishing that our police force is still regulated by the Police



The latest instruction is even more problematic since Bangladesh police, in recent years, has increasingly been criticised by human rights groups and observers for brutality and lack of accountability.

PHOTO: STAR

Regulations of Bengal 1943, it too imposes certain restrictions over using firearms in controlling unruly mobs or public gatherings. Under which circumstances police can use firearms to disperse an unlawful assembly are described by Acts 153 and 155. Act 153(c)(i) stipulates: "An order to fire upon a crowd should be regarded as an extreme measure to which recourse should be had only in the last resort when it is absolutely necessary for the defence of life or property or when a Magistrate, an officer-in-charge of a police-station or police officer superior in

rank to such officer considers it impossible to disperse a mob by any other means. Subsequent provision makes it mandatory to give 'full and sufficient warning' to the rioters for immediate dispersal before any firing. The Regulation requires that the magistrate or the officer in command shall direct the firing in such a way as to secure immediate effect with a minimum of injury."

The Code of Criminal Procedure too has similar provisions like the Police Regulations of Bengal, for dealing with unlawful assembly and mob violence. It emphasises using "as

little force" and causing "as little injury to person and property" in dispersing the assembly and arresting and detaining those in violation of lawful orders. Using firearms to disperse any mob can only be justified, as prescribed by the Penal Code, where it says, "in the exercise of the right of private defence against an assault which reasonably causes the apprehension of death."

It is unclear what those more powerful weapons will do, other than causing higher deaths and serious injuries. Will it not be worse when policing in the world has dramatically changed, putting human rights at the core of enforcing law? The latest spiral in violence that swept through the country started on March 26 at the premises of Baitul Mukarram Mosque, when police tried to stop protests against the visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. One of the cases filed with the Paltan Police Station by police noted that they had used more than 1,100 rounds of bullets and about 90 shells of tear gas within two hours to tackle the crowd. Doesn't this record suggest an inclination to use more firepower than non-lethal means for controlling a rioting mob?

Opting for more powerful weapons in policing is also worrying since we do not have an independent oversight mechanism. In 2019, the UNCAT recommended for establishing "an effective complaints mechanism for victims of excessive use of force and ensure prompt, impartial, effective investigations are carried out into all such complaints." Instead of encouraging use of more powerful weapons, it would be wiser for the authorities to initiate such reforms which will restore peoples' confidence in the police.

Kamal Ahmed is an independent journalist based in London.

What affect will lockdown have on the apparel industry?



THE Bangladesh government is set to enforce a week-long hard lockdown across the country, beginning April 14. Many murmurs it may go beyond that as well. While I understand "why" the government

feels compelled to act that way, I believe we need to rethink the strategy and find some creative ways taking into account the economy of the country, especially its apparel industry, which is intricately linked to global chains, and is already at a fragile state and passing through a critical moment in its recovery.

A better way ought to be pondered which would protect our people as well as their livelihoods. I believe "Lockdown Lite"—which has been practised in many other countries—could be more apt for Bangladesh and its needs and circumstances. I am not an expert in pandemics or public health, nor do I claim to know more than our esteemed health professionals. Yet, I may submit that the policymakers behind the decision for a heavy lockdown need to consider several other factors.

The first is the safety of the garment factories. The RMG industry in Bangladesh has gone to extraordinary lengths to create safe working environments since this pandemic erupted last year: workers constantly wash hands, wear masks, follow strict hygiene protocols and stay six feet apart.

Medical assistance and doctors are always available. Staff are constantly educated on how to stay safe. Workers are also encouraged to share the good practices they learn at work as they return to their homes. Temperatures of workers are recorded twice a day in factories. Anybody with symptoms is immediately tested and isolated, when necessary.

These strict protocols have been vital in ensuring that outbreaks of coronavirus in the workplace have been rare in the past year. Numbers over the past 13 months surely vindicate that.

In many ways, the workplace now provides the safest environment for garment workers, not least because many of these

workers live in cramped housing spaces where there are often six or more people in a tiny environment. Are they being tested while they are at home? It's unlikely. Do they stick to strict protocols? Again, we simply cannot know, although we can safely assume that not all will follow the kind of stringent hygiene norms at home as they do while at work.

When they are at home, workers may be carrying the virus but remain asymptomatic. Lulled into a false sense of security, they can spread the virus in their surroundings without knowing.

There is another issue at play here. If we lockdown from April 14, it is likely that many workers will not remain in Dhaka and will instead return to their villages. Speculations could kick in, as did last March-April. Our villages, which up until now have remained relatively Covid-free, now risk becoming infected—thus increasing community spread. Indeed, the nation does not want that. Surely,

the workers are relatively safer to be at work where they can be monitored, tested and isolated, if needed.

I believe that a hard lockdown is likely to have unintended consequences by increasing the spread of the virus, rather than dampening it down. Let me outline "lockdown lite" which, to many, should offer a more considered approach.

Don't get me wrong, I am not pitching "business" ahead of life. Under the present circumstances, it is a fact that if we want a successful, world-class healthcare system, we also do need a flourishing economy.

As it stands this week, many of our key markets are set to re-open fashion stores, the UK being a key one. All analysts suggest there will be a surge in buying as markets reopen and pent-up demand is unleashed.

If we do not fulfil this demand, our competitors will. And, if the orders move away once, it may well do for a good long time. This is something we cannot ignore.

During the last heavy lockdown or "general holiday", as the government called it, many factories were prevented from completing critical orders. This has happened time and again these past 12 months, destroying confidence with customers.

schools and economic activities likely resuming in the western world from this August, buyers will also not be ready to agree to take the orders on a later date. Clearly, the repercussions of wholesale lockdown in the apparel industry will be far too heavy for the factories, in particular, and for our national economy, in general, to absorb.

The timing of the hard lockdown is also critical—it coincides with the celebration of the Bengali New Year holiday as well as the start of Ramadan. There is a risk that many workers will assume the hard lockdown will be extended, when in all likelihood they head to their hometowns, until after Eid. Thus, this could cause a new wave of the virus. And, Eid is another factor to consider: are we then still expected to pay Eid bonuses while factories stay closed?

This is in no way a criticism of our government. Our prime minister is providing stellar, prudent leadership, and the government is discharging a job which is virtually impossible under extremely trying circumstances. Governments everywhere have been learning on the job about handling this pandemic.

Surely, it does not have to be a black-and-white situation in terms of hard lockdown versus normal life. Possibly a third way should merit thinking in which we take advantage of our investments, time and effort that RMG factories have put in to ensure the workplace is as safe a place as any in the current environment. However, the importance of stricter monitoring of the safety measures in each and every factory by the government as well as by Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) cannot be overstated to contain and control the infection rate.

By all means, let us introduce curfews and enforce strictest movement restrictions on the private lives of individuals—these are sacrifices we are all happy to make for the collective, national good.

In the meantime, let's please keep the wheels of our proud RMG industry turning—so that as we emerge out of this pandemic, we are ready to robustly hit the ground running.

Mostafiz Uddin is the Managing Director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the Founder and CEO of Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).



A garment worker takes hand sanitiser from the gatekeeper in front of a factory in Dhaka's Tejgaon industrial area.

PHOTO: STAR

QUOTABLE Quote

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
Former First Lady of the United States (1884—1962)

Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Locate
- 5 Cuts down
- 9 Wish granter
- 10 Furious
- 12 Second U.S. president
- 13 Oregon's capital
- 14 Kansas' capital
- 16 Rep.'s rival
- 17 Amorous archer
- 18 In a gentle way
- 21 Melancholy
- 22 New York's capital
- 23 Spills the beans
- 24 Montana's capital
- 26 Twisty fish
- 29 Trio doubled
- 30 Forever --- day

DOWN

- 1 Soft hat
- 2 Peas' place
- 3 City of southern France
- 4 Cubicle fixture
- 5 Towel word
- 6 Important time
- 7 Thoreau work
- 8 Unwavering
- 9 Airport areas
- 11 TV award
- 15 Georgia's capital
- 19 "Fernando" group
- 20 Mates for pas
- 22 Out of the wind
- 23 Diner sandwich
- 24 Morphine product
- 25 Thrill
- 26 Require as a result
- 27 Fixed copy
- 28 Bowling spots
- 29 Laments loudly
- 30 Houston player
- 33 Purposes
- 35 Knight's address
- 36 Cease

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BEETLE BAILEY

BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES

BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

MATE, LOTSA, ERA, SAMOAN, KING, QUEEN, BUNT, OAR, AKITA, TREND, POSTS, UNCUT, NEATO, ROW, HARE, CRABS, SNEER, BEES, SAMSON, BET, ELATED, SATED, WEDS

'80 shot dead' near Yangon

FROM PAGE 12
blamed the crackdown on "rioters", and reported only one dead.

The violence in Bago will add to AAPP's current death toll of 618 civilians killed since the coup.

The junta has a far lower number -- 248, according to a spokesman Friday -- and has branded the victims as "violent terrorist people".

The United States and European nations pleaded for action at a meeting on Friday of the UN Security Council where a Southeast Asian summit on the crisis was taking shape, but the military leadership remained defiant and refused entry to a UN special envoy.

Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun, who has passionately rejected the February 1 coup and brushed aside the military's claims that he no longer represents Myanmar, told the Security Council that there has been a "lack of adequate and strong action" despite hundreds of deaths, including children.

He pushed for more concrete action -- proposing a no-fly zone, an arms embargo and more targeted sanctions against members of the military and their families.

"Your collective, strong action is needed immediately," Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun told the meeting. "Time is of the essence for us," he said. "Please, please take action."

Despite the daily bloodshed, protesters have continued to take to the streets, with demonstrators manifesting their discontent in pointedly creative ways.

In commercial hub Yangon, crimson paint -- representing the blood already spilled -- was splashed across the streets in view of the historic Shwedagon Pagoda.

"Let us unite and boldly show in red that the dictatorial regime will not be allowed to rule us at all," a student activist announced on Facebook.

Flyers with the words "They will not rule us" were scattered across Yangon neighbourhoods.

In Mandalay, activists pasted the same flyers on the statue of General Aung San, the father of Suu Kyi and a national hero.

Suu Kyi is currently facing a series of charges from the junta -- including accusations of corruption and for having unregistered walkie-talkies.

State-run media announced Friday night that 19 people had been sentenced to death for robbery and murder under a military tribunal -- with 17 of them tried in absentia.

Human Rights Watch condemned the sentences yesterday as a way to sow fear in the anti-coup movement, as Norway's foreign minister called the use of capital punishment "unacceptable".

Journo Hasan Shahriar

FROM PAGE 12
editor post of Bangla daily the Ittefaq in 2008. He was the first editor of English daily the Daily Sun and chief editor of Chattogram-based daily People's View.

He also worked as Bangladesh correspondent for international magazine Newsweek, Khaleej Times; India's Daily Deccan Herald, The Indian Express, and The Asian Age; and Pakistan's Morning News, Dawn, and Evening Star.

Hasan was the first journalist from Asia-Pacific to be elected as president of the Toronto-based Commonwealth Journalists Association in 2003. He was also the president of CJA for two terms and the international president emeritus of the CJA in 2012.

He was awarded the prestigious Harry Brittan Fellowship by the Commonwealth Press Union in 1978.

He was elected president of the National Press Club management committee for 1993-94 tenure. He was also the existing president of Media Club Limited.

CONDOLENCES POUR IN

President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, ministers, and distinguished personalities have expressed profound shock and sorrow at the demise of Hasan.

In a condolence message, the president recalled the contributions of Hasan in the field of journalism with due respect.

"The role of Hasan Shahriar in the country's journalism will be remembered for long," Hamid said.

He also prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family.

In a separate message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock and sorrow at the death of the veteran journalist.

In her condolence message, Hasina said the role of Hassan Shahriar in Bangladesh's journalism will ever be remembered.

She prayed for the eternal salvation of the departed soul and expressed sympathy to the bereaved family.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud, now in Europe, expressed deep shock and sorrow at the death.

In the condolence message, the minister said Hasan Shahriar's dedicated contribution to journalism for a long time will be remembered.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said people will remember him for his contribution to the country's journalism.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, and BSS Managing Director and Chief Editor Abul Kalam Azad also expressed profound shock and sorrow at the death of the veteran journalist.

In a condolence message, Prof Arefin, also former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, recalled the contribution of Hasan in the field of journalism.

BSS Managing Director and Chief Editor Abul Kalam Azad, in a separate message, expressed deep shock and sorrow at the death.

Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAAB) also expressed shock and sorrow at the death of Hassan Shahriar.

Seven killed after quake hits

FROM PAGE 12
a hospital ward and debris strewn across the floor of the local parliament in Blitar, a city southwest of Malang.

"I had just finished praying and was changing my clothes when suddenly the quake struck," Malang resident Ida Magfiroh told AFP.

"It was pretty strong and went for a long time. Everything was swaying... My heart was racing."

The deadly quake comes as the Southeast Asian nation reels from a cyclone that killed more than 200 people in the eastern part of the archipelago and neighbouring East Timor this week.

Indonesia experiences frequent quakes and volcanic eruptions due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", an arc of intense seismic activity where tectonic plates collide that stretches from Japan through Southeast Asia and across the Pacific basin.

Among Indonesia's string of deadly quakes was a devastating 2004 tremor measuring 9.1 magnitude that struck off the coast of Sumatra and triggered a tsunami that killed 220,000 throughout the region, including about 170,000 in Indonesia.

The Boxing Day disaster was one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history.

JMB in-charge held in Badda

FROM PAGE 1
from JMB members in India due to the vigilance of the law enforcement agency and started living isolated, for which reason, Reza was invited to visit the country and take the charge there, said a top official of the CTCIC unit, requesting anonymity.

The official, however, refused to disclose Salehin's present location. Asked why Reza was asked to visit India with a passport, the official said he wanted to do some other job after going to the country so that no one could suspect their movement.

"We have some details of JMB activities in India and movement of the Salehin and we would knock the Indian authority soon through proper channel," the official told this newspaper.

In the last two years, Reza allegedly managed to gather around a hundred members for the outfit.

Besides, Reza was also responsible to collect funds for the outfit. Investigators claimed that they have detected a person in Saudi Arabia, who is working as the financier and sending money for the outfit.

"We are now trying to detect the financial channels and collect personal details of the financier to take lawful action," said another official of the CTCIC unit, wishing not to be named.

Only in the month of Ramadan, the outfit fund collection reached Tk 20 to Tk 30 lakh, the official said, adding, this fund was gathered from different local sources in Bangladesh.

BDU Chief Rahmatullah said they would interrogate Reza after taking him on remand to verify some clues and financial issues related to the outfit and then further action will be taken.

Members of the anti-Islam, anti-immigration Alternative for Germany gathered on Saturday despite

from JMB members in India due to the vigilance of the law enforcement agency and started living isolated, for which reason, Reza was invited to visit the country and take the charge there, said a top official of the CTCIC unit, requesting anonymity.

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A health worker takes a swab sample from a shopkeeper for a RT-PCR Covid-19 coronavirus test in Chennai, India, yesterday

PHOTO: AFP

Five killed as violence mars 4th phase

FROM PAGE 12
In another incident, BJP lawmaker and actress Locket Chatterjee's car and those belonging to the press were attacked by a mob at a polling booth in Hooghly district this morning. She is the party candidate in the assembly.

Voting in the fourth phase of the assembly elections covered 44 constituencies and a total of 1,15,81,022 voters were eligible to decide the fate of 373 candidates including that of many heavyweights like India's junior Minister for Environment Babul Supriyo and state cabinet ministers Partha Chatterjee and Arup Biswas.

The Assembly elections, which began on March 27, are being held in eight phases, with the last phase of polling scheduled to take place on April 29. Counting of votes will be taken up on May 2.

Previous three rounds of voting have been largely peaceful.

The Election Commission has deployed around 8,000 central armed police forces (CAPF) in 15,940 polling stations spread across the 44

constituencies.

Addressing an election rally in Siliguri, Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday said Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee "and her goons provoked the paramilitary forces to open fire".

He requested the Election Commission to take stern action against those responsible for the incident.

"Mamata Didi and her TMC goons have become jittery because of ground swell of support for BJP," Modi told the rally.

"Didi, this violence, the tactic of instigating people to attack the security forces, the tactic of obstructing the polling process will not protect you. You have to go out of power. Didi is asking people to attack and gherao security forces who are here to protect the rights of the people of the state," he said.

The Election Commission had recently asked Mamata to explain her remark asking the people to gherao federal security personnel deployed on poll duty.

In her reply to the EC, Mamata yesterday said that she did not incite or influence voters against federal security personnel with her remarks at a poll meeting.

Speaking at a public meeting in Baduria in North 24 Parganas district, Mamata sought Indian Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation over the killings by central forces at Sitalkuchi.

Mamata questioned the CISF version of the firing in self defence in Sitalkuchi and said the state CID would probe the incident. She also appealed to people to remain calm and said her party would take out protest rallies throughout the state today.

Mamata, one of Modi's most prominent critics, has accused the BJP of attempting to import divisive sectarian politics into the state, which has a large Muslim minority.

The BJP controls a dozen of India's 28 states, with alliance partners in several others. But it has never won power in Bengal, whose 90 million people make it the fourth most populous state.

Tajuddin seeks arms support

FROM PAGE 12
with about a section of my soldiers. Capt Haroon was there with a handful of EPR troops. Some brave, young college students were there along with us.

Early in the morning of April 11, Pakistan army started heavy artillery shelling on our position. After about half an hour of shelling, our position was attacked by the enemy with more than a company's (about 200 men) strength. Our total strength was about 20 men including elements of EPR.

As the battle raged on, casualties on both sides occurred. Soon Capt Haroon was wounded. I asked the brave students to carry Capt Haroon across the bridge to the other side where he could receive medical attention.

We managed to inflict casualties on the enemy. After some time, it became difficult for us to stay and fight because we were badly outnumbered and seriously outgunned.

As Capt Haroon was being carried

across the bridge, the Pakistan army started firing at him. So, I took up the task of covering his evacuation. At the same time, I asked my troops to start withdrawing. I covered their withdrawal. By the time the last sepoy had crossed the bridge to safety, I was left absolutely alone.

By then my position was surrounded on all sides. Withdrawal for me became impossible. I became desperate, came out of my bunker and wildly fired away at the advancing enemy. I can clearly remember that I had hit and killed three of the enemy and a fourth one was lying down wounded.

Just then I was hit. My weapon flew off my hand and landed some distance away. I fell flat on the bridge. I tried to get up but I failed to move. I have been hit on my left thigh. The bullet had passed all the way through the lower portion of my belly and was lodged in my right hip. The Pakistan army was now very near and I was apprehending that very soon they

will reach me and then torture me to death. I thought it better to commit suicide then to be caught by them. But suicide become impossible as my weapon was lying too far away from me to reach.

Finding no other way, I continued to lie down and await death. But death spared me. The Pakistani army walked up to me, repeatedly kicked me in my stomach, calling me a traitor. They then decided to take me as a prisoner of war. I was to remain a prisoner until December 17.

SCHOLLERS CALL FOR AN END TO KILLING IN EAST PAKISTAN

An appeal circulated by Robert Dorfman, professor of economics, and signed by more than two dozen specialists on modern Pakistan urged the president of Pakistan to stop using military force against rebellious East Pakistan. The appeal appeared today as an ad in the Washington Post.

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

Cops recover 20 snatched bullets

FROM PAGE 12
Arab Ali, 40, of Dakshin Kendubari village, and Monir Mia, 42, of Suhilpur village in Sadar upazila, -- are fruit traders.

The two were shown arrested in a case filed with Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station on March 30, the OC added.

According to the case statement, two members of Moulvibazar district police were travelling on a CNG-run auto-rickshaw on their way to a Brahmanbaria court with an accused of a case on March 27. A group of Hefajat men intercepted their way on Cumilla-Sylhet highway in Brahmanbaria's Nandanpur area.

Hefajat men beat up the two cops and snatched 20 bullets from one of them.

Later, victim policeman Md Mohiuddin filed the case with Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station accusing unidentified people.

Contacted, Brahmanbaria Superintendent of Police Mohammad Anisur Rahman said, "We first detained

a man based on intelligence. Later, the bullets were recovered and a second person was picked up after gleaning information from the detainee."

With the latest two arrestees, a total of 55 people have so far been picked up in connection with the cases filed over Hefajat mayhem in the district on March 26-28. A total of 49 cases have been filed with different police stations of the district over the arson and violence by the Islamist group, said police.

In Narayanganj, Hefajat leader Mamunul was made the prime accused in one of the three new cases filed with Sonargaon Police Station, said Mohammad Hafizur Rahman, OC of the police station.

Of the three cases, one was filed by Sonargaon upazila Jubo League Publicity Affairs Secretary Nasir Uddin against 111 named Hefajat and BNP men and 300 unnamed people over vandalising and torching the upazila Awami League office.

Another case was filed by the upazila Jubo League President Rafiqul Islam

Nannu against 120 named Hefajat and BNP men and 50-60 unnamed people over vandalising Rafiqul's business establishment and house.

Shah Jamal Tota, father of former Narayanganj district Chhatra League vice president Sohag Rony, filed the third case against 20 named Hefajat and BNP men and 30-40 unnamed people over vandalising his house.

With the latest three, a total of six cases have so far been filed with Sonargaon Police Station over the April 3 incident. Mamunul was accused in three of those.

On April 3 evening, ruling AL men kept Mamunul confined to the resort alleging that he went to a room of the resort with a woman with whom he was having an affair.

Hours later, a large number of Hefajat men blocked Dhaka-Chattogram highway, staged demonstrations, vandalised some vehicles, and got Mamunul "rescued from confinement".

[Our correspondents in Brahmanbaria and Narayanganj contributed to this report.]

Second whale

FROM PAGE 12
Shafiqur Rahman, chief scientific officer of Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute in Cox's Bazar.

He suspected that ships which ply the route beyond Bangladesh's exclusive economic zone injured the whales.

"Whales move in pods. Such deep injuries to marine mammals cannot be caused without the involvement of large vessels," he added.

Shafiqur expressed fear that more whale carcasses might wash ashore in Cox's Bazar in the next few days.

The 48-foot long female whale weighed around 10 tonnes and it was aged about 40, he said.

Md Torikul Islam, scientific officer of Bangladesh Oceanography Research Institute, said they cut open the stomachs of the two whales and found no food.

"No plastic was found in the stomachs either. We collected samples from the organs and sent those to Chattogram Veterinary Animal Science University for better analysis," he told The Daily Star.

He also suggested that whales might have died from injuries caused by propellers of large vessels.

Mohammad Nurul Azim Sikdar, associate professor of marine science at Chattogram University, said the two whales might have been separated from their pods after sustaining injuries, caused likely by ships.

"I suspect a few more whale carcasses may wash ashore in the next few days," he told this newspaper.

On Friday, the carcass of a male whale washed ashore at Himchhari beach. The authorities later buried it on the beach.

From January 2020 to April 2021, Cox's Bazar shore has seen four such mammal carcasses washing ashore.

2 held for raping

FROM PAGE 12
multiple times in the last couple of months, they said.

Around 7:00am on Friday, the trio committed the crime again. As the victim started screaming, the three fled the scene, said police.

Later, the boy's father filed a case against the three youths, who were arrested yesterday noon, said Anwarul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Chhatkil police station.

Hours after arrest, the three were sent to jail after they had been produced before a court, the OC added.

Daily cases keep

FROM PAGE 12
the 100,000 mark for the first time on Monday. Only the United States has reported more cases in a day since the pandemic began over a year ago.

Despite that, Prime Minister Modi again addressed an election rally crowded with thousands of people, many without masks, in the eastern state of West Bengal.

The government has blamed the resurgence mainly on crowding and a reluctance to wear masks as businesses across the country have reopened since February, only to be partially shut again to control the current surge.

The surge in cases comes as India yesterday became the fastest country in the world to achieve the 100 million Covid-19 vaccination mark, reported our New Delhi correspondent.

The cumulative number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered to people across India stood at 10,12,84,282 as per the provisional report at 8:00 pm Indian time, a feat achieved on the 85th day of the vaccination drive since its launch on January 16, the Health Ministry said.

A broader comparison with other countries on their achievements on the 85th Day reaffirms the fact that India has the highest rate of vaccination per day, it said in a statement.

The USA administered 92.09 million doses in 85 days and China's vaccination coverage was 61.42 million in 85 days, according to the Health Ministry.

India is faster compared to the USA and China which vaccinated 100 million in 89 days and 103 days respectively.

India recently expanded the vaccine coverage to those above 45 years along as well as allowing them to get vaccinated at their workplaces (govt and private).

However many states have complained of a vaccine shortage though immunisations are currently restricted to only about 400 million of India's 1.35 billion people.

The health minister said on Thursday the government had more than 43 million doses in stock or in the pipeline, which may be enough for only about 10 days going by the immunisation trend.

India is using the AstraZeneca Inc's shot and another developed at home by Bharat Biotech.

Saudi executes three soldiers for 'high treason'

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia yesterday executed three soldiers for "high treason", the defence ministry said, in a rare public announcement that accused them of colluding with an unspecified enemy.

The executions come as a Saudi-led military campaign intensifies in neighbouring Yemen and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, consolidates his grip on power.

AFP, Dresden

The far-right AfD will firm up its election manifesto this weekend as Germany prepares for the post-Merkel era, with the party seeking to reverse a lag in support amid infighting and an ailing effort to capitalise on the pandemic.

Members of the anti-Islam, anti-immigration Alternative for Germany gathered on Saturday despite

coronavirus restrictions for a two-day congress in Dresden, to finalise their strategy ahead of the general election on September 26.

With Angela Merkel stepping down after 16 years as chancellor, the AfD's "Merkel must go" slogan will need an overhaul.

The AfD caused a sensation in Germany's last election in 2017 when it secured almost 13 percent of the vote, entering parliament for the first

time as the largest opposition party.

But it has lost support as Germany reels from the coronavirus pandemic, and has lately been plagued by internal divisions, links to radical Covid-19 deniers and accusations of ties to neo-Nazi fringe groups.

Latest surveys have the party polling at between 10 and 12 percent, with Merkel's CDU/CSU on around 27 percent and the surging Greens not far behind.



Hom another beneficiary of selectors' positive mindset!

BISHWAJIT ROY

Never failing to excavate positives from the deepest of holes following disastrous performances is probably the only persistent thing about Bangladesh's cricket. So, walking on the same line as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), let's begin by finding some positives from the inclusion of Shuvagata Hom in the preliminary 21-member Test squad for the upcoming Sri Lanka tour.

Is it not a positive sign that the selectors kept their 'vigilant eyes' on a 'consistent performer' for five long years before finally deciding to call him back? Should Hom be delighted to finally get a chance to revive his international career or be worried about being dropped after inadequate opportunities? The latter seems to be more likely considering the past trend of BCB.

In 2016, when former international players Shahriar Nafees and Rakibul Hasan had been included in a 30-member preliminary national squad, they considered it a lifeline, if not a signal of a revival of their international careers. The rest was history for the

two batsmen but Hom can still also think along the same line. Is it not a positive sign that his age of 34 did not prove a barrier for the selectors? Is it not a message for players like Tushar Imran, aged 37, that everything is not done and dusted?

The selectors always talk about injecting new blood for a new mission after dismal outings, boast about the long queue of talents and prospects in the pipeline and pretend-ponder over implementing and executing a long-term policy for the betterment of Bangladesh cricket. But the truth is, all that the players need to do to pass their rigorous screening process is wait for someone else's failure in the team to come into the spotlight once again.

Although the general audience does not find any logic behind picking and dropping a player who has been providing similar kinds of performances over the years, selectors never fail to give reasons for sudden inclusions.

In the past, there has been no shortage of praise from selectors after picking up some fresh faces or recalling someone. Although hilarious, selectors once again found the right reason to include Hom.

Hom came to the spotlight in 2011 as a specialist batsman and a utility player, then made his second comeback in 2015 as a good spin bowler who was by trade a batsman and finally made the latest comeback after five years as a batting all-rounder, whose off-break is considered something handy.

All these different but very well-thought out and logical reasons were given by the same group of selectors. Let's not forget that former Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha even labelled him as the best off-spinner in the country.

Hom had hardly justified all that adulation like many others in the team in his first five-year international career, a time in which he played 8 Tests, 4 ODIs and 5 T20Is. Some could argue about his ODI average of 35.00, but if we look back at Hom's career, it just perplexes us.

Hom has been selected as a replacement for premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who is skipping the Sri Lanka tour due to his commitments in the IPL. But is there any specific role for Hom that has been chalked out in the

team? This very issue of fixing a specific role is not something new; the same management failed to carve out specific roles for many players, including Soumya Sarkar, who was dropped for the Sri Lanka tour after being suddenly recalled directly into the playing eleven in the second Test against the West Indies in February this year despite not even being included in the original 18-member Test squad for the Windies Test series.

The team management also proved unable to define a specific role for Soumya in limited-overs formats. He played at a new number seven position during the Windies series only to find himself back at the top in the recently-concluded New Zealand series.

Going back to Hom's inclusion, it is nothing against a player getting an opportunity and certainly, Hom, who is coming back to the side after a long exile, should remain focused on performing whenever the opportunity comes.

Yes, there is a policy to cut and chop, but it cannot be questioned because selectors can say they are trying to do something instead of sitting idly by. Is such promptness not a positive sign?

Sri Lanka home series still on schedule

BCB CEO says after Pakistan U-19s' tour is cancelled

SPORTS REPORTER



The Pakistan Under-19 team's tour of Bangladesh has been called off with the current Covid-19 situation in the country in mind after both boards mutually agreed to postpone the tour.

The Pakistan Under-19 team was originally scheduled to reach Dhaka from Lahore on 11 April to play one four-day and five 50-over matches. However, the tour was rescheduled to begin on April 17 after the government announced a nationwide lockdown at the beginning of the month.

With the government preparing for another lockdown from April 14, the Bangladesh Cricket Board has decided to call off the tour.

"Considering the overall situation, we were in constant touch with the Pakistan Cricket Board. We are planning to hold the series at a suitable time. Once we feel that Bangladesh can host international teams and the situation favours us, we will arrange the tour immediately," BCB

CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told media yesterday.

The Tigers are also scheduled to host Sri Lanka in May for a three-match ODI series right after Bangladesh's tour of the island nation. The team will fly for Sri Lanka tomorrow to take part in a two-match Test series. After completing the tour, the BCB will host their Lankan counterpart for an ODI series.

When asked if that tour was under threat, Nizamuddin informed the home series was on schedule so far and the board was preparing with all aspects in mind.

"According to the ICC's Future Tours Programme, the Sri Lanka team is scheduled to tour Bangladesh. We expect Sri Lanka to arrive in Bangladesh in mid-May to take part in the three-matches ODI series. So far, Sri Lanka is scheduled to arrive in Bangladesh in mid-May and we are going to host the three ODIs in the latter part of May. We have set the programme keeping everything in consideration. Still, if there are any issues, we will take steps according to the situation," he said.



Bangladesh national cricket team's opening batsman Tamim Iqbal arrives at the Kurmitola General Hospital with his wife Ayesha Siddiqua to get the second shot of the Covid-19 vaccine. The national team's cricketers and coaching staff got inoculated with two shots of the Covishield vaccine as they will embark upon a tour to Sri Lanka tomorrow to play two Test matches against the hosts.

PHOTO: STAR

Shakib's KKR begin campaign today

AGENCIES

Former champions Kolkata Knight Riders will look to strike a perfect balance under the astute leadership of Eoin Morgan when they open their IPL campaign against a consistent Sunrisers Hyderabad today.

One of the best in business in the white-ball format, Morgan took charge of an ordinary-looking KKR under Dinesh Karthik midway into the last season held in the UAE.

Running against time, Morgan-led side finished on same points with SRH and RCB but the two teams advanced on better run-rate as KKR missed the playoffs for the second time in succession.

In his first stint as full time captain, all eyes would be on the ODI World Cup-winning English skipper who will look to transform the misfiring army of cricketers

and bring back the glorious days of two-time IPL champions.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh cricket fraternity will be eagerly waiting to see Shakib Al Hasan back in action in the IPL for his former franchise (KKR). Shakib was part of KKR title-winning campaigns in 2012 and 2014 and was bought by his former franchise for Rs 3.2 crore.

In the opening match on Friday, South Africa's AB de Villiers hit a quickfire 48 as Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) prevailed in a last-ball thriller against holders Mumbai Indians.

RCB captain Virat Kohli later said he believes Harshal Patel has solved the team's death-overs woes following the seamer's bowling masterclass in Friday's victory. Patel claimed three wickets in four balls in the dramatic 20th over and conceded only one run to help restrict a star-studded Mumbai to a modest 159-9.



Bangladesh and Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan works on his catching skills during a training session yesterday ahead of his side's opening match against Sunrisers Hyderabad at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium today.

PHOTO: TWITTER



CURTAIN FALLS ON BANGABANDHU 9TH BANGLADESH GAMES

The curtains on the Bangabandhu 9th Bangladesh Games fell yesterday through a muted closing ceremony at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in absence of athletes and officials owing to the rising coronavirus cases in the country. The hour-long closing ceremony highlighted the salient aspects of the meet alongside messages from the dignitaries through audio-visual media before laser works and pyrotechnics brought an end to the proceedings. The meet was dominated by services teams, with Bangladesh Ansar & VDP grabbing the pole position, followed by Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Navy in second and third positions. Bangladesh Navy Sonia Akter Tumpa clinched highest eight gold medals in the ninth edition of the meet, where around 5300 athletes in 31 disciplines competed.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

10-man Leeds stun Man City

REUTERS, MANCHESTER

A dramatic last-gasp winner from Stuart Dallas earned 10-man Leeds United a shock 2-1 victory against runaway Premier League leaders Manchester City at the Etihad Stadium yesterday.

The result means City's six-game winning streak in all competitions has ended as they remain 14 points clear of second-placed Manchester United having played two more games, while Leeds move up to ninth.

A much-changed City side struggled to get going in the first half, with Leeds taking a surprise lead in the 42nd minute, full-back Dallas drilling the ball in off



the post with the visitors' first shot at goal.

Leeds' joy was short-lived as Ferran Torres broke their resistance in the 76th, levelling the score with a fine finish.

Dallas however grabbed a sensational win for Marcelo Bielsa's side in the 91st minute.

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'80 shot dead' near Yangon

Myanmar's UN envoy urges no-fly zone, sanctions against junta

AFP, Yangon

Reports emerged yesterday of more than 80 killed in the latest bloodletting by Myanmar's military, as the country's own ambassador to the United Nations called for "strong action" against the junta.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi in February, with protesters refusing to submit to the junta and demanding a return to democracy.

After over two months of military rule, efforts to verify deaths and confirm news of crackdowns have been greatly curtailed by the junta's throttling of mobile data within the country -- shunting most of the population into an information blackout.

Details of a brutal crackdown in the city of Bago, 65 kilometres (40 miles) northeast of Yangon took a full day to emerge, as residents told AFP of continued violence from the junta which pushed them to flee to nearby villages.

By yesterday evening, the Assistance Association of Political Prisoners -- a local monitoring group tracking deaths -- confirmed "over 80 anti-coup protesters were killed by security forces in Bago on Friday".

AFP-verified footage shot early Friday showed protesters hiding behind sandbag barricades wielding homemade rifles, as explosions could be heard in the background.

Authorities had refused to let rescue workers near the bodies, said a resident. "They piled up all the dead bodies, loaded them into their army truck and drove it away," he told AFP.

State-run New Light of Myanmar newspaper on Saturday

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Entrepreneur Rayhan, 32, sun-drying paper-made ludo and snakes and ladders boards on Noyabazar playground in the capital. He sells each board for Tk 25 to different wholesale markets while producing those for Tk 15-17. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Journo Hasan Shahriar passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent journalist Hasan Shahriar, former president of Jatiya Press Club, breathed his last at the ICU of Impulse Hospital in the capital around 11:45am yesterday.

Hasan, a confirmed bachelor, was admitted to the hospital on Thursday with 80 percent damaged lungs and severe breathing complications, said Mainul Alam, joint secretary of Jatiya Press Club.

Mainul also said that Hasan had Covid-19 symptoms and was tested for the deadly virus around a week ago, but his test report came out to be negative, reported UNB.

Hasan retired from the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

WEST BENGAL POLLS

Five killed as violence mars 4th phase

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Five people were killed in fresh election bloodshed in the Indian state of West Bengal yesterday, during the fourth phase of polling when an estimated 76.16 percent of voters exercised their franchise.

Four persons were killed when the armed federal Industrial Security Force personnel opened fire on being attacked by locals at a booth in Sitalkuchi area in Cooch Behar district, police said.

According to the police, the CISF personnel opened fire in 'self-defense' after locals attempted to "snatch their rifles."

Polling was stopped at the booth soon after the firing incident, EC sources said.

In a separate incident, an 18-year-old first-time voter was shot dead by unidentified persons outside a polling booth in Cooch Behar district, police said.

The deceased voter has been identified as one Anand Burman. According to the police, he was dragged from a booth in Pathantuli area in Sitalkuchi by a group of unidentified people and shot dead.

Trinamool Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party blamed the violence on each other.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Tajuddin seeks arms support

APRIL 11, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

TAJUDDIN'S RADIO SPEECH

The Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro today broadcast a speech by the prime minister of the newly formed government-in-exile Tajuddin Ahmad. On behalf of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his government, Tajuddin expressed his deep respect to all the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the resistance against the Pakistan army. He also thanked the Bangladeshi people for the unstinted support to the cause of Bangladesh's liberation struggle. He appealed to the Bangalees all over the world to come forward to the assistance of the liberation fighters of Bangladesh.

Tajuddin declared that the headquarters of the Independent Bangladesh Government had been established in the free zone of the south-west part of Bangladesh. He provided a list of the commanders who were entrusted with the task of conducting resistance war in various parts of the country.

In his speech, the Bangladesh PM sought unconditional support from the friendly countries of the world in the form of arms. "We are seeking this support as an independent state. We want this support to resist the military junta."

THE BATTLE OF KALURGHAT BRIDGE
Liberation fighters put a brave fight today to defend the strategically important Kalurghat Bridge on the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar road. Shamsher M Chowdhury, BB, then a lieutenant in the army, fought valiantly in the battle. He shares his memory in the following words: We were positioned at the north end of the Kalurghat bridge with about a section of my soldiers.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



MAYHEM IN B'BARIA Cops recover 20 snatched bullets

STAR REPORT

Police on Friday night recovered 20 bullets which were snatched from a cop by some Hefajat-e-Islam activists in Brahmanbaria's Nandanpur area on March 27.

Meanwhile, three more cases were filed in Narayanganj on Friday in connection with vandalism over the confinement of Hefajat Joint Secretary General Mamunul Haque to a resort in the district's Sonargaon on April 3.

Police recovered the bullets from a sweetmeat shop in Suhilpur Bazar of Brahmanbaria, said Md Imtiaz Ahammed, officer-in-charge at the Special Branch(SB) of police.

Law enforcers also arrested two people from Brahmanbaria's Suhilpur on Friday in connection with the recovery of the bullets. The arrestees --

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Second whale carcass washes ashore

Experts think large ships might have fatally injured them



MOSTAFA YOUSUF, MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT

A second whale carcass washed ashore at Himchhari beach of Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The first dead whale was found on the beach on Friday.

Researchers and experts suggest that large ships plying the sea route beyond Bangladesh's exclusive economic zone might have caused injuries to the marine mammals resulting in their death.

The female whale's carcass, which washed ashore yesterday, had a six-foot deep injury to its back, said

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

2 held for raping a boy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Police yesterday arrested three people on charge of sodomising a minor boy in Chatkil municipality area of Noakhali.

The arrestees are Rabbi, 19, and Sumon, 26, of Noor Kha village in Chandraganj upazila of Laxmipur, and Didar Hossain, 28, a resident of Charmutua union in Noakhali Sadar upazila.

Police said the victim and the three accused used work at the same fruit shop. The trio allegedly sodomised the boy

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



PRAYER TIMING APRIL 11

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-35 12-45 4-45 6-24 7-45
JAMAAT 5-10 1-15 5-00 6-28 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Seven killed after quake hits Indonesia

AFP, Jakarta

At least seven people were killed after a 6.0 magnitude quake struck off the coast of Indonesia's main Java island yesterday, as the country reels from a cyclone disaster in another part of the archipelago.

The afternoon quake hit offshore about 45 kilometres southwest of Malang city in East Java, damaging hundreds of homes as well as schools, government offices and mosques across the region.

"Our latest data shows that seven people died, two are seriously injured and 10 others sustained minor injuries," said National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Raditya Jati.

Several communities had been evacuated, he added.

The quake struck at a relatively deep 82 kilometres (50 miles) -- shallower quakes tend to do more damage than deep ones.

Images from the scene showed a ceiling caved in at

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People using three wheelers on the highways for travelling long distances as the government now restricts heavy passenger vehicles on highways during the "lockdown" that has been imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus. The photo was taken in Dhaka's Aminbazar.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

COVID-19 IN INDIA Daily cases keep breaking records

145,384 infections reported in last 24 hours; Maharashtra enters strict weekend lockdown

AGENCIES

India's daily coronavirus cases yesterday rose by a record for the fifth time this week and deaths surged to the highest in more than five months, with hospitals and crematoriums overflowing in parts of the country.

New cases in the world's second-most populous country have totalled the most of anywhere in the world over the last two weeks. India's overall tally of 13.21 million is the third-highest globally, just shy of Brazil and below the worst affected country, the United States.

After a lockdown a year ago caused widespread misery and one of the sharpest downturns of any major economy, the central government is desperate to avoid a hugely unpopular second shutdown.

But many states are tightening the screw, in particular Maharashtra and its capital Mumbai, where restaurants are shut and public gatherings of more than five people are banned.

Every weekend until the end of April the state's 125 million people are confined to their homes unless shopping for food, medicine or travelling.

Mega cities such as Mumbai, the country's financial centre and Maharashtra's capital, and the national capital of New Delhi have also imposed nightly curfews until the end of April.

India reported 145,384 new Covid-19 cases and 794 deaths, the Health Ministry reported. The country breached

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