



MAMATA 'CLEAN BOWLED'
Modi attacks West Bengal CM while campaigning in Bardhaman
SEE PAGE 6

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"The government has not taken any initiative to improve the country's medical system to save the lives of the common people."
JATIYA PARTY CHAIRMAN GM QUADER

"We have to learn how to live with this pandemic... We have to put importance on creating awareness instead of getting panicked..."
DR ASM ALAMGIR, PRINCIPAL SCIENTIFIC OFFICER AT THE IEDCR

"The Zionists want to take revenge because of our progress in the way to lift sanctions...But we will take our revenge against the Zionists."
IRAN'S FM JAVAD ZARIF BLAMES ISRAEL FOR NUCLEAR PLANT OUTAGE

Shafi's death 'hastened'

PBI probe finds; Babunagari, 42 others linked; Hefajat in govt's crosshairs

RASHIDUL HASAN and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN with FM MIZANUR RAHMAN

The Police Bureau of Investigation in a probe report says Hefajat-e Islam Amir Junaid Babunagari and 42 others were involved in "creating an atmosphere that hastened the death" of the Islamist outfit's supremo Shah Ahmad Shafi.



In the report submitted to a Chattogram court yesterday, the PBI recommended that charges of "culpable homicide" be brought against the 43 under Section 304 of the penal code.

According to Section 304, whoever commits culpable homicide, not amounting to murder, will be punished with imprisonment for life or imprisonment for a term which may extend to 10 years.

Inspector Monir Hossen, investigation officer of the case over the "murder" of Shafi, submitted the report to the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Shahidullah Kaiser.

After Shafi's demise in September last year, his brother-in-law Mohammad Moin Uddin claimed that Shafi was murdered in a planned way and filed the case on December 17 that year against 36 people, including Hefajat leader Mamunul Haque.

Taking it into cognisance, the court asked the PBI to submit a report within a month. The PBI later requested the court to give it more time.

Of the 36 accused in the case, the names of 31, including Hefajat Organising Secretary Azizul Haque Islamabadi, were on the list of 43

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Without maintaining physical distancing, passengers cram into a ferry before it leaves Shimulia Ghat in Munshiganj's Louhajang upazila for Banglabazar Ghat in Madaripur yesterday morning. This is ahead of a week-long restrictions on public movement from tomorrow aimed at putting the brakes on the rising number of coronavirus cases and deaths. A large number of people have left the capital for their village homes, fearing that the fresh Covid-19 curbs will drag on, slash their income and they will not be able to survive in the city.

PHOTO: SAJJAD HOSSAIN

STRICT RESTRICTIONS
FROM 6:00AM ON APRIL 14 TO APRIL 21 MIDNIGHT

CLOSURE

- All public, private offices and financial institutions will remain closed and staff members cannot leave their respective cities and town
- All modes of transport (road, river, rail and air) will remain suspended
- Malls and shops will remain closed

CURBS ON MOVEMENT

- No one will be allowed to go out except for emergencies (buying medicines, daily commodities, medical treatment, and burial)
- Vaccine recipients can go out for vaccination but they have to carry their vaccination cards

FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIES

- Factories and industries will remain open while maintaining health guidelines. Authorities will ensure the pick-up and drop-off services for workers

BANKS

- Bank branches will remain closed. However, branches and booths located on land, sea and airports will stay open. Banks involved in forex business, exports and imports can also remain open

HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS

- Hotels and restaurants will remain open from 12:00pm to 7:00pm and 12:00am to 6:00am only for takeaway and online services

KITCHEN ITEMS

- Kitchen market items and other daily essentials can be sold in open spaces from 9:00am to 3:00pm

HARVESTING

- District administrations will coordinate transportation of labourers in case of emergency during Boro harvesting

PRAYERS AT MOSQUES

- A maximum of 20 musalli can take part in regular and Tarabi prayers at mosques. Social distancing and health guidelines must be maintained

NO RESTRICTIONS

- Offices of air, sea, naval and land ports
- Vehicles carrying food, food grains, seeds, fertiliser and pesticides
- Law enforcing agencies
- Media
- Relief distribution
- Health services, Covid-19 vaccination
- Power, water, gas/energy services
- Telephone and internet (govt, pvt)
- Private security services
- Postal services

ASPIRING MIGRANT WORKERS Dreams dashed as flights suspended

JAMIL MAHMUD and RASHIDUL HASAN

The government's decision to suspend all international flights for a week from Wednesday onwards to contain the spread of Covid-19 has put aspiring migrant workers in a perplexing situation.

Tarikul Islam, 38, was all set to board a Saudi Arabia-bound flight on April 17 after he readied all his necessary documents, including two years' work permit, visa, and air ticket.

He had been dreaming of a new life with the 1,300-Riyal-a-month job as a construction worker in the Middle East country, as it would help change the fortune of his four-member family in Mymensingh's Phulpur.

"We are already struggling due to the pandemic," he said, adding the flight suspension will ultimately delay his income opportunity, which is a dire necessity now.

He added that after learning about the flight suspension decision, he communicated with the recruiting agency that arranged his job in but officials there could not confirm a new flight date immediately.

Like him, thousands of aspiring migrant workers have been waiting to board their flights for overseas jobs. However, the fresh government decision is likely to delay them from reaching their goals.

According to an estimate of Recruiting Agency Oikya Parishad, a platform of agents, about 20,000 to 25,000 aspiring migrant workers were supposed to catch their due flights in a week starting from Wednesday.

President of the Parishad Tipu Sultan said recruiting agents had already "booked and confirmed" the tickets for the workers.

The suspension will now hinder the procedure, he said, adding, it

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Record 83 die in single day

7,201 new Covid cases logged

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh recorded the highest Covid-19 deaths yesterday with 83 more fatalities in 24 hours till morning, taking the death toll from the virus to 9,822.

The number surpassed Sunday's figure of 78. The number was 77 the previous day.

The mortality rate remained static at 1.42 percent for the fourth consecutive day, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said in a handout.

Bangladesh announced its first coronavirus-related death on March 18 last year. The virus claimed 568 lives in January this year, 281 in February and 638 in March.

Between 8:00am Sunday and 8:00am Monday, 7,201 new cases were recorded, pushing up the caseload to 691,957.

The infection rate jumped to 20.59 percent, up from 19.81 percent on Sunday. So far, 5,037,833 samples, including 34,968 in the 24-hour period, have been tested.

Bangladesh has been seeing record

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Virus scare lost in mad rush home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the country braces for what officials said would be a strict lockdown from tomorrow, thousands of people left Dhaka for their village homes yesterday, ignoring the risks of contracting coronavirus while travelling.

With long-haul bus, launch, train and domestic flight services being suspended, people travelled on the back of pickups, by auto-rickshaws, rickshaws and motorcycles.

The rush towards hometowns started growing from Sunday morning and it intensified yesterday, soon after the news of a week-long strict "lockdown" was announced at noon.

The pressure of passengers was so intense that the authorities have been operating all the 16 ferries on the Paturia-Dauladia and the Shimulia-Kathalbari routes since Sunday.

The exodus is likely to increase the risk of further spread of the coronavirus across the country, which yesterday reported a record number of deaths from Covid-19 in a single day.

Besides, the Directorate General of Health Services yesterday reported 7,201 new cases, taking the total number of people infected to 6.91 lakh.

FRESH RESTRICTIONS
The Cabinet Division yesterday issued a circular with a set of strict restrictions that would be in effect from 6:00am on April 14 to April 21 midnight to rein in the numbers of Covid-19 cases and deaths.

As per the circular, all public and private offices and financial institutions will remain closed and all modes of transport (ie road, river, rail and air) suspended for the week.

Nobody would be allowed to go outdoors unless there is an emergency like buying medicine, daily necessities, or taking medical treatment, Covid-19 vaccine, and burial.

However, Bangladesh Bank issued a circular in the evening, noting that a limited number of bank branches that deal with overseas trade will remain open.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Jahanara Begum, on oxygen support, being taken for dialysis at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital by her son and other family members around noon yesterday. The 45-year-old woman, who tested positive for Covid-19, has been suffering from breathing difficulties for several days. She needs dialysis on a regular basis.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Pandemic reversing poverty cut: WB

Govt responding proactively but implementation challenges remain

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and DWAIPAYAN BARUA

The Covid-19 pandemic has reversed Bangladesh's steady trend of poverty reduction which had continued over the past two decades, according to a new report of the World Bank.

It also said 30 percent of the country's population was below the poverty line.

The WB report said the government responded to the economic shock from the pandemic proactively, announcing a Covid-19 response programme of \$14.6 billion, but there remained implementation challenges, particularly in bringing resources to small businesses and poor households.

The report, titled "Bangladesh Development Update-Moving Forward: Connectivity and Logistics to Strengthen Competitiveness," was launched through a virtual media briefing yesterday.

According to the government's data, the country's poverty rate stood at 21.8 percent in December 2019.

The Washington-based global lender in the report said despite being severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, the economy started seeing signs of gradual recovery in the first half of fiscal 2020-21 as mobility returned to pre-pandemic levels, factories reopened, and exports rebounded. Consequently, the GDP growth was

projected to reach 3.6 percent in this fiscal year, led by recovery in manufacturing on the back of strong export demand, rebound in construction supported by accelerating public investment, and robust services growth, thanks to progress in the vaccination campaign, it said.

Citing its recent phone-based surveys, the WB said there was a gradual recovery of livelihoods and the labour market in Dhaka and Chattogram in the first half of this fiscal year.

With gradual restoration of livelihoods, food security in poor and slum areas improved. In Chattogram, the percentage of adults working seemed to have returned to pre-Covid levels in February 2021, it said.

Yet, the report, which was being written at the time when the risk of a Covid-19 resurgence remained, indicated that the emergence of new infections would pose many challenges.

The persistence of new infections suggests that transmission of the virus remains an ongoing challenge, it said.

"We have some new information about additional infections and lockdowns but it is still very early. It is hard to know how long that would go on," said Bernard Haven, senior economist of WB, and co-author of the report, during the virtual lunch of the report.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1