

# Bus workers bear the brunt of lockdown



Bus workers in Tangail are facing dire straits as their vehicles go off the roads due to countrywide lockdown. PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Around 800 bus workers in Tangail are passing hard days with their families as they have been off the roads because of the countrywide lockdown imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus.

Neither the owners' association nor the government has come forward with any help for them during the lockdown, said the workers.

"When I got down from the bus the day before the government imposed lockdown on April 13, I had a total of Tk 2,500, which had already been spent to run the family. I'm now struggling to meet my daily needs," said Saiful Islam, a bus driver.

Saiful also said that most of the bus workers are poor and do not have any savings. It has become difficult for them to maintain family when their vehicles go off the roads.

Abu Taher, a supervisor of a bus, said "We get Tk 500 to Tk 700 a day when the buses ply the roads but we are now in dire

Workers said neither the owners' association nor the government has come forward with any help for them during the lockdown.

straits due to the lockdown."

Parvez Miah, helper of Dhaleswari Paribahan bus on Dhaka-Tangail route, said "Will all the problems be solved just by stopping the bus? During the last year's lockdown, I suffered a lot. I have not been able to repay the money I borrowed at that time."

Meanwhile, the bus owners did not stand by the workers during this difficult time. The owners' association has engaged 20 workers per day to keep the buses at the terminal under watch. Each of the worker is paid Tk 300 for

the job.

Several bus owners said they are around 800 buses in the district. This year's lockdown comes as a fresh blow to transport owners because they are yet to recover the losses they have faced during the first wave of Covid-19.

They added that many of the owners are yet to repay the bank installments. So, they cannot do anything for their bus staffers despite of having good intentions.

Seeking anonymity, a bus owner said it was possible to do something good for the workers with the money collected in the name of owners' association. But these are eaten up by the leaders.

Abdul Latif, organising secretary of the district bus coach workers' union, said they could not do anything for the workers due to lack of funds.

Several bus workers said they did not get any benefit from the owners. As a result, they are now struggling to meet their daily needs amid the lockdown.

# Orchards losing mango buds without rain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Over the last couple of months, mango buds are falling off trees in mango orchards across Chapainawabganj -- which is considered the mango capital of the country.

Worried farmers speculate that a drought-like situation due to no rain during the period is causing the damage.

Farmer Sadikul Islam from Mistripara in Chapainawabganj town leased over 100 mango trees on 14 bighas of land in Chalk Alampur village of Sadar upazila.

He said the mango farmers had been expecting a good harvest this year as almost all mango trees in their orchards produced massive number of buds when in full bloom. But with so many of the buds falling off, they have been worrying about incurring heavy losses this year.

As a last resort, the farmers have started to irrigate their orchards, he added.

Another mango farmer, Aminul Islam, from Alinagar area in the town, said he spent Tk 18.5 lakh to lease an orchard on 40 bighas in Jonakipara of Nachole upazila.

He said he was also worried about suffering massive losses as a good number of mango buds already died and fell off the trees in his orchard.

The lack of rain is drying up the mango trees, resulting in the fall of so many mango buds, he also said.

Most mango growers in the area said rain in the month of March is crucial for a good production of mango, but the entire month had no rain this year.

During a recent visit to mango orchards in Ganka, Sarkarpara and Court Bagan areas in the

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town and Dhumi Hayatpur and Chalk Alampur villages in Sadar upazila, this correspondent found a huge number of fallen mango buds that were blanketing the ground in the orchards and children were roaming around to collect the larger of the buds for consumption.

Contacted, Muhammad Nazrul Islam, deputy director of Department of Agricultural Extension, said this year they did not record any rain in the district. Whereas, last year they recorded 17 millimetres of rainfall in January, 7 mm in February, 29 mm in March and 72 mm in April.

About 10 to 12 percent of the mango buds fall off naturally, but the percentage has been higher this year due to the lack of rain.

Advising farmers to ensure adequate irrigation in the orchards, the official also said they expect a total mango production of 2.5 lakh tonnes in the district this year.

As much as 95 percent of mango trees -- in commercial orchards and homes -- bloomed in Chapainawabganj this year. The district had mango orchards on 34,871 hectares last year, when production reached 2.50 lakh tonnes.



PHOTO: RABIUL HASAN

Malnourished mango buds, smaller and deformed, on a tree in an orchard in Ganka area of Chapainawabganj. Enduring rainless months this year, a good number of the buds is dying and falling off.

## Global daily

FROM PAGE 12  
most new infections are the United States (490,000 cases in one week), Brazil (459,000) and Turkey (404,000).

The threshold of 150 million cases worldwide is expected to be reached next week.

The grim scenes out of India were in stark contrast to the quickening vaccine rollouts in much of the western world, with US regulators approving the re-start of a rollout of J&J vaccines halted over blood clotting concerns.

Health authorities had proposed a halt following instances of severe blood clots among a handful of the millions of Americans who received the jab -- a decision overturned after an expert panel said the shots' benefits exceeded possible dangers.

## Covid 'tsunami'

FROM PAGE 12  
to bring oxygen equipment from Singapore.

The government has also pressed industrialists to increase production of oxygen and life-saving drugs.

It also exempted import of Covid vaccines from basic customs duty with immediate effect for a period of three months in a bid to keep low the prices of overseas jabs, reported our New Delhi correspondent.

Import of oxygen and oxygen-related equipment also received full exemption from basic customs duties for three months with immediate effect to augment their availability in domestic markets.

The decisions were taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

One 'oxygen express' carrying 30,000 litres for hospitals arrived in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh state, where armed guards were waiting to escort trucks that would carry the oxygen to hospitals.

## Bhashani's telegram to world

FROM PAGE 12  
twin task of carrying on the war and reorganising the civil administration in the liberated zones. There was a general lull in the fighting between Mukti Foj and the Pakistan Army today except for some isolated encounters. In one of them, the Mukti Foj successfully repulsed an attack on Pakuria village in Dinajpur. The Mukti Foj inflicted heavy casualties on the Pakistani troops.

Today, Pakistan indirectly admitted the shelling of Benapole border areas. Radio Pakistan in its news bulletin claimed that Pakistan troops sealed the border with India at Petrapole after beating back a band of 'infiltrators' and their 'collaborators'.

FLOW OF REFUGEES FROM BANGLADESH UNINTERRUPTED

During the previous 12 days, Tripura received about 100,000 refugees from Bangladesh and of them 50,000 were in camps.

At Sabroom alone, 20,000 refugees had gone from Chattogram. Sabroom had a population of 5,000 only. On an average 5,000 to 6,000 refugees were pouring into Tripura every day. Accommodation for the refugees had been provided mostly in the educational institutions.

Another 100,000 refugees went to Haldibari, Cooch Bihar. The refugees went here following heavy shelling of Saidpur, Nilphamari and Thakurgaon towns by Pakistani troops.

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## Asean claims breakthrough

FROM PAGE 12  
a constructive dialogue among all parties, a special Asean envoy to facilitate the dialogue, acceptance of aid and a visit by the envoy to Myanmar. There was no mention of releasing political prisoners in the statement.

"He said he (Min Aung Hlaing) heard us, he would take the point in, which he considered helpful," Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong told reporters.

"He was not opposed to Asean playing a constructive role, or an Asean delegation visit, or humanitarian assistance."

But Lee added the process had a long way to go, "because it is one thing to say you will cease violence and release political prisoners, it is another thing to get it done".

It was not clear why Lee referred to the release of political prisoners when this was not in the consensus statement.

There was no immediate comment from Min Aung Hlaing.

A regular nighttime news bulletin on the military-run Myawaddy TV reported his attendance of the meeting and said Myanmar would closely cooperate with Asean on various issues, including "the political

transition in Myanmar, and the process that will be implemented in the future".

Charles Santiago, head of the Asean Parliamentarians for Human Rights group, called for the release of Myanmar's political prisoners and a timeline for an end to violence.

"Asean must now act swiftly and set a clear timeline for Min Aung Hlaing to deliver on ending the violence, or stand ready to hold him accountable," he said.

The ASEAN gathering was the first coordinated international effort to ease the crisis in Myanmar, an impoverished country that neighbours China, India and Thailand, since the coup that overthrew Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government. Myanmar is part of the 10-nation Asean, which has a policy of consensus decision-making and non-interference in the affairs of its members.

Myanmar's parallel National Unity Government (NUG), comprised of pro-democracy figures, remnants of Suu Kyi's ousted administration and representatives of armed ethnic groups, said it welcomed the consensus reached but the junta had to be held to its promises.

## Khaleda tests positive for Covid

FROM PAGE 1  
Hossain told reporters last night.

The team of doctors treating Khaleda will now decide the next course of her treatment, UNB reports, quoting her other physician Mohammad Al Mamun as saying.

Mamun said eight others infected earlier with the virus at Khaleda's Gulshan residence were also tested yesterday. None of them has symptoms, he added.

AZM Zahid Hossain, also a vice chairman of BNP, said, "Madam [Khaleda] entered the third week of the virus infection on Thursday. In some cases, the condition

of an infected patient may deteriorate in the third week."

He added, "Madam is doing very well now. She has no visible symptoms of Covid. Her breathing and blood oxygen saturation level are very good. Her taste in food is the same as before."

Khaleda tested positive for coronavirus for the first time on April 10.

The government on March 25 last year freed the BNP chief from jail for six months through an executive order suspending her sentences in graft cases. The government later extended the release period twice.

## AL leader

FROM PAGE 12  
altercations with him at times.

Following one such altercation, Faruk stabbed his wife with a kitchen knife, leaving her critically injured.

Kanak, also a former BCL leader, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead around 5:30am, she said.

The OC of Pallabi Police Station said Faruk, during primary interrogation, admitted that he stabbed his wife.

Police sources said they initially found that the victim gave money that Faruk earned in Japan to one of her relatives who was dilly-dallying to pay them back.

Besides, Faruk was putting pressure on his wife to transfer her share of the flat, owned jointly by the couple, to him as he paid the money.

The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy.

## Wearable

FROM PAGE 12  
has started working with partners to develop manufacturing processes.

Made from a flexible material -- polyvinyl alcohol -- with a layer of gold, the e-skin is a wearable sensor that can pick up signals such as heartbeat and electrical impulses from muscle movement.

A small wireless transmitter strapped to the chest will send heartbeat data to a nearby smartphone or laptop, or to the cloud, allowing a doctor to monitor it remotely.

"E-skin is the next generation of wearables," Someya tells CNN Business. "Today's mainstream wearables are in the form of smart watches and glasses, which are bulky. In contrast, e-skin is thin, lightweight, stretchable and durable."

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Date: 25/04/2021

### e-Tender Notice 03/2020-2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of package	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1.	557841	Supply & installation of Laboratory equipment & instrument for Physics, Chemistry, Botany & Zoology department of Sherpur Govt. College, Sherpur (Re-Tender).	06-May-2021 13:00pm	06-May-2021 14:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP 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 up to 05-May-2021 13:00pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

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