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# US, Britain rush supplies to India

Retired military medics recalled as new Covid infections hit a record peak for fifth day

AGENCIES

The United States and Britain rushed ventilators and vaccine materials to virus-stricken India yesterday while Italy lifted many Covid-19 restrictions in a bid to kickstart a near normal summer.

India is battling a catastrophic, record-breaking outbreak that has overwhelmed hospitals and set crematoriums working at full capacity.

A day-after-day surge has seen patients' families take to social media to beg for oxygen supplies and available hospital beds, forcing the capital New Delhi to extend a week-long lockdown.

But in Europe, it was a story of hope as bars, restaurants, cinemas and concert halls were reopening across Italy yesterday.

And in a boost for businesses, the parliament in Rome was to debate the government's 220-billion-euro (\$266-billion) EU-funded recovery plan.

Prime Minister Mario Draghi has admitted to taking a "calculated risk" with the reopenings, with virus statistics improving but Covid-19 deaths still mounting by hundreds every day.

"Finally!" said Daniele Vespa, the 26-year-old head

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**Renu Singhal, seeing her Covid-19 positive husband gasping for breath, tries to resuscitate him but couldn't save his life. Even as she performed mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on her husband, Ravi Singhal died on her lap inside an autorickshaw outside a hospital in Agra, India.**

PHOTO: INDIA TODAY

## The heat to continue for a few days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A heat wave has been sweeping the country over the last few days, causing immense hardship to the manual workers, especially the day labourers.

Rajshahi, Jashore and Kushtia regions yesterday experienced a severe heat wave while Dhaka, Mymensingh, Chattogram, Rangpur, Sylhet and Barisal divisions saw a moderate one, according to the Meteorological Department.

The sweltering heat may continue for the next two to three days as there are no chances of rain by this time, meteorologist Bazlur Rashid told this newspaper yesterday.

Sylhet and Mymensingh regions are likely to see rains on April 28 or 29 and other parts including Dhaka on April 30 or May 1, he said.

The country on Sunday saw the highest temperature in the last seven years -- 41.2 degrees Celsius in Jashore.

According to the Met office, yesterday's highest temperature was 39.8 degrees Celsius in Jashore. The peak temperature in Dhaka was 39.4 degrees Celsius.

The scorching heat has

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## 38 DSA cases filed in 3 months

Says Article 19; most cases filed by ruling party men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the first three months of this year, 38 cases were filed under the Digital Security Act against individuals exercising their right to freedom of expression.

At least five journalists were among those charged in the cases, revealed yesterday Article 19, a British organisation that promotes the right to freedom of speech.

"We are extremely concerned to see the number of cases and arrests made against those who were publishing news or expressing their opinions about corruption or ethical violations," said Article 19.

Recently, there have been allegations against a ruling party parliamentarian for vandalising the newspaper office of "Amar Habiganj", stated Article 19.

On April 19, the newspaper had published a news regarding allegations that the parliamentarian occupied the land of a local temple. "The victims claimed that the attack on their newsroom took place at the direct instructions of the MP while the police stood by watching," said

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**ROAD TO FREEDOM**  
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

### 'Don't squeeze Yahya'

APRIL 27, 1971  
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

**DON'T SQUEEZE YAHYA AT THIS TIME: NIXON**  
In a memorandum sent to President Richard Nixon today, the US President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger provided three policy options towards the East Pakistan crisis: 1) unqualified backing for West Pakistan, 2) neutrality which in effect leans toward East Pakistan, and 3) an effort to help Yahya achieve a negotiated settlement. Nixon approved the third option and added a handwritten note that reads: "To all hands. Don't squeeze Yahya at this time." He underlined "Don't" three times.

In the assessment of the third option, Kissinger wrote: "[It] would have the advantage of making the most of the relationship with Yahya while engaging in a serious effort to move the situation toward conditions less damaging to US and Pakistani interests. Its disadvantage is that it might lead to a situation in which progress toward a political settlement had broken down, the US had alienated itself from the 600 million people in India and East Pakistan and the US was unable to influence the West Pakistani government to make the concessions necessary for a political settlement."

**ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY SET UP IN BANGLADESH**  
AHM Kamaruzzaman, a minister of the provisional government, said today that an administrative machinery had already been set up to coordinate the Liberation War. He, however, declined to disclose the names of all the administrative heads for security reasons.

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## Papul to serve seven years in Kuwait jail

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Kuwait's Appeal Court yesterday extended the imprisonment of former Bangladeshi MP Mohammad Shahid Islam alias Kazi Papul and two Kuwaitis to seven years from four years in a bribery case.

The others whose sentences were increased include Kuwait's interior ministry's Assistant Under-Secretary Maj Gen Mazen Al-Jarrah and former MP candidate Salah Khorshid, reported Kuwaiti newspaper, Al-Qabas yesterday.

The court, however, acquitted Kuwaiti MP Saadoun Hammad.

Kuwait's Appeal Court delivered the verdict following an appeal filed by Papul after Kuwait's criminal court on January 28 sentenced him to four years, around eight months

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## 'Nomadland' wins big at Oscars

Director Zhao makes history



AFP, Hollywood

US road movie "Nomadland" emerged as the big winner at the Oscars on Sunday with three major prizes, including a history-making award for director Chloe Zhao, as Hollywood celebrated its most glamorous night with a unique pandemic-era gala.

Zhao's drama about marginalized Americans roaming the West in vans was honored for best picture, director and actress for Frances McDormand, who now is in elite company with her third Academy Award for performing.

No-show Anthony Hopkins pulled an upset

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## ARMANITOLA FIRE 2 warehouse owners held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab arrested two men accused in a case filed over the devastating fire at an unauthorised chemical warehouse that killed five people in old Dhaka's Armanitola on Friday.

Mostafizur Rahman was arrested in Nandigram, Bogura, and Mohammad Mostafa in the capital's Uttara during Rab raids early yesterday, said Commander Khandaker Al Moin, Legal and Media Wing director of Rab.

They are the second and third accused in the case filed by Bangshal police against eight named and 27 to 28 unnamed people.

Both of them admitted storing chemicals and highly flammable goods in their warehouses and stores in Haji Musa Manson, the six-storey building which caught fire.

"They didn't have the permission to store chemical and flammable goods there," Commander Moin told a press briefing at Rab Media centre in the

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**A child going back home on a motorcycle with a carrom board in hand. With the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic continuing for over a year now, many children are having to spend most of their time at home with indoor games and activities. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon at the capital's Farmgate area.**

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HUQ

## Hyundai's 10 engines now being used

BR pushes them into service despite no decision from committee concerned

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Railway has started using the 10 locomotives that a South Korean company supplied breaching contract. The move comes even when a BR committee is evaluating if those engines should be used.

First freight train, operated with one of the locomotives, came to Dhaka with goods on Sunday, four days after the authorities gave directives to operate those locomotives "on trial basis until further notice", officials said.

Meanwhile, project authority has asked Hyundai Rotem Company (HRC), the supplier of the locomotives, to change the alternators, a major equipment of the locomotives, otherwise, the company will get less payment, they said.

These developments came weeks after the railway authority changed project director (PD), who had halted payment to Hyundai Rotem Company (HRC) for breaching the contract, and appointed a new PD.

Besides, a technical committee, which has been assigned the job of determining whether those engines can be used for railway operations, was reconstituted after it's chief recused himself from the committee. The committee is yet to submit a report.

"The locomotives are sitting idle for more than six months due to a 'minor fault'. This is meaningless," PD Mohammad Hassan Mansur told The Daily Star yesterday.

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