







GISAID open-access database "from at

Eid will be celebrated in mid-May and

the government is likely to allow public transport after the current spell of restrictions ends on May 5.

People in large numbers are more than likely to head home outside the capital to celebrate Eid. Around 80

lakh to 1.2 crore people leave Dhaka,

Narayanganj, and Gazipur before Eid

during normal times, passengers welfare

defying government directives to spend

Eid at their homes twice last year. This

was blamed by experts as a reason for quick spread of the virus across the

To ease the rush, the government

is likely to extend the closure of public

and private offices until Eid since there

is the likelihood of being only three

working days between May 6 and the Eid

holidays, a cabinet division official said.

on government officials leaving their

The authorities will issue an embargo

The government yesterday instructed

garments factory owners to allow holidays of their workers according to

the zones they are in so that there is no

crisis of transport and physical distancing while travelling could be maintained.

Begum Monnujan Sufian, state minister for labour and employment,

gave the instruction at a tripartite

meeting of union leaders, government

high-ups and factory owners at Srama

Prof Abdulla said people should

celebrate Eid at where they are now while

Thousands of people left Dhaka

organisations estimated.

least 17 countries".

EID RUSH

country.

work stations.



COVID-INDUCED LOCKDOWN

RMG workers suffered 35pc pay cut last year

Says a study

MAYHEM DURING MODI VISIT

Hefajat hardliner

Harun arrested

The ex-Huji man was held earlier for plot

to attack US Embassy, blast in madrasa

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi workers in the readymade garments sector suffered a 35 percent pay cut during the lockdown period amid the coronavirus pandemic last year, which had adverse impacts on their rights to food, health, housing, and even life, says a new study.

The industry also suffered from the closure of markets, suspended shipments, delayed payments, and a liquidity crisis, added the study.

The study report titled "The Weakest Link in the Global Supply Chain: How the Pandemic is Affecting Bangladesh's Garment Workers" was virtually launched yesterday.

The Subir and Malini Chowdhury Centre for Bangladesh Studies, UC Berkeley, in collaboration with the Institute for Human Rights and Business, with support from UNDP Bangladesh and Sweden conducted the

The report is drawn from in-depth interviews conducted between October 2020 and February 2021 with senior executives from international brands,

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Harun

education and cultural

affairs secretary of the

committee of Hefazat-

arrested over the violence

during the Indian prime

minister's visit last month.

Chattogram early yesterday.

has

central

Rab officials picked him up from

Jamiyatul Ulum Al Islamia Madrasa,

known as Lalkhan Bazar madrasa, in

Commanding

Lieutenant Colonel Moshiour Rahman

Jewel told The Daily Star, "We detained

Harun Izhar after his involvement was

found in the violence in Hathazari on

March 26 during the visit of Indian

Police Station with which eight cases

Bangladesh is trying to source vaccines

as the country's mass inoculation

programme stumbled following India's

restriction on export of the Oxford-

AstraZeneca vaccine produced by Serum.

been postponed and the second dose

is uncertain for 13 lakh people as India

has yet to confirm when the shipment

approved on principle the local co-

production of Russia's Sputnik V and

China's Sinopharm vaccines involving

The drug administration yesterday

"We expect to receive five lakh doses

There is no legal restriction now on

Earlier on Tuesday, the government

On the same day, the DGDA issued

The price has not been fixed yet. It

issued authorisation for emergency use

of Sinopharm as a gift in two weeks," said

Maj Gen Mahbubur Rahman, director

general of the Directorate General of

the import and use of Sinopharm in

sought an immediate supply of the

vaccine from China during the first

meeting of the China-led initiative for

emergency use authorisation to Russia's

will be fixed through government-to-

Bangladesh is 15th among the 20

Asian countries in terms of vaccination.

The country has administered 3.3 doses

per 100 people while Palau is at the top

of the list with 74.3 doses, according to

experts not to rely on a single source

for vaccines, the government did not

initially seek the vaccines developed by

China and Russia because neither had

Despite repeated calls from the

the Asian Development Outlook 2021.

government negotiation," the DG said.

Drug Administration (DGDA).

Bangladesh

might arrive in Dhaka.

Bangladeshi drug makers.

The

Bangladesh.

Covid-19 vaccines.

WHO approval.

wishing anonymity.

Administration of the first dose has

government

"He will be handed over to Hathazari

Local production

Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

now-dissolved

e-Islam,

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladeshi suppliers, representatives of the international civil society, and Bangladeshi labour activists.

"Although the government mandates that furloughed workers be paid 65 percent of their salary for the first three months of the pandemic, union representatives claimed that many workers did not get paid as promised," the study said.

Referring to a survey by the Centre for Global Workers' Rights (CGWR) between 21 and 25 March 2020, it said 72 percent of furloughed workers had been sent home without pay. It also found that 98 percent of buyers -- many of them big global clients -- had refused to contribute to the cost of partial wages for furloughed employees, which was required under Bangladeshi law.

"A result of being paid extremely low wages meant that these workers had no savings to cover expenses while they waited for factories to reopen and government stimulus payments to be disbursed. This had adverse effects on several human rights -- food, health, housing, even life."

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

were lodged over the

militant outfit Harkat-ul-

Harun was arrested at

least two times before this

for being involved in the

2013 bomb blast in the

Lalkhan Bazar madrasa

active

(Huji),

of banned

Hefazat mayhem."

Jihad-al-Islami

and conspiring with Lashkar-e-Taiba to

launch an attack on the US Embassy in

Metropolitan Police said after the fierce

clash in Hathazari which left four

people dead, Harun appeared at the Chattogram Medical College Hospital

with his followers on the evening of

Under pressure from him, the

Besides, the international bodies

The World Bank lent \$500 million

for buying vaccines under the "Covid-19

Emergency Response and Pandemic

Preparedness" project.
The Asian Development Bank will

lend \$940 million to Bangladesh for the

During a press briefing on Wednesday, ADB Country Director

Manmohan Parkash stressed the need

for production capabilities within the

There are good Bangladeshi drugmakers that can produce the

"If that happens, it will be a long-term and sustainable solution," he said

GOVERNMENT WORKING ON CO-

"Three pharmaceutical companies have

vaccine producing capacity. One of the

companies can produce eight million

doses a month. The protocol is not fixed

yet," Maj Gen Mahbubur Rahman said.

A DGDA official, however, said the

The Sinopharm is a double dose

vaccine three weeks apart and has an

efficacy of 79.34 percent, according to

the New York Times Covid-19 vaccine

Created by the Beijing Institute of

The World Health Organization

China has already stockpiled more

Biological Products, this vaccine was put

into clinical trials by the state-owned

will decide next week whether it can be

than a million doses of the vaccine and

is using it at home. Besides, it is also

exporting to many countries in Asia,

Chinese company Sinopharm.

approved for emergency use.

South America and Africa.

co-production will take several months

vaccines with the vaccine developers.

"Vaccination will not be a one-year

same purpose by the end of May.

thing," he said.

PRODUCTION

lent funds to Bangladesh to buy only

the vaccines recognised by the WHO or

three Stringent Regulatory Authorities.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

authorities handed over the bodies of

Senior police officials of Chattogram

Dhaka in 2009.

organiser

Worried, govt now plans tough steps had as of Tuesday been detected in

INDIA A MAJOR CONCERN

India is going through a devastating second wave of Covid-19. Hospitals in many states have been overwhelmed with patients amid a nationwide

shortage of oxygen.
India's daily Covid cases hit a new high yesterday with 3.79 lakh fresh infections and 3,645 deaths in 24 hours.
West Bengal, which shares a 2,216km border with Bangladesh, saw a

192-percent rise in infection rate in two weeks during which the overall rise of infection rate in India was 89 percent.

Assembly elections in five states, including West Bengal, and the Kumbha Mela, in which around 50 lakh Hindu devotees took part in Uttarakhand, are mainly blamed for the sharp rise in Covid cases.

Considering the grave situation in India, the government closed its border with India from April 26. Only freight and stranded Bangladeshis are being allowed in.

In the last three days, at least 510 Bangladeshis have been allowed to return through Benapole. Of them, three were found Covid-19 positive, reports our Benapole correspondent. These people had gone to India for

treatment and had less than 15 days of valid visas. They would have to be in 14day institutional quarantine. However, a good number of people regularly cross the border illegally and

this is a major concern. At least 2,638 people were detained

by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in 2019 while they were entering Bangladesh illegally, BBC reported in December 2020 citing BSF's statistics. The number was 2,971 in 2018.

This is just the tip of the iceberg, sources tell The Daily Star. Many evade w enforcers' eyes.

Indian truckers and their helpers

enter Bangladesh often posing serious risk of spreading the Indian variant of over 1,200 sequences uploaded to the

Covid-19. Rashid-E-Mahbub, former Prof president of the Bangladesh Medical Association, said, "Indian variant will

Commotion on the Central Shaheed Minar premises as the Dhaka City (South) Awami League handed out Eid

gifts for underprivileged children yesterday. There were too many hoping to get hold of the gift packs.

come to Bangladesh ultimately."

The government should take steps to stop it from entering Bangladesh and prepare to stop the spread of the Indian variant, he said.

Infectious disease specialist Prof Ridwanur Rahman said the government should take three steps, keeping in mind that the Indian variant is likely to entre Bangladesh or has already entered Bangladesh.

The steps are: get more people vaccinated, increase the oxygen supply capacity, and increase the number of

The National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19 also expressed concern that the country might be in a crisis once the Indian variant enters. The authority should strengthen vigilance, it said in a press release on Wednesday.

Prof ABM Abdulla, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's personal doctor, said there is apprehension that the Indian variant might enter Bangladesh.

"The passenger travel ban [from India to Bangladesh] must be enforced strictly," he told The Daily Star yesterday. A cabinet division official said the home ministry has already been directed

to beef up surveillance by Border Guard Bangladesh so that no one can enter Bangladesh illegally. The Indian variant B1.617 is more transmissible than earlier strains of the virus.

A study published in Cell journal on April 20, said that the variant has a mutation that increases its potency to infect human cells. In laboratory settings, the variant proved to be 20 percent more

transmissible, said the study. The WHO said the B.1.617 variant Prof Rashid said the authorities should prevent the mad dash home usually seen

ahead of Eids.

Bhaban.

PM suggests five actions to fight those

HQ via video conference

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed on the importance of five actions to fight against antimicrobial resistance (AMR) as it is crucial for

The Prime Minister put forward the actions at the high-level Interactive Dialogue on AMR through her prerecorded statement played at the opening segment of the dialogue at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The actions include an integrated multisectoral action plan on AMR, including a collective action plan by the international community at both regional and global levels with a special focus on low- and middle-income countries; and good manufacturing, laboratory practices, and surveillance

The three other actions are equitable access to affordable and effective antibiotics, as required, through a transfer of technology and sharing of ownership; sustainable financing for AMR containment activities and finally global public awareness in combating AMR through political commitment and partnership among the member states.

"We need to implement the 2015 Global Action Plan on AMR, 2016 UN political declaration on AMR, and formulate AMR national action plans,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

US, European countries reject Syria election

Western members of the UN Security Council, led by the United States, France and Britain, on Wednesday rejected the outcome of Syria's May 26 presidential

Instigation behind 'suicide' but she [the victim] wrote about the incident or the day before. her extreme emotional distress and The police will interrogate everyone

FROM PAGE 1

the court through his lawyers.

The HC bench of Justice Mamnoon Rahman and Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman refused to hear any of the anticipatory bail petitions on the cause list stating that the bench has no jurisdiction to hear such petitions.

The HC bench said it would not entertain any anticipatory bail petitions due to the pandemic and restrictions.

"Some anticipatory bail petitions have wrongly been included in the cause list for hearing today," Justice Mamnoon Rahman told lawyers at the beginning of the proceedings of the

Anvir did not appear before the HC bench, said his lawyer Md Munsurul Hoque Chowdhury.

Chakrabarty, commissioner (Gulshan division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, yesterday told reporters that immigration police checked two passports of Anvir and said he had not left the country after April 26. "There was no direct suicide note... frustration in her diaries," said the DC. Chakrabarty quoted a diary entry, saying, "You [the accused] will see

tomorrow and feel me in your heart." He said, "It is very important and similar to a suicide note.

"After we went to the crime scene, we found a picture of the victim and the accused on the wall and her frustration and distress was written in her diaries. It

seemed to us that a promising 21-year-

old woman did not die by suicide without a reason or instigation." He said another important clue is that on the morning of April 26, the victim told her sister, who lodged the case, over the phone about "serious consequences" and said anything might

happen any time. After checking digital footprints, the victim's mobile phones and CCIV footage, the police have found evidence that the

accused used to visit the flat, he said. But police have not found any proof

mentioned in the case as well as the ones whose names will come up in the investigation, Chakrabarty said. About threats made to the victim's

family, the DC said police have looked into the matter.

"We are in touch with the family and will provide all them with security."

He refuted allegations that police were not arresting the accused because of his influence. It could just have been an unnatural death, but the case is at this stage because of police promptness.

"On the basis of evidence collected immediately from the spot, police convinced the family to file the case over instigation of suicide.

On Monday night, police recovered the body of the college student of Cumilla at a rented flat in Gulshan.

The following day, her sister sued Bashundhara Group MD Anvir.

According to the complaint, Anvir developed a relationship with the

of Anvir visiting the flat on the day of victim and promised to marry her.

Gonoshasthaya at their doorstep

ambulances for Covid-19 patients who call the institution or book the service using an app, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, founder and trustee of GK, told The Daily Star on Wednesday night. chancellor

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Prof Dr Nazrul Islam inaugurated the service virtually during a programme at GK's Dhanmondi hospital The service is currently being provided

every day from 9:00am to 8:00pm, he Initially three teams will work to treat

and volunteers. Dr Zafrullah said the ambulance that

will visit the Covid-19 patients' houses will have an X-ray, ECG machine, a ventilator and all other necessary equipment.

not charge any fees for their services and will charge about half the cost of other tests, including the Covid-19 test.

The medical team conducting house visits will also be accompanied by a motorcycle, the rider of which will return to the hospital with the X-Ray cassette and/or a potential Covid-19 patient's

Covid-19 patients will be divided into four categories according to the symptoms

they are exhibiting. These are: mild, tolerable, tolerable with comorbidities (diabetes, heart or kidney disease, stroke, asthma, etc.) and severe.

Dr Zafrullah said the first three types of patients can be treated at home.

the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO). The doctor will give them certain medicines after going through the X-ray image on their mobile phones. The technician will collect blood samples for necessary tests.

If a patient tests positive for Covid-19,

the necessary medicine will be sent to his or her residence and necessary treatment will be provided.

and his or her relatives in the use of oxygen cylinders and pulse oximeters. If necessary, plasma treatment will be arranged at home. In addition, chest X-rays, ECG and

all the tests that need to be done will be carried out.

corona patient's house, Dr Zafrullah said. He said not all Covid-19 patients need to go to hospital.

can provide through home visits -firstly, carry out tests on a large scale and secondly, if any Covid patients calls them,

their medical team will go to the patient's residence and provide the necessary Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury told The

Daily Star that the government had not taken the necessary precautionary measures regarding Covid-19 treatment. "I have been saying from the

beginning that oxygen is most needed for Covid-19 patients. We can easily produce that oxygen ourselves. It costs around Tk 30 crore to build a small oxygen plant, and it is not difficult for the government to spend [that amount]. If the money is given to the hospitals as a grant, they can produce oxygen as per their requirement,"

"At the same time, we will teach other people of the Covid infected patient how to measure temperature, blood pressure and oxygen level. We will provide this service from door to door, so that the crowd in the hospital is reduced and the panic among the people is also reduced." Zafrullah said there is no alternative

to stand by the people the way Covid-19 situation is deteriorating. We can say for sure that the positive results will be visible within 15 to 30 days of the door-to-door treatment gets started.

Call 01709-66994 and 09602111940 to avail the medical services of the Gonoshasthaya Kendra mobile medical team. In addition, this facility is also available through the app Codered SOS.



Speaks at dialogue at UN

UNB, Dhaka

preventing future pandemics.

framewoŕk.

results in advance

AFP, United Nations

election in advance, a position denounced by Russia as "unacceptable."

"The failure to enact a new constitution is proof positive that the so-called election on May 26 will be a sham," US ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said during a monthly session of the Security Counci on Syria.

LPG price slashed

The contract price rate set by the Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco) each month is the dominant price for LPG in Asia and elsewhere in the world. BERC chairman added that they

based on the price in the international market. However, the commission did not refix the price of the LPG gas sold by the state-owned Liquid Petroleum Gas Ltd (LPGL). The current price of gas sold by

company in 12.5kg LPG cylinders is Tk

would revise the price every month

With the new price rate, the BERC has set the LPG price twice in a month. On April 12, the commission fixed the retail price of LPG for the first time. But many consumers expressed

concern over the implementation of the new price as the regulatory body could not execute the decision of its previous price rates. Consumers from different districts

alleged that the LPG distributors and the retailers did not follow the rates set by the regulatory body on April 12. Idris Ali, a resident of Dohar upazila

n Dhaka, said he bought 12kg gas for Tk 1,030 last week. "No matter how much the government reduces the price of gas, we do not get the benefit. We will not get gas at government-fixed prices," he said. Mozammel Haque, a shopkeeper in Jamalpur, said he had been buying

LPG between Tk 980 and Tk 1,000 for long. "I could not purchase LPG at government-fixed rates yet. Seeking anonymity, a resident of Cumilla's Chauddagram, said he

bought 12kg gas at Tk 1,050 from the upazila town this week. At yesterday's briefing, Ruhin Hossain Prince, central committee member of Communist Party of Bangladesh, said the BERC earlier fixed the price at Tk

But traders did not implement that rate. The BERC chairman said they learnt from various sources that new prices were not being implemented at the retail level

975 only to protect the traders' interests.

"We will take actions based on specific allegations against the distributors for selling gas at higher prices," he said.

The BERC, as a single regulatory authority, on April 12 fixed the retail price of LPG for the first time in Bangladesh.

Previously, the state-owned and private companies used to set their prices separately.

Anvir's 5 family members leave younger brother Yeasha Sobhan and (AVSEC) at the airport confirmed to The her daughter.

Daily Star. The aircraft is operated by Sky Solution Limited, a company of Bashundhara Group, said the official

The family members left the country two days after Anvir was accused in a case over abetting suicide of a college student at a flat in the capital's Gulshan. According to the passenger list, a

copy of which has been obtained by

this newspaper, the five family members

include Anvir's wife Sabrina Sobhan,

their two children, wife of Anvir's

Sources at the airport told The Daily Star that security officials were on alert to make sure that Anvir could not leave the country as a Dhaka court imposed a

Authority of Bangladesh Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman said the chartered aircraft sought permission on Tuesday to operate a flight and they granted the permission.

The passengers got clearance from the Special Branch of police and then the chartered flight left the country, he added.

travel ban on him. Talking to this newspaper, Civil

Covid-19 patients at home. Each team will have senior and junior physicians, nurses, pathology technologists, physiotherapists

He said the mobile medical team will

sample.

They will be treated according to

Patients exhibiting severe symptoms will be transferred to the hospital.

The nurse will train the patient

In other words, a hospital will go to a

There are two types of services they