

**MYANMAR JUNTA TARGETS EDUCATION**  
Over 11,000 academics, other university staff suspended after going on strike in protest against military rule  
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# The Daily Star

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**"Taking the advantage of the relaxed lockdown, moving from one district to another is a suicidal decision."**  
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE MINISTER ZAHID MALEQUE



**"You've got to shut down...you need to break the chain of transmission."**  
TOP WHITE HOUSE COVID ADVISER ANTHONY FAUCI ON LOCKDOWN IN INDIA



**"Now, the time for long deliberations is also coming to an end. It is time to take action."**  
S KOREAN PRESIDENT MOON JAE-IN ON N KOREA CRISIS

## Pandemic to be budget mainstay

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

Keeping in mind the possible impacts of the second Covid-19 wave, the government is going to attach top priority to vaccination, economic recovery, and life and livelihood of the poor in the upcoming national budget.

The size of the next budget, due to be placed in parliament on June 3, is likely to be Tk 602,880 crore, 6.14 percent higher than the original budget of Tk 568,000 crore for the current fiscal year, according to a draft budget proposal.

It will be finalised today at a meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal and top officials of the Finance Division, said finance ministry officials.

"The meeting will discuss the size of the next budget, priorities for fiscal 2021-22, revenue collection and measures to revive the economy amid the second wave of Covid-19," a top official at the ministry told The Daily Star yesterday.

- Budget size Tk **6,02,880**cr
- Block allocation for vaccines and health emergency Tk **10,000**cr
- Subsidy for repaying loans under stimulus packages Tk **12,000**cr

- PRIORITIES:**
- Spending on vaccination
  - Economic recovery
  - Fiscal support to poor

"Though there will be some new special measures, the next budget will be a traditional one," said the official, seeking anonymity.

According to the proposal, the government will set aside Tk 35,000 crore in the next budget for the health sector. The allocation is Tk 29,246 crore for the current fiscal year.

The budget will be placed at a time when the economy, already struggling to recover from the impacts of the first wave of the pandemic, is hit by a resurgence of Covid.

The second Covid wave prompted the government to enforce a nationwide shutdown, dealing a massive blow to the poor and low-income groups. The crisis has put the government in a precarious situation as it is trying to save the lives of citizens on the one hand and revive the economy to protect the livelihoods of millions on the other.

Against such a backdrop, economists SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



People heading home for Eid push and shove each other as they try to get on a packed ferry being operated for a few ambulances and trucks at Mawa in Munshiganj yesterday. Thousands have been leaving for their homes this week despite the prime minister's call to spend Eid where they are.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## If Dhaka joins Quad, it'll harm ties with Beijing

Says Chinese ambassador Li Jiming

UNB, Dhaka

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming has said Bangladesh should not join "Quad", a US-led initiative, and Dhaka's relations with Beijing will "substantially get damaged" if it joins the initiative.

He termed "Quad" a military alliance aiming against China's resurgence and its relationship with neighbours.

The ambassador said Quad is a "narrow-purposed" geopolitical clique, and Bangladesh should not join it as the country will not derive any benefit from the initiative.

The US, India, Japan and Australia are part of an informal strategic alliance -- the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad as it is known.

"History has proved again and again such partnership surely damages our neighbours' own social, economic development and people's well-being," Ambassador Li said.

The Chinese envoy was speaking at a virtual programme with the members of Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAB) yesterday.

DCAB President Pantho Rahaman and General Secretary AKM Moinuddin also spoke at the event. On April 27, Chinese State Councillor and Minister of National Defence Wei Fenghe met President Abdul Hamid. The two sides agreed to advance bilateral military cooperation.

To jointly maintain regional peace and stability, the two countries SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



## INDIA RETURNNEES Covid negative certificate a must for release

Decides home ministry; going home suicidal, says Zahid Maleque

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Those returning to the country from India will be released from institutional quarantine only upon completing the 14-day quarantine period and testing negative for Covid-19.

The decision was made in an emergency health ministry meeting yesterday, where Health Minister Zahid Maleque termed people's decision to travel to their home districts for Eid "suicidal" after the highly contagious Indian variant was recently detected in Bangladesh.

"Taking advantage of the relaxation of lockdown, moving from one district to another is a suicidal decision," he said.

The health minister said the Indian variant has been killing thousands of people in India and then created a situation of terror in Nepal, and is now found in Bangladesh.

"If people continue moving around SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## 5.92m students at risk of learning loss

Closure of schools causes huge impact on education, finds PPRC-BIGD survey

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Covid-driven school closure of over a year has put millions of the country's students at risk of learning loss, a new study has said.

Besides, it found that the unprecedented situation forced guardians to increase out-of-pocket expenditure on their children's education as students had to attend coaching classes and private tuitions to continue their studies.

More than half the primary and secondary students had to attend such classes and tuitions during the closure, the study said, also pointing out that the pandemic was causing mental stress to all students.

Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) and Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) shared the study findings with journalists at a virtual press conference yesterday.

The findings were presented from Part 2

- Only **10%** students had access to distance learning
- Only **2%** primary, **3%** secondary students took TV classes
- **51%** primary, **61%** secondary students were availing private tuitions
- **12%** of **10-20** year olds suffering from mental stress during pandemic
- **8%** school-going boys, **3%** girls are engaged in income generating activities

of the third round of a survey titled "PPRC-BIGD Rapid Response Research: COVID Impact on Educational Life of Children".

The survey was based on telephone interviews of heads of 6,099 rural and urban slum households having school-going children. Forty-three percent of the respondents were from rural and the SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

## Nepal's PM Oli loses vote of confidence

President will call for parties to propose a new candidate

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli lost a confidence vote

yesterday, triggering fresh political uncertainty just as the Himalayan nation reels from the pandemic.

Oli, 69, decided to seek a vote of confidence following months of feuding within his ruling communist party and coalition partners.

"If you want a stable parliament you should vote for the continuity of this government," he said in his address to the legislature before the vote.



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## COLLEGE GIRL'S DEATH Family irked by poor probe progress

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Family of the college girl found dead in a Gulshan flat has expressed frustration and dissatisfaction as police have not yet arrested or even interrogated Bashundhara Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir, who stands accused of abetting her suicide.

"My sister was in a relationship with Anvir who promised her to marry and settle abroad. On April 26 morning, my sister called me and said Anvir would not marry her and had scolded her. She also said she is in trouble and an accident may happen anytime," said the victim's elder sister, who filed the case against Anvir.

"It is already two weeks since the body of my sister was recovered, but police are yet to collect the call record of Anvir's mobile phone," she told The Daily Star yesterday.

Police recovered the body hanging from the ceiling fan in her bedroom on April 26. Her legs were SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A student of class-III has a walk with her father at Hatirjheel in the capital yesterday. With schools closed and restrictions on playing with others, many are cooped up in their homes for days. Only the exercise time gets them some fresh air.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## Ansar Al Islam leader had links with Hefajat

Investigators claim

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The spiritual leader of Al-Qaeda-inspired militant outfit Ansar Al Islam had connections with Qawmi madrasa-based organisation Hefajat-e-Islam, said counterterrorism officials.

Ali Hasan Osama, 27, who was arrested by Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit from Rajbari on May 6, took his oath from a top Hefajat leader. The investigators have also got a photo of the oath-taking event, they said.

Osama is now on a five-day remand in CTTC custody. Saiful Islam, deputy commissioner of CTTC unit, said, "We have some information about the connections between Hefajat leaders and Osama."

"We also got some digital devices and communication ... from Osama. These have been sent for forensic analysis. We may say more after getting the forensic report," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Besides the Ansar Al Islam, investigators also claimed to have found some other militant outfits linked to Hefajat, including Harkat-ul-Jihad (Huji).

According to an intelligence report obtained by this newspaper, at least eight Huji leaders held posts in the 249-member Hefajat committee that had recently been dissolved.

Mahbub Alam, joint commissioner of DB police, said, "In our investigation, we have got evidence of Hefajat's links with militant outfits."

Police officials added that they have also found "close SEE PAGE 10 COL 3