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"Granting bail to Journalist Rozina Islam by the court has made it evident that the court is totally independent and the government has no intervention in the judiciary."
ROAD TRANSPORT AND BRIDGES MINISTER OBAIDUL QUADER



"Only granting bail is not enough, the case against journalist Rozina Islam should be withdrawn."
JATINYA PARTY CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION GM QUADER



"I'm increasingly confident that we're on track for the roadmap... the vaccine, after two doses, works just as effectively [against the Indian variant]."
BRITISH HEALTH SECRETARY MATT HANCOCK ON ASTRAZENECA JABS



Rozina walks out on bail, finally

'Will most certainly continue working as a journalist', says to a warm welcome



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Prothom Alo Senior Reporter Rozina Islam meets her daughter at a city hospital, hours after being released from prison.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prothom Alo Senior Reporter Rozina Islam walked out of jail yesterday afternoon, seven days after she was arrested in a case filed by the health ministry.

She left Kashimpur Central Women's Jail in Gazipur at 4:18pm, where her family members and colleagues were waiting for her with floral garlands.

She met the outpouring of support with the words: "I will most certainly continue working as a journalist."

In the evening, she was taken to Square Hospital in the capital for a medical check-up.

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Migrant workers intending to travel to Saudi Arabia gather in front of the Saudia office at the capital's Hotel Sonargaon around noon yesterday to book hotel stays after reaching the gulf country. A recent travel advisory by the Kingdom made it mandatory for travellers to be in institutional quarantine at their own expense for seven days after arrival.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Guideline on black fungus coming soon

Say health officials

MOUJIB AHMED SUJAN

As black fungus infections emerge as a new threat to public health in India, health officials in Dhaka yesterday said they will soon release a guideline on preventing and treating the infection.

Microbiologists and physicians say indiscriminate use of steroids and a few drugs are behind the black fungus infections among recovering and recovered Covid-19 patients.

"We are aware that black fungus infections have been detected in India's Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi and that a few states announced it as an epidemic. We are watching the situation carefully to make sure that it can't cause another disaster in our country," Nazmul Islam, director of Disease Control at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told a virtual

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COURT ORDER TO SURRENDER PASSPORT It's rare in case of journaous

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A court order asking Rozina Islam to surrender her passport before being granted ad-interim bail yesterday is a rare occurrence for journalists.

Some legal experts have said the country's criminal justice system does not allow conditional bail and that the right to holding a passport, leaving and entering the country is enshrined for citizens in the constitution.

The courts usually issue such directives on the accused while granting them bail in cases related to corruption, money laundering, politics and murder.

Rozina, a senior reporter for Prothom Alo, was arrested in a case filed by the health ministry last

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Ex-VC Sobhan violated rules

Edn ministry recommends steps against him for illegal recruitment at RU

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The outgoing vice-chancellor of Rajshahi University has violated the constitution, university law, and a government embargo by appointing 137 teachers and staffers on the last day of his office, found a probe committee.

RU VC Prof M Abdus Sobhan was involved in a "punishable offence", said the probe committee members and education ministry officials.

The probe report that was submitted to the top officials of the Secondary and Higher Education Division yesterday also recommended imposing a ban on the overseas travel of Sobhan.

"We have submitted the probe report," probe committee chief and University Grants Commission Member Prof Muhammed Alamgir told The Daily Star yesterday. He refused to make any further comments.

This correspondent tried to reach Prof Sobhan yesterday afternoon, but he did not respond.

The Secondary and Higher Education Division, on May 6, formed a four-member probe committee to investigate

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Travel ban to Israel remains

Foreign ministry says

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has said Bangladeshi passport-holders' travel ban remains in force after news reports and a tweet by an Israeli official said Bangladesh had removed the travel ban.

The confusion over the ban to Israel was created after the Bangladesh government six months ago removed the "except for Israel" part of the notification "This passport is valid for all countries of the world, except for Israel" in the passport.

Attaching a news report by Weekly Blitz, Deputy Director General for Asia and the Pacific at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Gilad Cohen tweeted that Bangladesh removed its travel ban to Israel.

"Great news! Bangladesh has removed travel ban to Israel. This is a welcome

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All hands on deck

Urge experts for saving lives, livelihoods during pandemic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should focus on safeguarding the livelihoods of the low-income people and fortifying its health facilities to combat the coronavirus rather than fixating on maintaining the growth momentum, said economists yesterday.

"For the time being we should not pay much attention in achieving the mid-term and long-term targets of sustainable development goals (SDG) or whether GDP growth is going to be the same as before," said eminent economist Wahiduddin Mahmud at a webinar styled "Covid-19: Linking Economic and Health Concerns" organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

It is now more important to take steps to ensure that the low-income people do not slip into poverty, he said, adding that the health sector must get equal attention.

"The Covid catastrophe has made it clear how fragile the health sector is - because of incompetency or irregularity," he said, adding that apart from these, there was also negligence in government allocation for the sector.

He went on to call for maintaining Covid precautions like mask wear, social distancing and frequent hand washing indefinitely since the financial costs for lockdowns needed to bring down the infections and fatalities are high.

"We seem to lack the discipline to enforce lockdown and ensure Covid measures -- and it is a governance issue," said Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre of Policy Dialogue.

If the infection increases dramatically, as was the case in neighbouring India, it may go beyond the capacity of the health sector, Mahmud said, while highlighting the low government allocation for the health sector.

"The government expenditure for the health sector is less than 1 percent of our GDP, which is not the case in countries of our level," he said, while citing the case of Vietnam, where the allocation for public health is 7 percent of GDP.

If the capacity of the public health sector is enhanced by increasing the allocation, it will have long-term benefits, Mahmud added.

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Curbs extended but relaxed

Inter-district bus, train, launch to operate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inter-district bus, train and launch services will resume across the country on the condition that they operate at half their capacity for a week.

The cabinet decision in a circular yesterday lifted the coronavirus restrictions on almost everything, except the educational institutions.

Restaurants can also serve food, keeping half the seats empty, it added.

A recent study of the Power and Participation Research Centre and Brac Institute of Governance and Development revealed that about 5.92 million primary and secondary school students were at risk of learning losses as in-person classes have not been taking place since March last year.

The term learning loss refers to any specific or general loss of knowledge and skills or to reversals in academic progress, most commonly due to extended gaps or discontinuities in a student's education, according to education and development forum UKFIET.

The government closed educational institutions on March 17 last to contain the spread of Covid-19.

Another report of the World Bank says the

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Tigers return to winning ways

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first match of the three-match ODI series started with some uncertainty due to coronavirus threat, but Bangladesh brushed aside everything and returned to winning ways in the fifty-over format, beating Sri Lanka by 33 runs at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Just hours before the start of the game, news broke out that two players and an official from the Sri Lankan contingent had tested positive for coronavirus.

Shiran Fernando and Isuru Udana - the two players - along with bowling coach Chaminda Vaas tested positive in the first tests ahead of the first ODI. However, only Fernando tested positive in the second test and was he isolated while the two others returned negative results and left-arm seamer Udana was allowed to play the game.

The game was, for most parts, dominated by Bangladesh, who bowled out the opposition for 224

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Bangladesh players celebrate as Mehedi Hasan Miraz (C) sends back Sri Lanka batsman Ashen Bandara during the first ODI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The off-spinner took four wickets for 30 as the hosts won the match by 33 runs.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Cyclone Yaas approaching

PM urges coastal people to stay alert

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is taking adequate precautionary measures to weather Cyclone Yaas, which is approaching the Southwest region near the Indian border and will likely make landfall on Wednesday afternoon.

"InshAllah, we will remain alert and be able to minimise this hazard," said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday at the inauguration of 215 cyclone and flood shelter centres along with other infrastructure in the city's Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

She went on to urge people to stay alert to reduce the damages.

"Now, we can know about the cyclones beforehand with the help of technology. Be cautious and aware to reduce the risks in any disaster," she added.

The cyclonic storm will gain strength during the full moon when the normal tide will be higher.

The surge will add another four to five feet, so the difference between low tide and high tide could be up to 20 feet, said Md Abdul Mannan from the storm warning centre of the Bangladesh Met Office.

With a wind speed of 118 km per hour, Yaas may become a 'severe cyclone', he said.

The cyclone is heading towards the Odissa coast and partially the Sundarbans area, said Samarendra Karmakar, a former director of the Met Office.

"But it is too early to make any prediction about the

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