

## 25,000 heave sigh of relief

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countries either.

Bangladeshi expatriates/citizens who visited (not residing) the 11 countries within 15 days before the date of travel to Bangladesh are allowed to travel to/from Dhaka provided they have the special approval/authorisation from the competent authorities of Bangladesh.

On arrival, the passengers will complete a mandatory 14-day institutional quarantine at government designated hotels on their own expenses, says the CAAB circular.

Names of Columbia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Georgia, Iran, Mongolia, Oman, South Africa and Tunisia have been dropped from the Group A list. None from these countries was allowed to travel to Bangladesh since May 1.

The CAAB also said passengers from eight countries (Group B) -- Belgium, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Greece, Kuwait and Oman -- are permitted to travel to Dhaka.

However, the passengers on arrival will have to complete a mandatory 14-day institutional quarantine at government designated hotels on their own expenses.

There is no restriction on the passengers bound for these eight countries.

As an exception, passengers from Kuwait and Oman shall have to complete a mandatory three-day institutional quarantine in Bangladesh at government designated hotels on their own expenses.

Upon completion of the institutional quarantine, medical tests

will be performed. The passenger will be allowed to go home to complete 11-day home quarantine if the medical test result is satisfactory.

In case of an unsatisfactory medical test result, the passenger will have to go for isolation at government designated facilities on his own expenses or continue the institutional quarantine, CAAB said in its circular.

There will be no restriction on outbound passengers' travel to Group B countries.

The CAAB said passengers to and from all countries except from those in Group A and B are allowed to travel between the respective countries. In that case, inbound passengers will have to complete 14-day strict home quarantine.

However, if any passenger shows Covid-19 symptoms on arrival to Bangladesh, he/she shall be sent to a government designated hospital for further checkup or depending on the nature/intensity of the symptoms, the passenger will be sent to isolation at government designated facilities or hotels to stay there on his own expenses.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Fakhru Islam, president of Recruiting Agencies Welfare Organisation of Bangladesh, said lifting ban on travelling to Oman and Kuwait is certainly a good news for about 25,000 Bangladeshi workers, who are stuck in the country for over a month.

"We hope the government will make necessary arrangements so that the migrant workers can return to work in those countries without suffering," he added.



Medical workers collect swab samples from people to be tested for the coronavirus disease in Cyberjaya, Malaysia yesterday. Malaysia reported 126 deaths from the coronavirus yesterday, the highest daily toll since the start of the pandemic.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Principal, super negligent

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For the principal and superintendent's negligence and failure to save the woman from being raped, the court asked the vice-chancellor and registrar of National University to initiate departmental proceedings against them by placing them under suspension or releasing them from their respective positions within seven days of receipt of a copy of the judgement and order.

The HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Kamrul Hossain Mollah came up with observation and directive while delivering the verdict.

"... The rape victim was entitled to have protection from the college authority -- a public institution in whatever manner it be -- in enjoying her most basic fundamental right to life and personal liberty, but it was crumbled brutally for which the inaction of the respective authority of the college was responsible," the judges said.

"If exemplary action is taken against the negligence, the women of our country will take our nation forward to a new height free from all sorts of oppression."

The right to life and personal liberty also includes rights to privacy as well, the bench said, adding that the country's constitution ensures certain rights which are fundamental in nature.

Following two separate reports published in The Daily Star on September 27 last year titled "Rape in MC College: 6 accused BCL men moved with impunity" and "Unpublished crimes led to horror like this", the HC bench on September 29 issued the suo moto rule.

In the rule, the court asked the authorities to show causes as to why they should not be directed to take appropriate legal steps against the principal and hostel superintendent of the college for their negligence and failure to save the woman from being raped.

The bench also formed a three-member committee, headed by Sylhet's District and Sessions Judge Md Bazlur Rahman, to probe into the incident of rape on the campus.

The committee submitted its 179-page probe report to the HC bench on October 20 last year, saying that there was negligence on the part of the hostel

superintendent, three daytime guards and two night guards.

Principal Prof Mohammad Saleh Ahmed also could not avert responsibility, the committee said in its report, adding that some former and current students of the college had occupied seats in the hostel and Saifur Rahman, a former student, managed to occupy the residence of the hostel superintendent.

Thus, they dared to commit the heinous crime on the college campus, the probe report mentioned.

The HC in yesterday's verdict did not say anything about the guards of the college as actions have already been taken against them.

The HC verdict will not create any hindrance in the trial proceedings of the case filed for the rape, court sources said.

Lawyers Muhammad Misbah Uddin placed The Daily Star reports before the HC bench and Md Abdul Qaium and Foyez Uddin Ahmed placed arguments in support of the rule, while Deputy Attorney General Nawroz Md Rusel and Assistant Attorneys General MMG Sarwar, Ashique Rubaiat and Yeshita Parvin represented the state.

## Haris dropped from police

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him and his brother Anis Ahmed.

Touching off public debate, a documentary titled "All the Prime Minister's Men" aired by the Qatar-based television channel Al Jazeera on February 1 referred Haris as a fugitive convict.

Later, it surfaced that the home ministry issued a notification on March 28, 2019 over pardoning Haris and Anis under Section 401 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

But his name along with his photo was still on the list of "wanted person" on the police website when the documentary was aired.

Interestingly, the name was removed from the website soon after Al Jazeera broadcast the programme but it reappeared again three days later. It was there at least till May 15.

In his application dated March 23, where he used his Dhaka address, Haris claimed himself as an established businessman since the '90s and a "shining star of Bangabandhu's ideology in Awami League politics" since '80s-'90s.

This newspaper has obtained a copy of the application.

"I never engaged in any criminal activities. I became the main target of the then Freedom Party and Jamaat-BNP because of their jealousy. To destroy me, pro-BNP-Jamaat political parties wrongly accused me in different cases at different times," he wrote.

Haris claimed he along with two brothers -- Anis and Tofail Ahmed Joseph -- was falsely implicated in the murder of Mostafa, a Freedom Party leader, at the instigation of local ward commissioner Habibur Rahman Mizan (Pagla Mizan).

Haris further said his elder brother Aziz Ahmed also would have been framed had he not been serving in the Bangladesh Army.

His another brother Joseph, who had been sentenced to death, got the presidential clemency, maintaining all the legal procedures, read the application.

Claiming that he has no case against him, Haris appealed that his name be removed from the Bangladesh Police list of wanted person and Interpol red notice.

Interpol issued a red notice on Haris on October 25, 2005 and withdrew it in 2019 following a DMP police commissioner's request, according to a letter of National Central Bureau of Bangladesh Police, dated April 7, 2021.

## Riots in Syria's Manbij leave 4 dead: monitor

AFP, Beirut

Kurdish forces have shot dead four Arab protesters during riots in the northern Syrian region of Manbij, a war monitor said yesterday.

The violence broke out at a demonstration against military conscription against a backdrop of growing anger over a deepening economic crisis which the area's Kurdish leadership is struggling to contain.

The unrest comes weeks after similar riots gripped other parts of the autonomous zone Kurdish forces have carved out in northeastern Syria since civil war broke out in 2011.

In the Arab-majority region of Manbij, which was captured by Kurdish forces five years ago, "four protesters have been killed in the past 48 hours from live rounds fired by internal security forces," known as the Asayish, said the Britain-based Syrian

Observatory for Human Rights.

Syria's state SANA news agency also reported four deaths.

The demonstrators initially took to the street to demand an end to forced military conscription by the region's main fighting force, the Syrian Democratic Forces.

But the protests swelled after one of their number was shot dead on Monday.

Protesters blocked roads and attacked an Asayish checkpoint outside Manbij on Tuesday, the Observatory said.

The Asayish responded by shooting dead three more protesters, further fuelling public anger, the monitor added.

The Manbij Military Council, a governing body linked to the Kurdish administration, acknowledged there had been casualties but did not specify how many.

## East Pakistan will eventually become

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that it was "premature to move on the Paks".

"We certainly will use our influence to do whatever we can to help solve the current humanitarian problems. But the President has felt that we should give President Yahya a few months to see what he can work out. As the President sees it, if we approach the Pakistanis emotionally now, we would not gain anything and we might lose what ability we may have to influence the situation," said Kissinger.

"Our judgment," Dr Kissinger continued, "is that East Pakistan will eventually become independent."

This, he felt, was the ambassador's judgment too. The problem was "how to bell the cat". The president chose to do it gradually, informed Kissinger.

In all honesty, Kissinger pointed out, President Richard Nixon had a special feeling for President Yahya Khan. One couldn't make policy on that basis, but it was a fact of life.

Kissinger said one of the president's main concerns was that India be discouraged from military action. Just to give the ambassador the flavour of the president's feelings, he recalled

that 10 days ago when we had received reports that India might be considering military action the president had said he would cut off economic assistance if India moved.

"But we don't have to think in those extreme terms. The Pakistanis are already up against a very difficult situation, and our policy is to give the facts time to assert themselves," said Kissinger.

**CHOLERA TOLL AMONG BANGLADES PUT AT 2,000**

Indian officials reported today that at least 2,000 refugees from East Pakistan had died of cholera in an epidemic that had been raging for a week in their teeming border camps.

Unofficial figures put the toll much higher among the Bangalee refugees, more than four million of whom fled to India to escape the Pakistani army, which since March 25 had been trying to crush the Bangalee independence movement in East Pakistan.

Government officials acknowledged that accurate death figures were impossible to keep under such chaotic conditions. They described the situation as "a grave crisis" and "absolutely impossible".

Speaking of the toll, KK Das, the

minister of health, said the epidemic was just beginning and that the deaths could easily increase to 40,000 or 50,000 in a matter of days.

Das, in an interview in his office, expressed alarm that large numbers of refugees, in panic and because of overcrowded conditions in border camps, were drifting closer to Calcutta.

"God knows what would happen if the epidemic spread to Calcutta," he said.

Calcutta, an overcrowded city of eight million people, was already India's worst cholera center -- suffering from a shortage of drinking water and a sewage system that frequently consists of little more than stagnant open ditches.

**BANGLADESH YOUTH CAMP OPENED**

A camp of Bangladeshi students and youths was opened in Calcutta today by Dr Azizur Rahman Mallick, vice-chancellor of Chittagong University. About 70 college and university boys and girls enrolled themselves in the camp.

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## WHO narrows in on Indian variant

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Monday to refer to variants of concern and interest using Greek letters -- aimed to avoid the possible stigmatisation associated with referring to them with the name of the countries where they were first detected -- the B.1.617.2 variant has now been dubbed Delta.

"We continue to observe significantly increased transmissibility and a growing number of countries reporting outbreaks associated with this variant," the UN agency said.

"Further studies into the impact of this variant remain a high priority for WHO."

In fact, a new variant announced by Vietnam's health authorities on Saturday appears to be a variation of Delta.

"What we understand is that it is this B.1.617.2 variant with one additional deletion in the location of the spike protein," WHO's technical lead on Covid-19 Maria Van Kerkhove told reporters Tuesday.

"We know that the B.1.617.2, the Delta variant, does have increased transmissibility, which means it can spread easier between people," she added.

The B.1.617.1 sub-lineage has meanwhile been downgraded to a "variant of interest," and named Kappa.

And the B.1.617.3 is now not even considered a variant of interest, WHO said, since "relatively few reports of this variant have been submitted to date."

It has not been attributed a Greek letter.

**RECORD DEATHS IN MALAYSIA**

The coronavirus has killed at least 3,681,985 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP yesterday.

The Australian state of Victoria yesterday extended a snap coronavirus lockdown in its capital of Melbourne for a second week, as it scrambles to rein in a highly contagious variant first detected in India, but will ease some curbs elsewhere.

Last Thursday's lockdown in Australia's second most populous state was to have run until today, following the detection of the first locally acquired cases in three months, but infections rose and the number of close contacts reached several thousand.

Malaysia reported 126 deaths from the coronavirus yesterday, the highest daily toll since the start of the pandemic, reports Reuters.

The Southeast Asian nation is seeing a surge in Covid-19 cases, partly due to more infectious variants, and has imposed stricter lockdown measures that have shut down non-essential businesses.

Britain was in talks with Oxford and AstraZeneca (AZN.L) for additional doses of their Covid-19 vaccine that has been modified to better target the "beta" coronavirus variant first identified in South Africa, and it will fund trials of the shots.

## Move suicidal

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Constitution. Bangladesh Election Commission Officers Association and Bangladesh Election Commission Secretariat and Field Level Officers-Employees Unity Council have expressed concern over this. I am declaring solidarity with them," Mahubb said while talking to journalists at his office.

Article 119 of the constitution deals with the EC functions.

He said that he couldn't even imagine that the NID services would be shifted to the home ministry.

The constitution has made the EC an independent entity and the commission would save the independence given by the constitution, Mahubb said.

A letter dated May 24, signed by the Joint Secretary of the Cabinet Division, has directed to replace the word "government" with "Election Commission" in the process of handing over the NID. On the other hand, it has been asked to take steps to hand over the existing infrastructure and manpower protection services of NID, Mahubb said.

Voter lists and national identity cards are related to each other. The shifting will complicate the preparation of accurate voter lists and the EVM system based on the national identity card database.

"If this is done, I think it will not be possible for the Election Commission to perform its duties as per Article 119 of the constitution," the election commissioner said.

The instruction to transfer NID from the EC is like cutting a limb of the commission, he added.

Mahubb said that the decision of shifting NID activities without consulting with the commission was like an insult to the commission.

"Never in the history of the EC has there been such a bad day," he feared.

## 3 victims share

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trafficked over 1,000 women to India in the eight years he has been involved with a human trafficking gang, the DC said, adding that Mohiuddin and Quader also helped at least 500 women to illegally enter India by crossing the border.

Officers seized two motorcycles, a diary, four mobile phones and an Indian SIM card from the arrestees. In the seized diary and the phones, investigators found the names of Ridoy Babo, Sagar, Sobuj, Dalim and Rubel.

After the video clip of a 22-year-old woman being tortured and sexually assaulted went viral on social media, Indian police on May 27 arrested Rifadul Islam Ridoy, 26, who goes by the alias Ridoy Babo, and five other Bangladeshis in Bengaluru.

Bangladeshi law enforcers later identified an international racket, involving some Bangladeshis.

Police said Ridoy first met the 16-year-old plaintiff near the capital's Madhubagh bridge in 2019. On later occasions, he promised the girl of making her a TikTok star and offering her a well-paid job.

In February 2020, Ridoy arranged a TikTok Hangout with 70-80 boys and girls at the Adventure Land Park in Narayanganj. On September 18 of the same year, Ridoy organised a pool party with 700-800 young girls and boys at Afreen Garden Resort in Gazipur.

On February 19, 2021, Ridoy and other suspected members of the racket trafficked the girl to India through Sathkha border after telling her that they were taking her to Lalon Shah Mazar in Kushtia, the DC said.

In India, the girl was made to stay in several locations in Anandapura, Bengaluru. She met several other trafficking victims from Bangladesh.

She was sent to a hotel in Chennai for 10 days where she was subjected to severe torture and sexual assault, police said.

Police also found a video of the 16-year-old victim being tortured brutally by the same gang.

With the help of the 22-year-old woman, who was seen being tortured in the viral video, she was able to escape with two other Bangladeshi girls and return home.

DC Shahidullah said the women have all entered India illegally and later obtained Indian identity cards to move around.

**'BOSS RAFI', 3 OTHERS ON REMAND**  
A Dhaka court yesterday placed four members of the human trafficking racket, including the "kingpin" Ashrafal Islam Rafi alias Boss Rafi, on a five-day remand each.

The others are Sahida Begum alias Madam Sahida, Ismail Sarder, and Abdur Rahman Sheikh alias Arman Sheikh.

Rab said Rafi met Ridoy two years ago and they used social media to target the victims. They trafficked about 50 girls after promising them modelling contracts or well-paid jobs.

According to Rab, Rafi has several "safe houses" in Bengaluru and along the borders of Bangladesh.

**ANOTHER ACCUSED SHOT IN THE LEG**  
Yet another suspect named Sobuj was shot in the leg in India's Bengaluru yesterday while he, according to police, was trying to run away from officers.

Sobuj attacked a police team which was trying to arrest him, reports our New Delhi correspondent, quoting police.

Just days ago, two other suspects were shot in the leg by police in India during what officials said was their attempt to escape.