

## Suspended

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The DSHE director, however, said that the assignment activities of SSC and HSC examinees of this year would continue following health guidelines.

"SSC and HSC batch of this year have only a little time for taking preparation. So, we would continue their assignment activities," he added.

On July 15, Education Minister Dipu Moni said the government wanted to hold the SSC and its equivalent examinations in the second week of November and the HSC and its equivalent tests in the first week of December.

As part of the exams, SSC candidates will have to submit 24 assignments in three optional subjects in 12 weeks whereas the HSC candidates will have to submit 30 assignments in 15 weeks.

Students were required to submit two assignments per week.

The distribution of assignments, to be prepared on shortened syllabuses for SSC candidates, begun on July 18. For HSC candidates, it will begin on July 26.

The government, in April, started giving assignments to students for its submissions in late April this year. The assignment activities for SSC and HSC candidates of 2022 started in June.

The government introduced assignment activities as it closed all the educational institutions on March 17 last year, around a week after the first cases of coronavirus were detected in the country.

The closure has been extended multiple times since then.

According to the latest announcement, schools and colleges will remain closed until July 31.

## Power plant

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The lawyer said SS Power I Limited has given the money in compliance with a directive issued by the HC on May 4.

SS Power I Limited has also given Tk 50,000 to each of the 16 victims, who were injured in the incident, for treatment, he said.

Also, Tk 2.5 lakh has been given to a severely injured victim for better treatment, he added.

Lawyer Rouf said the HC was yet to fix any date for hearing the issue.

Deputy Attorney General Bipul Bagmar, assigned to the HC bench led by Justice M Enayetur Rahim, told this correspondent that he did not know whether SS Power I Limited had submitted any compliance report to the bench.

He, however, said the state has earlier taken time from the HC bench for submitting the probe reports of the committees led by the deputy commissioner and superintendent of police in Chattogram as the inquiries are ongoing.

During hearing two separate writ petitions, the HC bench, on May 4, directed SS Power I Limited to immediately give Tk 5 lakh initially to each of the families of the dead victims.

Seven workers of the SS Power I Limited, an under-construction coal-fired power plant, were killed and at least 21 were injured during a clash with police in Banskhali on April 17.

## Ancient

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Destroyed and sunk along with a wide area of the Nile delta by several earthquakes and tidal waves, Thonis-Heracleion was rediscovered in 2001 in Abu Qir bay near Alexandria, now Egypt's second largest city.

The military vessel, discovered by an Egyptian-French mission led by the European Institute for Underwater Archaeology (IEASM), sank when the famed temple of Amun it was mooring next to collapsed in the second century BC.

A preliminary study shows the hull of the 25-meter flat-bottomed ship, with oars and a large sail, was built in the classical tradition and also had features of Ancient Egyptian construction, Egypt's tourism and antiquities ministry said.

In another part of the city, the mission revealed the remains of a large Greek funerary area dating back to the first years of the 4th century BC, it said.

"This discovery beautifully illustrates the presence of the Greek merchants who lived in that city," the ministry said, adding that the Greeks were allowed to settle there during the late Pharaonic dynasties.

## CPM seeks

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by Paris-based media non-profit Forbidden Stories and Amnesty International that was shared with a host of publications around the world, including The Wire In India, for a collaborative investigation.

The petition was filed by CPM MP from Kerala John Brittas.

Quoting The Wire report on the issue, Brittas said among the numbers is one that was registered in the name of a sitting Supreme Court judge and this amounts to interfering with the administration of justice and is unprecedented and shocking.

The petition says the government has neither accepted nor denied whether the spyware was bought and used by its agencies.

The government, in a statement, has maintained that there has been no unauthorised interception by its agencies, adding that allegations regarding government surveillance on specific people has no concrete basis or truth associated with it whatsoever.



Hundreds of protesters rally in the Tunisian capital Tunis yesterday demanding the government step down after a spike in Covid-19 cases that has aggravated economic troubles.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Over 17 lakh get govt cash support

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lakh after scrutiny of the list of ultra-poor and destitute across the country.

The target beneficiaries included rickshaw-pullers, day labourers, construction workers, farmers, people working at small businesses, and transport workers.

This time, they have selected 17 lakh most vulnerable persons from that list, said an official of the Finance Division.

Meanwhile, the government also started additional open market sale (OMS) centres across the country from yesterday to help low-income people in urban areas buy essentials at a subsidised price. These will continue till August.

At least 813 OMS centres will be operated across the country and the government has allocated another Tk 150 crore for the relief package for this, said the official.

Allocations were made for 20,000 tonnes of rice and 14,000 tonnes of flour -- rice will be sold at Tk 30 per kilogramme and flour at Tk 18 per kg. They are providing a Tk 17 and Tk 10

subsidy respectively per kg of rice and per kg of flour, he added.

Last year, however, rice was sold at a subsidised price of Tk 10 per kg in OMS.

OMS operations have been scaled up in the capital in light of the strict lockdown, said Food Secretary Mosammat Nazmanara Khanum. An additional allocation has been made for this OMS, she added.

Nazmanara said they have included every municipality in the country under the OMS programme this time and are distributing stocks based on the requirements of the district administration offices. Previously, OMS sales only took place in city corporation areas, she added.

Every municipality will get at least two tonnes of rice and one tonne of flour, she said.

The government has also already disbursed Tk 100 crore to the deputy commissioners (DCs) to provide food assistance to the poor in their respective districts based on requests to the national helpline 333. The

helpline provides information on government services and can be used to report social problems.

Pirojpur DC Abu Ali Md Sazzad Hossain told The Daily Star that his office has received Tk 1.15 crore in funds and already distributed Tk 70 lakh to all the upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) for their areas.

Any person who is in need will get Tk 500 worth of food assistance -- 7kg rice, 1kg lentil, 1kg potatoes, a half-litre of soybean oil, and a half kg of salt -- if they call 333 after verification by their UNO, the DC said.

Satkhira DC Mohammad Humayun Kabir said his office has received Tk 1.70 crore for distressed people in the district and has already started distributing the food assistance to the poor.

An official of the Finance Division said they set the fund allocation for food assistance in each district based on the number of unions in it.

Another Tk 1,500 crore of the Tk 3,200 crore package has been allocated to Palli Sanchay Bank, Karmasangsthan Bank, and Palli

## Dhaka residents asked

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rickshaws, should be off the streets at night from July 28 onwards, and that the entire city should be evacuated after August 1.

Bombs had been exploded in Dhaka every night for the last two weeks, and gunfire often accompanied the explosions. Detonations heard last night could not be immediately explained. Actions included the mining of roads in the outskirts of Dhaka and bombing attacks on power stations, the city gas supply, homes of people regarded by the guerrillas as enemies, army installations, bridges and communications, added the American newspaper.

The New York Times further reported that reaction of the Pakistan Army was generally rapid and forceful and there had been many arrests of suspects. Army patrols moved constantly through Dhaka and its environs and military guards are stationed at most important buildings. Despite this, guerrillas caused considerable dislocation of essential services since their campaign began two weeks ago and killed a number of persons. There was a steady flow of casualties, according to witnesses, although no estimates of numbers were available.

### BANGLADESH STAMPS

The first series of eight Bangladesh postage stamps would be issued on July 29. These stamps were to

replace the Pakistan postage stamps hitherto overprinted 'Bangladesh'. The Bangladesh government authorised the international distribution of these stamps. The first series would be issued for internal mail as well as for external postage. The eight separate designs for this series depicted the struggle for independence of Bangladesh. The designs are the work of Biman Mullick. The stamps were printed by lithographic process on white-coated security paper.

### RECOGNITION WHEN IT WILL BE IN OUR BEST INTEREST: INDIRA

At a closed-door meeting today Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi told leaders of opposition parties in parliament that the Bangladesh government would be given recognitions as soon as the government of India was convinced that this would be in the best interests of India and the cause of Bangladesh. Most opposition leaders urged the prime minister that recognition be accorded without further delay. Some of them said that recognition would strengthen the freedom struggle.

SN Mishra, a Congress leader, suggested adoption of a resolution expressing concern at the failure of the United Nations to prevent genocide in Bangladesh. The suggestion was rejected by the government and the leaders of other parties.

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## We're concerned

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and slander and harassment targeted at the plaintiff, and the free movement of Anvir were aimed at swaying the investigation.

"In this context, there is adequate room for doubts as to whether the case has been properly investigated."

They urged the government to launch a fresh investigation and ensure that the police impartially analyse the important clues like the woman's diaries.

"We are also requesting the government to look into whether the plaintiff in the case was fired by the Padma Bank authorities under any pressure. At the same time, we demand that the propaganda against the victim and the harassment of the plaintiff stop and that she and her family be provided security.

"We believe that a proper investigation and appropriate trial... is essential in the interest of maintaining people's confidence in the rule of law."

The government's sincere adherence to the policy to prevent violence against women can only be proved through an impartial and fair investigation when the accused is a powerful and wealthy individual.

"We look forward to an active role from the highest level of the government to ensure an impartial, fair investigation into the incident..."

Serajul Islam Chowdhury, Dhaka University professor emeritus; Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury, Gonoshasthya Kendra trustee; Sultana Kamal, noted rights activist; Hossain Zillur Rahman, economist and Executive Chairman, PPRC; Ali Imam Majumder, former cabinet secretary; Dr Hameeda Hossain, noted rights activist; Khushi Kabir, coordinator, Nijera Kori; Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation; Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director, Transparency International Bangladesh; and Rasheda K Chowdhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education, are among the signatories to the statement undersigned by eminent lawyer Syeda Rizwana Hasan.

Police recently cleared Anvir of the charges brought against him. An officer investigating the case filed a probe report with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka on July 19.

The court set July 29 to decide whether it will accept the report.

The 21-year-old victim's elder sister who filed the case said she will file a no-confidence petition against the probe report.

On April 26, police recovered the college student's body hanging from the ceiling fan of her bedroom in a Gulshan flat. Her feet were touching the bed and both knees were a little bent.

Two days after the incident, Sudip Chakrabarty, the then deputy commissioner (Gulshan division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said that six diaries of the college student contained crucial evidence supporting the allegations brought against Anvir.

"The victim's utter frustration and mental breakdown are reflected in her diaries that we have seized. Her writings will be important evidence," the DC told reporters at his office.

## Ethiopia's Amhara boss urges

## residents to fight

## Tigray rebels

AFP, Addis Ababa

Ethiopia's Amhara region yesterday called on all armed residents to mobilise for battle against rebels from conflict-hit Tigray, calling it a "survival campaign", state media reported.

Amhara borders Tigray to the south, and the two regions are embroiled in a decades-old land dispute that has become central to the eight-month-old war in Tigray.

Yesterday's statement from Amhara regional president Agegnehu Teshager echoes a call made Friday by the president of Ethiopia's Afar region just east of Tigray.

## Dhaka streets see more cars and crowds

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Many mentioned medical purposes, while some said they had emergency work. If someone fails to provide satisfactory answer, we are slapping fines," said Traffic Inspector Dulal Hossain at Gabtoli checkpoint.

Amid the rising cases of Covid-19, the government announced another lockdown, which bans operations of trains, domestic flights, river traffic, and personal vehicles, from Friday after an eight-day break for the Eid. There is, however, no restrictions on freight services.

The lockdown will end on August 5 midnight.

Police, Rab, Border Guard Bangladesh and army personnel yesterday set up check posts at different points in the city and the law enforcers

were tough at some of those places.

A mobile court, accompanied by the BGB, fined at least 20 people for not wearing masks in Mirpur.

Police in Dhaka yesterday detained 587 individuals for being outdoors without valid reasons.

Mobile courts fined 233 individuals and shops Tk 1.09 lakh while DMP's traffic division fined 521 motorists Tk 12.72 lakh.

In areas like Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Pragati Sarani and Badda areas, the check posts caused heavy traffic, hampering the movement of office-goers.

At some other places, the check posts seemed to have loosened up and people were seen moving freely.

Visiting some alleys in Mirpur, Mohammadpur and Adabor, this correspondent found a number of

shops and tea-stalls open.

In the morning, there were crowds at the kitchen markets of Mohammapur Town Hall and Karwan Bazar, while long lines had formed behind TCB trucks selling subsidised lentils, sugar and oil.

Despite the lockdown, holidaymakers were returning to the capital yesterday through the entry points at Gabtoli, Tongi and Jatrabari.

They took detours and walked to their destinations and many of them faced police questioning.

Our correspondent in Gazipur reported that passengers were changing vehicles before every check post and got on another one after crossing it to come to Dhaka and neighbouring districts.

In Manikganj, our correspondent

saw a similar scene on the Dhaka-Aricha Highway.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people, on motorcycles, cars and minibuses travelled across the Padma on ferries between the Daulatdia and Paturia and the Bangla Bazar and Shimulia terminals.

Officials said the travellers were allowed to board the ferries on humanitarian grounds.

Out of 19 ferries, only eight were operating on the Bangla Bazar-Shimulia route. Physical distancing could not be maintained on the crowded ferries, reports our Munshiganj correspondent.

Our Manikganj correspondent reports there were fewer passengers on Daulatdia-Paturia route yesterday, compared to the previous two days.

## Indonesia readies more ICUs

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Indonesia has become Asia's Covid-19 epicentre with hospitals deluged, particularly on the densely populated island of Java and on Bali, where oxygen supplies are running thin.

"I'd like to thank all Indonesians for their understanding and support for the curbs that have been effective for 23 days," the president, known as Jokowi, said, adding that infections and hospital bed occupancies had

declined, without specifying by how much.

Considerably looser than the previous curbs, Jokowi said the government would gradually adjust some restrictions on "some activities", while allowing traditional markets and restaurants with outdoor areas to open, with some limitations.

Some businesses, from salons and laundries to vehicle repair shops, are now allowed to open.

## Govt wakes up to oxygen crunch

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in hospitals and take steps where needed, the DC said.

Samiul Islam said central supply systems that use liquid oxygen tanks are used in 85 hospitals across the country and officials are working to get the system installed in 25 other hospitals. Oxygen cylinders are being supplied to 353 upazila-level hospitals.

The current daily capacity of liquid oxygen supply is 245 tonnes, 70 percent of which is locally produced, health officials said.

The government is assisting Linde, a major supplier, to import 240 tonnes a day using rail. Officials are also supporting Spectra to import oxygen from Singapore using ships.

"But our focus is on local production. We are trying to encourage the industrialists to set up their own plants in the country," Samiul said.

The DGHS has asked the suppliers to set up refilling stations close to public hospitals in every district.

Linde Bangladesh, a key supplier for public hospitals, yesterday imported 200 tonnes of medical oxygen by rail from India for the first time.

Ten tankers of the Oxygen Express arrived from Jamshedpur, India, via

Benapole.

Oxygen is normally imported from India by road.

A Linde India spokesperson said the Oxygen Express was an initiative that Linde India worked on with the government of India.

The company will continue importing medical oxygen by rail to supplement local supplies.

Linde produces around 90 tonnes of liquid oxygen per day at its two plants in Bangladesh, according to Linde officials.

Spectra also supplies around 90 tonnes every day to public and private hospitals. To meet the growing demands, Spectra officials told the government that they would bring oxygen from Singapore by ships.

Chattogram-based steel producers Abul Khayer Group and GPH Ispat have also been producing liquid medical oxygen since last year.

"We are producing around 30 tonnes of medical oxygen a day now," Imrul Kader Bhuiyan, senior manager of Abul Khayer Group's plant, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The plant can increase its daily production to 50 tonnes in two months, he added.

GPH Ispat, on the other hand,

is producing 25-30 tonnes a day. Nazmul Islam, head of GPH Ispat's oxygen plant, said the daily production capacity can be boosted to 40 tonnes.

Officials of the two companies said they were not selling directly to government hospitals yet.

Meanwhile, KSRM, another steel producer, launched a plant on July 18, capable of producing around 24,000 cubic metres of oxygen to be used in cylinders.

### WASTE OF OXYGEN

"The main issue is the lack of rational use of oxygen. In the high flow nasal cannula, the amount wasted is huge," Shamiul said, adding that the government is considering the use of Continuous Positive Airway pressure (CPAP) to lower the waste.

"If we use oxygen rationally, the pressure on the oxygen reserve will be low and the supply will be uninterrupted. The government is also encouraging the use of breathing masks to lower waste," Shamiul said.

"Besides, oxygen released in the air of a room may cause fires. We have seen such accidents in Dhaka and Tangail," he added.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque recently said that the use of CPAP

can save up to 100 tonnes of liquid oxygen a day. He also urged people not to use oxygen without consulting a physician because it is risky to store oxygen cylinders at home.

Regarding the use of CPAP, Muhammad Asaduzzaman, head of the Department of Critical Care at Kuwait Bangladesh Friendship Hospital in Dhaka, said, "Doctors and nurses have to be trained to operate the equipment. When the patient's physical condition is not stable, the machines need to be adjusted from time to time. CPAP can be used, but there is no alternative to training."

A CPAP machine increases air pressure in the throat so that the airway doesn't collapse when one breathes in.

The government will set up oxygen generators at different hospitals where a central supply system is not available.

"We are going to receive 29 machines from the Global Health Fund and the authorities are purchasing another 40. But installing the machines will take time," he said.

The health officials, however, say the efforts would not bear much fruit if people do not maintain health guidelines.