

Pandemic made them drivers

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His brother, also a kindergarten teacher, left for Dhaka in search of a job.

Tanjul said he was finding it hard to run his family with his meagre income. "The lockdown has made our situation even worse as vehicles are barred from plying."

Many kindergarten teachers are selling vegetables and tree saplings to run their families.

Hazrat Ali, who founded Fatah Kindergarten School in 2005 in Rampura area of the city, was seen selling saplings on a footpath.

Shahidul Islam, a teacher of Mahiganj Amtala Bidyapeet, said he worked at the school for 10 years and never found himself in such a difficult situation before.

"I have not been paid by the school for the last 15 months. I ran out of

all my savings long ago," he said. Shahidul is now looking for a new job.

Azizul Islam, a kindergarten schoolteacher of Hakimpur upazila of Dinajpur, became a mason to feed his family.

Many schools in the districts and Kurigram have spent all their money. Some even sold all their furniture to pay their teachers and other staffers.

Sheikh Mohammad Ajaharul Islam, general secretary of North Bengal Kindergarten and Pre-Cadet School Society in Rangpur, said many schoolteachers took up new jobs after failing to get any support from the government.

On behalf of the platform, he requested the government to either reopen the schools or provide the teachers with immediate financial assistance.

A salute to father

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to Bangladesh police in 1990, posted in Police Training Centre in Rangpur.

Later, he served different police stations across the country.

He is the father of three daughters. Of them, Shahnaz is the eldest. She joined Bangladesh Army recently after completing her MBBS from Rangpur Medical College.

She completed her SSC from Kurigram in 2010. Before joining, Shahnaz, clad in the uniform of the Bangladesh Army, saluted his father, who was dressed in the uniform of Bangladesh police.

Smriti Moni Mimi, the youngest daughter of the family, captured the

moment on her camera.

A couple of days ago, Smriti posted the photograph on her Facebook wall and it went viral in no time.

Talking to The Daily Star, the father said, "Smriti shared the photo on her Facebook wall. We did not know about it before."

Salam said he always wanted his daughters to be educated and adapt to the best professions they wanted to.

His eldest daughter made his family proud. His second daughter is also studying at Rangpur Medical College and his youngest daughter is an SSC candidate of Police Lines School in Rangpur.

Covid returns to Wuhan

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Millions are also still under movement restrictions in Australia, where troops Monday hit the streets of the country's largest city of Sydney and surrounding areas, which are entering the sixth week of a lockdown set to run until the end of August.

Authorities have been struggling to stop the spread of the highly infectious Delta variant in the city -- and to ensure that residents follow containment rules -- with more than 3,600 cases recorded since mid-June.

With about 15 percent of Australia's 25 million people fully vaccinated, authorities are still relying on lockdowns to slow the spread of the virus.

HOSPITALISATIONS IN US

And the virus has even spread in places where inoculation rollout programs have been relatively successful, with the EU has now passed the vaccination rate of the US -- which remains on 49.7 percent -- as that country suffers a new wave driven by the Delta variant that has sent hospitalisations soaring to levels not seen since last summer.

The US on Monday hit President Joe Biden's goal of administering at least one jab to 70 percent of adults one month late -- dashing hopes of declaring victory over the worst of the pandemic by Independence Day on July 4.

Officials blamed falling vaccine rates, particularly in areas where hesitancy is higher as well as among younger people, those with lower income and racial minorities, for the missed deadline as well as the soaring caseload.

"These cases are concentrated in communities with lower vaccination rates," Jeff Zients, White House Covid task force coordinator, told reporters.

"One in three cases nationwide occurred in Florida and Texas this past week," he added.

Mayor Bill de Blasio said yesterday that New York City will require proof of vaccination for indoor activities including restaurants, gyms and performances.

The announcement is the latest

in a string of initiatives aimed at encouraging more residents to get vaccinated as the Delta variant spreads in the nation's most populous city.

"We know this is what's going to turn the tide," de Blasio told a news conference.

BOOSTER SHOTS

And faced with the Delta variant, other countries have begun considering a rollout of booster shots, which some drug manufacturers have suggested could enhance immunity to more infectious mutations of the virus.

Germany said Monday that it would begin offering third jabs to elderly and at-risk groups, citing concerns over "a reduced or rapidly declining immune response" among some people.

A booster shot will also be offered to anyone who received the two-dose AstraZeneca or single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccines, a document released by the country's health ministry said, "in the interests of preventative healthcare".

The pandemic has killed at least 4,234,618 people worldwide since the virus first emerged in late 2019, according to an AFP compilation of official data yesterday.

Iran announced more than 39,000 new Covid cases yesterday, the highest in a single day in the Middle East country worst hit by the pandemic.

The health authorities in Iran said another 378 people died of coronavirus and 39,019 tested positive in the past 24 hours.

South Korea has detected its first two cases of the new Delta Plus Covid-19 variant, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) said yesterday, as the country battles with its fourth wave of infections.

The Delta Plus variant is a sub-lineage of the Delta variant first identified in India, and has acquired the spike protein mutation called K417N, which is also found in the Beta variant first identified in South Africa, reports Reuters.

Reports of Delta Plus cases have been few, and a handful of countries, including Britain, Portugal and India, have reported some cases.

ATTACK ON VOTING SYSTEM

Brazil's electoral court to probe Bolsonaro

AFP, BRASILIA

Brazil's Superior Electoral Court announced Monday it will investigate far-right President Jair Bolsonaro for his constant and baseless attacks on the country's electronic voting system.

The country's highest electoral body also agreed to ask the Supreme Federal Court to investigate the president for spreading misinformation during a Facebook Live event last Thursday, in which Bolsonaro spoke for more than two hours about his conviction that there had been fraud in the last two presidential elections, saying he should have won in the first round in 2018.

The Electoral Court investigation will determine whether Bolsonaro committed "abuse of economic and political power, improper use of the media, corruption, fraud, conduct banned for public agents and extemporaneous propaganda in his attacks against the electronic voting system and the legitimacy of the 2022 general elections."

Bolsonaro has long been sniping at

electronic voting, introduced in Brazil in 1996, and advocating instead for the use of "printable and auditable" paper ballots to be introduced for the 2022 presidential race.

People in Brazil cast their ballots electronically at voting stations, and Bolsonaro has for years been arguing for a paper printout to be made of each vote cast, suggesting the absence of a paper trail makes cheating easier.

He has not provided evidence of such fraud, and the Superior Electoral Court insists the system is transparent and has never been tainted by irregularities.

On Sunday, thousands of Brazilians took to the streets in several cities, including Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia, to support Bolsonaro in protest against electronic voting.

The 66-year-old leader -- under fire from several quarters -- did not take part in the demonstrations.

He is facing an investigation into his handling of the coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than half-a-million Brazilians, and his popularity is at a record low.



A man undergoes a health screening before receiving a dose of the vaccine against the coronavirus disease, during a vaccination program on the boat in Gresik, East Java province, Indonesia yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

'What's going on in name of journalism?'

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of Md Sharif Uddin, a deputy assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission, from the district.

The HC bench ordered those newspapers, which ran false reports, to publish rejoinders along with corrections, and fixed August 5 for delivering an order on the issue.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan was asked to communicate the orders to the newspapers.

During the proceedings, the lawyer told the HC that the Dainik Purbokone published a rejoinder yesterday and apologized.

On Monday, the HC bench disclosed the incident of fraud in its order regarding transfer of Sharif Uddin and also ordered the ACC to conduct a probe into it.

Sharif Uddin, who had reportedly been conducting investigations into corruption allegations in different offices and hospitals and against some

influential people in the district, was transferred on June 16.

The HC bench led by Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman on June 30 summarily rejected a writ petition that sought stay on the transfer of Sharif Uddin. One Fozle Azim Mohammad Sibgatullah had filed the writ petition.

But a lawyer named Md Mazharul Haque has issued an advocate-certificate saying that the HC bench of Justice Enayetur Rahim on July 29 stayed the transfer (of Sharif Uddin) and directed the authorities concerned to allow him to continue in the office for next two weeks.

Based on the lawyer-certificate issued by Md Mazharul Haque, the Dainik Purbokone and a few other newspapers published reports on this issue.

On Monday, the HC bench found that another writ petition was moved before it seeking similar order so that

Sharif Uddin's transfer order is halted.

Md Shahidul Islam Liton, claiming himself a human rights activist in Cox's Bazar, filed the writ petition.

Examining the petition, Justice Enayetur said his bench on June 30 rejected a similar writ petition, but a report was published in the Dainik Purbokone on July 31 saying that the bench on July 29 stayed the transfer of the ACC official, which is totally false.

No lawyer named Md Mazharul Haque could be found on the members' list of the Supreme Court Bar Association.

Deputy attorney generals Samarendranath Biswas and Bipul Bagmar represented the state during the virtual proceedings.

Contacted, petitioner's lawyer Ashanur Rahman and the deputy attorney generals said they didn't know Md Mazharul Haque as a lawyer of the Supreme Court.

Bangalee diplomats in US

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Government of Pakistan to sever their connections and pledge themselves to save the lives and honour of their own country and compatriots," said Moshtaque.

A spokesman for the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service said some of the diplomats who resigned had applied for permission to remain in the country under political asylum.

BANGABANDHU'S FATE WORRIES INDIA

Indian Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram expressed in the Lok Sabha today the government's concern at the reported statement of General Yahya Khan of Pakistan about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman whom the minister described as the "uncrowned

leader of Bangladesh". He said his government had approached various governments to exercise pressure on the Government of Pakistan so that no harm was done to Bangabandhu. BHUTTO URGES COMPROMISE WITH AL, BANGABANDHU BBC reported today that Pakistan People's Party leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had urged Pakistani rulers to negotiate a compromise formula with the Awami League and its leader Bangabandhu to meet the country's present crisis.

According to the report, Bhutto in his interview with an Iranian Newspaper had said the army could not solve the present problem in East Bengal and civilians' rule should therefore be established as early as possible. He had also expressed the

fear that by-elections, proposed to be held under martial law, would not be fair.

NOEL BAKER SUPPORTS BANGLADESH

Philip Noel Baker, a Nobel laureate for peace and a former secretary in the Atlee Government which was responsible for the transfer of power in India and the creation of Pakistan, came out in support of Bangladesh against Pakistan in an outspoken letter in the Times today. His denunciation of Pakistan was all the more significant as Noel Baker had all along been a supporter of Pakistan and sided with them on the Kashmir issue.

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

19 'joined Neo JMB' from one upazila

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suspecting the youths have links with the militant outfit, but we need some times to verify it."

Sources claimed that at least 20 to 25 youths, aged between 18 and 24, from Noagaon and Saatgram areas, have been traceless for the last six months. Some of them have been identified.

However, the local police did not have any knowledge about the activities of the militant outfit.

Anichur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Arahazar Police Station, told this paper yesterday that general diaries over people going missing were often filed with the police station and they investigated properly each of the complaints.

"But I have no actual idea and need time to give the update of youths missing from the same areas in the last six months," he added.

A high official of the CTTC unit says they are now trying to identify the missing youths and bring them under de-radicalisation programme as most of them are youths.

"The influence of Ahle-Hadith members is huge in the villages of Arahazar upazila and this might be a reason that militants got the scope to drive some youths into militancy," said the official, requesting anonymity.

Sources says the Neo JMB's top priority is now to train all their recruits on making IED through online videos as part of strengthening the outfit's activities.

Even the last two arrestees, Hridoy and Khalid, were also trained up and they made the remote-controlled IED and then planted it in the police box in Narayanganj. All the steps have been taken after Mahadi Hasan Jon alias Abu Abbas Al Bangali became the ameer of the IS-inspired outfit, they said.

Md Asaduzzaman, chief of CTTC unit, said Khalid and Hridoy made IEDs by watching online videos.

According to the case statement filed with Jatrabari Police Station on Sunday following the arrest of the duo, two other youths of Arahazar upazila are also the member of Neo JMB IED cell.

The two youths are Abu Raihan Noman, of Panchrukhi village, and Md Nasim, of Sahapara, reads the case statement.

ADC Rahmat Ullah, also the in-charge of bomb disposal unit of CTTC, said Noman and Nasim and other associates of Khalid and Hridoy went into hiding and drives are on to arrest them.

A STEP INTO MILITANCY In 2001, Hridoy was born in Noagaon village of Arahazar and he is a student

of HSC level. When he was a student of class-X, he first got invitation from Dawatul Islam, a wing of New JMB, according to investigators.

But he did not respond then and continued his study.

But he again got invitation from the outfit, this time via Facebook, and he was inspired and he joined militancy after reading different online articles, they said.

Later, he joined the online messaging apps like telegram and WeChat and got instructions from the Neo JMB chief Jon to attack police.

During interrogation, he admitted that the plan was to attack police personnel as "they are enemy of Islam." Outfit chief Jon instructed him to learn how to make IED by watching online videos.

Spending around Tk 6,000 and three days after their efforts, Hridoy and Khalid were able to make the IED and planted it in the police box. Although they failed to explode it, Jon became happy on the activities and promoted Hridoy as a "captain" in the military wing of Neo JMB.

Addressing reporters on Monday, CTTC chief Asaduzzaman said Neo JMB are very much active on online platforms, but the CTTC is aware of their activities and it is arresting militants before any incident takes place.

Year after Lebanon blast, children still in distress: UN

AFP, Beirut

A year after a monster explosion at Beirut's port, one in three families in Lebanon have children still showing signs of trauma, the UN said yesterday.

"One in three families (34 percent) has children still showing signs of psychological distress," said the UN agency for children, Unicef, citing a July survey of 1,200 families.

"In the case of adults, the figure reaches almost one in two (45.6 percent)," it added in a report published on the eve of the blast's first anniversary.

The August 4, 2020 explosion killed more than 200 people, wounded at least 6,500 others and damaged swathes of the capital.

In the year since, Lebanon has also had to grapple with the coronavirus pandemic and a spiralling economic crisis branded by the World Bank as one of the planet's worst since the mid-19th century.

"One year after the tragic events, children's lives remain deeply affected," said Yukie Mokuo, UNICEF's representative in Lebanon.

"Those families have been struggling

to recover from the aftermath of the explosions at the worst possible time -- in the middle of a devastating economic crisis and a major pandemic."

A Unicef survey in July found that almost all families that requested assistance in the wake of the Beirut port blast still need help, especially cash and food assistance, the agency said.

Many who lost employment because of the blast have yet to find work, UNICEF added, as Lebanon grapples with soaring poverty, rampant inflation and shortages of basic items from medicine to fuel.

Suspected drug

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Ullah Master General Hospital. A medical officer said the man was already dead when brought in.

Liton, from Bogura's Kahalu upazila, was accused in at least four cases, police said.

Ambar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kahalu Police Station, said two of those cases was filed with his station.

His son Wahedul Islam said Liton was a truck driver living in Narayanganj for the last couple of months. The owner of the truck informed his family about the arrest a couple of days ago.

"Two days ago, a man claiming to be a lawyer called us and said my father would not be placed on remand if we pay Tk 6,000. We didn't have that kind of money and couldn't pay him."

"Police from Uttara East called us in the morning and said my father was ill and we had to rush to Dhaka in a microbus. The police personnel [speaking to us] said they would pay the fare once we reached there. He did not inform us about his [Liton's] death."

The family was informed about the death once they reached the police station

Wahedul said his father was a drug addict but not a drug trader.

Vaccination

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The plan is to inoculate 66,000 initially, but eventually all Rohingya refugees will be vaccinated in the camp in Cox's Bazar, where nearly a million have been living since the 2017 military crackdown on them in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

Those in Bhashanchar will also come under inoculation later. Currently, there are about 19,000 Rohingyas in Bhashanchar.

So far, 2,400 Rohingyas have reportedly contracted the Covid-19 infection. Of them, 28 have died, Hayat said.

The positivity rate of the infection among the refugees was 11 percent yesterday.

"There are adequate isolation centres and ICU facilities for them in Cox's Bazar."

The decision to vaccinate the Rohingyas comes six months after the country first began the vaccination programme on February 7 with the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines.

The vaccination programme was halted for a few weeks as the supply of the vaccine from India had stopped. It restarted with the arrival of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines from the US and BBIP-CorV from Sinopharm China.

The government aims to complete the vaccination of 60 lakh people in the country by August 7 to 14, and another one crore by the end of this month as Covid-19 infections are on the rise.

2 doctors die

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She left behind a husband and one son, he said.

"Dr Jakia was a renowned gynaecologist surgeon. The district people, including the medical community, was shocked and mourned her death."

Tangail Civil Surgeon Dr Abul Fazal Mohammad Shahabuddin expressed his deep shock over the death.

Speaking to The Daily Star, he said, "We lost another frontliner in the war against the coronavirus," adding that Jakia's husband, and army officer, was also infected and in undergoing treatment.

Meanwhile, Sobuj, 27, assistant community medical officer at the ICU of covid unit of M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital in Dinajpur, died from the infection yesterday.

Dr Afroz Sulnata Luna, a medical officer at Birganj Upazila Health Complex, told The Daily Star that Sobuj tested positive for Covid-19 on July 16 with mild fever and a throat ache.

He was receiving treatment at home and had to be admitted to the hospital as his condition deteriorated due to breathing complications on July 23.

He was taken to the ICU the very next day.

Doctors had engaged all their effort to recover him but he finally succumbed to the infection at around 4:00am early yesterday.

Both victims had received both their vaccine doses earlier.

(Our Tangail and Dinajpur correspondents contributed to the report.)

Japan sends 6.16

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handover ceremony at the airport yesterday.

This vaccine support is expected to contribute to the Bangladesh government's efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and to save people's lives in Bangladesh, said Japanese officials.

Japan hopes that a fair, equitable and comprehensive access to vaccines will be ensured in Bangladesh and reiterates that it will stand by Bangladesh in the fight against Covid-19 and will work together to curb the virus spread as soon as possible, Japanese embassy said in a statement.

In the statement, Ito Naoki said, "We are very happy to give the much-needed vaccines to Bangladesh. We hope we will be able to supply the rest of the three million vaccine within this month."