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# Overcoming all barriers

The story of Mayuri, an award-winning handicraft entrepreneur in Jamalpur

AKANDA MUHAMMAD JAHID

She was born into a prosperous family.

But ahead of puberty, Arifa Yasmin Mayuri began feeling gender dysphoria -- a conflict between a person's assigned gender and their identity. As she approached adolescence, she finally realised she was not into typically "boy things".

Her battle began on multiple fronts as she started living as a hijra or transgender person -- facing unimaginable mockery, hatred and structural discrimination in a largely conservative and patriarchal society.

But nothing could stop Mayuri from standing on her own two feet and pursuing her dreams.

After a long struggle, Mayuri is now a successful handicraft entrepreneur in Jamalpur and has won multiple awards, including the National SME Women Entrepreneur Award in 2019 and the Joyeeta



Award in 2016. She is the first-ever transgender to win either award.

"Obviously, it has been a difficult journey," she said.

"My first battle was for my gender identity, and then for livelihood. Now, I am fighting for the rights of my community."

"I know more hurdles will come along. I will have to deal with it and move on," said a resolute Mayuri.

The 36-year-old has been able to thrive in a country where most transgender people get by on collecting alms or doing sex work amid widespread discrimination. They remain one of the most marginalised groups in Bangladesh despite being officially recognised as a third gender since 2014.

**HURDLES APLENTY**  
The idea of running a business came to Mayuri's mind when she was a student at Mymensingh Polytechnic Institute.

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A man on a wheelchair filling out a form to get tested for Covid-19 at the Mugda Medical College Hospital in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## COVID ORIGINS PROBE China rejects WHO's call

Says bringing Delta-driven outbreak under control

AGENCIES

China yesterday rejected the World Health Organization's calls for a renewed probe into the origins of Covid-19, saying it supported "scientific" over "political" efforts to find out how the virus started.

Pressure is once more mounting on Beijing to consider a fresh probe into the origins of a pandemic which has killed more than four million people and paralysed economies worldwide since it first emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

A delayed and heavily politicised visit by a WHO team of international experts went to Wuhan in January 2021 to produce a first phase report, which was written in conjunction with their Chinese counterparts. It failed to conclude how the virus began.

On Thursday the WHO urged China to share raw data from the earliest Covid-19 cases to revive its probe into the origins of the disease.


China hit back, repeating its position that the initial investigation was enough and that calls for further data were

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### ROAD TO FREEDOM

THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

## Nixon warns Yahya of famine



**I am Justice: Yahya Khan. Hindusthan Standard, August 15, 1971.**

**AUGUST 14, 1971**  
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

**NIXON'S LETTER TO YAHYA**  
In a letter dated August 14, 1971, US President Richard Nixon advised Pakistan President Yahya Khan to step up relief efforts to avert the risk of famine. Terming it as the "most immediate priority" Nixon said, "This step is fundamental to progress in re-establishing normal conditions. It will help those of us who want to help and will reduce the pretext for interference."

Nixon also advised Yahya to continue to enlist the support of the elected representatives of the East Pakistani people in "the urgent work of national reconciliation".

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## 11-year-old girl raped in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

An 11-year-old girl has reportedly been raped by her neighbour in Kasba upazila of Brahmanbaria. Mohammad Alamgir Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Kasba Police Station, said the incident took place on August 8.

The victim's father filed a case against Alauddin Ali, 20, of the same upazila, on Thursday night, he added.

According to the case statement, Alauddin called the girl when she was playing on a street adjacent to her home on that day. He then forcibly took her to a secluded place and raped her.

At one point, hearing the girl's scream, locals rescued her and rushed to Kasba Upazila Health Complex.

Later, as her physical condition was deteriorating, on-duty doctors sent her to

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## Ghostly rings found around a black hole



CNN ONLINE

Black holes are one of the universe's ultimate mysteries, hard to even imagine. But thanks to a recently released Nasa image, we can visualize one a little bit better now.

Ghostly glowing rings were captured around a black hole by Nasa's Chandra X-ray Observatory and Neil Gehrels Swift Observatory. The X-ray images reveal what would otherwise be invisible.

The black hole exists in a binary system with a companion star -- and the black hole's gravity is pulling material away from the star and into a disk around itself.

The black hole and star system is called V404 Cygni, and it's about 7,800 light-years from Earth.

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## Pori Moni, 4 others sent to jail

Court rejects her bail plea in case under narcotics act

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Actress Pori Moni, model Mariam Akhter Mou, director Nazrul Islam Raz and two others were sent to jail yesterday in three cases filed with Banani and Mohammadpur police stations under the Narcotics Control Act.

Pori Moni's bail petition was rejected after her lawyers moved it on grounds that

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## Erratum

In our news report titled "Female cop files rape case against SP", published on August 13, it was stated that the case was filed against "the superintendent of police in Bagerhat". It should have been "an officer of the rank of superintendent of police stationed in Bagerhat". We regret the inadvertent error.

## NORTHERN INDIA 2,000 people evacuated after landslide

AFP, Shimla

At least 2,000 people were evacuated yesterday after a massive landslide in India's ecologically fragile Himalayan north blocked a major river, officials said.

The people were evacuated from 13 villages in the Lahaul area of Himachal Pradesh state as a "preventative measure" in case of flash floods, a senior district official told AFP.

Hundreds of tonnes of rocks and other debris slid into and partially blocked the Chenab -- one of the biggest rivers in the region -- blocking the flow of water for a few hours.

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### PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 14

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4:25 12:45 4:45 6:41 8:30  
JAMAT 5:00 1:15 5:00 6:44 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



People ignoring social distancing and health safety guidelines while shopping from hawkers on a foot bridge near the capital's New Market yesterday, the first weekend after the government lifted restrictions it imposed to curb the spread of Covid-19.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Star HEALTHLINE

### Diabetes and Covid-19

## WHAT TO DO

STAR HEALTH DESK

While it is unlikely that people with diabetes are more likely to contract Covid-19, they are certainly more likely to have serious complications if they contract it.

The American Diabetes Association, in a release, has stated that people with diabetes are generally more likely to have severe symptoms and complications when they are infected with any virus.

Individuals affected by diabetes, especially type-2, have an impaired

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