

## Child tortured

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living in Dubai for the last 13 years, had married Marium's mother Sabina Yasmin eight years back, said family members.

In Dubai, Mostafa met Ripa, got married to her and divorced his first wife when Marium was only four months old, the family said.

When he went back to Dubai, Mostafa left Marium in Ripa's care in Sreepur.

The Sreepur Police Station SI said Marium was tortured and underwent surgery due to infections caused by injuries. Ripa is now in police custody, he said.

## Ragib, three

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filed with Pirojpur Sadar Police Station on Thursday.

Police in Pirojpur arrested Ragib's two brothers -- Mahmudul Hasan, an imam of a mosque in Pirojpur town, and Khairul Islam. Rab arrested Ragib and his other brother Abul Bashar in Dhaka the same time.

According to media reports, the four brothers allegedly embezzled Tk 17,000 crore from general people through a so-called multi-level marketing (MLM) business. Promising their clients of hefty returns, Ragib lured them into investing in different investment schemes. He allegedly used mosque imams and madrasa teachers in this regard.

After the clients were deceived, some of them held human chains and press conferences seeking justice from the authorities.

Then, cases after cases were filed against Ragib and his brothers.

Four of them were lodged with Pirojpur Sadar Police Station, said its OC Abu Zafar M Masuduzzaman.

## Scientists discover

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the 8-metre-long dinosaur weighed more than a tonne.

Based on estimations from the analysis of the fossil remains, the scientists say *U. uzbekistanensis* may have been twice the length and over five times heavier than a tyrannosaur.

The jawbone fossil analysed in the study was initially found in Uzbekistan's Kyzylkum Desert in the 1980s, and rediscovered by scientists in 2019 in a museum collection.

"Among theropod dinosaurs, the size of the maxilla (upper jawbone) can be used to estimate the animal's size because it correlates with femur length, a well-established indicator of body size," Tanak said in a statement.

"Thus, we were able to estimate that *Ullughbegsaurus uzbekistanensis* had a mass of over 1,000 kg, and was approximately 7.5 to 8.0 meters in length, greater than the length of a full-grown African elephant," he added.

The study, published in the journal Royal Society Open Science, noted that *U. uzbekistanensis* belongs to a group of "shark-toothed dinosaurs" called carcharodontosaurids.

"The discovery of *Ullughbegsaurus* records the geologically latest stratigraphic co-occurrence of carcharodontosaurid and tyrannosaurid dinosaurs from Laurasia, and evidence indicates carcharodontosaurians remained the dominant predators relative to tyrannosaurids, at least in Asia," the scientists noted in the study.

The scientists say dinosaurs in the carcharodontosaur group were usually larger than tyrannosaurs, sometimes reaching weights greater than 6 tonnes.

## Rain helps fight against 'monster' fire in Spain

AFP, Madrid

Light rain gave some breathing room to crews struggling yesterday to battle a "monster" wildfire in Spain that has killed a firefighter and forced roughly 2,600 people from their homes.

About 500 firefighters and 51 water-dropping planes have been tackling the blaze, which officials believe was started deliberately last Wednesday in the southern Malaga province, the regional government said.

Firefighters were joined on Sunday by some 260 soldiers from the military's emergency brigade as they battled to control the blaze in the Sierra Bermeja mountains.

TV footage showed older residents who had been evacuated to the town of Ronda breaking into applause as it began to rain.

But firefighters said the rain would not be enough to bring the blaze under control.

"The rain will not put out the fire," said regional fire chief Juan Sanchez.

"But in places where we have it under control, it will help shorten the time to extinguish it completely."

The fire, described by local emergency services as "complex and exceptional", has so far destroyed some 8,000 hectares (20,000 acres).

Erratic winds, scorching temperatures and low humidity levels had helped to turn the blaze into a "hungry monster", the region's deputy fire chief Alejandro Garcia said last week.



Residents register to take nucleic acid tests (NAT) at a testing site in Quanzhou, following new cases of the coronavirus disease, in Fujian province, China yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Donors pledge over \$1b in aid

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advance as the last US-led Nato troops pulled out and the forces of the Western-backed government melted away.

With billions of dollars of aid flows abruptly ending due to Western antipathy and distrust towards the Taliban, donors had a "moral obligation" to keep helping Afghans after a 20-year engagement, several speakers in Geneva said.

Neighbours China and Pakistan had already offered help.

Beijing last week promised \$31 million worth of food and health supplies, and on Friday said it would send a first batch of 3 million coronavirus vaccines.

Pakistan sent food and medicine, and it called for Afghan assets frozen abroad to be released. Iran said it had dispatched an air cargo of aid.

"Past mistakes must not be repeated. The Afghan people must not be abandoned," said Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi,

whose country has close relations with the Taliban and would most likely bear the brunt of an exodus of refugees.

Both China and Russia said the main burden of helping Afghanistan out of crisis should lie with Western countries.

"The US and its allies have a greater obligation to extend economic, humanitarian and livelihood assistance," said Chen Xu, China's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva.

The United States pledged \$64 million in new humanitarian assistance at the conference, while Norway pledged an extra \$11.5 million.

Even before the Taliban's seizure of Kabul last month, half the population - or 18 million people - depended on aid. That looks set to increase due to drought and shortages.

Around \$200 million of the new money is earmarked for the UN World Food Programme, which found that

93% of the 1,600 Afghans it surveyed in August and September were not getting enough to eat.

'BRINK OF STARVATION'  
WFP Executive Director David Beasley said 40% of Afghanistan's wheat crop had been lost, the price of cooking oil had doubled, and most people anyway had no way of getting money, reports Reuters.

While banks have started reopening, the queues for withdrawals are extremely long, and more importantly, no one who depended on the government for a salary - from civil servants to police - has been paid since July.

"Fourteen million people, one out of three, are marching to the brink of starvation. They don't know where their next meal is," Beasley said.

"If we are not very careful, we could truly, truly enter into the abyss in catastrophic conditions, worse than what we see now."

The UN World Health Organization, also part of the appeal,

wants to shore up hundreds of health facilities at risk of closure after donors backed out.

Antonio Vitorino, head of the International Organization for Migration, said the Afghan medical system was "on the verge of collapse", and WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that gains made towards eradicating polio and vaccinating against Covid-19 could unravel.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi warned that there could "very soon" be far greater displacement than the estimated half a million who have already sought refuge elsewhere in Afghanistan this year.

"The physical distance between our nations and Afghanistan shouldn't mislead us," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu added.

"A humanitarian and security crisis in Afghanistan will have direct implications across the globe. We should take collective action now."

## Time to rethink Ivermectin in Covid-19

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considerable concerns remain about ivermectin, an anti-parasitic drug. Several hundred million tablets of ivermectin have been used globally, especially in developing and resource-constrained countries. Several observatory studies and others found that the drug may have some beneficial effects on Covid-19 patients. In Bangladesh, ivermectin has been used for both therapeutic and preventive purposes with a propaganda that it is safe, effective and prevents Covid-19.

In this write-up, we address these perceptions about ivermectin one by one. It is not as safe as assumed for human usage. Ivermectin can cause a

severe allergic reaction and troubled breathing, swelling of throat or tongue and skin rash. If used with blood thinning drugs, ivermectin can induce severe bleeding. Although ivermectin has been used in Covid-19 treatment for more than 18 months, there has been no phase II/III clinical trials to optimise this drug.

Ivermectin is also endowed with a counterproductive role in containment of SARS-CoV-2. When one assumes that taking a drug like ivermectin would prevent Covid-19 infection, all public health measures are left behind and jeopardised. Testing becomes irrelevant as ivermectin has been taken, tracing becomes confusing and

voice of reason for usage of "mask" becomes inconsequential whereas the largest study in the world on the effectiveness of masks in preventing Covid-19 has recently been published from Bangladesh.

In the meantime, World Health Organization, Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA, Japan and manufacturer of ivermectin, Merck, have instructed not using the drug in Covid-19 treatment.

If action is not taken against this, we may be thrown into similar dilemma once experienced with thalidomide, when birth defects devastated the world for not properly approving the drug after requisite

clinical trials.

Dr Sheikh Mohammad Fazle Akbar is a researcher at Department of Gastroenterology and Metabolism, Ehime University, Japan.

Professor Mamun Al Mahtab is the chief of Interventional Hepatology Division, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and a member of Strategic and Technical Advisory Group, WHO-SEAR.

References:  
Adverse effects of Ivermectin: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/ivermectin-oral-tablet#interactions>

WHO joins Europe, Merck in recommending against ivermectin for Covid-19 | Reuters

## Podgorny calls for 'speediest political settlement'

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inalienable rights of people and nations..."

WE ARE TODAY UNITED AS NEVER BEFORE: HOSSAIN ALI  
M Hossain Ali, the high commissioner of Bangladesh in India, today said "politically, we are today united as never before".

"Although the Awami League won absolute majority in the elections, it has now joined hands with other equally dedicated political parties in order to ensure the participation of all shades of people and opinion to carry the liberation struggle to a victorious conclusion," he added.

Hossain Ali was inaugurating the exhibition of sketches by Subal Paul at

the Academy of Fine Arts in Calcutta.

Commenting on the activities of Mukti Bahini, the high commissioner said, "Our death-defying Mukti Bahini are already playing havoc with the enemy. The War of Liberation is gaining momentum every day. Our guerrillas are killing large numbers of West Pakistan soldiers -- they are disrupting their line of communication by blowing up bridges, snapping rail and road communication and also sinking boats and ships which West Pakistan are using to carry their arms, ammunition and troops. Our guerrillas are also systematically wiping out the collaborators inside Bangladesh. The morale of the

Pakistan army has gone down with the colossal loss of their men and material and they are compelled to fall back at different points. The Mukti Bahini is in control of large areas of Bangladesh and already the troops belonging to the so called "Martial Race" are panic-stricken and retreating."

ON THE WAR FRONT  
In the Rangpur-Dinajpur-Rajshahi sector, Mukti Bahini today ambushed a Pakistani patrol at Bhotemari killing two Pakistani troops. Another group of Mukti Bahini raided the Pakistan position at Mughalhat and seriously injured six soldiers.

In the Kushtia-Jashore-Khulna sector, Mukti Bahini encountered

Pakistani troops in Alfapur area. Seven Pakistani troops and 20 irregulars were killed in the action. Mukti Bahini captured 16 rifles and seven boxes of Chinese ammunition.

CORRIGENDUM  
In yesterday's article it was mistakenly written that Khurram Panni was the first diplomat of ambassadorial rank to defect to the Bangladesh cause.

It was Ambassador Abul Fatheh, Pakistan's ambassador to Iraq, who was the first ambassador to defect to Bangladesh. He defected on 15th August, 1971. We express our sincere regret for this inadvertent error. *Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com*

## Med colleges reopen for in-person classes

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will attend classes in person every day," Dr Enayet Hossain, director general of the Directorate General of Medical Education, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He also said they have inoculated all students and teachers against Covid. "We will bring back third and fourth year students to classes gradually."

At Dhaka Medical College, students attended classes from 9:00am yesterday, maintaining health safety guidelines.

The DMC authorities arranged an orientation class for the first year MBBS students who had been attending their classes virtually since last year.

The students said it was a great day for them.

"We were bored of virtual classes. Today, we joined classes in person for the first time following health safety

guidelines. This was a great day for us," Towhidul Abedin Tanvir, a first-year DMC student from Noakhali, told The Daily Star.

Second-year student Mostafa Anif Faisal said, "We attended classes in person for only two months last year. Since then, we completed our first year courses and had been continuing second-year courses virtually. The wait for in-person classes is over today. It's a great feeling."

According to DMC authorities, classes for second year students will be held from 9:00am to 11:00am while the classes for first year students will be held from 11:30am to 1:00pm regularly.

Besides, classes (practical) for the fifth year students will be held in the morning and night shifts regularly.

"We have around 230 students in each session. So we have started

in-person classes for the students of three sessions from today [yesterday] ensuring that health safety guidelines are maintained," DMC Principal Dr Md Titu Miah told The Daily Star.

Third- and fourth-year students have already been attending classes virtually from 8:00am to 9:00pm every day, he added.

Like DMC, first, second, and fifth year students at three other public medical colleges -- Shahid Shuhrawardy Medical College, Sir Salimullah Medical College and Mugda Medical College -- in the capital also attended their classes in person yesterday.

Similar scenes were seen at the other health institutions across the country yesterday.

Rajshahi Medical College welcomed students to the campus following health rules strictly. They

were greeted with flowers and asked to following the health rules, reports our correspondent.

Dr Nawshad Ali, the college principal, said they began in-person classes for first, second and fifth year students initially as 90 percent of them were vaccinated against Covid.

"The first-year students have received only the first dose. They will be administered the second shot soon," he said.

Teachers took classes dividing the students in two shifts on the first day, Nawshad said, adding that they would call all students to attend classes in person after observing the situation for a month.

In between classes, college staffers were directed to clean the classrooms with disinfectants.

The RMC has a total 1,100 MBBS and 300 BDS students.

## Medvedev foils

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accomplished in your career... for me, you are the greatest tennis player in the history."

Medvedev, the 2019 US Open runner-up, captured his first Grand Slam title in his third Slam final, a rematch of February's Australian Open final, won in straight sets by the 34-year-old Serbian to launch his Slam quest.

"Congratulations to Daniil. Amazing match," Djokovic said. "If there's anyone that deserves a Grand Slam title right now, it's you."

Djokovic's bid to sweep the US, French and Australian Opens and Wimbledon in the same year for the first time since Rod Laver did it 52 years ago collapsed at the last hurdle, with 83-year-old Aussie legend Laver among 23,700 watching at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

"Simply stunning Daniil Medvedev, you stopped one of the greatest tonight," Laver tweeted. "To win your first Grand Slam title is always special, to do it against a champion like Novak Djokovic is something else. Take heart Novak, the quest continues. Best wishes."

## Draft policy

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He said it is very tough to censor contents on OTT platforms through the censor board.

"It is easy to censor cinemas as 50 to 100 films are released every year. But it is not easy to censor hundreds of contents on the OTT platform. For this, we have made a draft of the policy which we will publish as notification after scrutiny," he added.

He said the policy has been made to protect the country's culture and heritage from deviation and lead the society and its people, including youths.

The minister said currently social media is added with mass media. Social media has given unfettered opportunity to people to express their opinions, said Hasan, also the ruling Awami League's joint general secretary.

At the same time, he said, it was also seen that the social media was being used to create instability in society and spread propaganda against the government or individuals.

The minister said some people are trying to spread rumours and to create confusion among the public by sitting abroad, through social media and online news portals.

"We have taken actions against them on behalf of the government through coordination of other ministries. But, in this case, many times we didn't get proper support which is needed from service providers. For this, we are in discussions with service providers," he added.

The minister said a decision has been taken to take action against those specific persons as per the existing law of the country from where they carry out the propaganda.

## No need for a vaccine third jab booster: study

AFP, Paris

Vaccines are effective enough at preventing severe Covid-19 that there is no current need for the general population to be given third doses, according to a report in The Lancet published yesterday.

Some countries have started offering extra doses over fears about the much more contagious Delta variant, causing the World Health Organization to call for a moratorium on third jabs amid concerns about vaccine supplies to poorer nations, where millions have yet to receive their first jab.

But a report by scientists, including from the WHO, concluded that even with the threat of Delta, "booster doses for the general population are not appropriate at this stage in the pandemic".

The authors, who reviewed observational studies and clinical trials, found that vaccines remain highly effective against severe symptoms of Covid-19, across all the main virus variants including Delta, although they had lower success in preventing asymptomatic disease.

"Taken as a whole, the currently available studies do not provide credible evidence of substantially declining protection against severe disease, which is the primary goal of vaccination," said lead author Ana-Maria Henao-Restrepo, of the WHO.

She said vaccine doses should be prioritised to people around the world still waiting for a jab.

"If vaccines are deployed where they would do the most good, they could hasten the end of the pandemic by inhibiting further evolution of variants," she added.

Countries like France have started distributing third jabs to the elderly and people with compromised immune systems, while Israel has gone further, offering children 12 and older a third dose five months after full vaccination.

The Lancet study concluded that the current variants had not developed sufficiently to escape the immune response provided by vaccines currently in use.