

## Keep children away

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similar viral loads in their nasopharynx and can spread the virus to others.

Like adults, pre-existing medical conditions have been suggested as risk factors for Covid-19 in children.

The risk of Covid-19 infection from schools can be reduced if the "three Cs" -- crowded places, close-contact settings and confined spaces with poor ventilation -- are avoided.

Apart from these "three Cs", washing hands frequently and wearing masks are part of the comprehensive strategy to suppress transmission.

It is not certain how long the Covid-19 virus survives on surfaces. Its survival time depends on a number of factors, including the type of surface, temperature, relative humidity and specific strain of the virus.

Children may become infected if they touch surfaces contaminated by the virus and touch their eyes, nose or

mouth without washing their hands.

There is currently no evidence that people can get Covid-19 from foods and water. But before handling food, children must wash hands with soap or disinfect with sanitisers properly.

Children must also wash their hands before they put on masks. The mask must cover the nose, mouth and chin.

After returning from school, the mask should be washed every day if it is a fabric one or disposed of if it's a surgical one. They should not use masks with valves.

To ensure students' safety, the roles of parents and teachers are very important.

Until children are vaccinated, prevention is the key to protect them from Covid-19.

Dr Rukhsana Parvin is Assistant Professor of Department of Pediatrics, Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College.

## Rights activists condemn case

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Judicial Magistrate's Court against Shaheen Anam and Banche Shekha Executive Director Angela Gomes under the Bangladesh penal code, accusing them of wantonly causing provocation with intent to cause riot and criminal intimidation.

Taking the case into cognisance, the court directed Police Bureau of Investigation to probe the matter and submit a report by December 21.

On Friday, Samajik Protirodh Committee, a platform of 67 organisations on human rights and women and development, expressed grave concern over the filing of the case.

Quoting media reports, it said some Hindu "fundamentalists" filed the case against them for taking initiatives to amend respective acts to ensure equal rights to inherited property for Hindu women.

In its statement, Moulik Odhikar Surokha Committee yesterday said discussions and research regarding reform to Hindu inheritance law have long been held by various quarters such as government institutions, including Bangladesh Law Commission, non-

government organisations and other platforms.

In that vein, national-level coalition "Hindu Ain Pranayaney Nagorik Udyog" proposed a draft "Hindu inheritance law-2020".

Making such a proposal and holding discussions in this regard are basic rights guaranteed by the country's constitution, while disagreeing with that stance and those discussions and giving a different opinion are also basic rights enshrined in the constitution, reads the statement.

But filing criminal cases against specific individuals as a means of opposing such research and discussion is equivalent to diminishing the freedom of speech, it reads.

"We are worried that now, besides the government, different individuals and institutions are also resorting to the criminal justice system to tarnish freedom of speech, freedom of thought and conscience.

"In such instances, all of us irrespective of race, religion, and opinion will be the sufferers," Moulik Odhikar Surokha Committee's press statement added.

## SPD narrowly wins vote

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this month.

Scholz, who served as finance minister in Merkel's outgoing 'grand coalition', said a government led by him would offer the United States continuity in transatlantic relations.

"The transatlantic partnership is of essence for us in Germany... So you can rely on continuity in this question," he said, adding it was important for

democracies to work together in a dangerous world even allowing for occasional "conflicts".

Scholz said he hoped to agree a coalition before Christmas, "if possible".

However, his conservative rival Armin Laschet, 60, said he could still try to form a government despite leading his CDU-CSU bloc to their worst ever national election result.

## Dhaka for quick release of funds

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Station in Sirajganj, which will ultimately shorten the Dhaka-Bogura travel distance by 112 kilometres and time by three hours.

India would provide Tk 3,146.59 crore or 56.39 percent of the total project cost in soft loans.

**LOC PROJECTS**  
Under three LoC funds, the BR took 17 projects, out of which nine have already been completed. Six other projects are now being implemented.

The six projects are: construction of the Khulna-Mongla Port rail line; construction of the third and fourth dual gauge lines in the Dhaka-Tongi section and dual gauge double line in Dhaka-Joydebpur section; rehabilitation of the Kulara-Shahbazpur section; conversion of the meter gauge into a dual gauge line from Parbatipur to the Kaunia section; construction of double line in the Khulna-Darshana section; and construction of dual gauge line from Bogura to Sirajganj.

The physical work of three projects have started and have already witnessed several revisions. But the physical work of three others are yet to start, despite being approved around three years ago.

The Khulna-Mongla Port rail line project taken to construct 64.75-kilometre-long rail line in December 2010 was supposed to be completed within three years of its approval.

But the project's physical work did not kick off even six years after approval. In the meantime, the cost of the project rose to Tk 3,801 crore -- 120 percent higher than the original estimate.

The delays did not end here.

The project authorities sought another Tk 633.4 crore and a one-and-a-half-year extension of the project's last deadline in June this year. As of August, the project witnessed 86.72 percent progress.

The deadline was extended up to December 2022 while the cost revision proposal is now pending with the Planning Commission, sources said.

The Ecneec had approved the project for building the third and fourth dual gauge railway tracks on the Dhaka-Tongi route and doubling the dual gauge track on the Tongi-Joydebpur route in November 2012. The cost of the project was Tk 849 crore and the deadline was June 2015.

After several revisions, the cost rose to Tk 1,106 crore and deadline was set to June 2023. But the project witnessed only 51.40 percent progress till August this year.

The project for the rehabilitation of the Kulara-Shahbazpur section, taken up in 2011, went through similar processes. It witnessed 24.40 percent progress till August, even though the revised deadline is December next year.

The project for Parbatipur-Kaunia section was taken up in February 2018 while the Khulna-Darshana project in May 2018 and the Bogura-Sirajganj project in October 2018.

The physical works of none of these have started yet, although the Bogura-Sirajganj project is well ahead. The project authority hoped to start physical works by mid-2023.

Delay in land acquisition, changes in design, lengthy tendering process due to the requirement of taking

concurrence from the Indian side at all phases and complexities over releasing payment are among the reasons behind the delay in project management, BR officials said.

**WHAT THE RAIL MINISTER SAYS**

At yesterday's programme, Sujan sought India's cooperation for the development of railway's infrastructure and rolling stocks; and to improve the BR's capacity.

He also hoped for the simplification of the payment system for projects, which are being implemented under LoCs, because it causes delay.

"I want to urge India through its High Commissioner present [at the programme] over the matter," the minister said.

"I would request them to consider whether payment can be simplified so that the main projects can be implemented within the deadline while maintaining standard."

In his speech, Vikram Doraiswami said, "Rail is in our common DNA. Indian and Bangladesh have a long history of working on railways and infrastructure of railway [that] we both inherited from the colonial period.

"We believe sincerely and honestly that we are ideally suited to be each other partners for the development of railways in Bangladesh," he said, adding that India will stand by Bangladesh railway for everything, including capacity building and execution of projects.

Railways Ministry Secretary Salim Reza and BR Director General Dharendra Nath Mazumder also spoke at the programme.

## Prof M Nabi's death anniversary observed

CITY DESK

The 15th death anniversary of Professor Emeritus M Nabi Alam Khan was observed yesterday.

He was a former professor and head of cardiac surgery at National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases.

He was also former professor of thoracic surgery at National Institute of Diseases of the Chest and Hospital.

Relatives and well-wishers were asked to pray for the salvation of his departed soul.



## Roushan Ara passes away

CITY DESK

Roushan Ara Chowdhury passed away in a city hospital on Sunday evening. She was 67.

She used to work as a project manager of Pathfinder International. She was also a college teacher in her early career, said a press release.

Roushan left behind her husband, two sons, a daughter and their families. She was buried at her home in Ishwardi, Pabna.

All are requested to pray for the salvation of her departed soul.

## Dinosaur fossil

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extant vertebrates," the scientists wrote in the study.

While fossils of armoured, herbivorous dinosaurs, such as the famous Stegosaurus, have been widely uncovered from the northern continents, the researchers say this is the first time the remains of one have been found from Africa.

Over the years, several armoured dinosaurs have been unearthed, some with rows of bony plates embedded into their skin, and those which grew spikes from these bony plates, and others with a large bony club at the end of their tails.

However, the newly discovered dinosaur stands out.

Palaeontologists say the protective spikes in this ankylosaur is particularly peculiar since the feature, which would have lined the sides of this animal, are actually fused to the rib bones themselves.

## Abducted teenager tortured

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Speaking to The Daily Star, Salam said he had a dispute with Ekram Hossain Sumon over business transactions.

"Ekram with the help of the other accused abducted Faisal and me at knife point from Natore town's Station Market area around 6:30pm on Saturday. They took us to the Jubo League's temporary office in Kanaikhal area by motorcycles."

He said the abductors demanded a ransom of Tk 3 lakh, accusing them to be thieves. As he refused to pay the ransom money, Rabiul Awal Bappi and his associates pulled out the nail of Faisal's left-hand index finger with pliers.

"Jubo League leader Roni, his brother Bappi and their associates then asked me to bring my wife's gold jewellery."

Salam said he at one stage gave away his motorcycle to the abductors. The abductors then let him go on

condition that he would pay them another Tk 2 lakh for the release of his employee Faisal.

The accused also threatened that they would kill Faisal if Salam disclosed the matter to police.

Feeling insecure, Salam that night informed police about the incident.

Police early on Sunday detained Ekram from his home in Nabinagar village and recovered Salam's motorcycle from there.

After gleaning information from Ekram, law enforcers picked up Abir from his home in Natore town.

The plaintiff alleged that accused Bappi was threatening him with life over the phone if he did not withdraw the case. "I am now felling insecure. I want safety of my life."

Speaking to this correspondent, Faisal said, "I am not going out of home for the threat to my life. The criminals and their relatives are threatening to kill me as I disclosed

the matter to police."

Ruhul Amin Biplab, acting general secretary of Natore district Jubo League, confirmed that Roni, Bappi, and Shubho hold the posts in Jubo League and Chhatra League.



"This is a brutal incident. Those involved in the incident should be brought to justice quickly and exemplary punishment should be meted out to them," he said.

Police said Faisal was admitted to Natore Sadar Hospital on Saturday night. He left the hospital on Sunday morning fearing fresh attacks.

Natore Superintendent of Police Liton Kumar Saha said they were conducting raids to arrest the rest of the six accused.

Asked about the threat on the plaintiff's life, the SP said he was not aware of it.


Meanwhile, a Natore court sent the two arrestees to jail on Sunday after police produced them before it.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE MOTHER OF HUMANITY  
HONORABLE PRIME MINISTER SHEIKH HASINA  
MAY YOU STAY WITH US FOREVER AND LEAD US TO  
A GREATER TOMORROW**

**WE WISH YOU HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

Founder: Freedom Fighter  
**Dr. H.B.M. Iqbal**



**On this auspicious occasion,  
Dr. H.B.M. Iqbal, Chairman of  
The Premier Bank Limited expresses his  
warmest wishes and most sincere gratitude  
to the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh**

**Sheikh Hasina**  
for granting permission to initiate the  
**Sheikh Hasina University of Science & Technology**

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## 308 accused in 172 cases

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and are being harassed as the trials have not been completed. The UK-based rights organisation observed that repetitive lack of coordination, opacity in action planning and acute absence of accountability at the policy-making level, to deal with the first and second wave of the pandemic have deepened the crisis in the country.

Faruq Faisal, regional director for Article 19 South Asia, said: "The government has used various excuses to curtail the right to information and the freedom of the media to an alarming level. Even the government has often come up with inaccurate and inconsistent information on overall crisis management, health care and vaccination.

"Instead of acknowledging the reports of irregularities and corruption in the health sector published in the media, the government has resorted to repression against the media and journalists. Disappointingly, the centennial Official Secrets Act of the colonial period, including the deeply flawed DSA are being used to do so."

He further added that obtaining information is a fundamental right of citizens.

"Citizens have an equal right to protection and privacy of their personal data. However, there are often disturbing incidents like eavesdropping on private mobile phones and secret phone conversations being leaked," said the statement quoting Faisal.

The statement also expressed concern at the proposed "Personal Data Protection Act" saying that it would be used as a tool to control dissent in the name of protecting personal data and further impede independent expression.

The statement added that the constitution of Bangladesh protects the right to information and fundamental freedoms of the people.

## Kosygin calls for political

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The trial commenced on August 11, 1971. The court, however, adjourned on the same day. On September 8, 1971 the services of AK Brohi was procured as the defence counsel, and the examination of the prosecution witnesses started.

**FOUR PAKISTANI HC EMPLOYEES DEFECT**

Four more employees of the Pakistan high commission in New Delhi switched their allegiance to Bangladesh along with their families. The four members of the staff are Mufizur Rahman, stenographer, AK Azad, upper division assistant, Mohammad Zainul Abedin, lower assistant, and Chulam Mustafa, dispenser.

Mufizur Rahman told a news conference at the Bangladesh mission that a large crowd of people had helped them get down from a bus after they had told them that they were being taken to Pakistan forcibly. The people arranged for another bus from the border which brought them to the Bangladesh mission.

**ON THE WAR FRONT**

In the Rangpur-Dinajpur-Rajshahi sector, Mukti Bahini encountered Pakistani troops in Likhaldari area today. They killed six enemy soldiers and injured three.

In the Mymensingh-Sylhet sector, Mukti Bahini today raided the Gafargaon Police Station and killed two police personnel. On the same day, Mukti Bahini ambushed the Pakistani Patrol at Dewanganj, killing two Pakistani soldiers.

Mukti Bahini ambushed enemy troops today in Barmi and Joydevpur area in Dhaka district, killing 12 enemy soldiers and injuring seven.

Mukti Bahini attacked the Pakistani position today with mortars in Kayampur near Kosba of Cumilla district. The battle continued for three hours. Mukti Bahini killed 35 enemy soldiers and injured 15. Besides, they captured five bayonets and 250 rounds of Chinese bullets.

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## Happy Birthday to Our Visionary Leader from North South University



# SHEIKH HASINA

## Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh

Congratulations to Honorable  
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for  
being Conferred the 'SDG Progress  
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