



# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

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"Although we have achieved tremendous success in health sector, the Covid pandemic has also exposed some loopholes in the system."

PRESIDENT ABDUL HAMID



"What the government is doing regarding Khaleda Zia's treatment is completely inhumane and a grievous act."

NAGORIK OIKYA CONVENER MAHMUDUR RAHMAN MANNA



"If the current situation prevails, the Afghan government and people will face problems and will become a cause for mass migration in the region..."

TALIBAN FM AMIR KHAN MUTTAQI ON AFGHANISTAN CRISIS

SMALL BUSINESSES DROWNING IN DEBT

## Deprived of help for no documentation

BB working with SME Foundation to educate them on importance of paperwork



- About **73%** micro and small businesses owners could not recover their losses during the pandemic.
- Only **9%** of small business owners received stimulus packages whereas the number is **45%** for large businesses.

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Basudeb, who hails from a remote village in Patuakhali, thought he had carved out a comfortable life for himself and his family in Dhaka.

The hair salon he ran in the capital's Bhashan Tek area was a community hub. On March 24 last year, his buzzing salon went quiet as the government announced a fortnight-long countrywide general shutdown to flatten the curve on coronavirus.

While the government had announced a stimulus package of Tk 23,000 crore for micro-entrepreneurs like Basudeb to tide them over the pandemic fallout, lack of proper documentation meant the benefits

of the initiative never reached those who truly needed it.

To save his salon, he took a loan at a high-interest rate -- a step that has now left him on the run from the loan shark's henchmen.

They threatened to pick up his wife and children to work in the lender's brickfield as slave labourers if he did not pay back about Tk 2.5 lakh.

"What else could I do?" a tearful Basudeb told The Daily Star over the phone from his home in Baufol upazila.

Stories like Basudeb's can be found in many places in Dhaka.

According to a survey conducted by the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM) conducted in July, 73

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Pillars have been driven into the Bhairab to encroach upon a large section in Shiromoni Balurghat area of Khulna. Hundreds of encroachers are feasting on the river and setting up factories along its banks between Khulna and Jashore.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Fuel price hike rational: Hasina

Says enough has been done for Khaleda

"Isn't it enough that Khaleda Zia was allowed to stay in her residence instead of jail and receive treatment there?"



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government rationally raised the fuel prices amid the price hike in the international market since a large amount of subsidy is provided to this sector.

"We provide Tk 23,000 crore subsidy to only diesel every year. We provide a total of Tk 53,000 crore as subsidy against diesel, electricity and others related. You just tell me how much money should be given as subsidy," she said while addressing a press conference at the Gono Bhaban on the

outcome of her recent two-week visit to France and the United Kingdom.

Some journalists were also connected to the event virtually from the Prime Minister's Office.

Hasina said fuel prices have gone up in the international market and there will be no more development in the country if a large amount of the budget goes to subsidies.

"If we procure diesel at a high rate and provide it at the cheapest rate by giving a large amount of subsidy, how can we

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OBSERVATION ON RAPE CASE

## 72-hour time limit not in full judgment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recommendation made by a Dhaka tribunal judge to the police to not register any rape case if the complainant goes to them after 72 hours of the incident is missing in the full text of its verdict.

While delivering the verdict in the Banani Raintree double-rape case on November 11, Judge Most Qumrunnaher of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-7 of Dhaka came up with the recommendation verbally in the open court.

Around 30 reporters were present in the packed courtroom during pronouncement of the judgment.

In the verdict, the judge also acquitted all five

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COST BURDEN OF DENGUE TREATMENT

## Poor spend 139pc of monthly income

Average cost for treating dengue patients Tk 33,817

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Families of dengue patients in the capital had to spend Tk 33,817 in treatment cost each on average, which came as an additional financial burden on them, says a government-funded study.

The study also found that the poorest households spent 139 percent of their monthly income for the treatment, which indicates they often emptied their savings, took loans from friends and families, and even sold assets.

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) collected data between October 15 and November 28 last year for the study, funded by Health Economics Unit of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. A

total of 1,176 households in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) areas were surveyed in this regard.

The study findings were disclosed at a seminar held at BIDS conference room in the capital yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 1,01,354 confirmed cases of dengue and 179 deaths were reported in 2019. The numbers were 1,405 and seven respectively the next year.

The DGHS has so far reported 26,000 cases this year.

The BIDS study says the family of a dengue patient had to spend Tk 22,379 on average for treatment at public hospitals.

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## Khaleda has kidney, liver diseases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is suffering from chronic kidney and "decompensated liver" diseases along with other complications at city's Evercare Hospital.

Her physicians said her haemoglobin was fluctuating, which was a new concern for the doctors, and that her blood sugar was also not under control.

Family members closed to the BNP chief said her physical condition has not

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A bus leaves a cloud of dark smoke on a road in the capital's Basila area yesterday. Such unfit vehicles contribute to smog and increase particles in the air, which are harmful to human health.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Latifur, Shahnaz again named top taxpayers

Editors of The Daily Star, Prothom Alo also make the NBR list



LATIFUR RAHMAN



SHAHNAZ RAHMAN



MATIUR RAHMAN



MAHFUZ ANAM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The tax authority yesterday announced Latifur Rahman, the founder and former chairman of Transcom Group, and Shahnaz Rahman, the conglomerate's current chairman, as top taxpayers for fiscal 2020-21, marking the second consecutive year of accolades for the two.

Rahman, who passed away on July 1 last year, was named amongst the top taxpayers in the senior citizen category for his income in the fiscal year 2019-20 -- a distinction he previously got in fiscal 2015-16, while his wife Shahnaz was one of the highest female taxpayers in the Dhaka city.

The National Board of Revenue also declared Rahman's family as "Kar Bahadur" or tax icon family along with 83 other families from across the country in 2017.

Besides the two, The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam and Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman were named top taxpayers in the journalist category for the sixth consecutive year.

The NBR also named two sister concerns of Transcom Group -- Mediastar and Transcraft -- the owning companies of Bangla daily Prothom Alo and its printer Transcraft -- as the top tax-paying firms in the print and electronic media category.

The two companies have been getting the recognition as highest taxpayers since fiscal 2015-16, when the NBR decided to broaden the list of the largest taxpayers to honour them with tax cards to encourage compliance among taxpayers.

The tax administration launched the initiative to honour taxpayers in fiscal 2010-

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