



A man helps a family member with physical disability board a train at Chattogram Railway Station, as the door is too narrow for wheelchair access. On top of that, getting on and off a train at the station is a challenging task for passengers, since the train compartments rest unevenly higher than the surface of the platform. This photo was taken on Friday afternoon.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Youth’s body recovered from Ctg pond

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday recovered the body of a 25-year-old youth from a pond in port city’s Bayezid area.

The identity of the deceased could not be known immediately.

SI Nur Nabi of Bayezid Bostami Police Station said, “Local spotted the body floating in the pond of a mosque near BSTC Glass House area and informed police around 11am.”

“Police rushed to the spot and recovered the body,” said the SI, adding, “The youth was wearing three-quarter pants and a black and white half shirt. There were no injury marks on the body.”

“The deceased had no mobile phone or wallet with him,” added the SI. He said they have notified PBI to collect his finger print for bio-metric verification.

It was not from space, after all

Metal object in Sitakunda fell out of shipyard crane

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Ctg

The iron-like object which fell on a village at Bhatiyari union of Sitakunda on Saturday afternoon, is part of a crane that was being used to drag fragments of a larger barge crane weighing 5,000 tonnes.

Dismantling large cranes requires proper know-how but the yard authority did not know how to handle it, causing wire and hook of the other crane to detach and projectile to nearby areas. At least three pieces fell on three different areas, said sources inside the ship breaking yard.

Mohammad Ali, general secretary of Bangladesh Metal Workers Federation, claimed that the incident originated from Ferdous Steel Corporation.

Ali, quoting his network of workers at ship breaking yards, said one of the three parts severed the power line at a nearby area in Jahajghata. The power line was restored yesterday evening.

Another part fell on a coconut tree and the heaviest part fell two kilometres away at Mitrapara of Bhatiyari union, creating a

15-feet deep hole, he said.

Mohammad Ali Shahin, coordinator of Young Power for Social Action, an NGO that works to ensure safety at shipyards, told The Daily Star that the yard does not have the technical knowledge to operate power cranes.

This requires technical know-how, otherwise it can cause serious damage, he said.

Golam Kibria, village police of Bhatiyari union told The Daily Star that the shipyard is two kilometres away from where the object fell. Sometimes tiny pieces of metal from shipyard ends up in nearby areas.

Milton Roy, Sitakunda upazila nirbarhi officer, told The Daily Star that they were considering that it came from the shipyard of Ferdous Steel Corporation.

The yard authority was dismantling a ship close to the time the object fell, he said.

Earlier the iron-like object weighing around 30kg led to a lot of speculation among locals.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Violating Home Quarantine Order

Five returnees fined

STAR REPORT

Five returnees from abroad were fined Tk 32,000 in total for violating home quarantine order in three districts during the last two days. Meanwhile, three traders were fined Tk 55,000 for hiking prices of essential commodities taking advantage of coronavirus fear.

Separate mobile courts fined three returnees from abroad in the district for defying home quarantine on Saturday, our Patuakhali correspondent reports.

In Sadar upazila, Executive Magistrate and Upazila Nirhabhi Officer Latifa Jannati fined Sajol Karmakar (35) from the town’s Natun Bazar area Tk 5,000.

He returned from India on March 11 and was seen roaming outdoors.

In Mirzaganj upazila, UNO and Executive Magistrate Sarwar Hossain fined Monir Hossain (32) Tk 2,000. He returned to Poshim Subidkhali village from Malaysia recently.

Dashmina UNO and Executive Magistrate Tania Ferdouse fined another man Tk 5,000, who returned from Oman recently. His identity could not be known immediately.

Meanwhile, samples of two people with coronavirus symptoms were sent to Dhaka, said Deputy Commissioner of Patuakhali Matuil Islam Chowdhury yesterday.

Of them, a 60-year-old woman went to the town from India recently and another man went to Moukaran in Patuakhali Sadar upazila two days ago from Kalkini upazila near Shibchar in Madaripur, he said.

“We already declared the houses they are staying in as ‘home quarantines’. The order will be effective until we receive their reports,” he told a press briefing at his office around 11am.

In the district, around 2,165 people were put in home quarantines and 402 of them were released, said DC Matuil Islam.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

SPREADING RUMOURS

Doctor put on 3-day remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday granted a three-day remand for quizzing Dr Iftekhar Adnan, who was arrested by police on Saturday night for spreading rumors about novel coronavirus on social media through an audio clip.

The court of Chattogram Metropolitan Magistrate Abu Salem Md Noman passed the remand order for Dr Adnan -- who works as a doctor at a private hospital at GEC intersection of the port city -- after police pleaded a 10-day remand for him before the court, said Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Md Kamruzzaman of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

Police claimed that Adnan is a health affairs secretary of Jubo Dal’s Chattogram city unit -- a youth wing of BNP.

The audio -- which appeared to be a phone conversation allegedly recorded by Adnan -- says the death toll from coronavirus increased in Chattogram, and that the government is withholding information relating to it, urging the man on the other side to be cautious.

Police had said on Saturday that Adnan admitted to recording the audio, during primary investigation.

Rajshahi residents defy social distancing advisory

Divisional health director urges lockdown to tackle coronavirus

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

With expatriates -- most susceptible to coronavirus -- continuing to return to the country, the authorities concerned in Rajshahi are struggling to make residents aware of social distancing for precautionary measures against the deadly virus as they keep on gathering at various places in large numbers.

Besides, religious congregations are also taking place in the division on a regular basis.

Meanwhile, doctors of healthcare centres are also in need of personal protective equipment (PPE) for treating coronavirus suspects.

“Though there are still no reports of anyone being infected with coronavirus, we need to remain alert,” said Dr Gopendra Nath Acharya, director of Rajshahi Divisional Health Office under Health Services Division.

The doctor informed that around 1,500 people with history of visiting corona-affected countries entered eight districts of the division in 24 hours till 6am yesterday, and all of them were asked to be home quarantined.

Urging the authorities concerned to impose a lockdown in the division, the director said the situation is grave as they do not have any testing facility. “Social distancing is important as it will lower the chances of getting infected,” he said.



People gather at a makeshift camp in front of RMCH outdoor yesterday. The hospital started the service for coronavirus screening, but no one was seen taking any visible cautionary step.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Unfortunately, people were still seen gathering at markets, parks and other places, despite government instruction of avoiding any kind of gathering as preventive measures to curb the spread of coronavirus.

Failing to stop religious gatherings, Rajshahi Deputy

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Constituent assembly

FROM PAGE 16

seats. There will be one Speaker and one Deputy Speaker to be chosen by the members of the Constituent Assembly from amongst themselves.

According to the Order, a member of the Assembly may resign his seat by a notice addressed to the Speaker. And if a member remains absent from the Assembly without leave for 60 consecutive sitting days, his seat shall become vacant.

CURB ON FLOOR CROSSING BY PARLIAMENT MEMBERS

Crossing of floor by a member of the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh has been prohibited by an order promulgated by the president today. A member of the Constituent Assembly who has been elected on the ticket of a political organisation will cease to be a member upon his resignation or expulsion from

that party, adds the Order entitled Bangladesh Constituent Assembly Members (Cessation of Membership) Order, 1972.

PM’S ‘MEET THE PEOPLE’ SCHEDULE

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will henceforth meet the citizens on Friday and Sunday at Ganobhaban to hear grievances of the people, according to the PM’s secretariat.

PARLIAMENT MEMBERS WILL DRAW 500TK A MONTH

A member of the Bangladesh Constituent Assembly shall draw Tk 500 per month as salary, according to the president’s Order entitled “The Members of the Constituent Assembly (Salaries and Allowances) Order 1972”. Besides that, members of the Constituent Assembly will enjoy first-class travel facilities from their residence to the place of the session

of the Assembly. Each member shall be given Tk 40 as daily allowance and Tk 10 as conveyance for each day during any period of stay on duty. A member, his spouse and his dependent children shall be entitled to the same medical facilities enjoyed by Class-I gazette officers. Every member of the Constituent Assembly shall get a telephone at his residence at government expense.

SOVIET UNION WILL SUPPLY 50 LOCOMOTIVES

The Soviet Union will give 50 diesel-driven locomotives to Bangladesh. This is disclosed by the Soviet Ambassador to Bangladesh Valentin Popov following his discussion with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at his official residence today.

SOURCES: March 24, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, Azad, Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer and Purbodesh.

Govt mulls turning 87km

FROM PAGE 16

zones and many markets and other structures along 16.5 km of the four-lane highway are slowing down traffic on the road, said Shishir Kanti Routh, additional chief engineer of RHD, quoting a road safety audit conducted by his department in 2017-2018.

The average daily traffic on the highway in 2019 was 27,663, he said. Shishir, also a member of RHD’s PPP cell, predicted that the traffic on the highway will increase once economic zones are established in Mymensingh, Netrokona, Sherpur and Jamalpur districts. There are three or four land ports in the districts.

For the first time, the RHD also plans to install an Intelligent Transport System (ITS) on the expressway to immediately learn about the news of any accident or other incidents. It will allow the department to take quick action to prevent disruption to traffic, he added.

Although the probable cost and duration of the new project has not been assessed yet, an RHD official said it may take Tk 3,000-4,000 crores. As the project would not require too much land, the duration of the project would be relatively short, he said.

Meanwhile, the government is also implementing a project for rapid bus service, whereby buses will use dedicated lanes, on the other portion of the four-lane Dhaka-Mymensingh highway from Shahjalal International Airport to Gazipur.

SOUTH KOREA ACCEPTED THE PROJECT

Public Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) and Korea Overseas Infrastructure and Urban Development (KIND), a Korean organisation for providing support to global PPP businesses, signed a memorandum of understanding in April last year.

RHD submitted two projects and Korea so far accepted the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway project, RHD Chief Engineer Ashraf Alam told The Daily Star on March 7.

The project proposal was then sent to the PPPA via the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry, he added.

PPPA Chief Executive Officer Muhammad Alkama Siddiqui told this newspaper on March 7 that they have already endorsed and recommended the project for submission to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) for in-principle approval.

He said once approved, they would hire an adviser and carry out a detailed feasibility study, physical and financial assessment within the shortest possible time.

The ministry would soon send the proposal to CCEA for approval, a ministry official said.

He added that South Korea has already selected three companies -- SK E&C, Korean Expressway Corporation and Cotte E&C -- for implementing the project. SK E&C will be the lead company.

An expressway is a highway especially planned for high-speed traffic, usually with no or very few

intersections, limited points of access or exit, and a divider between lanes for traffic moving in opposite directions.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 12 opened the country’s first-ever expressway from Dhaka to Faridpur’s Bhanga upazila. However, users will get the full benefit of the expressway once the construction work of Padma bridge is complete.

The government had also planned to construct an expressway parallel to the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway, but changed its decision last year.

Now priority is being given to a high-speed train project between Dhaka and the port city, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said recently.

Maoist rebels

FROM PAGE 16

battling the extreme left-wing guerillas since April, 2017 when 25 police commandos were killed in an attack in the same district.

Sixteen commandos were also killed in a bomb attack in the western state of Maharashtra before India’s election last year that was blamed on the Maoists.

The militants, who say they are fighting for rural people and the poor, have been fighting government forces across Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and other states since the 1960s.

Thousands have been killed in the fighting.

Man killed

FROM PAGE 16

and drugs, the OC said.

Sensing their presence, Sohel’s associates opened fire, prompting law enforcers to fire back in “self-defence”, the police official said.

At one stage, Sohel fell in the line of fire, while his cohorts managed to flee the scene.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead, the OC added.

Police claimed to have recovered a revolver from the spot.

Sohel’s elder brother Jamal Hawlader alleged that they went to Khilgaon Police Station on Saturday night hearing that police picked up Sohel who was returning from Cox’s Bazar.

Police then told them to go to the court yesterday saying he would be produced before it.

“But they killed my brother,” he claimed.

He also alleged that a local drug trader offered his brother to join the drug trade, but Sohel denied working with him. The drug trader may have misguided police to kill him, he alleged.

Jamal admitted that his brother was accused in a case but said he was on bail. He claimed Sohel used to sell fruits on the footpath in Khilgaon’s Sipahibag but recently shifted to Shanir Akhra as police evicted vendors from the footpath.

OC Mashiur refuted the allegation and said Sohel was a drug trader and went to Cox’s Bazar bring in drugs to Dhaka. He handed the drugs to someone before his arrest along with another youth named Sagor. Sohel was arrested several times and resumed his criminal activities after getting bail, he said.

Diamond

FROM PAGE 16

The new sample of kimberlite, a type of igneous rock, showed unmistakable properties similar to other portions of the NAC, the researchers said.

The fragment adds about 10 percent to the known expanse of the NAC and also helps reconstruct mysterious shapes of Earth’s ancient continental crust.

“The mineral composition of other portions of the North Atlantic Craton is so unique there was no mistaking it,” said University of British Columbia geologist Maya Kopylova.

“It was easy to tie the pieces together. Adjacent ancient cratons in northern Canada -- in northern Quebec, northern Ontario and Nunavut -- have completely different mineralogies.”

What happens

FROM PAGE 16

of resurgence”, said Flahault, head of Geneva University’s Institute of Global Health.

That proportion depends on the ease with which the virus is transmitted from an infected to a healthy person.

The more contagious the disease, the higher the number of immunised people has to be to stop it in its tracks.

For Covid-19 “there would need to be between 50 and 66 percent of people infected and then rendered immune to wipe out the pandemic”, he said.

The level of contagion itself is open to variation, according to the kind of preventative measures taken, such as quarantine, confinement, and also potentially weather conditions.

If an infected person infects on average less than one other person “then the epidemic comes to an end”, he said.

RESURGENCES

But that will not necessarily be an end of the epidemic, which might just be taking a break, as he argues it is “currently doing in China and South Korea”.

Because health measures during an epidemic are only temporary “and when you relax them the epidemic starts again until it reaches an ad-hoc herd immunity, sometimes over several months or years,” he said.

The head of the infectious diseases service at the Pitie Salpetriere hospital in Paris, Professor Francois Bricaire, also warned of possible “resurgences”.

“The reappearance of Covid-19 is a possibility, with eventually a seasonal resurgence” he told AFP.

Sharon Lewin, an Australian infectious diseases expert, also wonders about the possibility of a return: “Will it come back? We don’t know.”

However, she said SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), also a coronavirus, disappeared completely following strict social distancing measures, after killing 774 people in 2002 and 2003.

The development of a vaccine and its global distribution, which the pharmaceutical industry has promised to deliver within 12-18 months, would radically change the outlook.

Emirates to suspend

FROM PAGE 16

Saeed Al-Maktoum said in a statement. “We continue to watch the situation closely, and as soon as things allow, we will reinstate our services.”

Emirates passenger flights normally serve 159 destinations.

The United Arab Emirates on Friday announced its first two deaths from the COVID-19 disease, having reported 153 infections so far, of which 38 people have recovered.

Maktoum said that, until January this year, the Emirates Group was “doing well” against current financial year targets, but “COVID-19 has brought all that to a sudden and painful halt over the past six weeks”.

“The world has literally gone into quarantine due to the COVID-19 outbreak,” he said.

The airline also said it will slash basic salaries -- by between 25 and 50 percent -- of a majority of employees for three months, but will not cut jobs.

“Rather than ask employees to leave the business, we chose to implement a temporary basic salary cut as we want to protect our workforce,” said Maktoum. “We want to avoid cutting jobs.”

The disease first emerged in China in late December and was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization earlier this month.

Gulf countries have imposed various restrictions to combat the spread of the virus, particularly in the air transport sector.

The UAE has stopped granting visas on arrival and forbidden foreigners who are legal residents but are outside the country from returning.

17 years old raped

FROM PAGE 16

daughter in a critical condition on Friday night.

She is now undergoing treatment at Habiganj Sadar Hospital.

Rajib Chowdhury, a doctor of the hospital, said they primarily found evidence of rape.

Contacted, Azizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Nabiganj Police Station, said the victim’s father filed the case on Saturday afternoon. Police arrested Jewel at night, he said.

Talking to this newspaper, the victim’s mother said her daughter went out with Jewel on Friday. Promising her to marry, Jewel raped her, she said.