

Trudeau won't commit to US visit for talks on new trade deal

AFP, Montreal

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Friday he was reluctant to go to Washington next week for a summit marking the entry into force of the new North American trade agreement, in part due to concerns over possible US tariffs on Canadian aluminum.

"We're still in discussion with the Americans about whether a trilateral summit next week makes sense," Trudeau said at a press briefing.

"We're obviously concerned about the proposed issue of tariffs on aluminum and steel that the Americans have floated recently," he said.

The United States-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement (USMCA) took effect on Wednesday, as borders between the countries are partially shut due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The deal replaced the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Allow them Eid

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likely to be celebrated on August 1.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) are the platforms of the owners of RMG and knitting factories.

The minister urged the authorities concerned to take steps to stop the movement of goods-laden trucks and covered vans for three days ahead of the Eid.

Vehicles carrying agricultural, industrial, and export items, medical equipment, relief, fuel, medicine, food, perishable products and other emergency products, will be out of the purview of this restriction, he added.

He informed that CNG filling stations would remain open for 24 hours eight days before and after the Eid.

Quader also urged the vehicle owners not to operate unfit vehicles for carrying sacrificial animals.

He requested all to maintain social distancing and follow health guidelines to be safe from Covid-19 infection.

About the landlords' alleged inhumane behaviour to tenants, including students and jobless people, Quader said people need to be sympathetic towards each other during the pandemic period.

EC to hold

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occurrence of the vacancy.

"Provided that in a case where, in the opinion of the Chief Election Commissioner, it is not possible, for reasons of an act of God, to hold such election within the period specified in this clause, such election shall be held within ninety days following next after the last day of such period," said the constitution.

The maximum 180-day time limit for Bogura-1 will end on July 15 and for Jashore-6 on July 18, Alamgir added.

He said they would hold the election using ballot paper by strictly following the health directives to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

"We will let all know the details about health safety measures soon," Alamgir said.

He made the comments as many raised concern about the further spread of the virus mentioning that Sadullapur area of Gaibandha was put under lockdown as two voters allegedly attended a wedding ceremony after casting vote in a by-polls on March 21.

The EC in February announced that by-elections to these two constituencies will be held on March 29. But it was later postponed considering the coronavirus situation in the country.

The Bogura-1 and Jashore-6 constituencies fell vacant following the deaths of ruling party lawmakers MPs Abdul Mannan and Ismat Ara Sadique respectively.

Alamgir said that candidates who have collected and submitted nomination paper for by-polls to Bogura-1 and Jashore-6 constituencies earlier would be eligible to contest in the July 14 election.

The decision regarding holding the by-polls to Sirajganj-1, Dhaka-5 and Pabna-4, which fell vacant in recent times after the demises of lawmakers Mohammad Nasim, Habibur Rahman Mollah and Shamsur Rahman Sherif, would be taken later, he also said.

Election Commission also postponed the Chattogram City Corporation election scheduled for March 29 for an indefinite period due to coronavirus.

Alamgir said that commission would decide about the city corporation election later as there was no constitutional binding in this regard.



People moving an entire house, furniture and household goods to a safe place on a boat as water of the Teesta river flooded their house in Aditmari upazila of Lalmonirhat.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Flood affects new areas in the north

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were kept open yesterday morning as there was a heavy flow of water from the upstream river, said Muhibul Islam, sub-divisional engineer of WDB in Lalmonirhat.

In Kurigram, over 62,700 families are affected by flood as the Brahmaputra and the Dharla rivers were still flowing above the danger level.

Crops on 7,330 hectares of land, 16,000 houses, 30-km dykes and 37-km roads have been damaged, according to the district administration.

Many people are passing days with insufficient amount of food and drinking water, while government

officials said they kept distributing relief among the victims.

In Gaibandha, the flood situation is improving slightly, though water of the Brahmaputra and the Ghaghat rivers were still flowing above danger level yesterday.

Water of the two rivers are in falling trends and it will continue till next week, said Mukhlesur Rahman, executive engineer of WDB in the district.

In Bogura, water level of the Jamuna River is also in falling trends. But the Jamuna's water level could rise again within next couple of days due to onrush of water from upstream rivers, said WDB officials.

Over 1.60 lakhs people are directly affected by flood in the district, according to the district administration.

In Jamalpur, though water receded 21 cm in the last two days, around 4 lakh people are still waterlogged as the Jamuna was still flowing 57 cm over the danger level at Bahadurabad Ghat point in Dewanganj upazila yesterday noon.

Nine people have drowned in flood water and another died from snake bite so far in the region.

In Sirajganj, the Jamuna is flowing 33 cm above the danger level yesterday and the water level is on the rise, according to WDB officials.

Two more unions were flooded yesterday in the district, raising the total numbers of affected unions at 33. Around 1.60 lakh people have marooned due to flood.

In Munshiganj, some low-lying areas have been inundated as the Padma river was flowing 11 cm above the danger level at Mawa point yesterday, said TM Rashidul Karim, executive engineer of WDB in the district.

Government officials said they already started distributing relief materials among the flood-hit people there.

Our Lalmonirhat, Pabna, Bogura and Jamalpur correspondents contributed to this report.

'Sometimes, patients die on the way'

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Another 39 doctors and 39 nurses are working at the coronavirus isolation ward of the hospital, he added.

Though the hospital has 16 ICU beds, only 10 are functional. The other six have become damaged for not being used since their installation in 2015 due to manpower shortage, he said.

He also informed The Daily Star yesterday that 57 Covid-19 patients are taking treatment in FMCH including seven in the ICU. So far, 25 coronavirus patients including 13 in the ICU unit have died in the hospital.

"We are trying our level best to give the best service for the people," he said.

However, patients and their family members do not feel the same way.

"This ICU is nothing but an eyewash. The service is very poor there," complained Kushal Chakroborty Dip,

whose father Kamalesh Chakroborty died at FMCH on May 31.

Covid-19 patient Kamalesh was admitted at FMCH on May 23 with breathing difficulty. During his hospital stay, he was shifted at least once to the ICU, where he reportedly did not get proper care.

"My father told me he had to wait for two hours for a glass of water in the ICU," said Kushal.

After testing Covid-19 positive, Khalilur Rahman and his wife took treatment at FMCH's coronavirus isolation unit between April 18 and April 30. They too were not happy with the medical care.

"We reached the hospital around 8:30am and the hospital authority took us to the isolation ward around noon. The quality of food was very bad for the first three days. Only one doctor visited us just once during our stay at the hospital. No doctor

and nurse responded to our calls. The hospital water stank and had too much iron. I had to buy water from outside," he said.

Siddiqui Rahman, civil surgeon of Faridpur, said, "I have also received this kind of complaints from different patients. We are working on it and I hope the problems will be solved soon. We asked all the doctors and nurses to be kind to our patients."

Meanwhile, all critical patients, including those with Covid-19, from Shariatpur, Madaripur and Rajbari have to go Dhaka if they need ICU supports. It takes longer to go to Faridpur or Gopalganj from these three districts than what it takes to travel to Dhaka.

SM Abdulah-Al-Mamun, civil surgeon of Shariatpur, said, "If any patient in our district needs ICU support, we refer the patient to Dhaka. "Sometimes, patients die on the

way, but we can do nothing about it."

As of July 3, a total of 5,016 persons have been infected in Faridpur region, 53 died and 1,880 have recovered.

Till Friday, 3,350 out of 15,603 samples, which were tested at FMCH's RT-PCR lab, came out positive, said Ashraful Alam, professor of microbiology department of Faridpur Medical College and also the head of RT-PCR lab.

"The number of tests is increasing daily. We are working day and night. If we have another PCR machine, it will be easier for us to work," he added.

The lab can test 376 samples per day running four shifts. Only samples of Faridpur and Gopalganj are tested in this lab, said Faridpur's civil surgeon.

The samples of the other three districts are sent to Dhaka and results often take seven to 10 days to arrive.

Nine out of 10 visitors lobbied for postings

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been replaced by innovative methods, he said, adding that the transfer and posting will be done in regulatory manner, not through lobbying.

The IGP said that superintendents of police (SPs) and deputy Inspector general (DIGs) often visit him in the office and say "they want to do something for the force."

"The SPs want their postings in districts and the DIGs want postings in ranges," a high official present at the closed-door conference quoted the IGP as saying.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the officer, under anonymity, further quoted the police chief as saying that "if all SPs want their postings

in districts and DIGs in ranges, then what will happen to other police units?"

A number of officers and members do not want to go outside Dhaka, considering educational benefits for their children, IGP Benazir said, adding that initiatives have already been taken to set up quality educational institutions and medical facilities in divisional cities to solve this crisis.

Earlier, the police chief directed officials concerned to formulate a policy to eventually distribute SPs working places. The policy will ensure how long they will work in Dhaka and how long they will work in districts, a high official of Police

Headquarters told The Daily Star.

DMP Commissioner Md Shafiqul Islam presided over the conference, which was attended by senior police officials, including officers and in-charges of all DMP police stations.

The IGP further said that the attitude of police have changed over the last three months during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and they were able to ensure a place in people's hearts.

"The respect that we have earned over the last three months cannot be bought with money and to get that respect and love from people, you have to be with the people, you have to go to them, you have to love

them," he said.

He further said that police must be free from all kinds of corruption.

"Our position against corruption is 'zero tolerance'. There is no place for corruption in the police," said the IGP.

"No policeman should be involved with narcotics. Police must be narcotics free. We [also] have to stop police brutality and use our legal capacity," he added.

At the beginning of his speech, Benazir paid tribute to the 46 martyred policemen who sacrificed their lives to protect people from the spread of the coronavirus.

He also conveyed heartfelt condolences to their family members.

Bangabandhu's

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Cumilla Cantonment today, the prime minister pays a glowing tribute to the members of the valiant armed forces for their gallant performances in liberating the motherland from the clutches of the Pakistani occupation force. He reminds them that preserving the independence is much more difficult than achieving it.

Bangabandhu calls for strict discipline in the armed forces. He asks the officers and jawans of the army to set an ideal before the world by their deeds and behaviour as true soldiers of a unique nation that was born at the cost of blood.

He urges the army men to identify themselves with the miseries of common people and perform their responsibilities with utmost sincerity.

The prime minister is presented with a rare gift when he drives to the artillery headquarters to convey his blessings to the members of the 'Mujib Battery'. It is a metal container of the first shell fired on the Pakistani occupation force by the 'Mujib Battery'.

1,680 HOUSES CLEARED OF ILLEGAL OCCUPANTS

Police with the help of Jatiya Rakhi Bahini have cleared 1,680 abandoned houses of the illegal occupants and recovered 43 motor cars and 6 jeeps in their last week's drive across the country. They have also recovered huge cache of arms and ammunitions and arrested more than 500 persons on different charges.

MOHINI MILLS CLOSED

Mohini Mills is declared closed today for an indefinite period due to shortage of coal. The nationalised industry will lose Tk10,000 daily on account of salaries of the employees only.

21 KILLED, 24 KIDNAPPED IN 8 DAYS

21 people are killed and 24 kidnapped in different parts of the country by unknown miscreants during the period from June 27 to July 4, according to the police sources. As many as 20 were kidnapped in the district of Jessore alone.

SOURCES: July 6, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dianik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

4 DPDC

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"We have taken action against them on the basis of the recommendation of an inquiry committee," Bikash Dewan, managing director of DPDC, told UNB.

Final action will be taken after completion of final investigation, he added.

DPDC officials said it sent letters to all their 36 divisional engineers seeking explanation about their roles in preparing the electricity bills which a large number of consumers said were exaggerated.

A huge unrest created among the consumers for receiving their inflated electricity bills in the last three months during the time of coronavirus.

Two planets

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slow down as it overtakes WASP-148c on the inside.

To observing astronomers, this phenomenon makes it look like the planets are dancing.

Professor Andrew Collier Cameron, of the University of St Andrews and WASP team member, said: "This is the first time we've found a pair of giant planets interacting so closely, and it's exciting to be able to follow their dance from the ground."

An international team of scientists, which also included scientists from The Open University (OU) and University of Warwick, made the discovery using instruments on Earth rather than with space telescopes.

WASP-148b was identified by a range of instruments installed at the Roque de los Muchachos Observatory in La Palma, Canary Islands.

The star system was then observed with an instrument known as SOPHIE at the Observatoire de Haute-Provence in France.

They found WASP-148b, which is about the size and mass of Saturn, takes about 8.8 days to circle its host star while the orbital period for WASP-148c, thought to have a mass half that of Jupiter, is around 34.5 days.

According to the researchers, this ratio between the orbital periods suggests the WASP-148 system is close to resonance, meaning there is enhanced gravitational interaction between the two planets.

The scientists also observed the planetary transit, which is when a planet crosses in front of its host star, of both WASP-148b and WASP-148c.

The found both WASP-148b and WASP-148c undergo acceleration and deceleration as they pass each other, which according to the researchers, is evidence of gravitational interaction between them.

The researchers liken this gravitational dance between the planets to pushing a child on a swing - where adding force just at the right time produces large variations in timing and movement.

Analysis revealed both WASP-148b and WASP-148c orbit in the same plane, just like the planets in the Solar System.

The findings are published in the Astronomy & Astrophysics journal.