

War crimes

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RECOGNITION BY TANZANIA
Tanzania today announces recognition of Bangladesh. So far, 78 countries have accorded recognition to the newly-independent country.

1 LAKH TUBE-WELLS FOR VILLAGES
The ministry of local government has undertaken a scheme to ensure supply of drinking water in the rural areas by sinking one lakh new tube-wells across the country. Besides, 60,000 old tube-wells which are out of commission will be repaired.
SOURCES: July 13, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Rape accused

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connection. Akram was named the prime accused in the case, the OC said.
Around 2:00am yesterday, a police team launched a drive in Uttar Manikpur village on information that Akram and his cohorts were staying there.

Sensing the presence of law enforcers, the criminals opened fire at cops. Police fired retaliatory shots, triggering a "gunfight", the OC said. After about 15 minutes, the criminals backed off and escaped the area, leaving bullet-hit Akram behind. Police rushed the injured to Noakhali General Hospital where doctors declared him dead. Three cops were wounded during the "gunfight", police claimed.

Akram's sister Aklima Aktar said Cox's Bazar police picked up her brother from her home in the district on Thursday night.

"Police later took him to Uttar Manikpur village in Noakhali and staged the gunfight there about 27 hours after his arrest," Aklima said. Senbagh police also claimed to have recovered a gun, a Chinese machete, and six bullet shells from the spot. They filed two cases in connection with the incident.
On June 15, a suspect of another rape case, Mizanur Rahman, 40, was killed in a "gunfight" with police in the same upazila.

DGHS

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to increase, DGHS signed the MoU with Regent Hospital, "supposing it would encourage other private hospitals to come forward to treat Covid-19 patients," the letter reads.
The DGHS also claimed it was unaware of the fraudulent activities of Shahed and his hospitals. After being informed by the intelligence agency, they, along with Rab, conducted a raid at the hospital.

DGHS also said it gave permission to JKG Group to set up booths and collect samples of coronavirus patients as its coordinator Ariful Chowdhury went to DGHS and claimed that that his organisation was able to set up booths -- like in South Korea -- to help the government deal with the Covid-19 crisis.

But after receiving allegations, DGHS cancelled the permission of JKG's sample collection, it reads.
Seeking cooperation from people, DGHS in the letter said a vested quarter was trying to tarnish the image of DGHS by providing false information to media.

Five killed

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Police earlier posted pictures of some of the confiscated weapons on Twitter, saying they were dealing with a "hostage situation and shooting".
One potential motive for the attack is a power struggle at the church between rival factions, local media reported.

Four people were found shot and burnt to death in a car while a fifth victim, a security guard, was also fatally shot, local authorities said.

The National Commissioner of Police General Khehla John Sitole said the quick response by authorities averted even more destruction and death.

"I am certain that the speedy response by the joint security forces has averted what could have been a more severe blood bath," Sitole said in a statement yesterday. "... It is rather unfortunate that such an incident takes place during a time when South Africa is being plagued by a deadly virus and violent crimes."

The South African Police Service and National Defense Force responded to reports of a shooting and an alleged hostage situation at the International Pentecostal Holiness Church at 3:00 am local time.

Bangladeshi

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it to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.
Jamil also said, "We are vigilant at the border and continuing awareness campaign among locals. We urge all people in bordering areas not to risk their life by entering India."
So far, five Bangladeshis were killed either by Indian Khasia citizens of bordering villages or Indian Border Security Force in three bordering upazilas of Sylhet in the last three months.



Workers of a ready-made garment factory blocked Begum Rokeya Sarani for around five hours yesterday as over 2,000 of them suddenly received a transfer notice to Tongi, an area known for high Covid-19 transmission.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Syndicates active again

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with each syndicate having around eight to 10 members. The syndicates are now also involving women to evade law enforcement, he further said.

"Most of their ringleaders have been arrested earlier but go back to the crime after getting bail."
On June 23, Nilphamari district police arrested five members of a note forgery syndicate -- the first such arrest in the district in the last five years.

During interrogation, the arrestees told the police they were visiting various border districts and North Bengal to spread counterfeit notes ahead of Eid-ul-Azha due to their lax monitoring systems.

Mohammed Mokhlesur Rahman, superintendent of police in Nilphamari, told The Daily Star that they learnt from the arrestees that note forgery syndicates are targeting North Bengal and the border districts to spread counterfeit notes. But the police remain alert and increased vigilance to detect these crimes, he

said.
"We have also got some syndicate members' identities but they went into hiding after the arrests of their associates. We are now conducting drives to arrest them," he said.

According to a source in Police Headquarters, around 7,203 cases were filed regarding arrests and recovery of counterfeit notes across the country in the last 19 years.

A high-placed police official said the majority of these cases were filed in Dhaka, Chattogram, Barishal, Feni, Bogura, and Meherpur districts. This year is the first time that the activities of note forging syndicates were witnessed in North Bengal.

Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Abu told The Daily Star they tried their best to prove these note forgery cases when they reach the courts, in order to ensure punishment.

"The convocation rate of these cases is around 80 percent," he added.

A lawyer of a Dhaka court told this newspaper that the police mainly brought charges against note forger

syndicates under sections 420, 468, 469, and 471 of the Penal Code. For these charges, the accused may get sentenced to imprisonment for life or with imprisonment of either three or seven years for a term which may extend up to ten years, he said.

"But, courts generally award seven years of imprisonment in note forgery cases," he added.

In jail, a year's term ends in nine months, meaning the arrestees usually get released within five years and return to their previous profession, said police officials.

Meanwhile, syndicate members were found to be adopting new techniques to make counterfeit notes avoiding detection.

On June 29, Rapid Action Battalion arrested six members -- including two women -- of a note forgery syndicate from Bashundhara in the capital. Rab recovered around Tk 4 crores worth of counterfeit notes, around Rs 40 lakh worth of counterfeit Indian currency, and materials to prepare around Tk 25 - 30 crore more counterfeit notes.

Rab said the arrestees used to boil original Tk 100 banknotes in water and once the colour was washed away, print the colour of the Tk 500 note on the paper. This is why the paper and security measures on the counterfeit notes were the same as the original banknotes.

The syndicate's plan was to spread the counterfeit notes in the market ahead of Eid and cattle market.

Police and Rab officials said due to these new techniques and expenses taken to prepare counterfeit notes, the price for Tk 1 lakh worth of counterfeit notes went up by three times from that last year.

Last year, counterfeit note syndicate members used to sell Tk 1 lakh worth of counterfeit notes for only Tk 8,000 - 10,000 but are now selling the same for Tk 30,000 - 40,000.

DB DC Mashur Rahman said that they have learned of the higher price of counterfeit notes and the new techniques used. "We have already increased vigilance to detect their [the syndicates'] hideouts."

Virus affects entire body

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Center in New York City -- one of the hospitals flooded with patients in the spring -- went through their own experiences and collected reports from other medical teams around the world.

Their comprehensive picture shows the coronavirus attacks virtually every major system in the human body, directly damaging organs and causing the blood to clot, the heart to lose its healthy rhythm, the kidneys to shed blood and protein and the skin to erupt in rashes. It causes headaches, dizziness, muscle aches, stomach pain and other symptoms along with classic respiratory symptoms like coughing and fever.

"Physicians need to think of Covid-19 as a multisystem disease," said Dr Aakriti Gupta, a cardiologist fellow at Columbia who worked on the review, in a statement. "There's a lot of news about clotting but it's also important to understand that a substantial proportion of these patients suffer kidney, heart, and brain damage, and physicians need to

treat those conditions along with the respiratory disease."

Much of the damage wrought by the virus appears to come because of its affinity for a receptor -- a kind of molecular doorway into cells -- called ACE2. Cells lining the blood vessels, in the kidneys, the liver ducts, the pancreas, in the intestinal tract and lining the respiratory tract all are covered with ACE2 receptors, which the virus can use to grapple and infect cells, the Columbia team wrote in their review, published in the journal Nature Medicine.

"These findings suggest that multiple-organ injury may occur at least in part due to direct viral tissue damage," the team wrote.

Coronavirus infection also activates the immune system. Part of that response includes the production of inflammatory proteins called cytokines. This inflammation can damage cells and organs and the so-called cytokine storm is one of the causes of severe symptoms.

"This virus is unusual and it's hard not to take a step back and

not be impressed by how many manifestations it has on the human body," Dr Mahesh Madhavan, another cardiology fellow who worked on the review, said in a statement.

Blood clotting effects appear to be caused by several different mechanisms: direct damage of the cells lining the blood vessels and interference with the various clotting mechanisms in the blood itself. Low blood oxygen caused by pneumonia can make the blood more likely to clot, the researchers said.

These clots can cause strokes and heart attacks or can lodge in the lungs or legs. They clog the kidneys and interfere with dialysis treatments needed for the sickest patients.

Damage to the pancreas can worsen diabetes, and patients with diabetes have been shown to be at the highest risk of severe illness and death from coronavirus.

The virus can directly damage the brain, but some of the neurological effects likely come from the treatment. "Covid-19 patients can be intubated for two to three weeks; a quarter

require ventilators for 30 or more days," Gupta said.

"These are very prolonged intubations, and patients need a lot of sedation. 'ICU delirium' was a well-known condition before Covid, and the hallucinations may be less an effect of the virus and more an effect of the prolonged sedation."

The virus affects the immune system, depleting the T-cells the body usually deploys to fight off viral infections. "Lymphopenia, a marker of impaired cellular immunity, is a cardinal laboratory finding reported in 67%-90% of patients with Covid-19," the researchers wrote.

Doctors need to treat all of these effects when coronavirus patients show up in the hospital, the Columbia team said.

There is some good news. "Gastrointestinal symptoms may be associated with a longer duration of illness but have not been associated with increased mortality," the researchers wrote. Many of the skin effects, such as rashes and purplish, swollen "Covid toes," also clear up on their own.

Pandemic highlights danger posed by wildlife crime: UN

AFP, Vienna

The novel coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the need to combat the threat to human health posed by the illegal trafficking of wild animals, according to a UN report published Friday.

The report published by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) points out "zoonotic diseases -- those caused by pathogens that spread from animals to humans -- represent up to 75 percent of all emerging infectious diseases."

"Without human interference through capturing, slaughtering, selling, trafficking, trading and

consuming of wildlife, the evolution and transmission of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 would have been highly unlikely," the UNODC said in its annual World Wildlife Crime Report.

Pangolins, the mammals thought by some scientists to be the possible host of the novel coronavirus, are the most trafficked mammals in the world and the report says seizures of their scales have increased tenfold between 2014 and 2018.

Pangolin scales are prized in traditional Chinese medicine -- despite a lack of scientific proof -- and used for

the treatment of various diseases such as arthritis, ulcers and tumours.

The report warns that the current pandemic may worsen some forms of trafficking as some "wildlife products may be touted as 'cures' for Covid-19, notably bear bile."

In terms of other trends in smuggling of flora and fauna, the report noted that "demand for tropical hardwood timber has grown greatly in the last two decades" with illegal African rosewood entering some legal supply chains, such as the international wood furniture trade.

However, the report says the

demand for African ivory and rhinoceros horn is in decline.

The report's analysis of trends in wildlife crime uses a database compiling details of 180,000 seizures from 149 countries and territories between 1999 and 2009.

"To build back better from the Covid-19 crisis, we cannot afford to ignore wildlife crime," UNODC director Ghada Waly said in a statement accompanying the report, calling for further anti-trafficking legislation to be adopted in affected countries, as well as better inter-agency co-ordination.

US judge delays federal execution, citing pandemic

AFP, Washington

A US court halted Friday what would have been the first federal execution in 17 years, yielding to a request from victims' relatives worried about traveling during the pandemic to watch the inmate die.

Hours later the Justice Department appealed against the decision.

Daniel Lee, a 47-year-old white supremacist, was convicted in 1999 of killing a gun dealer, his wife and her eight-year-old daughter in Arkansas.

Lee had been scheduled to die Monday by lethal injection at a prison in Indiana.

But relatives of the victims,

including Earlene Peterson, the grandmother of the little girl, asked this week for the execution to be delayed because of the pandemic.

They said they faced the tough choice of exercising their right to witness the execution and protecting their health by avoiding travel during the coronavirus crisis.

Jane Magnus-Stinson, chief judge of the US District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, agreed to put the execution on hold.

"The public, like the government, has an interest in (the) prompt and orderly execution of Mr. Lee's death sentence," she wrote.

"But the public also has an interest --

codified by Congress -- in ensuring that crime victims are treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity," Magnus-Stinson added.

US prosecutors can appeal the decision all the way to the Supreme Court but Baker Kurrus, a lawyer for Peterson and other relatives of the victims, expressed hope that they would not.

However, the US Justice Department said late Friday that it would in fact appeal to keep the execution on track for Monday.

Peterson opposes the death penalty and has asked the administration of President Donald Trump several times to grant Lee clemency.

Flood strikes

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In Kurigram, a two-year-old boy named Arman Hossain was drowned in the floodwaters of a small beel next to his residence at Nawdabosh village under Phulbari upazila on Friday afternoon.

In Nilphamari, the Teesta was flowing 28 cm above danger level yesterday afternoon, according to the local WDB office.

The river will continue to rise, worsening the flood situation, the office warned.

Officials of local administration are preparing to evacuate people from the risky areas.

In Gaibandha, yesterday afternoon the Teesta crossed the danger mark by 0.2 cm at the Kaunia point for the first time this year.

Meanwhile, the Brahmaputra's water level almost reached the danger mark at the Fulchari point around 3:00pm yesterday.

In Bogura, the Jamuna and the Bangali are rising again after falling below the danger mark about three days ago.

Within the next two to three days, both the rivers will cross the danger level, said Md Humayan Kabir, assistant engineer of the Bogura WDB.

In Tangail, for the last two days, the Jamuna river has been rising again due to heavy rain and onrush of water upstream from the district, thus threatening a worsening of the flood situation.

Earlier this month, around 1.5 lakh people of the char and low lying areas of six out of the district's 12 upazilas were affected by flood after the Jamuna overflowed.

FLASH FLOODS IN THE NORTHEAST
In Sunamganj and Sylhet, flood situations are worsening again, a week after the previous flash flood situation had improved.

Yesterday, the Surma was flowing at 54 cm above danger level at Sunamganj town area and 166 cm above at the district's Chhatak upazila.

In Sylhet's Kanaighat upazila the river was flowing 77 cm above the danger level, according to local WDB officials.

Meanwhile, the Jadukata river is flowing 134 cm above the danger mark at Shaktiarkhola of Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila. Many roads at Sadar, Bishwambarpur, Tahirpur, Jamalganj and Chhatak upazilas are submerged in floodwaters.

Mamun Ahmed, a shopkeeper in Sunamganj municipality's Ukil Para, said, "My shop was flooded a couple of days ago. It has flooded again. I don't know when the flooding will stop."

Earlier on June 25, a flash flood affected 82 unions and four municipalities of all 11 upazilas of the district. Later, the water receded and before the situation could completely improve, another flash flood hit the district severely.

Mohammad Abdul Ahad, deputy commissioner of Sunamganj, said, "As we had forecast of the flash flood, we prepared for it and already started opening shelter centres for affected people."

Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat, Bogura, Nilphamari, Tangail and Sylhet contributed to the story.

Scientists

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conditioning as people would be able to stay cool by leaving their windows open.

A proof-of-principle study is published in the journal Scientific Reports, detailing a prototype that makes use of 18 microphones and 24 speakers to eliminate half of the sounds passing through a window.

The 4.5cm speakers were arranged in a grid pattern on bars attached to the inside of a window, though future iterations of the device could involve much smaller speakers hidden from view.

The system was tested with road traffic, train and aircraft noise, resulting in a 10 decibel noise reduction for sounds above 300Hz.

"Compared to noise cancellation headphones, what we have achieved is far more technically challenging as we needed to control the noise in a large open area, instead of just around the ear," said Professor Gan Woon Seng, director of NTU's Centre for Infocomm Technology and lead author of the research.

"Our innovation not only computes the right amount and type of 'anti-noise' to emit, but also does it faster than the detected noise can reach inside the building."

The NTU researchers are currently working with government agencies in Singapore to reduce the gadget's size and make it more cost-effective to produce.

"We are currently finding ways to improve the technology further so that it can be used not only at window grilles with large openings, but also provide a cost-effective solution that can be easily installed and replaced," Prof Gan said.

"Ultimately, we aim to integrate this technology into window grilles that can help mitigate urban noise pollution conveniently."