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SHAH CEMENT

## TAKING 'ADVANTAGE' OF PANDEMIC Land grabbers feasting on unguarded plots

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

With people mostly staying home to avoid coronavirus infection, land grabbers are using this opportunity to take over unguarded and empty plots of land in the capital's Khilgaon.

In the last three months, criminals aided by a former Chhatra League leader and a sacked police constable, have taken control of at least a dozen plots in Nandipara area by building boundary walls and put up signboards.

Moshiur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Khilgaon Police Station, under which Nandipara falls, allegedly provided shelter to the criminals, according to landowners and locals.

When the plot owners tried to recover their property, the criminals demanded a handsome amount of money.

It all came to light after Prof Humayun Kabir, principal of Dhaka Dental College, on behalf of the plot owners, submitted a prayer on June 24 to the deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Motijheel Division) seeking legal support.

Following the complaint, police started investigating the incident.

Prof Humayun then filed a case with Khilgaon Police Station on July 1 and police arrested prime accused Masud Ahmed alias Mukul and his partner-in-crime Ziaur Rahman Pintu alias Pistol Pintu the next day.

"Due to Covid-19 outbreak, a number of plots remain unguarded as people are not able to take care of their property by going out regularly. Land grabbers are using

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



A three-wheeler going against the flow of traffic on the Dhaka-Tangail highway in Savar's Jirani area yesterday, flouting the ban on movement of three-wheelers on highways. Such violation of traffic rules often leads to fatal accidents.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Legislative secy Naren Das dies from Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Secretary of the law ministry Naren Das died from Covid-19 yesterday evening. He was 56.

He breathed his last at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University at 7:15pm, said a ministry press release.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock at the death of Naren.

Law Minister Anisul Huq prayed for eternal peace for his departed soul and expressed deep sympathy for his bereaved family members.

The ministry's Law and Justice Division Secretary Golam Sarwar also expressed deep shock at the demise of Naren, the release added.

Naren was admitted to BSMMU with breathing problems on July 5.

His Covid-19 test was conducted on July 7, and the result showed positive.

## INDO-BANGLA BORDER Dhaka to deploy more troops to stop killing, smuggling

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has planned to deploy additional troops in Indo-Bangla bordering areas to decrease border killings and alleged cattle smuggling.

Making the statement yesterday, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told The Daily Star that it was regrettable that killings in the border significantly increased recently.

"We [Bangladesh and India] are friends. There should be no killing on our border. Once a life is gone, it cannot be brought back," he said.

Mentioning that Indian Border Security Force (BSF) blames cattle smuggling for the killings, he said smuggling was not supposed to happen as Bangladesh already had enough cattle now.

"Still Dhaka is identifying the areas that are said to be hotspots for cattle smuggling and planning to deploy additional forces," he said.

He also mentioned that the two counterparts had an understanding of not using lethal weapons in the bordering areas to ensure zero death there.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

### Jakarta pledges to help UN entry

July 22, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### BANGABANDHU ADVISED REST

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been keeping indifferent health over the last few days. Even so, he continued with his usual busy programme despite his physician's request, according to a health bulletin issued in Dhaka today by the personal physician to the prime minister. The bulletin adds that yesterday the prime minister hardly had any rest till late at night. Consequently, he had a recurrence of his abdominal pain. Rest is now essential for him and there should be no visitor until further instruction.

#### FOREIGN MINISTER'S JAKARTA VISIT CONCLUDES

Declaring his fullest support to Bangladesh's entry into the United Nations, Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik today says, "Bangladesh's position is now getting stronger and the Republic would be accepted into the UN later this year because it appears it would be able to collect the two-thirds majority if the matter comes to a vote."

He accompanies Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad on the latter's trip to Bali.

Abdus Samad Azad asks Pakistan President ZA Bhutto to accept the reality of the subcontinent by recognising Bangladesh. "Other nations could help him [Bhutto] to come straight to the decision

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



## Africa facing coronavirus 'acceleration'

Warns WHO, gives emphasis on contact tracing

REUTERS, Geneva

South Africa's growing Covid-19 epidemic should be an alert to the rest of the continent to strengthen disease surveillance, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Monday.

South Africa reported a surge of 13,373 new cases on Saturday, the fourth largest globally.

Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe also reported significant increases in cases over the past week, WHO's top emergencies expert Mike Ryan told a news conference.

"Even though the numbers in those other countries are smaller I think what we starting to see is a continued acceleration of transmission in a number of countries in sub-Saharan

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## Nasa offers prize for moon toilet design



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Humans are going back to the moon. But how will they "go" when they get there?

Nasa wants to build a better toilet for astronauts on its upcoming Artemis mission, a moon excursion with a target date of 2024. And it wants the public to help.

The agency has mounted what it calls the Lunar Loo Challenge, a contest inviting designs from the global community in exchange for a prize purse of \$35,000 (£27,900).

Space presents a set of challenges for anyone

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## Rape suspect killed in 'gunfight'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A suspected rapist of a schoolgirl was killed in a "gunfight" between Rab and a "drug-peddling gang" in Rajshahi's Puthia upazila early yesterday.

The dead, Ekhlash Uddin, 32, was from Holholla village in the same upazila, the Rab-5 said in a press release.

Ekhlash was accused of raping her sister-in-law Eva Khatun, a schoolgirl, who later died by suicide.

His family, however, claimed that law enforcers had picked him up from Narayanan's Fatulla area on July 4.

The elite force said the "gunfight" broke out in Peergachha village of the upazila around 3:45am when a Rab-5 team was conducting a special anti-drug drive there.

Sensing the presence of law enforcers, the "drug-peddling gang" opened fire on the Rab men.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## VACCINE TRIAL IN DHAKA Chinese envoy to be first volunteer

BSS, Dhaka

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming will be the first volunteer to take part in the final or phase-3 human trial of a prospective Chinese Covid-19 vaccine in Bangladesh.

"Ambassador will be the first one once it [trial] is approved by due Bangladesh authorities," Deputy Head of Mission, Chinese Embassy in Dhaka Yan Hualong told BSS yesterday.

"As I have no chance to win against him [ambassador], I'll be happy to be the second one," he said, adding

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



A trader on a boat laden with guava puts the seasonal fruit into a crate in a floating market in Pirojpur. Usually there is high demand for the fruit and markets such as these are vibrant and thronged by consumers. But during the ongoing pandemic and due to the havoc wreaked by Cyclone Bulbul in November last year, traders and farmers fear reduced sales.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## EU agrees huge virus aid plan

Trump backs face masks as US cases surge towards 4m

AGENCIES

European leaders yesterday agreed a massive aid package for their pandemic-ravaged economies, as US President Donald Trump finally came out in favour of face masks as a tool against the coronavirus.

The virus has infected more than 14.7 million people and killed over 610,000 of them since emerging in China late last year, with fresh alarm being sounded over its accelerating spread in Africa.

After a fractious, 90-hour summit, European leaders finally agreed on a rescue package of 750 billion euros (\$858 billion) to try and pull their bloc out of a deep recession. The pandemic has devastated the global economy.

"This is a historic change for Europe," said French President Emmanuel Macron, while German Chancellor Angela Merkel expressed relief that the EU had, in her eyes, shown itself equal to "the greatest crisis" in its history.

The package will send tens of billions of euros to countries hit hardest by the virus, most notably heavily indebted Spain and Italy who had lobbied hard for a major gesture from their EU partners.

The talks saw strong resistance from some nations against sending money to countries they considered too lax with public spending.

There was criticism from others that the compromises made were too great. Teenage climate campaigner Greta Thunberg tweeted her disappointment.

"As expected the #EUCO resulted in some nice words, some vague distant incomplete climate targets nearly impossible to track and a complete denial of the climate emergency," she wrote.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



### PRAYER TIMING JULY 22

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4:15 12:45 5:00 6:54 8:15  
JAMAT 4:50 1:15 5:15 6:58 8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION