



4-LANE DHAKA-BHANGA EXPRESS HIGHWAY BUILT WITH BSRM XTREME

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SHAH CEMENT

'Please, take us back'

Indians stranded here for months plead to Delhi and West Bengal

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Prianka Majumder had planned to stay in Bangladesh for 20 days when she along with her husband and daughter came to the country on March 8 to attend her cousin's wedding in Barishal's Gournadi.

Little did she know that her 20 days in Bangladesh would stretch up to five months with no sign of possibility for immediate return to her country in sight.

The 25-year-old makeup artist from West Bengal's Uttar Chhabis Porgona district has been stuck here all these months with her three-year-old daughter due to the lockdown and travel restrictions imposed for Covid-19 pandemic.

Her husband, however, returned to India on March 14, following media reports that the Indian border with Bangladesh is going to be closed from March 15.

"We [she and her daughter] did not go [with him] as we thought the situation will become normal. We never thought that we'll be stuck here for more than five months," Priakna told The Daily Star.

Priakna called this correspondent first on Saturday night after collecting his mobile phone number from one of her acquaintances. The correspondent again phoned her on Sunday.

"How does it feel to stay in a relative's house for such a long time? My daughter cries every night for her father but I can't help... We want nothing but to go home immediately. It is not possible to live like this," she said, with a cracked voice.

Like Prianka, around 2,500 Indian citizens got stranded

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



People are supposed to leave seats empty and wear masks as part of measures to reduce the chances of coronavirus transmission in public buses. But in many vehicles such physical distancing directives are not being heeded to. The photo was taken at the capital's Sonargaon intersection inside a BRTC bus.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Rivers swell threatening more floods

STAR REPORT

Water of some major rivers in the country's northern region and some other districts is rising again, posing the risk of flooding many areas.

"River water is increasing due to heavy rainfall in the upstream. It may cause flood for a short period by the end of this month," said Mizanur Rahman, executive engineer of Water Development Board in Lalmonirhat.

Yesterday's bulletin of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said water level of the Brahmaputra and Jamuna rivers was in a rising trend.

"The Brahmaputra and Jamuna rivers may become steady in next 24 hours," said the bulletin released at 9:00am.

"The Ganges and Padma rivers are in a steady state which may remain steady in next 24 hours," it added.

"Medium to heavy rainfall has been forecasted for south-eastern hilly region and south-central

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

COVID-19 VACCINE

China grants country's first patent

REUTERS, Beijing

China's vaccine maker CanSino Biologics Inc has won a patent approval from Beijing for its Covid-19 vaccine candidate Ad5-nCoV, People's Daily reported, citing documents from the country's intellectual property regulator.

The patent was submitted for application on March 18, and was approved on August 11, the report said. It is the first Covid-19 vaccine patent granted by China.

On August 11, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced Russia had won the global race to approve a Covid vaccine.

Russia said that the first consignments of its "Sputnik" vaccine had been produced and will be given to healthcare professionals on a voluntary basis.

China's CanSino's vaccine uses a modified common cold virus to carry genetic material from the new coronavirus into the human body, a method also used by the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

Both vaccines elicited antibody and T-cell immune responses and neither prompted any serious side effects in early trials. T-cells are an important component

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

British PM meets Bangabandhu

August 18, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

EDWARD HEATH CALLS ON BANGABANDHU

British Prime Minister Edward Heath calls on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the latter's hotel suite today. Coming out of Bangabandhu's room at Hotel Claridges, Heath tells newsmen that he has had 'very good talks' with the Bangladesh prime minister. The British prime minister declines to comment further on their meeting. Although nothing precise is available to the press about the talk, it is understood that the two leaders discuss matters of mutual interest besides exchanging views on international issues with reference to the situation in the subcontinent. It is also believed that the two leaders have had a discussion on the relationship between Bangladesh and Pakistan.

STEPS TO AVERT GRAVE FOOD CRISIS UNDERWAY

Food Minister Phani Bhushan Majumdar today claims that there is a "satisfactory food stock" and the government can avert possible famine conditions forecast by many both inside and outside the country. But at the same time, he admits that the food situation is grave and would not contradict newspaper reports about hunger marches.

It is reported that price of rice and other essentials commodities have registered a rise during the last fortnight in various parts of Bangladesh. The reasons for the rise in price of rice are attributed to floods and lack of proper communication.

The Cabinet meets today at the Secretariat with acting Prime

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



UAE denies entry to 68 Bangladeshi migrants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 68 Bangladeshi expatriates were sent back home from Abu Dhabi International Airport yesterday after they allegedly failed to meet necessary conditions for their immigration clearance.

Officials at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka said the expatriates flew back in a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight in the morning.

Of the 68 passengers, six flew from Bangladesh the previous night and the rest travelled to Abu Dhabi on Friday, he added.

An official of Prabashi Kalyan Desk at the airport said he talked to several passengers after their return and they mentioned different reasons for not getting their immigration clearance.

One returnee said

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

'Lucky' phone number sells for \$300,000



AFP, Beijing

A "lucky" mobile phone number has sold for a whopping 2.25 million yuan (\$300,000) after hundreds of people vied online for the right to use the apparently auspicious string of digits.

The number ends in five eights, a sought-after combination in China as the word "eight" in Mandarin sounds similar to the word for "prosperity".

The number was among assets seized and ordered auctioned by a court in Beijing, and an online sale attracted more than five thousand bids between Saturday and Sunday.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Bangladesh has 6th most active cases

37 more die, 2,595 infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With 2,595 more people testing positive for Covid-19 yesterday, Bangladesh has now become sixth on the list of countries with most active cases.

The 24 hours till 8:30am yesterday also saw 37 deaths from the highly transmissible virus, according to the health directorate.

The total number of active cases rose to 1,17,454, according to www.worldometers.info -- a reference website that provides almost real-time statistics.

Out of 2,79,144 confirmed cases, 1,60,591 patients -- or more than 57 percent -- have recovered from their illnesses as of yesterday, according to the health directorate.

With 6,79,946 active cases, neighbouring India

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

BSF shoots cattle trader dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A Bangladeshi cattle trader was shot dead allegedly by Indian Border Security Force along Shingnagar border in Chapainawabganj's Shibganj upazila on Sunday night.

Sumon Ali, 22, was the son of Kalu Mandal of Tarapur village of the upazila.

Locals said some cattle traders were going to India through Shingnagar border around 7:45pm on Sunday for bringing cattle. Members of BSF opened fire on them and Suman was critically injured.

He died when his fellows were taking him

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 18

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-25 12-45 4-45 6-38 8-00
JAMAT 5-00 1-15 5-00 6-41 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



The rush of floodwater washed away the approach road to this bridge in Char Islu village of Rangpur's Gangachara upazila. Desperate for a usable bridge, the locals did not bother to wait for it to be mended. They made it passable by building an approach road out of bamboo poles and fences. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

S Korea battles worst outbreak in months

Warns of crisis; NZ delays polls amid surge in virus cases

AGENCIES

South Korea yesterday warned of a looming novel coronavirus crisis as new outbreaks flared, including one linked to a church where more than 300 members of the congregation have been infected but hundreds more are reluctant to get tested.

The outbreak linked to the Sarang Jeil Church in Seoul is the country's biggest in nearly six months and led to a tightening of social distancing rules on Sunday.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) reported 197 new cases as of midnight on Saturday, mostly in the Seoul metropolitan area, marking the fourth day of a three-digit tally.

South Korea has been one of the world's coronavirus mitigation success stories but it has nevertheless battled persistent spikes in infections. The latest cases brought its total infections to 15,515 including 305 deaths.

"We're seeing the current situation as an initial stage of a large-scale transmission," KCDC director Jeong Eun-kyeong told a briefing.

"We're facing a crisis where if the current spread isn't controlled, it would bring an exponential rise in cases, which could in turn lead to the collapse of our medical system and enormous economic damage."

The outbreak at the Seoul church has revived fears seen in February when authorities struggled to contain an outbreak that emerged in a secretive Christian sect in the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2