



US ELECTION 2020
Democrats nominate Joe Biden for president, vowing to end Trump 'chaos'
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ZILHAJI 29, 1441 HIRI

16 PAGES PLUS SHOUT PRICE : Tk12.00



INDIAN FOREIGN SECY'S VISIT Dhaka, Delhi join hands on vaccine

Bangladesh to get priority in getting vaccine once produced in India, says Shringla; Dhaka ready to take part in India's vaccine trial

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will get priority in getting Covid-19 vaccine once produced by India, Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said yesterday, but did not specifically mention anything on conducting vaccine trial in Bangladesh which was sought by Dhaka.

"For us, Bangladesh is always a priority country," he told reporters after an about one-and-a-half-hour meeting with his Bangladeshi counterpart Masud Bin Momen at the capital's Hotel Shonargaon.

He also said India was conducting stage three trial of Covid-19 vaccines and that the trials reached an advanced level.

Meanwhile, Times of India yesterday reported that India was eyeing the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine candidate as the likely first shot against Covid-19 to be available for Indians by the end of this year. The country was also conducting trial of two locally-developed vaccines, which may come a few weeks after the Oxford vaccine, it said.

Talking to reporters after the meeting,

which ended around 2:30pm, Shringla said, "We are going to produce vaccine on a massive scale. India produces 60 percent of the world's vaccines. When the [Covid-19] vaccine is produced, it goes without saying that our closest neighbors, friends, partners and other countries will be part of it."

He, however, did not say anything concrete on fulfilling Bangladesh's expectation that India conducts vaccine trials here.

Talking to the reporters, Masud Bin Momen said, "We offered that we can extend our assistance, if needed, especially in terms of vaccine trial... we are ready."

"The Indian side then positively responded, saying that they are developing vaccines that are not only for them but also for others. In that case, Bangladesh will get a priority."

Momen said Bangladesh has a good number of pharmaceutical companies having enough capacity to produce vaccine. "We sought their cooperation in creating collaboration to that end," he said.

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Ekhlasuddin trying to see if there is anything worth saving on his farmland which has been waterlogged for over a month. Millions of people have lost everything to the floods that have been ravaging the country for weeks. The photo was taken yesterday in Binadangi area of Singair, Manikganj.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BANGLADESH UPDATE



2,747
New cases in 24hrs



285,091
Total cases



3,781
Deaths



1,65,738
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE



786,656
Deaths



22,416,884
Total cases

Flood damages Tk 1,323cr crops

Agri minister says further deterioration may jeopardise country's food production

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Flooding has damaged crops, worth about Tk 1,323 crore, on 1.58 lakh hectares of land in 37 districts, Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque said yesterday.

Expressing concern over the matter, he said any further deterioration in the flood situation or occurrence of any other natural disaster would be a severe blow to the country's food production.

"The measures taken by us is enough to mitigate the loss caused by floods if the overall flood situation does not worsen further. The loss will not have any impact on our food production," Razzaque said.

Speaking at a virtual press briefing, he said it is time now for sowing Aman seedlings, but flood water level is rising in some areas which is worrying.

The minister said in the worst case scenario the government has planned to cultivate Robi crops instead of Aman paddy on lands badly affected by floods.

Even if the flood water recedes now, the possibility of drought and storms hitting parts of the country in October and

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Flood response inadequate, faulty

Finds CPD study, points out delays in embankment repair, irregularities in relief distribution, waste of resources

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Centre for Policy Dialogue study on the ongoing flood identified problems in flood response, including delays in repairing embankments and irregularities in relief distribution.

The prominent think tank yesterday presented their study findings in a virtual dialogue session titled "Recent Floods: Damages and Recovery Measures".

The ongoing flood has damaged crops and killed livestock worth nearly 117 million USD till the end of July, affecting more than five million people in 33 districts, the study found.

In terms of the scale of inundation, duration, and destruction of property, this flood is comparable to the devastating floods of 1988 and 1999, the CPD study revealed.

The study focused mainly on three key issues: damage assessment, relief, and rehabilitation and rice procurement and stock.

Moderated by the organisation's Executive Director Dr Fahmida Khatun, the dialogue session was chaired by CPD Chairman Professor Dr Rehman Sobhan. State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Dr Enamur Rahman was the chief guest of the session.

In 97 unions, more than four kilometres of embankments have been damaged, two to four kilometres of embankments have been damaged in 53 unions and up to two kilometres of embankments have been damaged in 70 unions.

"Every year, we talk about building and repairing embankments after the floods. However, after receding of floodwater, we forget to repair and

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CYBERBULLYING

Shipra to decide on filing case after HC rule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Stamford University student Shipra Debnath would decide whether to sue two policemen and others under the Digital Security Act after the High Court rules possibly today on a writ petition regarding the matter.

The writ seeks HC orders for a probe into police officials' Facebook posts that try to smear her by circulating doctored private photographs in social media.

"We will follow the orders and directives given and then make a decision," Shipra's lawyer Mahbulul Alam Tipu told reporters yesterday afternoon.

On Tuesday night, Shipra, a crew member of slain Maj (ret'd) Sinha Md Rashed Khan's YouTube channel, went to Cox's Bazar Police Station to file a case against two superintendents of police and 150 others under the Digital Security Act.

Cox's Bazar Police Station officer-in-charge refused to record the case and advised Shipra to file it with either Ramu Police Station or with the cyber-crimes tribunal, Shipra's lawyer said.

Yesterday morning, Shipra and her

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LOW-INCOME PEOPLE

Veg price hike adds to woes amid pandemic

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The price hike of daily essentials is coming down heavily on limited-income people, who are already struggling to survive the economic meltdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The price of vegetables has shot up by Tk 5 to Tk 30 per kg over the last one month. A recent visit to one of the kitchen markets in the capital revealed that the price of rice has also increased by at least Tk 5.

Retailers are blaming a shortage in supply for the price hike. According to a horticulture scientist, pollination is being hampered due to heavy rainfall. Besides, excessive rainfall also paves the way for fungal and bacterial infection leading to a reduction in vegetable production.

According to the Met office, the rainfall will continue for the next 5-6 days across the country.

Shahinur Mia, a vegetable retailer in Shantinagar kitchen market, said he was selling per kg of potatoes for Tk 34, eggplants for Tk 80, green chili for Tk 200, tomatoes for Tk 120, green papaya for Tk 45, okra for Tk 50, pointed gourd for Tk 55, and bitter gourd for Tk 70.

A month ago, Shahinur said, he sold per kg potato for Tk 35, eggplants for Tk 60, green chili for Tk 170, tomatoes for Tk 100, green papaya for Tk 40, okra for Tk 40, pointed gourd for Tk 45 and bitter gourd for Tk 60.

At Jatrabari kitchen market, retailers were selling per kg of fine rice for Tk 56 to Tk 60. A month ago, the price of fine rice fluctuated between Tk 50 and Tk 58.

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PEC EXAMS 2020 Primary edn ministry seeks PM's approval for cancellation

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The primary and mass education ministry yesterday sent a proposal to the Prime Minister's Office, seeking Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's approval to cancel this year's Primary Education Completion (PEC) and its equivalent exams.

The education ministry is also preparing a set of proposals to send those to the PMO about the fate of Junior School Certificate (JSC) and its equivalent exams, said a top official.

Primary and Mass Education Senior Secretary Akram-Al-Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday that if the prime minister approved the proposal, the primary and mass education ministry will cancel this year's exams of PEC and its equivalent Ibtedayi Education Completion.

"If the exams are

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Instead of forming a queue maintaining social distance, people, most of whom have Covid-19 symptoms, crowd in front of the capital's Mugda General Hospital where they have come to be tested for coronavirus. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Govt set to okay rapid testing

The move aimed at increasing daily Covid tests; fee halved

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

The health ministry has decided to use rapid testing kits in order to increase the number of daily Covid-19 tests and reduce the burden on RT-PCR based tests.

To that end, it is now revising testing protocols, Md Mostafa Kamal, additional secretary of the ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We will get the final guidelines from the technical team by next Sunday and then we will submit it to the minister for the final approval. We hope the entire process will be complete by next week," said Mostafa, who leads the nine-member inter-ministerial task force formed by the government.

The National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) recommended the use of rapid testing kits three months ago to ease the pressure on the pathology services.

The additional secretary said the task force is focusing on how to increase daily testing and "the initiation of rapid testing and reduction of the fees are parts of it."

"Like many other countries, we need to allow such [rapid] testing to detect more infected people," he added.

For more than a month, the day-to-day positive rate has remained stagnant at over 20 percent, which is much higher than the five percent parameter indicating that transmission is under control.

Rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) are easy-to-use paper tests to facilitate testing outside of laboratory settings within a few minutes to half an hour.

There are two types: antigen-based and antibody-based testing.

The antigen-based rapid testing is a molecular test

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