

UN to discuss

FROM PAGE 12
The government's drive against corruption, nepotism and misuse of power will continue, say government sources. So far, 44 members of constituent assembly have been stripped of their membership on charges of corruption and favouritism. The government has also suspended six officials, including two chairmen of autonomous organisations, for dereliction of duty and misconduct. Meanwhile the law-enforcing agencies imposed a curfew and launched combing operations in a bid to stop smuggling and eliminate the anti-social elements.

FIRST BANGLADESH

CONSIGNMENT OF MOLASSES TO INDIA

The first railway consignment carrying 1,200 tonnes of molasses from Bangladesh arrives at Naihahi in 24-Pargana district today. Another rake of 60 wagons loaded with molasses is on its way to India from Bangladesh.

SOURCES: September 25, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Seven steel

FROM PAGE 12
"Tipu was released after giving primary treatment while the workers have sustained 7 percent to 11 percent flame burn and inhalation injury," told Dr Rafiq Uddin Ahmed, assistant professor at CMCH Burn Unit.

He confirmed, injured workers were from a still mill.

Fire Service and Civil Defense Headquarters sources said they had no information about any fire incident in any factory.

Man buys

FROM PAGE 12
Dulal and Tulusi got married 20 years ago. They have two children. Following the dream, Tulusi established several temples in the house and started performing puja there. Her health started deteriorating in the meantime.

"I was heartbroken as my wife's health deteriorated. I have done what was possible for me to fulfil her wish and to keep her healthy," Dulal, a loving husband who sold off three bighas of the total four bighas of his land, said.

Tulusi, however, said that she is feeling well following the arrival of the elephant.

"I am taking care of the animals and worshipping them as I was instructed," she said, adding that she firmly believes that none of her family members nor the animals will have to starve due to the expenses. "God will provide food for the animals in our house, we will all live together happily."

People from around the village were filled with awe after coming to know of such an incident. They are used to stories of kings and nawabs owning elephants, but a farmer owning an elephant is a first in the area.

Navendra Chandra Barman, 85, a resident of Ratidhar Dewti village, told this correspondent that he had seen elephants at a local zamindar's house before. But for the first time in his life he saw an elephant in a farmer's house.

"Keeping elephants in the house is hard work. I don't know how Dulal is doing this," he said.

Ator Rahman, 55, from Nazim Khan area of Rajarhat upazila in Kurigram, said he came to see the elephant after hearing the news.

"Seeing an elephant in a farmer's house is a really rare sight. I don't know how long Dulal will be able to afford keeping an elephant in his house," he said.

"But the love he has for his wife is a rare example in today's age," he added.

Elephant mahout Shariful Islam from Patuakhali said he was hired by Dulal for a monthly salary of Tk 15,000, along with daily meals.

Two young men from the village are being trained in elephant management and he will leave once their training is completed.

"It is rare for a farmer to buy an elephant by selling his lands. I have experienced this the first time in my life," he said.

Support builds

FROM PAGE 12
nine-member high court, giving it a 6-3 conservative majority. Trump has said he plans to announce his nominee by Saturday.

Romney, the party's 2012 presidential nominee, is one of the few Republicans in Congress willing to criticise Trump, and he even voted to remove him from office in the February impeachment trial.

But he dismissed Democratic arguments that the Senate should wait until after voters decide whether to re-elect Trump or chose his Democratic challenger Joe Biden in the November 3 presidential election.

"I intend to follow the Constitution and precedent in considering the president's nominee," he said.

Republicans hold a 53-47 majority in the Senate, and they can afford few defections after two of their members, Alaska's Lisa Murkowski and Maine's Susan Collins, said the Senate should not consider a nominee this year.



Members of India's opposition Congress party try to cross over the police barricades during a protest against the passing of new farm bills in parliament, in New Delhi yesterday. Three bills were approved on September 20 that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said would achieve a "complete transformation of the agriculture sector" and empower "tens of millions of farmers".

PHOTO: AFP

World sees record weekly Covid-19 cases

FROM PAGE 12
World saw new cases rise last week, WHO said, with Europe and the Americas seeing new cases swell by 11 and 10 percent respectively.

Africa, which has remained relatively unscathed by the pandemic, dodged the upward trend, reporting a 12-percent drop in fresh cases from a week earlier.

India reported 75,083 new cases in the last 24 hours, according to federal health data released yesterday, the lowest daily tally in almost a month. There were 1,053 deaths over the same period.

Even as cases shot up across much of the world, the number of new deaths is going down, the WHO statistics showed.

Last week, some 37,700 new deaths linked to the virus were recorded worldwide, marking a decline of 10 percent compared to the previous

week.

The decline was driven by the Americas, long the hardest-hit region, where new deaths were 22 percent lower than a week earlier, and by Africa where new deaths dropped 16 percent.

The Americas meanwhile still accounts for half of all reported cases and 55 percent of deaths in the world. The clear drop in new deaths in the region were driven mainly by decreases in Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador and Bolivia.

The United States, which is the world's worst-hit country, and Brazil, the second-worst hit, continued to report the highest number of deaths, each reporting over 5,000 new deaths in the past week.

Europe, some of which is experiencing a second wave of infections, meanwhile saw its new death count shoot up to over 4,000

for the seven-day period, a 27-percent-hike compared to a week earlier.

France, Russia, Spain and Britain reported the highest number of new cases in the past week, while Hungary and Denmark reported the highest relative increase in deaths.

Spain's health minister called on residents of Madrid to limit their movements and social contacts to the "essential" to put the brakes on a surge in infections.

UK TIGHTENS CURBS

The UK government yesterday tightened restrictions to stem a rising tide of cases, ordering pubs in England to shut early and abandoning calls for people to return to the workplace to help kickstart the battered economy.

Britain is following Europe in facing a second wave of infection and Prime Minister Boris Johnson said measures were needed now to prevent

further, more costly, action later.

"This is the moment we must act," he told parliament. "We're acting on the principle that a stitch in time, saves nine."

Johnson said the measures, which could be in place for up to six months, would be bolstered by greater penalties for infringements, a boosted police presence and military back-up.

"If all our actions fail to bring the R (reproduction rate) below one, then we reserve the right to deploy greater firepower with significantly greater restrictions," he added.

"Your harmless cough can be someone else's death knell," he warned.

Pubs, bars and restaurants will have to close early at 10:00 pm from Thursday, while face coverings will be made compulsory for staff in retail, as well as in taxis.

Ferry crisis

FROM PAGE 12
More than 300 trucks were seen stranded at two truck stands near the Paturia ferry terminal around 1:00pm yesterday and over 200 trucks were seen lined up on the Dhaka-Aricha highway at Uthli-Paturia intersection, about 6km away from the ferry terminal.

On the other side of the river at Daulatdia, more than 600 trucks were waiting to cross the Padma around 11:30am yesterday.

The trucks lined up on 6km stretch

on the highway, around 13km away from the Daulatdia ferry terminal.

Truck driver Joyntal said at the Daulatdia end said, "I came from Jessore and reached the Goalanda intersection yesterday [Monday] afternoon. I'm still here. I cannot say when I will get on a ferry."

Another trucker Saddam Hossain who came from Satkhira said he had been waiting to get on a ferry since Monday morning. His vehicle was stuck around 13km away from the ferry terminal.

Mohammad Selim heading for Jessore said, "I could only reach Paturia truck terminal on Monday afternoon after being stuck at Uthli intersection for a day. I did not get the ferry ticket until noon today [Tuesday]. I cannot even say when I will get it."

Trucker Sajib Hossain, who was going to Magura, said, "I have been stuck at Paturia for two days. I'm in a lot of trouble here."

Contacted, BIWTC official Abdus Sattar said there are 19 ferries on the Paturia-Daulatdia route. Of them,

two large ferries "Bir Shrestha Matur Rahman", "Bir Shrestha Ruhul Amin" and small ferry "Rajanigandha" have been sent to Narayanganj for repairs.

Four others are anchored at the floating workshop near the Paturia ferry terminal to fix problems, he said.

There is no navigability problem on the Paturia-Daulatdia route. Efforts are being made to reduce the people's sufferings, he said, adding, "We are trying to bring some ferries from the Shimulia-Kathalbari route to make the service normal."

Freedom fighters under pressure

FROM PAGE 12
manipulated the local administration to turn their back on the guard of honour event.

When reporters asked MP Mostafizur about the incident, he said no battle took place in Banshkhali during the Liberation War and that Ali Ashraf was nobody of the upazila Awami League, further infuriating the freedom fighters.

Freedom fighters in Chattogram took to the streets following the comment and have been subjected to several attacks since then.

The first attack took place on August 3 when the family of Mouli Syed organised a programme at Puichhari Bazar in Banshkhali to condemn the lawmaker's comment.

At least 10 people, including several local journalists, were injured in the attack.

Khursed Alam Pasha, former general secretary of Banshkhali upazila Chatro League who was also wounded in the attack, told this newspaper that some notorious robbers and murderers of the upazila were among the attackers.

The second attack took place on August 5 when around 500 freedom

fighters gathered in Jaldi Pourasabha area in the upazila to protest the authorities' failure to provide Ashraf with a guard of honour as well as the comment of Mostafizur.

A group of miscreants wielding hockey sticks swooped on the freedom fighters to disperse the gathering, injuring at least six people.

Freedom fighters were assaulted yet again on August 24 when they organised a protest rally in front of Chattogram Press Club.

At least 20 people, including eight freedom fighters, were injured in the attack.

Police arrested four people, including Mostafizur's assistant personal secretary AKM Mostafizur Rahman Russel, in connection with the third attack.

Muzaffor Ahmed, commander of Chattogram Muktiyoddha Sangsad, told this newspaper that Ashraf Ali was a well-known freedom fighter.

"He organised other freedom fighters and directly took part in the warfare. How dare local lawmaker Mostafizur Rahman deprive him of a guard of honour," he said.

"This MP has shown grudge against freedom fighters since his

election of lawmaker. He even did not allow any freedom fighter to deliver speech in a programme organised to commemorate the tragic event of 15 August", Muzaffor said.

He said they came to learn that the lawmaker confused the local administration about the funeral time.

Mahbubul Alam Hanif, joint secretary of the Awami League, told The Daily Star that they have seen the reports of attacks on freedom fighters. "Police have arrested few people and are looking into the matter to find out who was behind the attacks", he said, adding that they would also take action if anyone from their party is found involved.

"Apart from this, we will take action from our party if anyone from the party is found involved in the attack," he added.

Asked if the Awami League would take any action if the local lawmaker is found involved in the attack, he said there are some constitutional obligations to take action against a lawmaker.

If the investigation finds him guilty, legal proceedings will be taken in line with the constitution, he said.

Contacted, Mohammad Atiur

Rahman, assistant commissioner (land) of Banshkhali upazila, who was late to reach the janaza venue, refused to comment on the matter.

He rather advised this correspondent to talk to upazila nirbahani officer about it.

Momena Akther, upazila nirbahani officer of Banshkhali, however, said she was on another assignment. Assistant Commissioner (land) was in charge of the guard of honour.

"Incidentally, he got late on his way to conduct the guard of honour. The family was informed about it. The freedom fighter was buried by the time he reached the spot. As the Eid-ul-Adha was imminent, there were cattle markets along the road delaying him to reach the spot", she explained.

She denied the lawmaker's involvement in this incident saying freedom fighters deserve the supreme dignity from the state. So, they would never give in to such a conspiracy to deprive a freedom fighter of his due honour.

This correspondent called Mostafizur several times but he didn't receive the phone. He also didn't reply to the text message sent by this correspondent.

Half of project

FROM PAGE 12
The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecnc) approved the project on February 27, 2018, aiming to meet the demands of national, regional and international traffic by increasing transportability through Dhaka-Khulna and Khulna-Chilahati corridor of Bangladesh Railway, by removing existing limitations.

The existing Khulna-Darshana section on Dhaka-Khulna corridor is a single broad gauge line. Under the project, the section will be upgraded to a double line through the installation of a 126.25km broad gauge track with a 14.40km loop line.

At present, a 43km new rail line is being set up from Khulna to Mongla port with an Indian soft loan, on completion of which direct rail connectivity with Mongla will be established with neighbouring countries, alongside local routes.

India will provide Tk 2,689.93 crore, out of Tk 3,506.75 crore, under a second line of credit.

THE DELAYS

The project authorities, in March 2018, issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) notice for appointing a consultant but cancelled it in August that year as only one organisation was shortlisted for work, shows the project documents.

The second attempt was also cancelled as Indian EXIM Bank did not give approval.

The third time the project authorities issued an EOI notice, five organisations were shortlisted.

"It will take at least four more months to complete the appointment of a consultant. It may take more time," Project Director Al Fattah Md Masudur Rahman told The Daily Star on Sunday.

After appointment of a consultant, they will prepare a detailed design, tender documents and complete relevant work, which will take around one year, he said, adding that they will then float a tender to select a contractor for doing the physical work.

"So, we have to extend the deadline of the project. The cost of the project is likely to increase too after the detailed design is prepared," Masudur Rahman, also the chief engineer (West) of Bangladesh Railway, said.

Trump admin designates several US cities hotbeds of 'anarchy'

AFP, New York

The Donald Trump administration on Monday declared the cities of New York, Seattle and Portland, Oregon as jurisdictions "permitting anarchy," threatening to withhold federal aid over civil unrest.

The move from the Republican president came as he tries to bolster the "law and order" image he hopes will win him re-election in November.

Earlier in September Trump requested the Department of Justice identify municipal governments "permitting anarchy, violence, and destruction in American cities."

In recent months anti-racism protests have mushroomed nationwide in response to police violence that disproportionately harms black people.

On Monday the Department of Justice accused the city governments of New York, Portland and Seattle of failing to control their populations, citing a spike in shootings, protests and looting.

It also noted that New York had reduced its police budget, facing increasing public pressure to use government money for health, education and mental health resources.

The DOJ notably did not single out sometimes violent protests in cities in Minnesota and Wisconsin -- key states in November's vote -- despite prolonged demonstrations against police brutality there.

"When state and local leaders impede their own law enforcement officers and agencies from doing their jobs, it endangers innocent citizens who deserve to be protected, including those who are trying to peacefully assemble and protest," said Attorney General Bill Barr in a statement announcing the designations.

"It is my hope that the cities identified by the Department of Justice today will reverse course and become serious about performing the basic function of government and start protecting their own citizens."

New York City mayor Bill de Blasio dismissed the move as "another one of President Trump's games."

"It's not based in the fact in the least," the Democratic leader of the already cash-strapped city said. "It's insulting to the people of New York City."

"His effort to withhold our funding is unconstitutional."

Federal efforts to withdraw money from the cities on the list will likely get tied up in the courts.

"The president does not have the authority to change the will of Congress," said James Johnson, New York's chief city lawyer.

"We are preparing to fight this in court if... he actually takes concrete steps to withdraw federal funds."

Hindu, Buddhist women must have equal claims

FROM PAGE 12
"Women are playing a significant role in the economic growth of the country in spite of being a susceptible section of the society. They are actively taking part in the economic activities of the country even though they are deprived of their basic rights in almost every sphere of life only on the ground that they are women. So their activities are no more limited to the household chores only. The picture of discrimination is seen irrespective of their social, economic and religious status," he said in the notice.

Lawyer Tanoy Kumar Saha said in the notice that "If we consider

the property rights of women in Bangladesh, they appear to be poor and insufficient. The condition of Hindu and Buddhist women is even worse since they are given very limited right of property under the personal law of Bangladesh. For any country it is a matter of regret that a large segment of the population is being discriminated against under the legal framework of the state mechanism only because they belong to a minority community."

The lawyer said in the notice that in Bangladesh the Hindu and Buddhist are guaranteed meager property rights in comparison to their male

relative as well as their other religious counterparts. "Although Bangladesh is mandated through its constitution to prohibit all sorts of discrimination on the ground of sex and religion, no single piece of legislation has so far been enacted to reform the traditional laws that guarantee limited property rights to Hindu and Buddhist women. Moreover, as a member of international community and signatory to various international conventions, Bangladesh is bound to eradicate all sorts of discriminations. Therefore, by not addressing the property rights of Hindu and Buddhist women, Bangladesh is not

only violating the constitutional mandate of non-discrimination but also its international obligation," he said in the notice. In the notice, he requested the respondents to take proper and necessary steps to legislate and enact laws ensuring an equal and absolute right of Hindu and Buddhist women on their parents' or husbands' properties. Tanoy Kumar Saha told The Daily Star that he will move a writ petition before the High Court after one month seeking necessary directives if the authorities concerned of the government don't take any initiative for formulating a law in line with his notice.