

BREONNA TAYLOR CASE
Protests erupt in major US cities after no murder charge brought against cops
SEE PAGE 6

THE DAILY **Star** ON FRIDAY



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"To get tested for Covid-19 every other day is uncomfortable... it doesn't feel good to stay under such strict protocols."
BANGLADESH BATSMAN NAZMUL HOSSAIN SHANTO ON TRAINING IN A BIO-SECURE BUBBLE PAGE 11

"Fundamental to democracy is the peaceful transition of power; without that, there is Belarus."
REPUBLICAN SENATOR MITT ROMNEY ON TRUMP'S REFUSAL TO PROMISE TRANSFER OF POWER IF HE LOSES US VOTE PAGE 6

"The Hungarian position is: 'Stop the migrants.'"
HUNGARIAN PRIME MINISTER VIKTOR ORBAN REFUSES TO ACCEPT 'NOT TOUGH ENOUGH' NEW EU MIGRANT PLAN PAGE 6

ONION SELF-SUFFICIENCY
Possible, but not so soon
Officials say as govt targets rise in production, cultivation coverage; seed crisis big hurdle

PINAKI ROY
The government intends to make the country self-sufficient in onion by increasing the production of this essential cooking ingredient but it may take years as overcoming the seed crisis remains a major challenge. Scientists in Bangladesh say they have developed some high-yielding varieties that can be cultivated in summer when the market sees a scarcity of local onion produced in winter. But it would take at least six years to have enough seeds of the new varieties to meet the country's demand. With trouble recurring due to India's onion export ban in two consecutive years, the government aims to expand the coverage of onion cultivation in the coming winter season to be started at the end of next month. The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) has already sought suggestions and data from the field offices on how to reach the target and experts also made a presentation on this at the agriculture ministry. "Our prime minister has directed us to take initiatives to increase onion production. We have already conducted several meetings on this," Dr Muhammad Abdur Razaque, the agriculture minister, told The Daily Star. He said scientists at Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI) have developed summer varieties which have yet to reach the farmers because of the seed crisis. Bangladesh is now self-sufficient in rice, vegetables, fish and meat because the government took initiatives to increase the production of those food items.

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Two migrant workers slouch in disappointment yesterday after failing to get air tickets on Saudia to reach Saudi Arabia and resume work there. Since they returned home on holidays, they have been stranded due to the pandemic. Yesterday was their fifth attempt to get tickets at the Sonargaon Hotel office of the carrier. Inset, migrants show documents in front of a Biman office in Motijheel as they wait to get tickets. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

No promotion without exams for 8th graders

Decide all edn boards
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education boards yesterday decided that school authorities should hold assessments to graduate eighth grade students to the next grade and there should be no scope for promotion without examinations. They also said that assessments can be done through physical exams, online tests, online classes, TV education, or through students' continuous assessment based on how much of the syllabi were covered before the closure of schools. The boards took this decision as the government cancelled this year's Junior School Certificate (JSC) and equivalent exams for class VIII students in late August due to the Covid-19 situation. All educational institutions have been closed since March 17 in a bid to stem the spread of coronavirus, and the closure was extended till October 3.

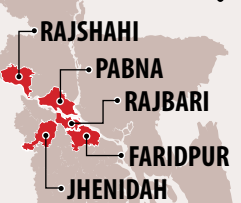
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THE ONION STORY

- Current demand **25 lakh** metric tonnes
- Production this season **25.57 lakh** tonnes
- Wastage after production **30%**
- Local production meets **60%** of demand
- Average import **10 lakh** tonnes annually
- Import mostly from India, **15** other countries
- Target to be self-sufficient **33 lakh** tonnes

DISTRICTS THAT PRODUCE MOST ONIONS



SEEDS NEEDED 1,100 tonnes
SEEDS STOCK 700 tonnes

SOURCE: BBS, DAE CONTROL ROOM

Govt decides to allow more flights to KSA

The move aimed at helping stranded expatriates join work

RASHIDUL HASAN and JAMIL MAHMUD

The authorities have decided to allow more flights to Saudi Arabia for the thousands of people desperately waiting to go to their workplaces in the Gulf country. Most of them came to Bangladesh before the international travel restrictions were imposed amid the pandemic and have been unable to return. Bangladesh will allow Saudi Arabian Airlines to operate as many flights as it wants, said Air-Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman, chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority (Caab). Other airlines will also be allowed to resume regular flight operations between the two countries, he added. If the Saudi authorities allow Biman Bangladesh Airlines to operate an increased number of flights, there

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Riyadh's pressure on Dhaka unfair

Analysts, activists say about insistence that 54,000 Rohingyas in KSA be issued Bangladeshi passports; Momen says no passport without proof

PORIMOL PALMA

The Saudi Arabian pressure on Bangladesh to issue passports to 54,000 Rohingyas and bring back 462 others is unacceptable and unfair, analysts and Rohingya activists have said. They said if the kingdom was really to send back the Rohingyas, they should mount pressure on Myanmar. They questioned as to why Bangladesh, which had taken in over a million Rohingyas, should take the 54,000 more. The observation came after the foreign ministry revealed that Saudi Arabia has recently renewed its pressure on Dhaka over the Rohingya issue. Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said the Saudi authorities have declared that there were 54,000 Rohingyas, who had no passports, and that they do not allow stateless people in their country. "They [Saudi Arabia] are not saying that they will send the 54,000 Rohingyas to Bangladesh, but they should be provided with Bangladeshi passports," Momen told reporters at the ministry yesterday. He said Dhaka has informed Riyadh that Bangladesh could consider the Saudi request only if the Rohingyas had any prior passports or other documents.

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Gonoforum may split as rift widens

A section of leaders to meet tomorrow

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

An intra-party conflict over leadership may cause a split in Gonoforum as a group of party leaders are going to hold an extended meeting in Dhaka tomorrow. Party leaders cited a conflict between Gonoforum General Secretary Reza Kibria, former executive president Subrata Chowdhury and former general secretary Mostafa Mohsin Montu as the reason for the possible split. Subrata, Montu and Abu Sayeed have called an extended meeting of the party for September 26 to discuss party affairs. Meanwhile, Gonoforum in a press statement, signed by its President Dr Kamal Hossain and General Secretary Reza Kibria, on Tuesday said the party has no involvement with the meeting.

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Wasa's move to reappoint MD challenged at High Court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition was filed with the High Court yesterday challenging the legality of the process for further appointing Tazsem A Khan as the managing director of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa). Engineer Khandker Monjur Morshed, former additional chief engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board, submitted the petition where he also pleaded to stay the proposal for extending the tenure of the Wasa MD by three more years. Citing the petition, Khandker Monjur's lawyer Tanvir Ahmed told The Daily Star that the Wasa's board meeting was supposed to be convened either by its chairman or vice-chairman to select its MD as per the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority Act, 1996. But, the Wasa's board meeting was convened

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Men taking apart used lead-acid batteries to recycle the parts at an unauthorised and temporary factory in Matuail on the outskirts of the capital. Such factories contribute to the reduction of pollutants in the environment but the business is largely market driven and unregulated.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

'Situation now worse than during peak in March'

EU urges new measures to head off coronavirus second wave; Trump says may block stricter FDA guidelines for vaccine

AGENCIES

The EU yesterday raised the alarm on coronavirus saying the epidemic is worse now than at the March peak in several member countries, as governments in Europe and beyond reimpose drastic restrictions. EU Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides warned that in "some member states, the situation is now even worse than during the peak in March." "This is a real cause for concern," she said, urging new measures to head off a second wave of the virus, which has killed at least 978,448 people worldwide since the outbreak emerged in China late last year. The death rate has not returned to the levels seen earlier this year, but cases of new infections are soaring once again in many areas of the bloc. In a statement, the EU's Stockholm-based disease control agency pointed to Spain, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Malta as countries of particularly "high concern." The seven have "an increased proportion of hospitalised and severe cases" among older people and "increasing or high death notification rates are already observed... or may be observed soon," said the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC). Other countries such as France and Britain have observed rising infection rates primarily among younger

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