

China won't

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a half acres of khas land -- one and a half acre for cultivation and one acre for homestead -- to landless peasants. Peasants receiving these khas lands would have to till their land through agriculture cooperative system. The government is determined to bring about revolutionary land reform in the country, adds the minister.
Sources: October 5, 1972 issues of Daily Observer, Dainik Ittefaq and Dainik Bangla.

Flood

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for the next few days," he said.
The official, however, said he was not sure about how long this trend would continue.
Due to the swelling of the Jamuna river, the water level in the Fulzore, Karatoa and other small rivers in the district was also on the rise, Rafiqul added.

Sirajganj is seeing fourth round of flooding this year, with the latest floods hitting the district four days ago.

According to the agriculture department, flooding has so far damaged Ropa Amon paddy on 3,406 hectares, black gram on 931 hectares, winter vegetable on 234 hectares, ground nut on 80 hectares, and green chili on 68 hectares in the district.

Abdur Rahim, district relief and rehabilitation officer, said most of the low-lying areas of Sirajganj Sadar, Kazipur, Belkuchi, Shahzadpur and Chowhali upazilas have gone under.

Five out of nine upazilas of the district have been hit by floods so far.

20 more die

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Among the 20 newly deceased, 17 were males and three were females. All of them died in hospitals, according to the press release.
One of them was aged below 10 years, three were aged between 41 and 50, six between 51 and 60 and the highest 10 were above 60.
One each was from Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions, three were from Rangpur and Chattogram, and the highest 12 were from Dhaka division.
So far, more than half of all deceased were from Dhaka division.
As of yesterday, a total of 2,667 patients were undergoing treatment in general beds and 286 were in ICU beds in Covid-19 dedicated hospitals across the country.

Man 'murdered'

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The eight are Fatullah Model Police Station Sub-Inspector Mizanur Rahman, Detective Branch SI Mizanur Rahman, SI Safiqur Rahman, SI Ashraful Islam, Inspector Mohammad Afzal Hossain Talukder, Narayanganj Criminal Investigation Department SI Ziauddin Ujjal and two other senior officers.
Police had submitted the charge sheet in the case against six accused on December 18 last year.
According to the charge sheet, Mamun's maternal cousin Taslima called him out of his house and proposed to marry him. As he refused the proposal, the accused made him unconscious by letting him drink soft drinks mixed with a sedative and took him to an unknown place.
However, Taslima denied the allegation and said Mamun went missing after she had denied to accept his proposal to develop a relationship with him.

India's

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At the same time, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is pressing ahead with opening up Asia's third-largest economy even as virus cases surge.
A strict lockdown imposed in March not only failed to stop the spread of the virus but also caused misery for millions of people suddenly left jobless.
In the last quarter, the Indian economy -- which even before the pandemic was struggling -- shrank 24 percent, one of the steepest drops of any major economy.
International commercial flights remain suspended although limited services, many to allow citizens to return to their home countries, have been operating.
Trains, metros, domestic flights, markets and restaurants have already reopened or resumed service, with some restrictions.
On Wednesday, the government said that all schools could re-open along with cinemas and swimming pools, subject to certain conditions.
Uttar Pradesh state, home to 200 million people, is allowing religious events from October 15, clearing the way for major gatherings in India's upcoming festive season.
The state of Bihar will allow its 70 million voters to cast ballots in upcoming elections, one of the biggest to take place worldwide since the pandemic began.
Dildar Singh Rana, 57, said the hospitality industry that he works in has seen "destruction" and has no choice but to open up despite the health risks.
"The virus is on the rampage... But we fear losing out to rivals with deep pockets so we have to venture out and start our business," he told AFP.



This general view shows a partially submerged truck in the River Vesubie at Roquebilliere, south-eastern France, yesterday. One person died and authorities listed some 20 as missing after heavy storms lashed southern France and northern Italy with hundreds of aid workers deployed to villages cut off by the deluge.

PHOTO: AFP

Million years on rock record

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As the rocks are exposed to the surface, and Jaflong as a whole has become vulnerable due to uncontrolled extraction of stones, geologists and environments have been calling for protection of these precious resources.
An initiative to establish the country's first geological museum at the site was also planned years ago. But the progress is slow as the authorities are yet to finish acquisition of land which is under threat of grabbing and illegal mineral extraction.
Dr Syed Humayun Akhter, geology professor at Dhaka University, said, "In 2009, when I was the chairman of the department, I urged the then secretary of the Energy and Mineral Resources Division to protect the geo-heritage and establish a geological museum there."
He added, "The geo-resource visible near the river was exposed millions of years ago, when the Indian plate collided with the Eurasian plate. It has been a research ground for students of geology and natural science, even for the petroleum and mining industry experts. Such geo-heritage should not be destroyed by any means but must be protected."
After Dr Humayun's letter, the Energy and Mineral Resources Division instructed the Geological Survey of Bangladesh (GSB) to take necessary steps in this regard.
A committee led by the then director general Dr Nehal Uddin was formed with Dr Humayun and officials from different government wings as its members.
The committee in its report in May 2010 recommended protecting the geo-heritage and establishing a geological museum there, said Md Nuruddin Sarker, director (geology) of GSB.
"In the first phase, we are acquiring 10 acres of land and will start the acquiring process of the rest of the land later. The committees formed regarding the museum will start working for a detailed project after the land acquiring is completed," he added.

In 2015, Jaflong, in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila, was declared an ecologically critical area by the Department of Environment.
Later in January 2017, the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources declared 22.59 acres of land -- where the Eocene Sylhet Limestone is exposed -- as geological heritage.
That 10 acres of land to be acquired for the museum is within the geo-heritage site.
Recently, a group of businessmen put up a signboard on the land declared as geo-heritage, claiming the High Court gave them permission to extract mineral resources from the site.
A total of 78.27 acres of land, which includes 6.58 acres from the geo-heritage, was leased to Jalalabad Lime Manufacturers and Trading Association and Bulbul Brothers decades ago and the lease was cancelled by the government in 1991.
They filed a writ petition in 2009 against the cancellation and the HC ruled in their favour. But in 2015, the verdict was scrapped following an appeal by the state.
They recently filed another writ and put up a signboard.
In a memorandum last month, the then then director general of Bureau of Mineral Development Md Zafar Ullah, stated the importance of the land and asked the solicitor of the Law and Justice Division of the government to take necessary steps to appeal against the writ petition.
Advocate Shah Shaheda Akhter, regional coordinator for Sylhet of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela), said, "In the recent writ, the traders hid information like the area is an ecologically critical area and it is a geological heritage site. They also hid the writ of 2009 and the judgment."
"Moreover, the court only served show-cause notices upon government offices to know the reason for cancelling the lease but did not give them permission to extract resources. Yet, they put up the signboard

illegally."
Contacted, Afsar Uddin, managing director of Jalalabad Lime Manufacturers and Trading Association, said, "We have our claim over 78.27 acres in Jaflong and only a small part of it is in the land designated for the museum. Moreover, that's not even the part they are going to acquire."
"We didn't hide anything and it's the responsibility of the authorities concerned to tell the court whether it is an ECA or geological heritage."
"Following our writ," he said, "the court ordered a status quo and we've taken possession of the land. If the authority thinks to protect the land, they can legally do so and if they want to acquire it, they can still acquire it from us legally."
Md Aslam Uddin, additional deputy commissioner (revenue) of Sylhet, said, "We've only a few steps of formalities to be completed to acquire the land for [the museum] and will settle any legal claims or objections accordingly soon."
Dr Syed Humayun Akhter said, "If we could successfully present the geological history of Bangladesh with proper 3D modelling in the museum, it will be a splendid work. As thousands of people come to visit Jaflong, they will get a sight of our geological heritage along with the nature."
"Watching such rare geo-heritage in the open and learning about how our land was formed millions of years ago, young students will be interested in natural science and that might eventually create some natural scientists someday."
Dr Moha Sher Ali, director general (additional charge), Geological Survey of Bangladesh, said, "Considering the importance of the geo-heritage, the initiative of establishing the geological museum was taken and now it is progressing fast. We've urged the district administration several times to complete the land acquiring process fast so that we can take further steps."

Govt to set up independent institution

FROM PAGE 1
Standing Committee on the home ministry, said, "We want to give dope test operation an institutional structure. The test will be conducted in educational institutes, and before entrance in the job and transport sectors to identify drug addicts, adding that the word "dope test" may be disrespectful for someone applying for a job or higher studies.
"For this, we are planning to term it as a 'special health examination'.
He said if anyone wants to complete their education or get a job, they must stay away from narcotics, adding that a public university and a police force have already started conducting the tests and they are hopeful that it would be implemented in all sectors soon.
Tuku further said they have sent letters to the education ministry to implement the dope test operation in all educational institutions. "We would discuss about the progress in the next meeting."
"We have a plan to check [public] transport drivers before, in the middle and at the end of a journey, so that no one gets the chance to drive any vehicle after taking drugs," Shamsul Haque Tuku said.
"The transport sector is a major stake holder for the dope test operation and we also have a member from the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges [on board with the operation]," he said, adding that they are hopeful that the operation of the test will change the grim scenario of the sector in the upcoming days.
According to ministry sources, the three-year-long project, costing Tk 62.83 crore, was initiated to intensify the dope testing across the country.

Muhammed Ahsanul Jabbar, director general of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC), told The Daily Star yesterday that a separate laboratory for the dope tests will also be set up and steps have already been taken in this regard.
Sources in the home ministry said any authority would be able to conduct dope test through the institute. If any private organisation want to conduct the test among its employees they too would be able to apply for it, sources added.
The Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) in Sylhet has already started conducting the test among the newcomers during the admission since last year.
Bangladesh Police have also started conducting the test among its officials.
The authority of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) recently conducted it among around 100 suspected officials and found evidence against 26 officials regarding drug abuse. Steps have already taken to dismiss them from their jobs, according to sources.
The 26 police personnel include a traffic sergeant, four sub-inspectors, three assistant sub-inspectors, a Nayek and 17 constables. DMP commissioner Shafiqul Islam also disclosed the development while inaugurating the office of newly formed Mirpur Traffic Division on September 26.
Meanwhile, Tuku, during a crime conference on September 14, instructed the officer-in-charges of all police stations in the metropolitan area to create a list of known drug addicts of the areas concerned, according to sources.
He also instructed the officials

to help these drug addicts' family members in the rehabilitation process. He further asked the OC's to take legal action if anyone's condition does not improve even after rehabilitation.
Sohel Rana, assistant inspector general of Police Headquarters, said police have conducted different kinds of awareness programmes along with a drive against narcotics.
Besides, they have increased vigilance among force officials so that no member of the force gets involved with narcotics trade or becomes addicted, he said, adding police is not only conducting dope tests before joining the job but also after to identify addicts.
Sources said the public administration ministry on September 5, 2018, issued a letter to include dope tests along with the existing process for all kinds of government jobs.
Referring to the letter, the security service division of the home ministry sent a letter to all ministries on September 18 that year but the dope test operation was yet to get any structure, sources claimed.
The security service division of the home ministry on February 5 this year sent a letter to the secretary of the Secondary and Higher Education Division and the Secretary of Technical and Madrasa Education Division.
Getting no response from the former, the home ministry again sent a letter on August 8.
The Technical and Madrasa Education Division, however, instructed the concerned wings to take necessary steps for dope testing.

Weinstein charged with six new sex crimes counts in LA

AFP, Los Angeles

Disgraced Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein, who has already been convicted of sex crimes in New York, was charged Friday in Los Angeles with six new counts over the alleged rapes of two women.
The first incident took place sometime between "September 2004 and September 2005 where Weinstein allegedly raped a woman at a hotel in Beverly Hills," said the office of LA County District Attorney Jackie Lacey.
The 68-year-old Weinstein "also is accused of raping another woman on two separate occasions in November 2009 and November 2010 at a hotel in Beverly Hills," Lacey's office said.
The statement does not name the victims or offer any other details about the circumstances.
These six new charges come in addition to others he is already facing. In total, Weinstein is accused in Los Angeles of either rape or sexual assault of five women.
If convicted, he faces up to 140 years in prison.
Weinstein is already serving a 23-

year sentence after being convicted in New York in February of a criminal sexual act in the first degree and rape in the third degree.
That verdict was a landmark moment for the #MeToo global reckoning against men abusing positions of power.
Nearly 90 women, including Angelina Jolie and Salma Hayek, have come forward alleging 40 years of vile predatory behavior by the Oscar-winning producer of "Shakespeare in Love" and numerous other critically acclaimed and box office hits.
Weinstein has steadfastly denied all charges against him in both New York and California, saying all of the sexual encounters in question were consensual.
"I am thankful to the first women who reported these crimes and whose courage have given strength to others to come forward," Lacey said in a statement.
"The willingness of these latest victims to testify against a powerful man gives us the additional evidence we need to build a compelling criminal case."

Hubble finds Supernova

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core becomes hot enough to start a nuclear fusion reaction, turning it into a planet-sized atomic bomb.
The force of this reaction tears the star apart, and in this instance the energy unleashed was the equivalent of the radiance of five billion suns, NASA says.
This particular supernova, classified as SN 2018gv, was spotted in the spiral galaxy NGC 2525 in mid-January 2018 by amateur astronomer Koichi Itagaki.
By February, it was being recorded by the Hubble telescope to help scientists track the expansion rate of the universe.
In the time-lapse, scientists could see the supernova appearing as a brightly shining star near the edge of the galaxy. It quickly becomes the brightest object in the galaxy, before fading from sight.
"No Earthly fireworks display can compete with this supernova, captured in its fading glory by the Hubble Space Telescope," said Adam Riess of the Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI) and Johns Hopkins

University in a statement.
Supernovae of this kind all peak at the same brightness, and as such are known as "standard candles."
This is because they act as "cosmic tape measures," NASA says. With information about the brightness of the supernova as constant, astronomers can calculate the distances of their host galaxies.
This allows the scientists to measure the expansion rate of the universe.
In May, the Hubble Space Telescope reached its 30th birthday. Its first photo was of the binary star HD96755 from its wide field camera, captured in black and white.
In August, the telescope captured its first observation of a total lunar eclipse - the first time that a total lunar eclipse has been captured from a space telescope, and also the first time one has been studied in ultraviolet wavelengths.
Scientists hope they can use this data to examine exoplanets, giving us a better understanding in the search for alien life and interstellar travel.

Mother-in-law says

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Rana and his wife Akila moved in with Delowara in her house in Katnarpara area of Bogura town five years ago as the latter's health deteriorated, read the complaint filed by Delowara, widow of local businessman Sheikh Sharif Uddin.
Rana and Akila also supervised the businesses owned by the family.
Delowara was the managing director while her five daughters Akila, Mahbuba Sharif Sultana, Nadia Sharif Sultana, Kaniz Fatema, and Touhida Sharif Sultana were directors of Sharif Biri Factory, Sharif CNG Limited, Sharif CNG Limited-2, and Delowara-Sheikh Sharif Supermarket Limited.
Delowara alleged that between June 2015 and September 21 this year, Rana and Akila forced her to sign on cheques, legal papers, fixed deposit receipts and other papers and eventually took away Tk 100 crore.

She also Alleged that her daughter and son-in-law stole important papers and cheque books from her drawers and threatened to shoot her dead if she told informed anyone about their activities.
Delowara's other son-in-law, Maffazzal Hossain Ranju, said, "The police have asked for evidence and bank papers. We are providing those."
Contacted, Rana said, "My mother-in-law is making false allegations because her other daughters and their husbands are making her do these things."
He added: "There are many household staff at my mother-in-law's house. Could I have threatened her in front of so many people?"
The allegation that Rana and his wife took over the businesses was also false, he said.
Humayan Kabir, officer-in-charge of Bogura Police Station, said, "After a primary investigation, we will take legal actions."

Pro-govt clerics

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One member, who participated in the meeting, said Mahmudul got support from 63 members while Kasemi from 55 members of the Befaq committee.
"I have information that different agencies phoned the executive committee members asking them to support Mahmudul. People from the agencies threatened to file false cases against those who would not listen to them," the member said, wishing not to be named.
This member, who is a principal of a madrasa in the capital's Mohammadpur area, claimed that he too received such a phone call.
Amid pressure from the anti-government group, Kasemi was made senior vice-chairman of Befaq, said sources in the meeting.
Several lakh students study at Qwami madrasas across the country and different political forces use them to materialise their goals, according to political analysts.
Meanwhile, talking to this correspondent, Abul Kasem Kasemi, a Hefajat leader from Dhaka city, claimed top police officials called the Befaq executive committee members asking them to lend support to Mahmudul.
In another development, Mahfuzul Haq, principal of Jameya Rahmania Madrasa in city's Mohammadpur, was elected secretary-general of Befaq.
Beside, the posts of senior vice-chairman and secretary general fell vacant after Maulana Abdul Quddus, principal of Faridabad Madrasa at city's Sutrapur, resigned from the posts all of a sudden.
Asked, Mahfuzul said he made the decision because of health reasons.
But sources at Befaq said he was forced to resign after allegation of corruption surfaced against him.
The Daily Star could not get his comment on the issue.
The chairman, senior co-chairman

and the secretary general of Befaq would carry out their responsibility until Befaq council is held. The next council is scheduled to be take place after two and a half years.
Asked about the rivalry between pro- and anti-government leaders over establishing control over Hefajat and Hathazari, several of the leaders said both the sides remain active.
"But as the Awami League is in power for a long time and they have somehow managed to control Hefajat after its failed movement in 2013, those against the government seem to be the weaker side here," said Hefajat Joint Secretary General Maulana Zafrullah said.
Hefajat Secretary General Junaid Babunagari is reportedly leading the anti-government group in Hefajat and Hathazari madrasa, while Ahmad Shafi's son Anas Madani is reportedly heading the pro-government group.
Shafi, who often drew controversy for opposing women's empowerment and education, passed away, on September 18, a day after he resigned as the director general of Hathazari madrasa. He was 103.
He was forced to quit the post he had held since 1986 following an unprecedented student unrest at the madrasa.
The unrest was fuelled by Babunagari and several others who were not on good terms with Shafi since he leaned towards the AL after the failed 2013 movement, said Hefajat sources.
Shafi's son Anas Madani, who reportedly has good relations with the AL government, was also removed from the post of assistant director of the madrasa on Wednesday night.
At present the Hathazari madrasa, the largest Qwami madrasa in the country is run by a three-member interim body.