

Coordination

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the anti-smuggling operation. The home minister will be chairman of the council.

UNROD CHIEF, ITALIAN ENVOY CALL ON BANGABANDHU

Italian Charge d'affaires Pontecorvo calls on Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Gono Bhaban today. It is his first official meeting with the prime minister. UNROD Chief Umbricht also calls on Bangabandhu at the Gono Bhaban today evening.

TOBACCO BOARD WILL BE SET UP

The Government of Bangladesh has decided to form a tobacco board to look after the cultivation, marketing and storage of tobacco in the country, discloses Agriculture Minister Sheikh Abdul Aziz.

BANGALEES ALLOWED TO PERFORM HAJJ

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad today confirms that Saudi Arabia has agreed to allow Bengalee pilgrims to perform hajj with Bangladeshi passports. The Saudi Government made the confirmation in a message to Bangabandhu through India this week. The minister, however, says the Saudi Government had not consented to allowing a Bangladeshi mission to look after the hajis.

UN GROUP WILL EVALUATE FOOD GRAINS

In agreement with the government of Bangladesh, the United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim and the Director-General of FAO H Boerma today announce the formation of a special agricultural group to evaluate future food grains in Bangladesh. The purpose of the special group will be to evaluate future harvests in Bangladesh, particularly the Aman crop, which yields approximately 60 percent of the total domestic production, as a means of estimating import requirements for 1973.

SOURCES: October 7, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Painter Monsur

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at Chattogram University was known for his intricate work. His favourite medium was oil.

Karim was the recipient of many awards at home and abroad -- including the Grand Award at the 6th Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh in 1993, the Grand Prize at 8th Indian Triennial International at New Delhi in 1994, and the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Award in 1994. He also received the 2015 Sultan Padak for his contributions to Bangladeshi art.

Monsur came to prominence in the late '60s. As an experimental painter, he would delve into figures, themes, colours and textures.

His works zoom in on the struggles and yearnings of his subjects, employing bright and lively colours to denote the Padma river and its surroundings. His themes include sailing boats, fishing nets, clouds, monsoon, the changing tides, erosion of riverbanks and the displacement of people.

Monsur was born in Rajbari in 1950. He did his graduation from the Institute of Arts (now the Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka).

The artist once displayed only one artwork at a solo show that showcased the natural beauty of Bandarban.

Later, he dedicated the painting to National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. In Rainagar, Rajbari, he had set up 'Bunon Art Space' for students and young artists.

Scientists make

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PET takes hundreds of years to degrade in the environment. PETase can break it down into its building blocks in a few days.

John McGeehan, lead co-author and director of the Centre for Enzyme Innovation at the University of Portsmouth, told CNN that this latest development represents a huge stop towards using enzymes to recycle plastic and reduce plastic pollution.

"We were actually quite surprised it worked so well," said McGeehan, although he underlined that the process is "still way too slow" to be commercially viable.

He told CNN that researchers have received funding to carry out further experiments, and successful developments could mean existing PET could be recycled instead of using fossil fuels to create new plastic.

"We're looking at huge energy savings," said McGeehan.

The super enzyme combines PETase and MHEase. A mixture of the two breaks down PET twice as fast as PETase on its own, while connecting the two enzymes increased the speed by a further three times.

McGeehan used the Diamond Light Source, a device that uses X-rays 10 billion times brighter than the Sun to be able to see individual atoms, to map the molecular structure of MHEase.

The full study was published yesterday in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America.



Palestinians, wearing protective face masks, take part in a demonstration to show their support to prisoners held in Israeli jails, in Gaza City yesterday.

I'll work to strengthen partnership

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High Commission in Dhaka welcomed him in Akhaura, reports our Brahmanbaria correspondent.

"Bangladesh and India are friendly countries. I will work to strengthen partnership between the two friends. I am happy to have the scope of working here," he told reporters at the zero point of Bangladesh-India border.

The new envoy reached Dhaka by road from Brahmanbaria shortly after noon, an official of the Indian High Commission told this correspondent. He is likely to present his credentials to President Abdul Hamid on October 8.

His arrival in Dhaka takes place at a time when regional geopolitical scenario is changing, with India-China rivalry intensifying following Indian Army's bitter border standoff with the Chinese military in eastern Ladakh where at least 20 Indian soldiers were killed in June.

It is also the time when Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla and Indian Army Chief Gen

MM Naravane handed over 3,000 vials of Remdesivir to State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi as part of India's contribution to help Myanmar in its fight against Covid-19.

Myanmar is a close ally of both China and India. Both the Asian giants have major investments in Myanmar. However, Bangladesh faces a serious burden of sheltering some one million Rohingyas, most of them fled a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state in 2017.

Bangladesh has been seeking India's cooperation in terms of Rohingya repatriation, which could not begin despite two attempts as Rohingyas refuse to return saying there is no guarantee of safety, citizenship and movement in Rakhine state of Myanmar.

During the visit, officials from India and Myanmar noted the "considerable progress" made under the Rakhine State Development Programme and proposed finalising projects under Phase-III of the Programme, including setting up of a skills training centre.

During the visit, Shringla conveyed

India's support for ensuring safe, sustainable and speedy return of displaced persons (Rohingya) to Rakhine state.

News agency PTI reported that Shringla and MM Naravane went to Naypyidaw on Sunday on a two-day visit with an aim to further expand ties in a range of areas, including connectivity, defence and security.

Myanmar is one of the India's strategic neighbours and shares a 1,640-km-long border with a number of northeastern states, including militancy-hit Nagaland and Manipur.

The visit came four days after the two countries held foreign office consultations virtually where Shringla said India and Myanmar are working towards operationalising the Sittwe Port by the first quarter of next year and that the tendering process for 69 bridges proposed under the ambitious India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway will begin soon.

Sittwe Port is part of the Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Transport Project which is being viewed as India's

gateway to Southeast Asia. The port will connect India's landlocked northeastern region with the Bay of Bengal through Mizoram.

Shringla deeply appreciated Myanmar for its handing over of 22 Indian insurgents, which sends a strong message of "deterrence to inimical elements on both sides".

India and Myanmar have significantly ramped up defence and security cooperation in the last few years, including in the maritime security sphere.

India has been assisting Myanmar in developing border areas under an agreement inked in 2012 that provided for granting USD 5 million each year over a period of five years. This MoU has already been extended till 2022.

India's development cooperation in Myanmar is estimated at USD 1.4 billion. The two countries are also expanding partnership in the area of energy cooperation. Recently, India approved an investment of over USD 120 million in the Shwe Oil and Gas project.

US-British trio wins Nobel prize

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many parts of the world, greatly improving global health", the Nobel committee said.

Their discoveries allowed the rapid development of antiviral drugs directed at Hepatitis C.

"For the first time in history, the disease can now be cured, raising hopes of eradicating Hepatitis C virus from the world population," the jury said.

Alter, 85, told Swedish Radio he was stunned to receive an early-morning call from the committee, saying it was "mind-boggling".

"I didn't even realise this was the day the Nobel Prizes were going to be given out," he added.

"To see so many people get cured is astounding," he told the Nobel Foundation.

Prior to the trio's work, the discovery of the Hepatitis A and B viruses had been critical steps forward -- the discovery of Hepatitis B won the Nobel Medicine Prize in 1976 -- but the majority of blood-borne hepatitis cases remained unexplained.

The discovery of Hepatitis C virus revealed the cause of the remaining cases of chronic hepatitis, and "made possible blood tests and new medicines that have saved millions of lives", the Nobel committee said.

Alter was credited for his pioneering work studying the occurrence of hepatitis in patients who had received

blood transfusions, determining that their illness was neither Hepatitis A or B.

Houghton built on Alter's work to isolate the genetic sequence of the new virus.

Rice, 68, subsequently completed the puzzle by using genetic engineering to prove that it was the new strain alone -- Hepatitis C -- that was causing patients to get sick.

The trio will share the prize sum of 10 million Swedish kronor (about \$1.1 million, 950,000 euros).

In 2013, Houghton reportedly declined Canada's Gairdner International Award because two of his key collaborators who worked with him at pharmaceutical group

Chiron Corp were not included.

Houghton, Alter and Rice would normally receive their prize from King Carl XVI Gustaf at a formal ceremony in Stockholm on December 10, the anniversary of the 1896 death of scientist Alfred Nobel who created the prizes in his will.

But the in-person ceremony has been cancelled this year due to the pandemic and replaced with a televised ceremony showing the laureates receiving their awards in their home countries.

PANDEMIC EFFECT ON PRIZES?

The award for work on a virus comes as the world battles the new coronavirus pandemic, which has put the global spotlight on science and research.

Trump awaits release, fires tweetstorm

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vehicle during the short trip outside Walter Reed military medical center near Washington on Sunday evening.

Trump, who has been repeatedly rebuked for flouting public health advice and spreading misinformation on the pandemic, said in a video on Twitter just before his outing that he had "learned a lot about Covid" by undergoing treatment.

"I learned a lot about Covid, I

learned it by really going to school," Trump said.

But experts complained he had broken his own government's guidelines requiring patients to isolate while they are in treatment and still shedding virus -- and had also endangered his Secret Service protection.

'THIS IS INSANITY'

"Every single person in the vehicle during that completely unnecessary

Presidential 'drive-by' just now has to be quarantined for 14 days," said James Phillips, chief of disaster medicine at George Washington University.

"They might get sick. They may die. For political theater. Commanded by Trump to put their lives at risk for theater. This is insanity."

White House spokesman Judd Deere said "appropriate" precautions had been taken to protect Trump and his

support staff, including protective gear.

The president was flown to Walter Reed with a high fever on Friday after a "rapid progression" of his illness, with his oxygen levels dropping worryingly low, White House doctor Sean Conley said in a Sunday briefing.

Conley admitted that he had kept from the public the fact that the president had been given extra oxygen, in a bid to reflect an "upbeat attitude."

8 arrested over 5 rapes

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over the gang-rape of a housewife in Madarganj upazila.

The arrestees include Sujan Miah, 35, husband of the victim. Other two arrestees are Sujan's relatives Nurnabi, 40, and Razia Begum, 35, said Rab officials.

The Rab said the woman is the second wife of Sujan. On September 22, Sujan took her to his brother-in-law's house and forced her to sign a divorce paper.

As the woman refused to comply, Sujan along with a few others gang-raped her, said MM Sabuj Rana, company commander of Jamalpur Rab, at a press briefing yesterday.

On Sunday, the woman filed a gang-rape case against five people, including Sujan. Later, Rab members arrested the three, while a few other accused were on the run.

In Rangamati, police on Sunday arrested a 85-year-old man on charges of raping a mentally-challenged minor girl.

The arrestee is Harunur Rashid, a

resident of an area under Naniarchar upazila. The victim and the accused are neighbours, said police.

Quoting the victim's family members, police said the girl was staying alone on Sunday morning as other family members were out of home. Taking the chance, Harun entered the house and raped her.

When the victim's mother returned home, she caught the accused red-handed. The mother filed a complaint with the local police station. Hours later, police arrested the accused, said Mohammad Alamgir, duty officer of Naniarchar Police Station.

In Sylhet, police early yesterday arrested two people in connection with raping a housewife, who is mother of five children.

The arrestees are Delwar Hossain and Harun Miah, both from Shamimabad Residential Area in the city.

Police said the accused on Saturday evening entered the victim's home. Then the prime accused Delwar raped her with the help of others, said Jyotirmoy Sarker, additional deputy

commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

A day after the incident, a case was filed against three named and few other unnamed accused. Police were trying to arrest the other accused, the police officer said.

In Gopalganj, a case was filed yesterday with Kotlipara Police Station against two youths on charges of raping a ninth grader on Saturday.

The accused, Ali Hossain, 22, and Masud Hawladar, 23, are from Purnaborti village in Kotlipara upazila.

The victim, a resident of a neighbouring village, went to a local market to buy some daily essentials around 9:00am on Saturday. On her way back, the accused intercepted her and forcibly picked her up on a motorbike.

They then took her to a remote place where Ali Hossain raped her and Masud filmed the incident, said police quoting the victim's family members. After returning home, the victim shared the incident with her

family members, who later filed the rape case.

Meanwhile in Habiganj, two youths, who were arrested earlier on charges of raping a widow and her daughter on Friday night in Chunarughat upazila, gave confessional statements before a court yesterday.

The district's Senior Judicial Magistrate Sultan Uddin Pradhan recorded their statements, said Champak Dham, OC of Chunarughat Police Station.

The accused are Shakil Ahmed and Harun Mia. Later, they were sent to jail.

On Friday night, a group of youths forcibly entered the house of the victims and gang-raped the mother and her daughter. They also looted ornaments and other valuables from the house.

After the incident, a case was filed against six unnamed accused. Later, police arrested the duo.

[Our correspondents from Dinajpur, Rangamati, Savar, Faridpur, Jamalpur, Sylhet and Moulvibazar contributed to this story.]

2m tests

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are men and 1,220 women. The mortality rate is 1.45 percent, according to a handout of the Directorate General of Health Services.

Meanwhile, 1,526 patients have recovered during the same 24-hour period, taking the number of recoveries to 2,81,182. The recovery rate rose to 76.5 percent.

Currently, Bangladesh has 83,575 active cases. A total of 14,189 people are now in isolation and 41,957 in quarantine.

The government has recently approved antigen tests. However, RT-PCR method is more reliable and considered the gold standard of novel coronavirus testing.

In Bangladesh, the first Covid-19 cases were reported on March 8 and the first death was recorded on March 18.

The number of cases reached the 3,00,000-mark on August 26 and the death toll crossed 5,000-mark on September 22.

Globe Biotech

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we hope to supply the vaccine in the market by next December-January," Nag claimed.

The pre-clinical trial results were pre-published in the international platform, biorxiv.org -- an archive for unpublished pre-prints in life sciences.

The result, however, has not been published in any peer-reviewed journals yet.

Peer-review involves subjecting the author's scholarly work and research to the scrutiny of other experts in the same field to check its validity and evaluate its suitability for publication.

Peer-reviewed means the article is more likely to be scientifically valid and reach reasonable conclusions.

"We have submitted our findings to multiple journals. Those will take three to four months to be published. But we do not want to sit idle for that," Nag said.

Asked why BANCOCVID was not in the draft Covid-19 candidate vaccines list of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Nag alleged, "We have submitted all necessary documents to them [WHO] [two months ago]. But they are delaying the process unnecessarily."

Asked about, Bardan Jung Rana, country representative of WHO said, "There is no delay. There are lots of people who have been applying. So I think they [officials at headquarters] will look on all the papers and things like that... These things are not with us; these things are at the headquarters."

"We will continue following especially [since] they have finished the preclinical [stage]," he added.

HOW MUCH POTENTIAL?

According to the Globe Biotech researchers, the BANCOCVID is a mRNA (messenger RNA) vaccine. This is a new type of vaccine for providing acquired immunity through an RNA containing vector, such as lipid nanoparticles.

Speaking at the occasion, experts also lauded the efforts of Globe Biotech Ltd, but said there was a long way to go.

"Just the pre-clinical stage of BANCOCVID has ended. The issue whether the vaccine will be proved effective will come later. But we appreciate Globe Biotech Ltd for it," Prof Mamun Al Mahtab, chairman of hematology department at BSMMU, said at the event.

The researchers of the company said they have not fixed any contract research organisation (CRO) to start the first phase of human trials yet, but they hope to "sign a MoU soon".

The next level trials will be conducted in supervision of the CRO.

"The BNCOCVID vaccine is developed with our own technology and is the only and the first vaccine against the D614G variant," Nag said.

On July 2, Globe Biotech announced that they were developing a Covid-19 vaccine.

According to the US Centre for Disease Control (US-CDC), the general stages of the development cycle of a vaccine are: exploratory stage, pre-clinical stage, clinical development, regulatory review and approval, manufacturing and quality control.

The final stage trial or Phase-III clinical trial means the vaccine is at its final stage of major trials in which the vaccine is given to thousands of people and tested for efficacy and safety.

"Globally, many vaccines have been failing even at the final stage of trials. And BANCOCVID has just passed the first stage. It does not authenticate the vaccine is effective. We could be sure about the efficacy after the mass scale human trial," Muniuruddin Ahmed, a professor of pharmacy at Dhaka University told The Daily Star yesterday.

"If a vaccine become successful in the long run, it will shake the entire world. We are optimistic, but we should not make any exaggeration; because drug is a very sophisticated thing," he added.