



PM FOR A DAY
Finnish teenager fills the top post as part of a campaign to promote girls' rights
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"We can end this era of division, we can end the hate and the fear."
JOE BIDEN URGES AMERICANS TO UNITE TO HALT 'FORCES OF DARKNESS'



"Of course this is a huge tragedy. People are dying."
VLADIMIR PUTIN CALLS CEASEFIRE OVER NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION



We cannot stay silent anymore. Rape or any kind of sexual harassment can never be tolerated... Wake up Bangladesh. Say no to rape. No means NO.
FORMER BANGLADESH CAPTAIN MASHRAFE BIN MORTAZA IN A FACEBOOK POST

Local politicians behind his rise

Before getting involved with Jubo League in 2014 and forming his own gang, Delwar belonged to a BNP-backed gang

ANWARUL HAIDER

Delwar Hossain, prime accused in the recent gang rape of a woman in Noakhali, engaged in various crimes under the patronage of local politicians from both the ruling Awami League and the BNP.

Born in a poor family, Delwar began earning at an early age after the death of his father. "He used to drive a CNG-run auto-rickshaw. At that time, he became close to a criminal who was involved in local BNP politics. This is when he stepped into the world of crime," said Saidur Rahman, general secretary of Ward-8 AL in Begumganj upazila's Eklaspur union.

After the 2014 elections, Delwar started approaching local AL politicians. He then joined the Jubo League's politics under the patronage of Begumganj Union Krishak League Chairperson Alamgir Kabir Alo, and AL President of Ward-4 Zahir, he said.

At this point in time, Delwar engaged more prominently in different criminal activities in his area. And then "Delwar Bahini" began its journey, Saidur said.

The "Bahini" has around 40-50 members, he said, adding, "They commit crimes like rape and extortion in the neighbourhood, a glimpse of which we've seen recently," said Saidur.

A video clip where a woman is seen being torture has gone viral recently, drawing condemnations from across the country and beyond. Locals said

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Delwar



Monira Sultana, former vice-president of a bank, delivering an impassioned speech about her travails when seeking justice for being sexually harassed in her workplace, which led to her losing her job. She was speaking in Shahbagh yesterday at a protest against the epidemic of sexual crimes in the country, following the gang-rape of a woman in Noakhali. Monira expressed solidarity with the survivor and also wanted justice for herself.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

UN expresses grave concern over violence against women

Protests rage on all over the country

STAR REPORT

The UN has expressed serious concerns over the increasing violence against women in Bangladesh and called for justice.

"These are heinous crimes and grave violations of human rights. One rape is one too many," said the UN in a statement yesterday amid the rising number of rape incidents that triggered nationwide protests.

UN Resident Coordinator in Dhaka Mia Seppo tweeted the statement both in Bangla and English, reports our diplomatic correspondent.

The recent case of the woman from Noakhali that was circulated through social media has yet again underlined the state of social, behavioral and structural misogyny that exist, said the UN Bangladesh office.

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COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE

Ensure \$100b for developing nations a year
PM urges int'l community



BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for ensuring \$100 billion a year for developing countries to save them from climate change impacts as she placed a four-point proposal including "establishing climate justice" at a virtual "Climate Vulnerable Leaders' Event".

She also informed that her government has decided to launch a programme to develop national "Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan" to help mobilise resources for the implementation of a new pathway to secure the future of the people.

"We should ensure that at least \$100

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HSC grading based on SSC, JSC marks

Evaluation by Dec, govt decides after cancelling this year's HSC exams amid pandemic; mixed reaction among students, parents, educationists

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent examinations of this year have been cancelled due to health-safety concerns.

Instead, candidates would be evaluated based on their results in Junior School Certificate (JSC), Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and their equivalent tests. This is the first time an HSC candidate would be evaluated without the tests since they were introduced in the mid-60s.

Many candidates, stressed over the pending exams and worried about delayed admissions to universities, breathed a sigh of relief yesterday.

Parents and educationists, however, had mixed reactions about the cancellation.

"We have decided that the candidates will be evaluated based on the results of two public examinations -- JSC and SSC and their equivalent exams the students sat for previously," Education Minister Dipu Moni said yesterday in a virtual press

conference.

The evaluation of the candidates would be published by December this year, she hoped.

"The decision has been made keeping in mind the wellbeing of the examinees and their family members across the country," she said.

HSC and equivalent exams slated for April 1 were postponed on March 22 out of fear that they would help coronavirus transmission. More than 13.65 lakh students were expected to sit for the exams.

The government postponed the exams following the closure of all educational institutions on March 17. They are to stay closed at least until October 30.

The minister said had they held the exams following health-safety protocols, they would have needed twice the exam centres.

Dipu Moni said the current Covid-19 situation was not suitable for holding exams that take up more than a month to complete. The government also took into

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Govt hopes to get vaccine on priority basis

March 7 declared 'Historic Day'

UNB, Dhaka

The cabinet yesterday expressed hope that Bangladesh would get the Covid-19 vaccine on a priority basis as the government was in touch with all countries and organisations trying to develop it.

This optimism was expressed at the cabinet meeting held virtually, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the Chair.

The PM joined the meeting through a video conference from the Gono Bhaban, while her cabinet colleagues got connected from the Bangladesh Secretariat.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam said, "Detailed discussions were held on Covid-19 vaccine today [yesterday].... Bangladesh will get it on a priority basis relatively at a lower price. Not only that, our one or more pharmaceutical companies will also be able to produce vaccines."

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RETURN TO SAUDI ARABIA Syndicate cashing in on ticket crunch

KSA extends visa validity till Oct 30: FM

RASHIDUL HASAN and JAMIL MAHMUD

Although the government has resumed international flights, many expatriate workers are facing difficulties in returning to Saudi Arabia due to the big gap between the demand for tickets and the frequency of flights.

A syndicate of travel agents and a section of officials of Biman Bangladesh Airlines are cashing in on this crisis and taking money from the workers in return for confirming their tickets back to the gulf country, several workers alleged.

Although officials of the national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines said re-issuing of return tickets will cost no extra money, the workers alleged that the syndicate was charging between Tk 10,000 and Tk 50,000 in exchange for issuing a return ticket.

However, Biman managing director and CEO said no agencies have permission to reissue tickets.

The cashing in on migrant workers' panic persisted even as Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said the Saudi Arabia government has extended the validity of visa and iqama (residence permit) for Bangladeshi expatriate workers till October 30.

Workers and travel agency insiders said some agencies were working on social media in this regard to avoid detection.

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With a bat in one hand and a towel providing scant protection on top of his head, a city dweller cycles hurriedly for shelter during the heavy rain yesterday afternoon that ruined his game of cricket. This photo was taken in front of Bangabandhu International Convention Centre on Rokeya Sarani.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

35 more die from Covid in a day

1,520 test positive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-five people were reported dead from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to a press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With this, the total number of coronavirus deaths in the country rose to 5,440, while the death rate stood at 1.46 percent.

Another 1,520 cases were recorded in the meantime, taking the total number of people infected to 373,151, added the release.

Against a number of 13,032 tests, the positivity rate was 11.66 percent, while the overall positivity rate stood at 18.41 percent.

Bangladesh is currently ranked 16th in the list of worst affected countries in the world in terms of total number of confirmed cases.

The position is one step behind Iraq and one step ahead of Saudi Arabia,

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In Memory of
Alhaj Lion ATM Ahsan Habib Khan Kohinoor

Today is the 1st death Anniversary of Alhaj ATM Ahsan Habib Khan Kohinoor. We the family members, friends, well-wishers are expressing our heartfelt gratitude for him.

He was kind hearted, a great organizer and social worker. He never failed to assist anyone, suffering from worldly challenges, came across his way — whether a relative or a common people, irrespective of colour, cast or belief. He served as District Governor (MJF) of Lions Clubs International Bangladesh (315-B3) during 1998-99. As President, he also served Munshigonj-Bikrampur Association, NASCIB, Munshigonj District, Lions Club of Dhaka Prominent & Premier, Bangladesh, Gulshan-Niketon Recreation Club and as Chairman, served OISCA International (UNO affiliated) Bangladesh, Kalma L. K. High School, Bikrampur. He was a Life/ E.C. Member Dhaka Club, Lions Club, Birdem, Bikrampur Foundation, Red Crescent and Anjuman Mofidul Islam. Late Ahsan Habib Khan Kohinoor also served Dhanmondi Walkers Welfare Club and Gulshan Society Dhaka as Vice President; and BLF- Lions Eye Hospital, Agargaon as Vice Chairman.

He was rewarded by several organizations for his outstanding social works, for example, Atis Dipankar Gold Medal (1985), Akram Khan Gold Medal (1987), Jagadish Chandra Basu Gold Medal (1989), Deshbondhu C. R. Das Gold Medal (1992) and Nawab Sir Salmullah Gold Medal (1995).

Unfortunately, due to prevailed COVID-19 situation, we couldn't arrange a family, friends and well-wishers gathering but requesting all to pray for his departed soul to be in eternal peace.