



**COVID-19 PANDEMIC**  
Panicked Europe  
battens down against  
virus second wave  
**SEE PAGE 6**

# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

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**"We all have to pledge that we will take back what was snatched illegally..."**

J&K EX-CM MEHBOOBA MUFTI VOWS TO RESTORE ARTICLE 370 AFTER RELEASE FROM DETENTION



**"It is time to lower the heat."**

REPUBLICAN SENATOR MITT ROMNEY  
SLAMS TRUMP'S US ELECTION  
RHETORIC



**"As things currently stand, the hypothesis of a 'no deal' is a very real one."**

FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER JEAN-YVES LE DRIAN  
ON POST-BREXIT TRADE DEAL



## Lagging behind in vaccine race

*Sinovac trial uncertain after govt refusal to co-financing; experts point out slow, lackluster efforts to get vaccine*

WASIM BIN HABIB and MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Bangladesh's refusal to co-fund the trials of a Chinese Covid-19 vaccine has narrowed down its options for getting vaccines when they will be ready, experts said.

The government insists that it is in talks with makers of five front-running vaccine candidates. But its efforts are not visible compared to the frantic efforts being made by many countries, they said.

A number of countries have already made investments to get vaccines from companies that were conducting phase-III trials but the Bangladesh government is yet to make that move, they said.

And time is running out. The World Health Organisation (WHO) said a vaccine for the coronavirus disease could be ready for registration by the year end or early next year.

The first vaccine safety trial for humans began in March and five vaccine candidates have so far been approved for limited use. At least 11 more have reached the final stages of testing, according to the New York Times Coronavirus Vaccine Tracker.

On Tuesday, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said Bangladesh would not co-fund the domestic trials of a vaccine developed by China's Sinovac Biotech Ltd, Reuters reported.

Beijing-based Sinovac last month commenced phase-III trials of CoronaVac vaccine in Turkey.

With CoronaVac's phase-III testing in Bangladesh now uncertain, the government has two options left for getting vaccines, according to the experts.

It could get 20 percent of the vaccines it needs from the WHO and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) under the COVAX Facility, a mechanism designed to guarantee rapid, fair, and equitable

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A car that was seized after an accident is kept on the road in front of Tejgaon Industrial Police Station, hampering traffic movement. Such vehicles, meant to be preserved at a separate place for legal reasons, are left to wear away around police stations. *Inset*, a seized covered van kept on the footpath near the station, blocking the path for pedestrians.

PHOTOS:  
PRABIR DAS

## BUSINESS

### Ahead of India in per capita GDP

Bangladesh is set to surpass India in terms of per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020 because of its robust agriculture output, exports and remittance despite the economic headwinds brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. Bangladesh's per capita GDP would rise to \$1,887.97 at the end of this year, up 3.96 per cent from that in the previous year, according to the International Monetary Fund's latest World Economic Outlook report. India's per capita GDP would fall to \$1,877 in 2020, a decline by 10.3 per cent year-on-year. Bangladesh's progress was praised by the Indian media yesterday.

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## Bangladesh to resume flights to India Oct 28

*Airlines of both countries to run 56 flights a week*

RASHIDUL HASAN

Air communications between Bangladesh and India will resume from October 28 after being suspended for more than seven months due to Covid-19.

The decision was made at an inter-ministerial meeting at the civil aviation and tourism ministry yesterday.

The resumption of air communications will bring relief to many Bangladeshis who are waiting to travel to the neighbouring country for treatment.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Senior Secretary Md Mohibul Haque of the civil aviation and tourism ministry said three Bangladeshi carriers -- Biman Bangladeshi Airlines, US-Bangla Airlines and Novo Air -- would initially operate 28 flights a week while five Indian airlines -- Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet, Vistara and GoAir -- would operate 28 flights a week between the two countries.

Of the three Bangladeshi carriers, Biman is scheduled to operate flights on Dhaka-Delhi and Dhaka-Kolkata routes, US-Bangla Airlines on Dhaka-Chennai and Novo Air on Dhaka-Kolkata route, sources at Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) said.

The five Indian airlines are expected to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## UNIVERSITY ADMISSION PROCESS

### HSC results may not help students

*UGC to propose that admission seekers' SSC grades should carry greater weight*

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The University Grants Commission is set to propose that this year's HSC exam results be given no or less weight in the university admission test process as the government is awarding candidates grades without holding the public exams.

The regulatory body of higher education, expected to hold a virtual meeting today with vice chancellors of public universities, is also likely to place another proposal as an alternative -- that grades of SSC exams be given more weight.

The meeting is expected to discuss the progress of ongoing online education at public universities, in place of in-person classes during the continuing closure of educational institutions due to the pandemic. It will also discuss the first-year admission tests at public universities for the upcoming academic session.

"We will sit with VCs of public universities on Thursday [today]. We will make different proposals regarding the weightage of HSC GPAs in the university admission process for the upcoming academic session," UGC member Prof Dil Afroza Begum told The Daily Star.

When the government decided on October 7 to cancel this year's Higher Secondary School Certificate and equivalent exams due to concerns over transmission risk amid the pandemic, it led to confusion among candidates about the admission process of public universities.

Instead of the exams, candidates' evaluation would be based on their results in the Junior School Certificate, Secondary School Certificate and equivalent tests.

The evaluation of the candidates would be published by December this year. HSC and equivalent exams, originally slated for April 1, were postponed on March 22 out of fear that they would increase coronavirus transmission.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

## ROHINGYA RETURN US to engage afresh with Myanmar next month

US official tells Shahriar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After the elections in Myanmar next month, the US will engage with the country



Stephen Beigun

anew over Rohingya repatriation and human rights violations in Rakhine, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam said yesterday.

"We said we want Rohingya repatriation, not long-term plan of assistance for them in Bangladesh," he told reporters after a meeting with US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Beigun at a city hotel.

The US official arrived in Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

Beigun is to visit the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi this morning and later have meetings with the prime

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## PADMA RAIL LINK PROJECT

### BR for change of China firm's representative

*3 'costly' projects to be reviewed*

TUHN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Railway (BR) has asked the Chinese contractor of Padma Bridge Rail Link Project (PBRLP) to change the project's chief, claiming that his work pattern was causing problems in the project implementation.

Although the authorities of the PBRLP has recently wrote to the contractor -- China Railway Group Limited -- to change their "representative" Wang Kun, the issue was discussed at a meeting between Railways Minister Nurul Islam Suhan and Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Li Jiming yesterday.

The meeting was held at a time when the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is reviewing the negotiated costs and plans of three Chinese-linked railway projects.

"We mainly discussed how the costs of the said projects can be reduced. The Chinese ambassador also agreed to work on it," the minister told The Daily Star after the meeting.

Asked whether the issue regarding the contractor's representative was discussed in the meeting, he replied in the affirmative.

Replying to another question, Suhan said the Chinese ambassador told him that they would look into it, but it was a lengthy process.

The minister said there was no issues over the previous representative. Officials of railways and other project-related officials were complaining about not getting

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## EC to sue Faridpur-4 MP for polls code breach

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission is going to file a case against independent lawmaker



Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury, popularly known as Nixon Chowdhury, for violating the electoral code of conduct.

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda yesterday said they have enough evidence to lodge the case against Faridpur-4 lawmaker Nixon Chowdhury.

"The case will be filed anytime within today or tomorrow," he told reporters yesterday.

He made the comment while talking to reporters after the law and order coordination meeting with law enforcement agencies before by-elections to Dhaka-5 and Dhaka-18.

"The case will be filed with a local police station.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



A bus-waiting shed on Asad Avenue stands badly damaged by the elements. Authorities seem least bothered about its upkeep though passengers complain about having to get wet in the rain while waiting for transport there. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO:  
PALASH KHAN



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