

POMPEO'S VISIT
US urges Sri Lanka to make 'difficult' choices over China ties
SEE PAGE 5

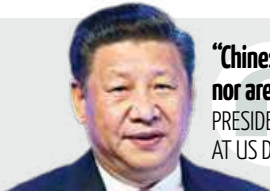
The Daily Star



REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXX No. 272 | KARTIK 8, 1427 BS | **Your Right to Know** | RABUL AWAL 6, 1442 HIJRI | 16 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00



"Today is a good day for the Libyan people."
STEPHANIE WILLIAMS, THE UN'S ENVOY TO THE TROUBLED NORTH AFRICAN COUNTRY, AFTER LIBYA'S WARRING FACTIONS SIGN A PERMANENT CEASEFIRE DEAL.



"Chinese people don't create troubles, nor are we afraid of them."
PRESIDENT XI JINPING DELIVERS THINLY-VEILED SWIPE AT US DURING KOREAN WAR ANNIVERSARY SPEECH



"Leo had more than earned a decision and if he considered that he should go ... I as president would have acted differently."
BARCELONA DEFENDER GERARD PIQUE, TALKING TO LA VANGUARDIA

Bills paid sans work

Financial irregularities traced in DGFP's IEM unit since 2018, its director questioned by ACC

MOHAMMAD AL MASUM MOLLA

The payment disbursed but the work not done -- this appears to have become a common practice at the IEM unit of DGFP.

The Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP) in 2018 decided to widely disseminate a voice message to mobile phone users as part of an awareness campaign, the budget of which was Tk 99 lakh.

The Information, Education and Motivation (IEM) unit was tasked with preparing a voice message of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and sending it to one crore people through a private company.

The unit selected Kabir Enterprise for the job and on April 6, 2018 issued a work order, a copy of which The Daily Star obtained.

Over two years have passed since then and the message is yet to be ready or sent to any mobile users, but the money has already been paid in full to Kabir Enterprise, according to its owner Kabir Ahmed.

"I am waiting for the voice message of the prime minister. The DGFP office was supposed to provide me the content but I am yet to receive it," Kabir told The Daily Star recently.

This is not, however, the first time something like this has happened at the department.

In the 2019-20 fiscal year, the IEM unit was tasked with organising 486 workshops across the country, with a total of Tk 7 crore allotted for this project. But there have been widespread allegations internally that false and inflated bills were submitted and the funds withdrawn in full under the project.

After these allegations surfaced, the health ministry formed an internal inquiry committee headed by Shabbir Hossain, additional secretary of the Medical Education and Family Welfare division.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A woman from the indigenous Kole community paints decorative motifs on the mud wall of her home in Chapainawabganj's Bilboilatha village yesterday, marking the celebration of Durga Puja. Painting such motifs during the religious festival has been a part of tradition for 24 local Hindu families of the community for years. PHOTO: RABUL HASAN

Mobile money transfer to get easier

All MFS users to be able to send, receive money from bank accounts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All banks and mobile financial service (MFS) providers will have to introduce the financial interoperability system by March 31 to help clients transfer money within the financial institutions.

The central bank on Thursday issued a notice in this regard.

Interoperability means clients will be allowed to send money from their respective accounts with MFS providers to banks.

Similarly, clients will be allowed to deposit money from their accounts with banks to MFS providers.

Clients will also be able to transfer funds between MFS providers.

The service will be implemented through the National Payment Switch Bangladesh (NPSB), a national payment gateway used to facilitate transfer funds among banks.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

UN chief urges G20 to unite on Covid-19 fight

AGENCIES

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has urged 20 major industrialised nations to be united to fight the coronavirus pandemic.



Antonio Guterres

Ahead of the Group of 20 summit next month, Guterres, in an interview with The Associated Press published yesterday, said that he hopes the international community now understands "they need to be much more coordinated in fighting the virus."

The UN chief expressed his frustration at leaders of the G20 nations that they didn't come together in March and establish a coordinated response to pandemic in all countries as he proposed.

The result, he said, is every country is taking its own sometimes contradictory actions, and the virus is moving "from east to west, north to south," with second

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

Myanmar wants to resume talks

Chinese foreign minister tells Momen

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Beijing on Thursday informed Dhaka about Myanmar's assurances of taking back the Rohingyas.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in a phone call told his Bangladesh counterpart AK Abdul Momen that Myanmar was willing to start afresh the discussions on Rohingya repatriation after its national elections on November 8.

He made the phone call while the international community was pledging funds to provide humanitarian assistance to the Rohingyas, at a virtual conference of donors.

"Myanmar informed China that it is working to take back the Rohingyas when the Covid-19 situation improves," said a foreign ministry statement yesterday.

Wang Yi also proposed an ambassador-level meeting and a trilateral senior official-level meeting among China, Bangladesh and Myanmar. He said the trilateral meeting could be held in Dhaka at the earliest.

Earlier on October 11, Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming expressed frustration over the fact that the repatriation has not begun in over three years since some 750,000 Rohingyas fled a brutal military crackdown in Rakhine State in 2017 and came to Bangladesh.

Dhaka has been vocal in stating that the Rohingya crisis could destabilise the region and deter foreign investors and made it clear that Bangladesh could not bear the burden of the nearly a million Rohingyas any longer.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Play robust role in resolving Rohingya crisis

PM urges UN

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the United Nations to play a more decisive and robust role in resolving existing global challenges, including the Rohingya crisis.

"There are still areas where the UN can play a more decisive and robust role in resolving many of today's intractable challenges such as the Rohingya crisis," the premier said in a message issued yesterday on the occasion of the UN's 75th founding anniversary.

She said the world is still beset with poverty, hunger, armed conflicts, terrorism, insecurity, and climate change -- all of which call for concerted efforts and greater action.

"As we agreed in the declaration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations,



SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Less chaos but plenty of clashes

Trump, Biden row over Covid, climate, racism in final debate; over 50m Americans have already voted

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden offered sharply contrasting views on the still-raging coronavirus pandemic at Thursday's final presidential debate, seeking to persuade the few remaining undecided voters ahead of November 3 election day.

Signaling a potential record turnout, more than 50 million Americans have cast ballots in the presidential election. According to Michael McDonald of the University of Florida's Elections Project, at least 51 million people had cast ballots in person or by mail till Friday.

That is roughly 21% of all eligible US voters. Some 137 million ballots were cast in the 2016 election, and McDonald and other experts predict that figure could be above 150 million this year.

Trump, a Republican, adopted a more restrained tone than he did during a chaotic first debate in September, when he repeatedly interrupted Biden. But Thursday's clash still featured plenty of personal attacks

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Assignments for class 6-9 students to start on Nov 1

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government is set to start the process of giving students of classes 6 to 9 assignments from November 1 in the absence of annual examinations.

Assignments will be given to school and madrasa students every week to identify students' learning shortcomings so that authorities can take remedial steps in those areas, said Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) officials.

"We are all set to start the process of giving and taking assignments from November 1," DSHE Director General Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk said.

He said all teachers and officials concerned will be notified about the process.

"We will also upload the assignment process on our website before November 1," he added, while talking to this newspaper yesterday.

The government is starting the process after Education Minister Dipu Moni on Wednesday announced that students of classes 6-9 would be promoted to the next classes this year without any annual examinations.

"There will be no annual exams for them. There will be no results, no grading

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Holding umbrellas, people ride boats to go to Keraniganj across the Buriganga amid intermittent rain yesterday. Many parts of the country experienced moderate to heavy rain throughout the day due to a depression over the Bay of Bengal. The photo was taken in Babubazar area of Old Dhaka.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Heavy rain batters life

Weather likely to start improving tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The deep depression formed in the Bay of Bengal made landfall around noon yesterday, causing moderate to heavy rain across the country.

Coastal areas of Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram, and Cox's Bazar have been inundated due to heavy rain in the last two days. The rain will continue today, said the Dhaka Met office.

Bangladesh Meteorological Department Director Shamsuddin Ahmed yesterday said, "The country will experience moderate to heavy rain tomorrow [today] and the overall weather situation will start improving from Sunday [tomorrow]."

He said all the maritime ports have been asked to hoist local cautionary signal number 3.

The depression made landfall around noon yesterday and it would remain on the land till midnight, Shamsuddin said in the evening.

The rough weather disrupted normal life across the country. Launch services on Barishal district's internal routes were suspended yesterday morning due to the inclement weather, reports UNB.

Traffic Inspector Md Kabir of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) said launch services on all internal routes

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1