



US Senate set to confirm Barrett as life-time justice of the Supreme Court
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Vaccine for all, free of cost

Govt decides to make coronavirus vaccines available for all citizens once those are procured

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

The government has decided to administer Covid-19 vaccines to all the citizens free of cost once those are procured.

As per the decision at a high-level meeting recently, the government will purchase vaccines as soon as those are out in the market and administer those to all like it does under the existing immunisation programmes, said finance ministry officials.

The finance ministry has already sought \$2 billion in financial assistance from four development partners to purchase, store, transport and administer the vaccines.

It has written to the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, seeking from them \$500 million each.

In the letters to the multilateral lenders, the ministry said the government decided to procure and administer the vaccines at its own cost.

It also mentioned that large-scale commercial production of the vaccine is expected by the end of this year.

"In this context, a major initiative is afoot to import vaccines to Bangladesh in order to make the vaccines available for all the citizens," the ministry wrote.

Seeking anonymity, a top official of the finance ministry, told The Daily Star, "We have already sent letters to the development partners, seeking \$2 billion in financial assistance. We are still not sure how much we will get. Whatever amount we get, the rest will be managed from government funds."

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WOMEN REPRESSION CASES

HC's monitoring order ignored

3 years on, authorities yet to form cell

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Over three years ago, the High Court directed the administration of the Supreme Court to form a cell to monitor whether the trials of cases filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000 are completed in 180 days.

The monitoring cell, headed by the registrar general of the SC, would report to the SC and the government for taking appropriate action against judges, public prosecutors and investigation officers who fail to assign causes for not disposing of the cases on time, according to the HC directive.

Three years down the line, the SC administration failed to constitute the cell.

The SC office, however, could not say the exact reasons behind noncompliance with the HC directive. As a result, updated information on the disposal of cases filed under the act remain unknown.

Incumbent SC Registrar General Md Ali Akbar said he was not informed about the HC directive for formation of the monitoring cell.

"I will inquire about the High Court verdict and then will take necessary steps," he told The Daily Star on October 17.

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Rab personnel arrest Mohammad Erfan Salim, son of Dhaka-7 lawmaker and Awami League leader Haji Mohammad Salim, at his home in Chawkbazar area of Old Dhaka yesterday for assaulting a navy officer in the capital's Dhanmondi area Sunday night. Inset, unlicensed walkie-talkies found at his home.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

ASSAULTING A NAVY OFFICER

Haji Salim's son Erfan arrested

Illegal arms, walkie-talkies, handcuffs, liquor seized as his home raided; 'torture cell' found

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Erfan Salim, son of Dhaka-7 lawmaker and Awami League leader Haji Md Salim, was sentenced to one year in prison yesterday for illegally possessing walkie-talkies and foreign liquor.

Rab Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam handed six months' imprisonment to Erfan for keeping the radio transceivers illegally and the other six months for the illegal liquor possession, said Lt Col Ashique Billah, Rab's Legal and Media wing director. Erfan's bodyguard Zahidul Islam, 35, was given the same punishment for the same offence, he said.

It came after Rab raided Erfan's home in the capital's Chawkbazar for six hours

from 12:30pm. Rab claimed that it found 38 black walkie-talkies, five Virtual Private Server (VPS) handsets, one repeater, a router, two unlicensed firearms, and seven bottles of foreign liquor from the house, said Rab officials.

Two more cases would be filed against Erfan under the narcotics and firearms acts, they said.

Earlier in the day, 37-year-old Erfan, councillor of Ward-30 under the Dhaka South City Corporation and son-in-law of an MP in Noakhali, and two others were detained in a case filed for assaulting a navy official in the capital's Dhanmondi area on Sunday night. The incident happened after Erfan's SUV hit the official's motorcycle.

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Cable repairs can cause slow internet for five days

RASHIDUL HASAN and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

Internet users may face reduced speeds in some areas for five days starting from the wee hours of today due to maintenance work on the submarine cable connecting Chennai to Singapore.

The 3,100-kilometre submarine cable, known as the i2i cable network, also connects Bangladesh's international internet gateway (IIG) operators with Singapore, industry operators said.

"Latency and congestion are likely to increase in some destinations, especially during the peak hours from 8:00pm to 1:00am," said Ahmed Junayed, secretary general, International Internet Getaway Association, Bangladesh (IIGAB).

Talking to The Daily Star last night he also said Bangladesh may experience

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Rangpur cop suspended over rape charges

Man held for raping minor in Noakhali

STAR REPORT

An assistant sub-inspector of Rangpur police was suspended yesterday on charges of gang-raping a ninth grader with two others.

In separate incidents, a man was arrested yesterday for allegedly raping a girl in Noakhali, and in Habiganj on Sunday, a court took cognisance of gang rape charges against eight people, including a union parishad chairman, and asked police to investigate the incident.

In Rangpur, the suspended police officer, Raihanul Islam, was discharging duties as an ASI

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An idol of Durga arrives at Chattogram's Patenga Beach for its immersion in the sea. Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindus, ended yesterday with the celebration of Bijaya Dashami. Devotees bade farewell to the deity amid loud chants and drumbeats as the idols were immersed in the sea and rivers across the country.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Trump, Biden begin final week campaign

Covid-19 issue dominates as nearly 60m Americans cast ballots

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden yesterday were to storm swing states in the final week of campaigning before the Nov. 3 election, as surging coronavirus cases and an uncomfortable admission by his chief of staff keep the focus of the race on the pandemic.

Trump claimed progress in combating the disease even as the United States set records in recent days for daily infections, while Pence forged ahead with campaigning on Sunday despite close aides testing positive.

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Durga Puja ends with immersion of idols

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindus, ended yesterday with the immersion of the idols of goddess Durga and her children in water bodies.

This year, the puja was different as worshippers mostly avoided any gathering and festivity due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Most of the puja organisers did not bring out any Dashami procession yesterday. Only a few brought out processions on a very limited scale.

All the temples across the country

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IN TRIBUTE

Barrister Rafique-ul Huq

(02 November 1935 – 24 October 2020)

Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajiun

We deeply mourn the passing of one of the nation's pre-eminent lawyers and the former Attorney General of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. He was also renowned for his many philanthropic and social activities.

We recall with immense gratitude his invaluable contribution as a Legal Advisor to ACI Group during its inception.

We pray to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of the departed soul and extend our heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family.

