



A BLOW TO THE POOR
Retail prices of coarse rice rose Tk 15 per kg in the last one year
STORY ON B1

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Your Right to Know

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"Usually, we are highly ambitious while preparing a plan but very slow in implementing it."
ROAD TRANSPORT AND BRIDGES MINISTER
OBAIDUL QUADER



"We are in a dramatic situation at the start of the cold season. ... The winter will be hard."
GERMAN CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL AFTER IMPOSING SWEEPING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS ON SOCIAL LIFE



"I'm not running on a false promise of being able to end this pandemic by flipping a switch."
JOE BIDEN SAYS HE WOULD FOLLOW SCIENCE FROM DAY 1 IF HE IS ELECTED DURING A RALLY IN FLORIDA



Hell in the desert

Bangladeshi migrant workers detained, tortured and extorted in camps in lawless Libya; families back home go in debt to pay traffickers

ZYMA ISLAM

"Please don't reveal my son's name in the news, he is still in Libya, he will get killed by his trafficker," she implored, talking over the phone from Noakhali.

The fear is real. In August, her 21-year-old son Aiman (not his real name) was released after two months of hell in a camp in Brak al-Shati, an outpost in the middle of the Sahara desert, 700km from Libya's capital Tripoli.

Aiman was among a group of 27 Bangladeshis locked up in a camp run by human traffickers between June and the beginning of this month.

Traffickers in Libya usually intercept those trying to reach Europe by boat via irregular migration channels, hold them hostage, and torture them for ransom.

On May 27 this year, a horrifying massacre took place in such a camp in another town called Mizdah, where 26 Bangladeshis were killed when a fight broke out between the traffickers and hostages.

The killing of the Bangladeshis shed light on the fact that Bangladeshis were among other migrants in Libya frequently imprisoned in centres colloquially known as "campos".

Aiman, for example, was imprisoned in Brak al-Shati in June, the month after the massacre at Mizdah.

"There are many such camps all over Libya run by the militias where Bangladeshis are often held."

ASM ASHRAFUL ISLAM, LABOUR COUNSELLOR OF THE BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSION IN TRIPOLI



Headless of the danger, a child takes sip of a drink sitting right on the rail line in the capital's Tejgaon Railway Station area. A few other people also can be seen on the lines nearby. Such disregard for safety often proves to be fatal. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Miladunnabi today

UNB, Dhaka

The holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi is being observed in the country today, marking the day of birth and passing away of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM), with religious festivity and fervour.

On this day in 570, the 12th of Rabiul Awal of the Hijri calendar, Muhammad (SM) was born in Makkah with divine blessings and messages of peace for mankind. The prophet (SM) also passed away on the same day.

After the independence of Bangladesh, Father of

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HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star office will remain closed today on the occasion of Eid-e-Miladunnabi. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow. Stay tuned to our website for round-the-clock news coverage.

Incident not covered by any CCTV cameras

Say cops about Erfan, his men's assault on navy officer

MUNTAKIM SAAD

The incident of Erfan Salim and his men assaulting a navy officer in Dhanmondi on Sunday was not recorded by any CCTV cameras in the vicinity, but the police have amateur videos of the incident.

"We got two CCTV cameras installed in the area ... the cameras do not cover the actual place of occurrence," Abdulla Hil Kafi, additional deputy commissioner (Dhanmondi zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

The police said they have proof of the assault

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SSC, HSC EXAMINEES

Special classes likely from next month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is considering whether to resume classes on a limited scale from next month for students who would sit for the SSC and HSC exams in 2021.

The Covid-19 health guidelines will be strictly maintained. The government yesterday extended the closure of all educational institutions until November 14 in a bid to reduce further spread of coronavirus.

Education Minister Dipu Moni made the announcement at a virtual press briefing yesterday.

Because of the pandemic, the government will not be able to hold the Textbook Festival on January 1 when textbooks are handed over to primary and secondary students for free, she added.

"We are considering reopening classes for SSC and HSC candidates amid strict enforcement of health guidelines and avoiding risks posed by Covid-19," Dipu Moni said.

She did say, however, that everything would depend on the Covid-19 scenario as transmission of the virus is increasing in many places around the world and there is speculation that there may be a spike in cases in

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- Closure extended till Nov 14
- No Textbook Festival next year
- Directive on tuition fee collection soon
- Combined admission test at univs should be considered

NOAKHALI GANG RAPE

Husband of victim could have been involved

Says HC-formed probe body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Noakhali gangrape victim's husband and his elder brother may have been involved in the gangrape and torture in Begunganj in September, said a probe committee formed by the High Court.

The committee submitted its report to the HC yesterday through its registrar's office, saying that it found negligence of the local police and local union parishad chairman and member in taking action against the perpetrators.

The committee recommended taking

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GRAFT, ANOMALIES AT RU

Govt sits on UGC probe report

Evidence found against VC, pro-VC

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government is sitting on a UGC probe that found evidence of corruption and irregularities by Rajshahi University vice-chancellor and pro-VC in appointing RU teachers.

In the probe report, the University Grants Commission recommended taking action against VC Prof M Abdus Sobhan, pro-VC Prof Choudhury M Zakaria and others of the university over the matter. It also recommended scrapping the appointment of 34 teachers, who were recruited "relaxing university rules".

The report said the vice-chancellor and the others relaxed the rules also to appoint the VC's daughter and son-in-law as teachers at the public university.

Following investigation, the UGC submitted the report to the Ministry of Education, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on October 20.

Education Minister Dipu Moni, replying to a query on the action against the RU teachers, yesterday said, "It is really unfortunate that an allegation of irregularities has surfaced against officials of such a large public university."

"We had asked the UGC to probe the matter. Now it [the probe report] is submitted. We will inform all of you of our decision after reviewing the report."

She said she had not yet received the report and since Secondary and Higher Education Division Secretary Mahbub Hossain was suffering from Covid-19, they could not discuss the matter.

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THE THIRD VIEW



MAHFUZZ ANAM

PM'S COMMITMENT TO FREE PRESS
The real test is in practice

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Under fire, IPH scraps dress code circular

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Institute of Public Health issued a circular on Wednesday asking Muslim women employees to wear hijab and to make sure that their clothes cover their ankle joints.

After widespread criticism on social media and a show-cause notice from the health ministry yesterday, the institute's director withdrew the order.

"It is being ordered that 'purdah' be maintained," said Wednesday's notice, signed by Director of the Institute of Public Health (IPH) Dr Muhammad Abdur Rahim.

The health ministry yesterday issued a "show-cause" notice, asking Rahim to explain why "he issued the circular" and "based on which rule and upon approval from which authority" did he do it.

The IPH director withdrew the notice soon afterwards. Prof Dr ABM Khurshid Alam, director

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Large concrete pipes of storm-water drain lie right on the street near Bangladesh Bank headquarters in the capital's Motijheel, obstructing movement of vehicles and pedestrians. Locals said city corporation authorities kept the pipes there for the last eight months. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

US ELECTION 2020

Trump, Biden zero in on Florida

Candidates clash over economy, coronavirus as election day nears

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump and challenger Joe Biden were set to rally voters just hours apart in the Florida city of Tampa yesterday, their campaign paths crossing for the first time as the rivals' fight for the White House enters its frenetic final days.

Florida, with 29 electoral votes, is a must-win prize, and polls show the candidates in a dead heat in America's third-largest state, which has sided with the winner in every presidential election since 1964, with one exception.

The candidates' events are sure to be a study in contrasts, with Trump's largely mask-less and densely packed supporters gathering in the afternoon, and Biden holding a socially distanced drive-in meeting later in the evening.

A day prior, Trump was stumping in Arizona, while Biden voted in his home state of Delaware and met with health experts, as he fine-tuned his pandemic response plan, seeking to reassure voters that he would use science to fight the contagion.

The virus has killed more than 227,000 people in the US and forced millions out of work in the world's largest economy as a resurgent wave of cases was reaching record levels.

"I'm not running on a false promise of being able to end this pandemic by flipping a switch," said the 77-year-old former vice president, who has a strong lead in opinion polls.

"But what I can promise you is this: We'll start on Day 1 by doing the right thing. We'll get science guide our decisions."

Tomorrow, Biden is to get some star power when he is joined on the stump in Michigan by Barack Obama, whom he served as vice president. It will be their first joint in-

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