



# The Daily Star



REGD. NO. DA 781 | Vol. XXX No. 311 | AGRAHAN 18, 1427 BS | **Your Right to Know** | RABIU SANI 17, 1442 HJRI | 16 PAGES PLUS SHOUT PRICE : Tk12.00

**"If we do not respond to climate change, we will continue to have these emergencies on our shores."**  
NEW ZEALAND PM JACINDA ARDERN AFTER DECLARING CLIMATE EMERGENCY



**"To date, we have not seen fraud on a scale that could have effected a different outcome in the election."**  
US ATTORNEY GENERAL WILLIAM BARR



**"... We see Malaysia sometimes positive but see them pushing back Rohingya boats. I think whole international community should work together."**  
EU AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH RENJSJE TEERINK ABOUT THE ROHINGYA CRISIS



## ROHINGYA RELOCATION TO BHASAN CHAR

# All set with UN views put aside

*UN says it has not been involved in preparations, has 'limited info' on the overall relocation exercise*



PORIMOL PALMA

While the United Nations and other development partners still wait for an independent assessment of the Bhasan Char housing project, the government prepares for relocating some 2,500 Rohingyas to the isolated island within a couple of days.

The government move has triggered concerns among the UN and the development partners.

Experts have, meanwhile, said relocating the Rohingyas without the UN consent could risk Bangladesh's reputation. They were also not sure

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## Promise of protection from natural disaster

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN, back from Bhasan Char

Uri grass is growing naturally along the shore of Bhasan Char Island. This type of grass only grows in areas where there is no possibility of erosion, according to officials of Ashrayan-3 project.

The officials are now working to put in place a five-layer protection system to save the island from natural disasters.

The Bangladesh government has spent around Tk 3,100 crore to develop the island, build infrastructure and a protection system against extreme climate events under a project delegated to Bangladesh Navy.

A number of international non-government organisations questioned the safety and protection system in the island as the government decided to relocate a group of Rohingyas there.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



The Bhakurta canal in Keraniganj of Dhaka has been orange for the last two years as water from Dhaka Wasa's iron removal plant has been getting into the canal. Local fishermen say they cannot get a decent catch in the canal anymore. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## People like PK Halder must face music: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

However powerful the corrupt and money launders like Proshanta Kumar Halder alias PK Halder are, they must be brought to book, and they cannot be spared under any circumstances, the High Court observed yesterday.

The court also said the government agencies concerned are bound to protect public properties in accordance with the law and the country's constitution.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Ahmed Sohel came up with the observation while virtually hearing a suo motu rule issued by it questioning the inaction of the authorities concerned in arresting Halder and bringing him back to the country.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

## SONARGAON RESORT, ECONOMIC ZONE

# Earth-filling by 2 companies illegal

*HC slams the Unique Group firms, directs authorities to restore wetlands in 6 months*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday slammed two private companies owned by businessman Md Noor Ali for grabbing and filling up wetland and farmland to set up a resort and an economic zone in Narayanganj's Sonargaon upazila.

In the verdict on a writ petition, the HC observed that the land grabbing by Unique Property Development Ltd (UPDL) and Sonargaon Economic Zone (SEZ) in six moujas near the banks of the Meghna was unfortunate as it was done bypassing the relevant laws and directives from the HC and the Supreme Court.

The court declared illegal the activities of the two firms in the six moujas of Sonargaon and ordered the Department of Environment (DoE) and the local administration to take necessary steps to restore farmland and wetland there in six months.

Citing from government documents,

it said the firms -- both concerns of Noor Ali-owned Unique Group -- filled up agricultural land and wetland in Pirojpur, Jainpur, Chhoyhissa, Char Bhabonathpur, Batibandha and Ratanpur moujas, first in the name of setting up a resort and then a private economic zone.

Noor Ali is a freedom fighter and the nation does not expect this from him, noted the HC bench of Justice Md Ashraf Kamal and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil.

The court directed the DoE and the local administration to probe the incidents of land grabbing and earth filling by the UPDL and the SEZ or any other organisation or individual and also give compensation to the affected land owners.

It mentioned that 2,350 bighas of farmland and wetland have been grabbed in the six moujas.

A company has to apply to Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA) for establishing an economic zone in line with

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Cabinet okays direct vaccine purchase

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs yesterday approved in principle a proposal of the Health Services Division to procure Covid-19 vaccine directly from any organisation through negotiations without following any bidding process.

"The cabinet body approved a proposal of the Health Services Division [under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare] to procure Covid-19 vaccine worth over Tk 5 crore by applying the direct procurement method," said Abu Saleh, additional secretary of the cabinet division.

He was briefing reporters after a meeting of the cabinet committee. Abu Saleh, however, said, "This committee has just given the approval in principle to meet the emergency needs of the state. But when any procurement deal will be final, it'll come to the Cabinet Committee on Public Purchase for its final approval."

He said the approval was given in compliance with the Provision 76 of the Public Procurement Rule-2008.

Earlier on November 5 last, the government signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU)

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Vaccination starts next week in UK

*Britain clears Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine for use in world first; EU warns against hasty decisions*

AGENCIES

Britain approved Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine yesterday, jumping ahead of the United States and Europe to become the West's first country to formally endorse a job it said should reach the most vulnerable people early next week.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson touted the medicine authority's approval as a global win and a ray of hope amid the gloom of the novel coronavirus which has killed nearly 1.5 million people globally, hammered the world economy and upended normal life.

Britain's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) granted emergency use approval to the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, which they say is 95% effective in preventing illness, in record time - just 23 days since Pfizer published the first data from its final stage clinical trial.

The world's big powers have been racing for a vaccine for months to begin the long road to recovery, and getting there first may be seen as a coup for Johnson's government, which has faced criticism over its handling of the crisis.

"It's fantastic," Johnson said. "The vaccine will begin to be made available across the UK from next week. It's the protection of vaccines that will ultimately allow us to reclaim our lives and get the economy moving again."

The European Union's drug watchdog and lawmakers warned against hasty approvals of Covid-19 vaccines yesterday, after Britain granted emergency authorisation to the experimental shot of Pfizer and BioNTech.

The European Medicines Agency (EMA), which is in charge of approving Covid-19 vaccines for the EU, said its longer procedure to approve vaccines was more appropriate as it was based on more evidence and required more checks than the emergency procedure chosen by Britain.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## Selim Prodhan amassed Tk 57.79cr

*Says ACC source about casino 'kingpin'*

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

It was Tk 12.27 crore illegal wealth mentioned in a graft case filed against online casino "kingpin" Selim Prodhan.

But during investigation, it was revealed that Selim's illegal wealth was five times higher than that mentioned in the FIR.

An Anti-Corruption Commission source said Selim amassed about Tk 57.79 crore illegally and laundered about Tk 22 crore to Thailand and the US.

The source said the investigators have summed up their findings and will submit it before the commission.

In September, the Criminal Investigation Department submitted a charge-sheet against Selim in another case for siphoning off about Tk 13.28 crore.

Selim, who came to the fore last year when the law enforcement agency conducted drives against

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



People try to straighten a crumpled truck cab and free the driver trapped inside at Ghoramara in Sitakunda on Dhaka-Chattogram highway yesterday. The truck had rear ended another truck on the highway. The driver suffered injuries, including a broken leg.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## 23 YRS OF PEACE ACCORD

# CHT still plagued by myriad ills

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The hills have remained restive due to land disputes, extortion, killings and feuds between and within the region's political parties 23 years into the peace accord in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Officials and a section of locals blame this on regional political groups trying to establish supremacy in the hill tracts. Rights organisations and another section of locals, meanwhile, see the treaty not being fully implemented as the reason.

They also said when the peace accord was signed, people of the hilly districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban thought their lives would change for the better and the bloodshed would come to an end.

"The core issues of the treaty were not implemented. That's why frustration among people of the hills is growing and the law and order situation is deteriorating," Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, told The Daily Star.

He said implementation of the provisions of the peace accord would improve the law and order situation and also reduce the frustration.

When asked about the violence by armed groups in the hilly districts, he said, "It is the responsibility of the law enforcement agencies to check it."

There has been a spate of killings -- 115 -- since the start of 2019 till October this year, along with 49 abductions during the same period, according to information obtained from the security forces and various intelligence agencies.

Most of the people killed were members of the four regional parties -- Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3