

Lok Sabha

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from moving that amendment. He points out that the Argentine resolution spoke of repatriation of civilians and POWs but nowhere had it made the acceptance of these factors a condition to admission of Bangladesh.

TEJGAON WORKERS DEMONSTRATE IN FRONT OF THE GONO BHABAN

A large number of workers from the Tejgaon industrial area stage a demonstration today in front of the Gono Bhaban, official residence of Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, demanding trial and punishment of a labour leader for his alleged anti-social activities. Bangabandhu walks down to the gate amidst slogans and addresses the crowd.

GHANA ACCORDS RECOGNITION

Ghana officially recognises Bangladesh today as an independent and sovereign state. Quoting an official report from Accra, the capital of Ghana, BBC further says Ghana would look into the interest of Bangladesh both in the fields of economic and post-war reconstruction and the country would hold a similar stance in the case of prisoners of war.

SOURCES: December 9, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Titas sues

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Yesterday, they were shown arrested in the case and were sent to jail.

The police inspector said they were conducting drives to arrest the other accused.

On Sunday noon, Executive Magistrate and Assistant Commissioner Uzzal Hossain had led the drive in Jhaugora Uttarpara area to snap illegal gas connections.

Three Titas Gas officials and eight policemen sustained minor injuries during the attack, said police.

Biden names

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highest level of integrity, scientific rigor, and crisis-management experience to one of the toughest challenges America has ever faced,” Biden said.

Biden, who has said he would ask Americans to wear masks for 100 days when he moves into the White House, vowed his administration would “ready on day one to mobilize every resource of the federal government” to lower the soaring daily death toll from Covid-19.

President Donald Trump’s administration has been widely criticized for its response to the pandemic, with Trump downplaying the risks and ignoring basic measures such as mask-wearing and social distancing to prevent spread of the deadly virus.

Biden confirmed that the government’s respected top infectious disease specialist Anthony Fauci would remain in his post as director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases -- and will also serve as Biden’s chief medical adviser on Covid-19.

Biden has stressed that he would strive for diversity when choosing staff.

During Becerra’s 12 terms in Congress representing Los Angeles, he was an outspoken advocate of Latino rights and a vigorous defender of Obama’s signature health care program -- a policy that has been much attacked by Trump.

Akram Ahmed

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brave role as a fighter pilot during the Liberation War, Caab said in a press release.

He left behind his wife, daughter and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Captain Akram was hospitalised in early November with Covid-19. He had also been suffering from pneumonia.

He was one of the nine pilots who joined the “Kilo Flight”, which caused havoc in enemy territory during the war.

On the night of December 3, Squadron Leader Shamsul Alam and Captain Akram attacked the eastern refinery in Chattogram and destroyed the oil depot.

Simultaneous attacks in Chattogram and Dhaka were made by the valiant “Akash Shainik”, in conjunction with the Indian military, against the Pakistan occupation forces.

After the war, Akram joined Biman Bangladesh Airlines as a pilot, flying Dakota DC-3. Later, he flew the F-27 and Boeing 707. He retired when he was a DC-10 pilot.

He was awarded the title of Bir Uttam for his contribution to the Liberation War.

He will be buried at Banani graveyard today after Zohr prayers, with a guard of honour from the Bangladesh Air Force.

State Minister for Civil Aviation M Mahbub Ali and Caab Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidir Rahman expressed deep shock at the demise of the brave freedom fighter.



PHOTO: AFP

Employees of Austria’s railway operator OeBB shovel snow from a train in Lienz, eastern Tyrol, yesterday, as winter sets with heavy snowfall.

Remembered forever

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MAG Kabir Vulu, who was captive there, said, “We were sent to the Wapda Pakistani army camp in Barishal town in July 1971.”

He had previously been incarcerated at Gournadi Pakistani army camp in Barishal, where he had been severely tortured. “Both my legs were severely injured by bayonets. I did not know the reason for my transfer from Gournadi to Barishal town,” he said.

“My friend Anwar, who was bigger and stronger looking, had been brought with me. One morning, he was picked up and dragged away. Then I heard the sound of gunfire. In the same way, the then student leader Firoj Kabir was also shot dead.”

Kabir, who had been spared, also described the other killings at Wapda

on the banks of Kirtankhola river in Barishal town.

Every day, people were brought by trucks from different parts of Barishal, Jhalakati, and Pirojpur. “In the early morning the next day, they were taken to the banks of the river and after that I would hear gunshots.”

Barishal Sangskritik Sangathan Samannay Parishad has been calling for initiatives to preserve the memories of the Liberation War at Wapda since 1996, said Syed Dulal, former president of the organisation.

After a few delays, it will finally be inaugurated for the public today, the day the city of Barishal was liberated from Pakistani occupation forces, as a significant reminder of sacrifices in the war.

PRESERVATION

Barishal City Corporation, with the

help of the Liberation War Museum, has preserved and restored the Wapda compound as the largest memorial of the Liberation War and genocide in the south.

The compound includes two wartime torture cells and two bunkers, as well as an open stage, auditorium, and a walkway which have been constructed so that visitors can tour the compound and pay their respects.

BCC sources said the preservation and restoration work started in 2017 at a cost of Tk 3.31 crore.

The bridge, the site of many killings during the period, has also been preserved so that the youth and children can get an idea of what took place here, BCC Mayor Serniabat Sadik Abdullah, who will inaugurate the site, told The Daily Star.

“On December 18, 1971, we first

visited here and recovered human bones, and materials and other documents related to the killings,” said Mahafuz Alam Beg, sub-sector commander of the ninth sector.

On April 25, 1971, the Pakistan occupation forces first entered Barishal district town and set up an army camp in the Wapda area.

“From then till December 7, they killed innocent Bangalees here every day,” said Mahafuz.

Surrounded on land, the Pakistan army left Barishal on December 8 by water on several launches and was met by Indian Air Force fighter planes which sank these, killing most of the Pakistan military personnel.

Freedom fighters entered the city and captured Barishal Kotwali Police Station, liberating the city that very day.

Nuke scientist killed by ‘AI’ machine gun

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despite being only 25 centimetres (10 inches) away, was not shot,” Mehr news agency quoted him as saying.

It was being “controlled online” via a satellite and used an “advanced camera and artificial intelligence(AI)” to make the target, he added.

Fadavi said that Fakhrizadeh’s head of security took four bullets “as he threw himself” on the scientist and that there were “no terrorists at the scene”.

Iranian authorities have blamed arch foe Israel and the exiled opposition group the People’s

Mujahedeen of Iran (MEK) for the assassination.

State-run Press TV had previously said “made in Israel” weapons were found at the scene.

Various accounts of the scientist’s death have emerged since the attack, with the defence ministry initially saying he was caught in a firefight with his bodyguards, while Fars news agency claimed “a remote controlled automatic machine gun” killed him, without citing any sources.

According to Iran’s defence minister, Amir Hatami, Fakhrizadeh was one of his deputies and headed the ministry’s Defence and Research

and Innovation Organization, focusing on the field of “nuclear defence”.

Meanwhile, plans by Iran to install advanced centrifuges at its main nuclear enrichment plant in Natanz are “deeply worrying”, France, Germany and the UK said yesterday.

The three governments, dubbed the E3, said the plans were contrary to a 2015 agreement between Tehran and world powers that aimed to restrain Iran’s nuclear programme.

The deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

(JCPOA), is “the best and currently the only way to monitor and constrain Iran’s nuclear programme,” the three countries said.

The UN’s nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported last month that Iran had installed and begun operating advanced centrifuges at an underground section at Natanz.

“Iran’s recent announcement to the IAEA that it intends to install an additional three cascades of advanced centrifuges at the Fuel Enrichment Plant in Natanz is contrary to the JCPOA and deeply worrying,” the E3 said.

India’s Serum Institute seeks urgent approval

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supplies for a domestic coronavirus outbreak that is the world’s second biggest, has said an emergency use approval could preface a full rollout by February or March.

Serum Institute CEO Adar Poonawalla tweeted that the move to apply for emergency use “will save countless lives,” but did not give any other details.

The company declined to reply to Reuters’ follow-up questions about the process.

AstraZeneca’s vaccine, called “Covishield” by Serum Institute, can be stored at two to eight degrees Celsius and distributed more easily in India, which lacks cold chain capabilities that the vaccine developed by Pfizer requires.

Poonawalla has said the company will first focus on supplying the vaccine in India before distributing it to other countries, pricing it at 1,000 rupees per dose (\$13.50) for private markets.

Governments signing large supply deals will likely buy it at lower prices. In Europe, AstraZeneca has pledged to supply 300 million doses of the vaccine for 750 million euros, pointing to a per-dose price of 2.50 euros.

Meanwhile, Britain yesterday prepared to start its biggest ever immunisation campaign but health officials warned the drive to inoculate millions against Covid-19 would be a “marathon” stretching well into next year.

The world-first rollout of the

Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is due to start today -- dubbed “V-Day” by Health Secretary Matt Hancock, who has volunteered to take it live on television to assuage any public doubts over the rapid approval.

Croydon University Hospital in south London is one of 50 clinical hubs that started receiving the country’s initial consignment of 800,000 doses over the weekend, from a Pfizer plant in Belgium.

The vaccine rollout coincides with the end-game of Brexit talks on Britain’s future trading relationship with the European Union, reports AFP.

Secured \$15.5 million in funding from a local firm to double production capacity of its coronavirus vaccine,

the companies said yesterday, as it expects efficacy data of its experimental shot this month.

The investment deal also comes as Sinovac expands supply deals and trials of its experimental Covid-19 vaccine CoronaVac with more countries following positive results from early to mid-stage clinical trials.

China’s Sino Biopharmaceutical Limited said yesterday a business unit will invest \$515 million in Sinovac Life Sciences, a subsidiary of Sinovac, to help development and production of CoronaVac.

The investment will give Sino Biopharmaceutical a 15.03% interest in Sinovac Life Sciences, Sino Biopharmaceutical said in a filing to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

Cybercrime costs to top \$1 trillion this year

Say researchers

AFP, Washington

Cybercrime is expected to cost the global economy more than \$1 trillion this year, up more than 50 percent since 2018, a research report said yesterday.

The report by McAfee Corp. with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) concluded that the cost of online criminal activity is more than one percent of global economic output, and also had significant non-monetary impacts.

The researchers noted a surge in a range of attacks including ransomware, phishing, business email takeovers, spyware and cryptocurrency theft.

Some of the increase can be attributed to weaker security with more people working remotely outside their workplace.

“The severity and frequency of cyberattacks on businesses continues to rise as techniques evolve, new technologies broaden the threat surface, and the nature of work expands into home and remote environments,” said Steve Grobman, chief technical officer at McAfee.

“While industry and government are aware of the financial and national security implications of cyberattacks, unplanned downtime, the cost of investigating breaches and disruption to productivity represent less appreciated high impact costs.”

The report was based on a survey of 1,500 technology professionals in government and business in the US, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Japan and Australia.

The impact of cybercrime included the loss of intellectual property and monetary assets, but also system downtime and damage to an organization’s reputation, according to the report.

“It is no secret that cybercrime can harm public safety, undermine national security, and damage economies,” the researchers wrote.

Giant vertical

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1,000 tonnes annually when the farm is running at full capacity by the end of 2021, explains Anders Riemann, founder and chief executive of Nordic Harvest.

That would make the Taastrup warehouse one of Europe’s biggest vertical farms.

These urban facilities have unsurprisingly received a cool welcome from rural farmers, who have questioned their ability to feed the planet and criticised their electricity consumption.

But Riemann stresses the environmental benefits of his farm, with produce grown close to consumers and its use of green electricity.

“A vertical farm is characterised by not harming the environment by recycling all the water and nutrition or fertiliser,” says Riemann, who uses no pesticides.

In Denmark, a world leader in wind farms, about 40 percent of electricity consumption is wind-based.

“In our case, we use 100 percent energy from windmills which makes us CO2-neutral,” he adds.

First developed around a decade ago, vertical farms have taken off in Asia and the United States. The idea has slowly started to catch on in Europe.

Urban farming could even allow land exploited by single-culture farming to be reforested, Riemann said.

“We moved the forests in order to have fields,” he laments, noting that now farmers like him can bring “some of the food production back into the cities where you can grow on much smaller land and space optimised in height”.

Bangladesh

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Aftab ul Islam said he was aware of the issue of conflict of interest and that was why he left the BB board meeting when the approval was given yesterday.

“There has been no conflict of interest as I was not present during the discussion on the issue at the board meeting,” he said.

When her attention was drawn to the matter, Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said conflict of interest was a regular phenomenon in the country’s banking sector.

The latest decision is the continuation of existing practices, she said.

The new bank is set to join the others at a time a when the banking and financial sector is riddled with a number of loan scams and bad loans due to a lack of good governance.

Khaled said the existing banks were already struggling to survive amid the current situation over business activities. In addition, new banks seem reluctant to expand their business to rural areas as they mainly focus on urban areas.

This means they have had little impact on the expansion of the county’s financial inclusion, he added.