

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 Uttartpara area to snap illegal gas connections.

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

2 women raped

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As she declined the proposal, Rakib threatened to spread her secretly-recorded video footage, which he later did from his Facebook account, said the police official. The girl then filed the case with the police station yesterday.

A housewife, 32, filed a separate case with the police station yesterday, accusing Selim, son of Md Rafiq, of raping her.

In the case statement, she said her family have been having a land-related dispute with Selim for the last 25 years. Recently, Selim came to the house of one of her neighbours to discuss a case filed over the land issue. After the housewife went there, Selim raped her holding a knife to her throat.

The woman also accused him of threatening to gang-rape her if she disclosed the matter to anyone. Two others were also made accused for abetting the crime.

Inspector Moniruzzaman said they were investigating the cases. “We are trying to arrest the accused in the two cases,” he said.

In Noakhali, a woman, 35, filed a rape case on Sunday night against a former expatriate, Md Ripon, who now lives in Chhatkhil upazila.

The case statement says Ripon developed an intimate relationship with the victim after promising that he would marry her. But he married someone else three weeks ago and then went into hiding.

Chatkhill OC Anwarul Islam said they were trying to arrest Ripon.

In Feni, madrasa teacher Emdad Ullah, 27, was arrested over raping one of his students on multiple occasions in the past few months.

Police sources said law enforcers held the teacher after the 16-year-old boy informed the matter to some of his other teachers at the residential madrasa in Yeakubpur union of Daganbhuian.

The victim said he was raped in a room of the madrasa, where the teacher lived.

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.



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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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.

In China, Sinovac Biotech has secured \$515 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.

Sinovac said in a separate statement that it would be able to manufacture 300 million vaccine doses annually and aims to complete construction of a second production facility by the end of 2020 to increase annual Covid-19 vaccine production capacity to 600 million doses.

Depending on market conditions and the availability of financing, it may seek to further expand its production capacity, Sinovac said.

Sinovac has secured CoronaVac supply deals with several countries including Indonesia, Turkey, Brazil and Chile, and is holding talks with the Philippines for a potential sale.

CoronaVac is also one of three experimental Covid-19 vaccines China has been using to inoculate around 1 million people under an emergency use programme.

Gunmen kill 5 south Yemen separatists

AFP, Dubai

Suspected Al-Qaeda gunmen killed five south Yemen separatists in Abyan province yesterday, in the terror group’s biggest attack in the region for months, a secessionist security official said.

The five members of the Security Belt separatist force, which is dominated by the Southern Transitional Council (STC), were killed at dawn on the outskirts of Lawdar city, the official told AFP.

“It was gunmen believed to be from Al-Qaeda who launched the attack and managed to escape,” he said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

A medic in Lawdar confirmed the death toll, while Al-Qaeda has yet to issue any statements on the attack.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has thrived in the chaos of Yemen’s civil war between an internationally recognised government that is supported by a Saudi-led coalition and the Iran-backed Shia Huthi

rebels.

The United States, which considers AQAP the terror group’s most dangerous branch, has carried out a campaign of drone strikes against its leaders for the past two decades.

Yesterday’s attack was the biggest in southern Yemen since August, when Al-Qaeda killed a dentist in Al-Bayda accused of guiding US drone strikes against its militants and later that month blew up the medical centre in which he worked.

Security Belt forces played a

decisive role in fighting against Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group, which were forced to withdraw from southern urban centres.

The separatist STC wants the south to secede from the rest of the country, even while it is allied with the central government in a fight against their common foe, the Huthis, in the civil war.

The government and rebels have been locked in a five-year-old war that has killed tens of thousands -- triggering what the UN terms the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.

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.

“What is less well known are the hidden costs that organizations may not be aware of, such as lost opportunities, wasted resources, and damaged staff morale.”

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”.

Councillor

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Rana said, “The accused defamed the newspaper’s publisher and editor in social media and I filed the case on behalf of the publisher.”

The councillor on the other hand accused the publisher and others who shared the news on Facebook.

The news in question mentioned that the councillor was trying to grab the land of a government primary school and extorting the local land owners.

Contacted, Councillor Shalim, also a ruling Awami League Leader, said, “I saw the news online the day they published it. My supporters protested against the news on Facebook. In several interviews on Facebook, I said the publisher of the newspaper himself is a controversial industrialist. The news was published to defame me and I will take legal action against them.

“But to my surprise, they filed a case against me. Then I filed the case against them. I believe that the report intended to defame me,” he said.

Officials said both the cases were being investigated.