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Your Right to Know

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HASINA-MODI MAIDEN VIRTUAL SUMMIT

India pledges vaccine support

Timely, effective delivery when ready; connectivity, resolving water sharing, border killing discussed



PORIMOL PALMA

India promised to promptly and effectively deliver to Bangladesh the Covid-19 vaccines it is producing as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi held a virtual summit yesterday.

The two PMs also expressed their interest in expanding the already-strong bilateral and regional economic cooperation by improving connectivity while resolving existing issues, including water sharing and

management and bringing down border killings to zero.

Stating that Bangladesh is a significant pillar of India's "Neighbourhood First" policy, Modi said pharmaceutical companies on both sides have already arranged plans for supply of vaccines. The prospect of cooperation in production will also be explored, he added.

The Bangladesh government and a local pharmaceutical company have already signed an agreement with Serum Institute

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

HASINA, MODI SPEECHES ON PAGE 2



Text books of grades VI-IX are being distributed to the schools from Thana Secondary Education Office in the capital's Mohammadpur. The book will be given among students for free in the coming year. But there will be no festivities during the book distribution on the first day of the year because of the pandemic.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



"I believe both our countries can move up the global and regional value chains by further integrating our economies taking advantage of available synergies."

SHEIKH HASINA



"Bangladesh is a major pillar of our 'neighbourhood first' policy and it has been a special priority for me from Day 1 to strengthen our relations with Bangladesh."

NARENDRA MODI

- » Bangladesh wants early signing of Teesta deal
- » Chilahati-Haldibari rail link inaugurated
- » India will join activities on 50th year of Bangladesh's independence
- » India says border killings to be brought to zero
- » Two countries sign seven MoUs during the summit
- » India offers Bangladesh to be member of BRICS dev bank
- » Bangladesh wants to join India-Myanmar-Thailand highway, speed up BBIN agreement on MVA
- » Postal stamp on Bangabandhu and Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Exhibition inaugurated

Airports being used to smuggle out yaba

Anti-narcotics officials, law enforcers say

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Drug traffickers smuggled four to five stashes of yaba pills in luggages and shipping boxes out of the country through the airports every month in the last two years.

Anti-narcotic officials and law enforcers said the recipients were mostly in other South Asian countries, the Middle East and the US.

Several drug rackets were involved in shipping the pills brought in from Myanmar, they said after interrogating several arrested traffickers and keeping a watch on several others.

Since there is no 3D baggage scanner at the airports, the gangs simply shipped the stashes undetected via overseas courier and postal services.

In the destination countries, the packages were picked up by recipients from the shipping company's offices or the airports, according to recent findings of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) and transnational crime-fighting unit of police.

"These are difficult to detect unless expert narcotics officials check the packages putting a lot of effort or a state-of-the-art scanner is used," said a high official of the DNC.

In some cases, the traffickers tricked migrant workers into becoming mules.

Last month, aviation security officers at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) found around 39,000 yaba pills inside a box of garment factory accessories. The box was being sent to Saudi Arabia on a cargo plane.

DNC officials later arrested five suspects in this connection, said an investigator.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Give couriers access to NID server

Narcotics dept suggests to stop drug smuggling

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

To stop narcotics smuggling through national and international courier services, the Department of Narcotics Control has recommended National Identity Card server access for couriers.

The anti-drug authority of Bangladesh came up with the idea after it found that transnational syndicates are using the couriers to smuggle drugs into the Middle East, America, Australia and some countries in Asia.

Smuggling narcotics from neighbouring India and Myanmar, syndicates are using Bangladesh as a major transit route.

In just five months from June this year, the DNC seized around 14 consignments of drugs meant to be sent to Saudi Arabia and the US by air, Rameshwar Das, assistant director (intelligence) of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Kajol all set to be free at last

HC grants the journo, out of home for 280 days, bail in two cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol was "found" near the Indian border in the middle of the night 53 days after his disappearance, his family thought he would be coming home soon.

Kajol's son went to Jashore to bring him, while his wife and daughter waited in Dhaka.

Then as the day progressed, the photojournalist was suddenly whisked off to jail, under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). The police informed the court that he was being arrested since he was facing three cases under the Digital Security Act (DSA) filed separately by a lawmaker and two activists of Jubo Mahila League.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



TIMELINE

MARCH 9: Digital Security Act case filed by lawmaker from Magura

MARCH 10: Kajol goes missing. Later CC camera footage revealed his motorbike was tampered with by two unidentified individuals

MARCH 10-11: Two more DSA cases filed against him by two Jubo Mahila League activists

SEE PAGE 10

AHMAD SHAFI'S DEATH Hefajat leader Mamunul, 35 others sued for 'murder'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-six people, including Mamunul Haque, a top Hefajat leader, were sued yesterday over "killing" the former chief of the Islamist outfit Shah Ahmad Shafi.

The case comes at a time when Hefajat-e-Islam, under its new leadership with Junayed Babunagari as the ameer, has taken to streets opposing the construction of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's sculptures.

Safi's brother-in-law Md Moin Uddin filed the case with the court of Judicial Magistrate Shiplu Kumar Dey of Chattogram around noon yesterday, claiming that Safi was murdered in a pre-planned manner.

The court took the case into cognisance and ordered Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) to investigate it. It also asked the PBI to submit a report on the probe progress within a month, said

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Cars parked right next to the police's "no parking" sign in front of the office of the Department of Government Transport. Several traffic policemen said chauffeurs of high officials leave the vehicles there and do not pay heed to police. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

MONEY LAUNDERERS

Who are they? Where are they?

HC asks ACC, govt for specific info on those who bought homes abroad

STAR REPORT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know specifically the names and addresses of Bangladeshi nationals who have laundered money abroad and purchased houses in foreign countries, including Canada, Singapore, and Malaysia.

It also wanted to know what steps have been taken against them.

The court directed the authorities concerned of the Anti-Corruption Commission and government to submit separate reports before it by February 28 next year.

The HC bench of Justice Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Ahmed Sohail also fixed February 28 for holding further hearing and passing order on this issue.

The bench passed the order during virtual hearing on a suo moto (voluntary) rule issued by it on November 22 on this issue.

During the hearing, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told the court that the government has taken necessary legal steps against money launderers and has sought information from the diplomatic offices of different countries where they have purchased homes.

The government needs time to get the information, he said. ACC's lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan placed a compliance report before the HC bench, saying that the ACC has filed cases against more than 100 people including Casino kingpins Selim Prodhan, Ismail Hossain Samrat and Khaled Mahmud for laundering money abroad.

Trial proceedings against them are going on, he said, adding that the ACC and government have brought around Tk 70 crore as laundered money from abroad through mutual legal assistance cooperation law.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6