

6 lakh tonnes

FROM PAGE 12
make available 10 lakh tonnes of food grains on January 5, 1973 in response to a request by the Bangabandhu. The secretary general had earlier made an appeal for 7 lakh tonnes of food grains for Bangladesh, out of which the US has pledged to provide two lakh tonnes and Canada one lakh tonnes.

JSD WILL CONTEST IN ALL 300 SEATS
The Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) has decided to contest in all the 300 seats in the ensuing general elections provided the polls are free and fair. The decision is taken at the first national conference of the party held today at Suhrawardy Udyan.

\$1010 MILLION FOREIGN AID
Bilateral and multilateral aid to Bangladesh totalled about 1010 million dollars between December 16 last year and October 31 this year, according to an official statement released by the Bangladesh government. Of the total foreign assistance, food relief comprised 32.31 percent, agriculture 10.52 percent, transport 17.77 percent, trade and industries 5.77 percent, energy 7.95 percent, the announcement adds.

SOURCES: December 24, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

'Yaba dealer'

FROM PAGE 12
from the spot.
Two Rab members were also hurt in the "gunfight", Rab-15 said in a text sent to reporters yesterday.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Shah Alam, of Rab-15, said a team found some people running away while patrolling Baharchhara area on Monday night. The team chased them.

The criminals opened fire. Rab members also fired back, forcing the criminals to flee the scene, he said.

After the "gunfight", the Rab members found the bullet-hit body of a man, the official said, adding that he was rushed to Teknaf Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead.

The body was kept at Teknaf Police Station.

Dr Zafrullah

FROM PAGE 12
by January 21 next year.
Dr Nasrin, Dr Shawkat Ali Arman, Dr Delowar Hossain and nurse Shangkari Rani Sarkar, who serve at the Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital, were also accused in the case.

According to the case documents, Nasrin died while giving birth on September 24 at the Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital due to the negligence of Dr Nasrin and Dr Delowar, and nurse Shangkari.

The hospital authorities admitted their negligence and said they would negotiate and settle the matter, but did not do so, the complainant claimed.

The victim's family went to Dhanmondi Police Station to file a case on December 17, but police suggested that they file it with the court, the complainant stated.

Train ignores

FROM PAGE 12
freight train sped towards platform-1 before he was given clearance to enter platform-2. The gateman at Swajanpur level crossing, around 300 metres away from the station, did not lower the barrier as the red light of the outer signal was on. He was waiting beside the barrier in case he was given any signal.

Suddenly, the freight train rammied the rice-laden truck on the level crossing. The Naogaon-bound truck flipped onto its side and fell on the gateman, leaving him dead on the spot.

Rescuers of fire service later recovered the body and sent it to Dinajpur M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.

Train communications on Dhaka-Khulna and Khulna-northern districts routes remained suspended for about five hours after the accident, said railway officials.

Shahidul Islam, divisional railway manager in Pakshey, said a five-member committee, led by an assistant transportation officer of Bangladesh Railway in Pakshey, was formed to investigate the accident. The committee was asked to submit its report in three working days.

Meanwhile, Rupsha Express bound for Chilahati from Khulna derailed on the same level crossing at 4:20pm yesterday, said the stationmaster. The derailment halted road communications on Phulbari-Rangpur highway and rail communications on Khulna-Dhaka and Khulna-Rajshahi routes.

The railway authorities were conducting a salvage operation till filing of the report last night.

At least 12 bus passengers were killed and eight others injured as a train hit a bus on a level crossing near Joypurhat town on Friday morning.

The gateman had left the crossing's gate open, said police.



US President-elect Joe Biden receives a Covid-19 vaccination from Tabé Mase, Nurse Practitioner and Head of Employee Health Services, at the Christiana Care campus in Newark, Delaware, US on Monday. PHOTO: AFP

No need for major alarm

FROM PAGE 12
said they had no evidence that the variant made people sicker or was more deadly than existing strains of Covid-19, although it did seem to spread more easily.

Countries imposing travel curbs were acting out of an abundance of caution while they assess risks, Ryan said, adding: "That is prudent. But it is also important that everyone recognises that this happens, these variants occur."

WHO officials said coronavirus mutations had so far been much slower than with influenza and that even the new UK variant remained much less transmissible than other diseases like mumps.

They said vaccines developed to combat Covid-19 should handle the new variants as well, although checks were under way to ensure this was the case.

"So far, even though we have seen a number of changes, a number of mutations, none has made a significant impact on either the susceptibility of the virus to any of the currently used therapeutics, drugs or the vaccines under development and one hopes that will continue to be the case," WHO Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan told the briefing.

A US official advising the country's Operation Warp Speed vaccine program also stressed that more information was needed to establish

the risk of the UK variant.

"There is no hard evidence that this virus is actually more transmissible, (but) there is clear evidence that there is more of it in the population," said Moncef Slaoui, a vaccine scientist and former pharmaceutical executive.

Meanwhile, Europe was trying to forge a coordinated response to the threat of the new variant yesterday.

Its discovery has heightened fears that led more than two dozen countries around the world suspend flights from the UK out of precaution.

With the bans unleashing travel chaos during the holiday season, EU ambassadors were set to meet yesterday to try to nail down a unified approach and work out how to eventually lift the border restrictions with Britain -- possibly by imposing a requirement for tests on all arrivals.

The World Health Organization in Europe said it would also convene its members to discuss how to handle the outbreak and cautioned that "limiting travel to contain spread is prudent until we have better info."

WHO's regional director for Europe Hans Kluge said in a post to Twitter that the organisation would "discuss strategies for testing, reducing transmission & communicating risks."

Around the world, the death toll from the virus surpassed 1.7 million yesterday, according to an AFP count,

with the highest number of daily fatalities reported in the US, Germany and Russia.

VACCINE CAN ADAPT
Germany yesterday extended its ban on arrivals from the UK -- as well as South Africa, where a similar variant has been found -- until January 6.

Health Minister Jens Spahn said that "as long as it is possible", Germany aimed to prevent "potentially dangerous virus mutations from spreading in continental Europe".

The border closures come as the European Union prepares to start rolling out the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine on Sunday, following similar vaccination campaigns in the UK and the US.

The EU's medicines regulator recommended the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for use in the bloc's 27 states.

In the US, the world's most-affected country, 78-year-old President-elect Joe Biden received a Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine live on television to boost Americans' confidence in the shots.

And after a long delay, US lawmakers finally approved a \$900 billion relief package to help Americans struggling to stay afloat in the pandemic-hit economy.

The Indian state of Maharashtra has imposed a night curfew on cities including the country's financial hub Mumbai because of fears about the new strain from Britain.

1.2 lakh more households

FROM PAGE 12
double-burner stove consumes gas worth Tk 605 per month on average.

A household without a prepaid gas meter needs to pay Tk 975 to use a double-burner stove. Therefore, using prepaid meters can save Tk 370, or 38 percent.

She added that according to the survey, on average, a consumer used 78.12 cubic metres of natural gas every month, which came down to 48.06 cubic metres after setting up a prepaid meter.

She was talking to journalists after the Ecneec meeting yesterday, which approved the second extension of the project.

Primarily, the Tk 712 crore project was aimed at setting up prepaid gas meters at 1,70,000 households in 22 police precincts of the capital, and it was scheduled to complete the work between January 2015 and December 2018.

The project's first extension was till December this year, with a revised target of setting up prepaid meters at 30,000 more households in 12 more police precincts. In the first revision, the project cost had decreased to Tk 499 crore.

The second extension of the project is till December 2022 and the project cost has now increased to Tk 754 crore, Tk 651 crore of which will be financed by Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica).

During this period, prepaid meters will be set up at 1,20,000 more households in seven additional police precincts of the capital.

Some 2,00,000 meters have already been set up in as many households,

Nasima Begum said, adding that the project time and cost increased as another 1,20,000 meters will be set up in more Dhaka city areas.

The Ecneec also approved a Tk 1,883 crore project to ensure safe drinking water supply and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) facilities for around 4.5 million people.

The project also has a component of installing 882 hand washing stations at schools and in places where people frequently gather, and provide the necessary tools to prevent Covid-19 transmission.

Planning Commission Member Mamun-Al-Rashid said the Department of Public Health Engineering will implement the project between January 2021 and December 2025, with Tk 1,832 crore as loan from the World Bank and AIB.

The project will be implemented in 98 upazilas of 30 districts.

In reply to a query about allotting Tk 26.89 crore for consultants, Mamun said it was seen that the monthly salary of qualified consultants -- like procurement specialists, financial management specialists -- is not less than Tk 2.5 lakh.

"We need qualified consultants for better work. We do not think there was too much expenditure on consultants."

He added that the project had allocated Tk 19 crore for feasibility tests, which was also not too much.

The Ecneec yesterday approved five other projects involving Tk 3,308.36 crore, of which Tk 2,042.08 crore will come from donors.

Of the five projects, two are new while three others are revised ones.

Ice Age wolf

FROM PAGE 12
details of muscle tissue and allow an insight into what life was like in Canada 2.6 million years ago. They also constitute the oldest ever recorded wolf and may help to shed light on the evolution of the animal.

A professor of anatomy at Des Moines University in Iowa, Julie Meachen, called the creature: "the most complete wolf mummy that's ever been found." Meachen added that the wolf was "basically 100 percent intact" saying that the only thing missing are her eyes.

The fact she remains are so complete has let scientists "basically reconstruct her life" said the professor.

Yukon Government palaeontologist, Dr Grant Zazula described the wolf as "beautiful" and "spectacular" and said it had: "cute little paws and tail and the curled upper lip showing its teeth."

BGB-BSF

FROM PAGE 12
The meeting will end on Friday with the signing of a Joint Record of Discussions (JRD).

The objective of the border talks is to discuss border-related issues, including killing of Bangladeshi nationals along the borders and enabling better coordination between the two border forces.

Contacted, BGB headquarters' Public Relations Officer Md Shariful Islam said the Bangladesh delegation entered India through Tamabil (Sylhet)-Dauki (Meghalaya) integrated check post (ICP).

IG Hardeep Singh of BSF Meghalaya Headquarters received the delegation.

Later, the Bangladesh delegation went to Guwahati by a BSF helicopter. The BSF DG welcomed the visiting team with flowers there.

Mutation-beating Covid

FROM PAGE 12
Nevertheless, he voiced confidence that the vaccine developed with Pfizer would be efficient because it "contains more than 1,000 amino acids, and only nine of them have changed, so that means 99 percent of the protein is still the same".

He said tests are being run on the variant, with results expected in two weeks.

"We have scientific confidence that the vaccine might protect but we will only know it if the experiment is done... we will publish the data as soon as possible," he added.

Meanwhile, Chinese vaccine maker Sinovac Biotech Ltd's Covid-19 vaccine has shown to be effective in late-stage trials in Brazil, the Wall Street Journal reported on Monday, citing people involved in the vaccine's development.

Sao Paulo state's Butantan Institute, which is organizing the

late-stage trials of Sinovac's vaccine CoronaVac in Brazil, said on Monday that any reports on the efficacy of the shot before today's announcement were "mere speculation."

Brazil is the first country to complete late-stage trials of CoronaVac, which is also being tested in Indonesia and Turkey, the Journal reported.

The results from the Brazil trials put CoronaVac above the 50% threshold that international scientists deem necessary to protect people, the report said.

Butantan is poised today to announce CoronaVac's efficacy rate, according to the Journal.

Sinovac did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment.

Sinovac and AstraZeneca Plc's vaccine candidates may be ready for use in Brazil by mid-February, the country's health minister said last week.

Israel set for snap election as budget deadline nears

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israel yesterday was on course for a fourth national election in two years after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his main governing partner, Benny Gantz, failed to resolve a dispute over the budget.

Parliament voted late on Monday against an attempt by both men to delay a deadline of midnight on Tuesday for approval of the fiscal package.

Under law, failure to pass it by then would mean Israel going to the polls in March, and neither lawmakers nor the cabinet have passed it yet, a process near impossible to complete in a single day.

Netanyahu, who heads the right-wing Likud party and defence minister Gantz, head of the centrist Blue and White faction, established a unity government in May after three inconclusive elections held since April 2019.

Their pact involved Gantz taking over from Netanyahu as prime minister in November 2021, and passing a bi-annual budget for 2020 and 2021.

But even as that power-sharing pact was being inked, many analysts argued that Netanyahu, on trial for alleged corruption which he denies, would not relinquish his powerful

post, and Likud has since demanded to pass the budgets separately while Blue and White insisted Netanyahu stick to their deal.

Israel has so far this year managed its finances on the basis of a pro-rated version of the 2019 budget.


The current fiscal deadlock has plunged Israel into more economic uncertainty at the end of a year when a coronavirus-induced slump is expected to shrink gross domestic product by 4.5% with the jobless rate standing at 12.1%.

Israel, also preparing for a new U.S. administration led by President-elect Joe Biden, kicked off its vaccination campaign this week.


Analysts had seen Netanyahu pushing for an election in May or June next year, after the coronavirus crisis was expected to ease and the economy to begin to recover.

A March vote would be riskier for Israel's longest serving leader, who has been facing a wave of street protests against his alleged corruption, which he denies, and his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Though polls show Netanyahu's party emerging as the largest faction in parliament, surveys also predict a strong showing for a bloc of factions from across the political spectrum seeking to unseat him.



Bangladesh Bank
Sustainable Finance Department
Head Office
Dhaka
Website: www.bb.org.bd



Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Hiring Consulting Firm (National)

1.	Name of procuring entity	: GCF RPSP Project Implementation Unit, Sustainable Finance Department, Bangladesh Bank.
2.	Expression of Interest (EOI)	: Selection of Consulting Firm.
3.	EOI Ref. No. & date	: SFD/(GBMS)/1003/6/2/2020-2340 Date: December 22, 2020.
4.	Procurement sub-method	: Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS).
5.	Budget and source of funds	: Foreign Grant.
6.	Project title	: Upscaling regulatory landscape of Green Banking for Shariah Based Banks and Financial Institutions in Bangladesh.
7.	Assignment title	: Hiring Consulting Firm (National) for Strengthening Environmental and Social Risk Management Framework for Financial System.
8.	EOI closing date and time	: January 10, 2021 at 5:00pm.
9.	Brief description of the assignment	: Bangladesh Bank (BB) has received financing from Green Climate Fund (GCF) to implement a policy framework or a white paper on Shariah based green financing. To carry out the project successfully, consultancy service is needed to strengthen Environmental and Social Risk Management (ESRM) framework for financial system in Bangladesh.
10.	Qualifications and experience	: Consulting firm should be registered under relevant GoB rules and acts. The relevant firm should demonstrate thorough understanding of existing ESRM guideline. The firm should have established credible credentials, expertise, and track record in undertaking and conducting comprehensive consultancy in environment and social risk management for financial and business sector. The experts employed by the firm for the project should demonstrate experience and knowledge in relevant sector.
11.	Other details	: Expected term of the assignment is 12 (twelve) months. Consulting firm may not associate with other firm(s)/NGO(s) without prior notification and approval from PIU, SFD, BB. The prospective consulting firm shall submit all supporting documents in written form (in person, or by mail, or by email) to the address below or in BB website (https://e.tender.bb.org.bd). Interested candidates may obtain "Terms of Reference (ToR)" from the website of Bangladesh Bank (https://www.bb.org.bd/aboutus/tenders/tenders.php). Application/proposal will not be accepted after EOI closing time.

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

12.	Name of the official inviting EOI	: Khondkar Morshed Millat.
13.	Designation of the official inviting EOI	: General Manager (Project Director).
14.	Address of the official inviting EOI	: GCF RPSP Project Implementation Unit, Sustainable Finance Department, 19th Floor, 2nd Annex Building, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
15.	Contact details of the official inviting EOI	: Phone: 9530320, Fax: 9530327.

This Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) is in compliance with relevant government rules and regulations e.g. Public Procurement Rules-2008. By responding to this EOI, consultant firms are conforming to those rules and regulations. The procuring entity reserves all right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without assigning any reason whatsoever. The details EOI and ToR are available at BB website (<https://www.bb.org.bd/aboutus/tenders/tenders.php>).

ব্যাহকিঙ ও আৰ্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২০৬ নম্বরে কোন কলন।

Khondkar Morshed Millat
General Manager (Project Director)
Phone: 9530320
E-mail: g.m.sfd@bb.org.bd

DCP: 48/2020-3889
Date: 22-12-2020
GD-2047

NZ backpacker killer revealed as serial predator

AFP, Wellington

The New Zealand man who murdered British backpacker Grace Millane committed violent sex crimes against at least two other women, a court revealed yesterday, as police urged any more victims to come forward.

The Supreme Court overturned orders banning Jesse Shane Kempson being identified as the predator who strangled Millane in December 2018 after the pair met through the online dating app Tinder.

The murder shocked New Zealand, which is usually regarded

as a safe place to travel, prompting a tearful apology to Millane's family from Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern after the young traveller's body was found.

The suppression orders on reporting Kempson's name remained in place even after his murder conviction in November last year, with the court offering no explanation at the time for the highly unusual move.

But a judgement released yesterday revealed that he was still facing two trials for sexual offences when the Millane verdict came in, and the court feared naming him could prejudice those proceedings.