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## PREPAID GAS METERS IN DHAKA 1.2 lakh more households to get them

*Titas survey finds gas costs can be cut by 38pc*

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council yesterday extended a project to install prepaid gas meters in Dhaka households, which will see 1.2 lakh more prepaid connections by December 2022.

Residents of the capital can save 38 percent in costs if they are using prepaid gas meters, which also results in similarly reduced wastage of the utility, found a recent survey by Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited.

Titas is commissioning the meters at households in Dhaka to minimise wastage of the utility, and has set up 200,000 meters in the first two phases of the project that began in January 2015.

Planning Commission Member Nasima Begum yesterday said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, while presiding over the weekly Ecne meeting yesterday, observed that prepaid gas meters should be set up at more households.

"If we can install prepaid gas meters in commercial and industrial zones, we will be able to save more gas," Nasima said, quoting the PM.

Nasima said Titas in a survey found that after commissioning prepaid meters, a household using a

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A large number of PVC banners, mostly of the ruling Awami League leaders, hanging at Shaheed Smriti Square in the capital's Basila area. Such banners decrease visibility and increase the chance of accidents at the spot. The signboard directing people to a police station is lost amid the bright banners. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Train ignores signal, rams truck in Dinaipur

*Level crossing gateman killed*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A gateman was killed at a level crossing as a freight train hit a truck in Dinaipur's Phulbari upazila early yesterday.

The dead, Sushanto Kumar Das, 28, was an employee of Bangladesh Railway under Pakshey railway zone. He hailed from Ishwardi upazila of Pabna.

Israfil Sarkar, stationmaster of Phulbari Railway Station, said Chilahati-bound Rocket Mail train from Khulna was waiting at platform-1 for clearance around 1:00am. At that time, a freight train from Dinaipur's Parbatipur upazila was heading towards the station. The train was supposed to be given clearance for entering platform-2.

But the driver of the

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## Mutation-beating Covid vaccine in six weeks

*Says BioNTech; China's Sinovac vaccine proves effective in Brazil trials*

AGENCIES

The co-founder of BioNTech said yesterday it was "highly likely" that its vaccine against the coronavirus works against the mutated strain detected in Britain, but it could also adapt the vaccine if necessary in six weeks.

"Scientifically, it is highly likely that the immune response by this vaccine also can deal with the new virus variant," said Ugur Sahin.

But if needed, "in principle the beauty of the messenger technology is that we can directly start to engineer a vaccine which completely mimics this new mutation -- we could be able to provide a new vaccine technically within six weeks."

Sahin said the variant detected in Britain has nine mutations, rather than just one as is usually common.

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## FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

### 6 lakh tonnes of grains will be purchased

December 23, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU GARLANDED

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is garlanded today by the members of Kalyani, Gandaria ladies organisation, on his being awarded the Juliot Curie medal for peace. Members of Khulna Music College also garland him.

DEALS FINALISED FOR PURCHASING FOODGRAINS

The Bangladesh government has finalised deals with a number of countries for the cash purchase of six lakh tonnes of food grains for next year, Minister for Food Phani Majumdar says today in Dhaka. The food grains will reach before March, 1973. The minister adds that the next year's food production is expected to be 9.5 million tonnes and the total food demand is 11.2 million tonnes leaving a deficit of 1.7 million tons.

It may be mentioned that the UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim will make his second appeal to the donor countries to

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## WOMAN'S DEATH

### Dr Zafrullah, four others sued for 'negligence'

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury and four others have been sued over the death of a pregnant woman.

SA Alam Sabuj, husband of victim Nasrin Akter, filed the case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday. Zahir Uddin, bench assistant of the court concerned, told The Daily Star.

The magistrate took the case into cognisance and recorded the complainant's statement.

The court also directed the Police Bureau of Investigation to investigate and submit a probe report

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## Ice Age wolf pup mummy found



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

An ancient wolf pup, perfectly preserved in permafrost, has been discovered in Yukon, scientists have revealed.

The creature dates from the Ice Age and its remains were discovered by a gold miner in 2016 near to Dawson City in Yukon, Canada. It has been given the name Zhür which means wolf in the local indigenous Han language.

It appears that the animal, confirmed as female, died suddenly when the den she was in collapsed.

The remains contain particularly exceptional

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## 'Yaba dealer' killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

An alleged yaba dealer was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila on Monday night.

The identity of the deceased could not be known immediately.

Rab claimed to have seized 10,000 yaba tablets, a homemade firearm, a sharp weapon and three bullets

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 23

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:25 12:45 3:45 5:24 7:00  
JAMAAT 6:00 1:15 4:00 5:27 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Two men leave Kadamtoli Central Bus Terminal in Sylhet after failing to get a bus to their destination yesterday. Transport owners and workers associations of Sylhet suddenly called for a three-day strike demanding the district's stone quarries be opened again. All sorts of transportations between Sylhet and the rest of the country remained disrupted due to the strike.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## BGB-BSF border meet begins in Guwahati

UNB, Dhaka

A four-day director general-level border conference between Border Guard Bangladesh and Indian Border Security Force began yesterday in Guwahati, the capital of Assam state.

BGB Director General Maj Gen Md Shafeenul Islam is leading the 11-member Bangladesh delegation to the meeting while his counterpart Rakesh Asthana is leading the 12-member Indian team.

For the first time in four decades, the border conference between the two forces is being held outside the Indian capital, New Delhi.

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## No need for major alarm

*Says WHO over new Covid strain as EU approves first vaccine; US official says 'no hard evidence' new variant more contagious*

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization cautioned against major alarm over a new, highly infectious variant of the coronavirus that has emerged in Britain, saying this was a normal part of a pandemic's evolution.

WHO officials even put a positive light on the discovery of the new strains that prompted a slew of alarmed countries to impose travel restrictions on Britain and South Africa, saying new tools to track the virus were working.

"We have to find a balance. It's very

important to have transparency, it's very important to tell the public the way it is, but it's also important to get across that this is a normal part of virus evolution," WHO emergencies chief Mike Ryan told an online briefing.

"Being able to track a virus this closely, this carefully, this scientifically in real time is a real positive development for global public health, and the countries doing this type of surveillance should be commended."

Citing data from Britain, WHO officials

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