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Your Right to Know

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# Gambling with GREENERY

MP proposes de-reserving reserve forest, exposing it to lease, grabbing

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

A local lawmaker has put forward a proposal to change the status of nearly 600 acres of reserve forest and wildlife sanctuary in Cox's Bazar into khas land for leasing it out to the people living there.

Jafar Alam, elected from Chakaria-Pekua (Cox's Bazar-1) constituency, sent a DO (demi official) letter in January this year to the Cox's Bazar district administration to proceed with a proposal to the secretaries of the land ministry and environment, forest and climate change ministry regarding the de-reservation.

The lawmaker himself is a member of

the parliamentary standing committee on the environment, forest and climate change ministry.

Citing the people living inside the forest territory as cyclone victims, a few of whom have lived there since 1970, Jafar said in the letter the people had been enjoying utilities along with other government services over the years.

The letter referred to this as grounds to de-reserve almost 600 acres of forestland in Harbang union of Chakaria upazila.

The forestland which Jafar proposed to be de-reserved lies just adjacent to Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway and

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## Christmas today

BSS, Dhaka

The country's Christian community is celebrating the holy Christmas today commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ amid festivity and religious fervour.

They are celebrating the day by offering special prayers, illuminating churches and installing makeshift Christmas trees at homes and places of worship and missions across the country.

Elderly people of the community, attired in the outfit of Santa Claus, usually make fun with children and distribute gifts among kids as part of a universal Christian practice.

But due to Covid-19 pandemic, the day is being celebrated on a limited scale this year maintaining health safety rules.

The day is a public holiday. President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Opposition Leader Raushan Ershad, in separate messages, greeted members of the

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## We Deeply Mourn



Phoenix Insurance family is deeply shocked at the sudden demise of the business icon, eminent industrialist, former Member of Parliament and Honorable Chairman of Partex Group **Mr. M A Hashem**, father of Mr. Aziz Al Mahmood, Director of **Phoenix Insurance Company Ltd.**

Members of the Company's Board of Directors' and employees express their heartfelt condolence and sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and pray for the eternal peace of his departed soul. We are praying to Almighty Allah to grant him Jannatul Ferdous. **Ameen.**



Head Office : 1/A Dilkusha C/A, (1<sup>st</sup> Floor), Dhaka-1000, Tel. PABX: 9563609, Fax : 880-2-9563576, E-mail: mail@phoenixinsurance.com.bd, Website: www.phoenixinsurance.com.bd

## POST-BREXIT TRADE UK, EU reach landmark deal

AGENCIES

Britain clinched a narrow Brexit trade deal with the European Union yesterday, just seven days before it exits one of the world's biggest trading blocs in its most significant global shift since the loss of empire.

The deal means it has swerved away from a chaotic finale to a tortuous divorce that has shaken the 70-year project to forge European unity from the ruins of World War Two.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told reporters: "It was a long and winding road. But we have got a good deal to show for it. It is fair, it is a balanced deal, and it is the right and responsible thing to do for both sides."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson tweeted a picture of himself inside Downing Street, raising both arms in a thumbs-up gesture of triumph. "We have taken back control of our destiny," he told reporters. "People said it was impossible, but we have taken back control."

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## No need to panic over new strain

Experts say; local virologists found the variant in early November, almost similar to the UK one

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Scientists in Bangladesh have reported a new Covid-19 strain, which is a bit similar to the one found in the UK recently.

Analysing data in early November, a team of Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research observed new mutations in novel coronavirus strains.

"We observed that one new strain was almost similar to the one found in the United Kingdom. It was not 100 percent the same. We will start working on it again," Dr Selim Khan, principal scientific officer at the BCSIR and also the head of the team, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Talking to this reporter later in the day, BCSIR Chairman Prof Md Aftab Ali Shaikh advised people not to panic and said the research was still underway.

Experts also advised against ringing the panic button, saying the new strain found here has already been in the country for almost two months at least and that no surge in Covid-19 cases has been reported yet.

They stressed on continuing to follow the health rules to stay safe amid this pandemic.

On December 14, authorities of the United Kingdom reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) that a new

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### READ MORE ON THE DAILY STAR ONLINE

- DRUG CASE AGAINST SHIPRA DEBNATH POLICE SHOW NO-CONFIDENCE IN RAB PROBE REPORT
- POLICE, BGB, ANSAR TO BE DEPLOYED AT VACANT ARMY CAMPS IN CHT: HOME MINISTER

## YOU LEFT US A LEGACY TO CARRY BEYOND



M. A. HASHEM

30 August 1943 -24 December 2020

### WE MOURN

You can't edify us with your presence but your vision is implanted in each one of us and will keep us determined with the same spirit to carry forward your everlasting legacy.

In memory of our beloved Founder Chairman Sir - **PARTEX** Family

**M. A. Hashem**  
30 Aug 1943 – 24 Dec 2020

**We deeply mourn the departure of an icon**

Our deepest condolences to the passing of a legend called Mr. M. A. Hashem, a founder & former Chairman of City Bank; founder & Chairman of Partex Group; one of the founders, former Chairman & lifelong member of the Trustee Board of North South University; and a former Member of the Parliament.

He will be remembered for his benevolence and extraordinary vision that moved the nation forward.