



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know

JAMADIL AWAL 11, 1442 HJRI

16 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00



"The government has not given up its habit of corruption and theft... It's doing it even with coronavirus vaccine."

BNP SECRETARY GENERAL MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR



"A window of hope has now opened, without forgetting that there is a very difficult fight ahead."

PORTUGUESE HEALTH MINISTER MARTA TEMIDO AS EU READIES FOR MASS VACCINE ROLLOUT



"Wherever you [the US] found our money, you stole it. You are famed for stealing. How could we trust thieves?"

IRAN PRESIDENT HASSAN ROUHANI AFTER CRITICISM OVER FAILURE TO PURCHASE A COVID-19 VACCINE



SANGU RESERVE FOREST

Left exposed to HUMAN GREED

Mindless plundering destroying the natural treasure; large areas deforested in few years



PINAKI ROY and SANJOY KUMAR BARUA

A vast number of century-old trees have been felled by loggers at a remote reserve forest and wildlife sanctuary in Thanchi of Bandarban in the last two months, and as seen in satellite images, about a hundred acres of it have been totally razed over the last few years.

The Daily Star collected videos and photographs from multiple sources which provide evidence that century-old trees are being illegally felled and transported out of Sangu reserve forest via the Sangu river.

Witnesses and locals from Thanchi alleged a syndicate led by timber merchants from Bandarban town and Chattogram have been sending loggers to fell trees from the country's lone virgin hill forest in

winter these last few years.

However, the Forest Department never took action against this and always maintained they were unable to remain vigilant in the reserve forest because of a "shortage of manpower".

There are even allegations of direct and indirect involvement of forest officials in the plundering.

The Daily Star obtained satellite images taken on November 30, 2016 and November 29 this year which clearly show that large areas of Sangu forest, which is 82,080 acres in total, have been deforested over the years.

The satellite images, taken and analysed by Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation (SPARSO), show large areas were denuded in at least 24 spots.

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Job seekers form large crowds in front of the capital's Tejgaon Government Girls High School where a recruitment test of the narcotics control department took place yesterday. The authorities have promised to ensure social distancing in the exam rooms, but the people waiting to get in apparently couldn't care less.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Loggers make planks, top, out of century-old trees in a remote reserve forest in Thanchi of Bandarban. In the satellite image "A" taken in 2016, the red and brown parts are green forest. In the image "B" taken last month, the green spots are forests that have been razed.



PHOTO: STAR



SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO



ROAD CRASH VICTIMS

Compensation claims will still remain pending

Panel for paying damages gets members; rules for payment yet to be finalised

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

More than two years after the Road Transport Act-2018 was passed in parliament, the government has appointed a chairman and a secretary for the trustee board that is supposed to deal with compensation-related issues after accidents.

Yet, the board cannot function as it is supposed to since the rules for it have not yet been formulated.

Road accidents victims will have to wait until the rules are formulated and approved by the government before they can get damages. They can seek compensation but these will not be processed before the board is fully functional.

Under the Motor Vehicles Ordinance-1983, victims or their family members had the opportunity to seek compensation at the Motor Accident Claim Tribunal for death, injuries, and damage to properties.

But the ordinance was repealed after the act came into force in November last

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Stay off winter events at all costs

Experts urge people, warn infections may spike in late January and early February

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

Experts have anticipated that coronavirus infections will spike in late January and early February and urged people to abide by the rules and avoid "super spreader events" at all costs.

If everyone wears a mask and maintains social distance, the number of infections and deaths will fall in the coming days, they added.

In the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, 834 people tested positive for coronavirus, the lowest in 33 weeks.

The number of recovered patients in the same 24-hour period was 1,685, which is more than double the number of new cases.

"Based on previous trends, we have made a projection using a design of the Komo-Ise cohort study. It shows both the infection and casualties will rise in late January and early February," Dr Shafiq Shimul, an associate professor of health economics at Dhaka University, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said, "It is just an academic exercise. However, our previous projection was almost accurate."

The other members of the team that came up with the projection are Dr Mofakhar Hussain of the University of Toronto, Dr Abul Jamil Faisal of the public health advisory committee of the health ministry, Prof Syed Abdul Hamid of Dhaka University and Nusrat Jabin of the University of Oxford.

Dr Shimul said, "The main barrier in making accurate projection is the scarcity of necessary data."

Public health expert Prof Dr Tahmina Shirin, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, said considering the factors that had led to more infections in the western countries, it can be said that infections might rise here in the coming days.

Transmission of coronavirus rose in many western countries after November. The UK authorities reported that a new strain of the virus with higher transmissibility was causing new infections there.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BUSINESS

Pandemic to bring some challenges for LDC graduation Says Unctad

Bangladesh is set to graduate from the grouping of the least-developed countries (LDCs) but will face some challenges during the transition period because of the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, said a United Nations agency. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development said the emergence of the pandemic and the ensuing global recession had interrupted a period of rapid economic growth in Bangladesh.

STORY ON B1



IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE

It is with grave sorrow, we announce the sad demise of **Mrs. Badruddoza Mannan**, wife of Major General Abdul Mannan Siddiqui.

She breathed her last on 25th December at Square Hospital, Dhaka.

She was a business person, who owned oil tankers in the country and a Director of Phoenix Insurance Company Ltd.

She will always be lovingly remembered as a big hearted, stylish and gracious hostess, who with her generous nature welcomed all with a beaming smile.

This good natured and loving person also possessed a firm and determined personality and would always come forward in times of others' distress.

She was a loved daughter, beloved wife, loving grandmother and loved mother of two daughters- Meeta, Roma and a son Rano who, also passed away earlier.

We mourn her sad passing away and urge all well wishers, friends and family to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

On Behalf of the Grieving Family: Meeta Mannan & Maliha Mannan

We Mourn

We mourn the death of M. A. Hashem, former Member of Parliament and an exceptional business luminary of the country. He was the Chairman of Partex Group.

It is an irreparable loss for the business community. His vision, entrepreneurship and business practices served as a guiding light in our business community. He has guided Partex Group into one of the most successful conglomerates of the country.

We pray for the salvation of the departed soul. May the Almighty give courage to the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude.

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