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# Mine officials to face music

*Petrobangla chairman visits Barapukuria, says all those involved in coal scam will be held accountable*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Petrobangla Chairman Abul Mansur Md Faizullah yesterday said taking coal out of the Barapukuria coal mine yard would not have been possible if its staffers had not been involved in the act.

The employees of Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd (BCMCL) responsible for 1.45 lakh tonnes of coal "going missing" would be made accountable, he told reporters after visiting the coal mine in Dinajpur.

A probe body would be formed to investigate the incident, he added.

Faizullah was among the four top officials who visited the coal mine and the nearby Barapukuria 525 MW coal-fired power plant yesterday. The three other officials are Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) Chairman Khalid Mahmud, Power Division Secretary Ahmad Kaikaus and Energy Division Secretary Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem.

Faizullah said BCMCL Managing Director Habib Uddin Ahmed, who was made an officer on special duty (OSD) after the incident came to light and later suspended, informed him on July 16 about insufficient stock of coal.

The following day, a Petrobangla director visited the coal mine yard and found insufficient coal, he mentioned.

According to mine officials, the coal stock was around 25,000 tonnes on July 16.

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Horses are kept under the Mayor Hanif flyover, opposite to the capital's Bangabazar, virtually turning the divider into a stable and making the place stinky and unhygienic. A carriage is also parked close by, right on the road. Coachmen are often seen occupying the public space taking advantage of lax monitoring by the authorities. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'The gravest ethno-religious cleansing of recent times'

FM on Rohingya crisis

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has urged the international community to continue pressure on Myanmar for the safe repatriation of the Rohingyas and hold accountable the perpetrators of brutal atrocities in Rakhine state.

"The influx of the Rohingyas from Myanmar is one of the gravest ethno-religious cleansing of recent times. The perpetrators of these heinous crimes must be held accountable," said Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali.

Addressing a conference on "Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom" in Washington DC on Thursday, Ali said the unprecedented role played by Bangladesh in sheltering and supporting 1.1 million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals reflects the truly Samaritan and inclusive nature of Bangladesh.

The foreign minister emphasised that the international community should continue sustained pressure on Myanmar to ensure safe, sustainable and dignified return of the refugees to a religiously-tolerant and ethnically-inclusive Myanmar.

Organised by the US Department of State, Foreign Minister Ali took part in the first-ever ministerial conference at the invitation of the US secretary of state. As many as 80 delegations, mostly led by ministers, attended the conference.

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# 'Commercially not viable'

*GSK about shutdown of its medicine plant in Bangladesh*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Continued losses in recent years have forced GlaxoSmithKline to close its medicine manufacturing unit in Bangladesh after over six decades of operation.

Chairman of GSK Bangladesh M Azizul Huq yesterday said the company could not produce the drugs, which are in demand in Bangladesh, due to patent laws.

"It's a very tough but necessary decision, as we have been incurring losses for several years," he told a press conference at the Westin Dhaka hotel.

Nakibur Rahman, managing director of GSK Bangladesh, said the company took the decision in a board meeting held in the capital on Thursday.

The London-based pharmaceutical giant has been running a review programme for the last few months to address the losses, he said.

"On the basis of the review, our board

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# Five more killed in 'gunfights'

*One of them suspected drug peddler; number of 'drug peddlers' killed so far rises to 203*

STAR REPORT

Four suspected criminals, including an outlawed party leader, were killed in "gunfights" with law enforcers in Comilla, Sirajganj and Rajbari early yesterday, while an alleged drug peddler died during a "gun battle" between two groups of drug peddlers in Tangail.

With the death of the "drug peddler", the number of deaths since the anti-narcotics drive began on May 4 has risen to 203.

In Tangail, police recovered the bullet-hit body of former Aronkhola union parishad member Masud Rana Farid, 42, from Naira Baid area in Madhupur upazila yesterday morning.

The victim stood accused in five drug-related cases filed with Madhupur Police Station, said Shofiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Police suspected that Farid was killed when two groups of drug peddlers were "trading bullets" in Naira Baid area, centreing disputes over illegal drug trading.

On information, police took the body to the police station around 8:00am, said the OC.

Farid's brother-in-law Rubel Miah said he along with Farid's wife and children went to a relative's marriage ceremony at Roktipara on Thursday and Farid was scheduled to join them yesterday morning.

Family members talked to him over mobile phone at 8:00pm on Thursday, but Farid had been unreachable by phone since yesterday morning, he added.

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# IOM official found dead in Cox's Bazar

UNB, Cox's Bazar

Police recovered the body of an official of International Organization for Migration from a hotel in the district town on Thursday night.

The dead, Tauhidul Islam, was from Chittagong's Patiya upazila. He had been working as a senior programme assistant of the IOM, the UN migration agency.

Md Farid Uddin Khondakar, officer-in-charge of Cox's Bazar Model Police Station, said police recovered the body of the 35-year-old man from Hotel Holiday around 9:30pm and sent it to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital for an autopsy.

The cause of his death will be ascertained after the postmortem.

# 'Blood Moon', Mars offer celestial show



AFP, Paris

The longest "blood moon" eclipse this century coincided with Mars' closest approach in 15 years yesterday to offer skygazers a thrilling astronomical double bill.

Viewers needed no protective eye gear to observe the spectacle -- unlike when watching solar eclipse.

For about half the world, the moon remained partly or fully in Earth's shadow from 1714 to 2328 GMT -- six hours and 14 minutes in all.

The period of complete eclipse -- known as "totality", when the moon appears darkest -- lasted from 1930 to 2113 GMT.

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# SUNDARBANS 3-month ban on tourists proposed

*Forest department weighing proposal*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Forest department officials have requested the authorities concerned to ban tourists in the Sundarbans between June and August from next year as the months are the wild animals' breeding season.

The East Sundarbans Forest Division sent a proposal to the chief conservator of forest in this regard last month to ensure that some 375 species of wild animals are not disturbed during their breeding season.

A high official of the environment ministry, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star yesterday that necessary steps would be taken in this regard.

"Tourists negatively impact the breeding of the animals. June and August are not peak tourism season anyway. We want to ensure a calm environment during the time from next

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Boats waiting to take people on tours of the Sundarbans forest area. The forest department has proposed banning tourism in the Sundarbans from June to August as part of its wildlife conservation efforts. This period of three months is the breeding season of most of the animals.

# RETTALIATION TO ATTACK IN WEST BANK Israel to build new homes

AFP, Kobar

Israel will build hundreds of new homes in a settlement in the occupied West Bank where a Palestinian stabbed three Israelis, one fatally, Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman said yesterday.

"The best answer to terrorism is the expansion of settlements," Lieberman wrote on Twitter, announcing 400 new housing units in the Adam settlement north of Jerusalem a day after the deadly stabbing.

The teenage attacker snuck into the settlement on Thursday evening by climbing a wall, the Israeli army said.

He stabbed three people seemingly at random before being shot dead.

The army named the man who died as Yotam Ovadia, 31, with Israeli media saying he had two young children.

A 58-year-old victim was said to be seriously wounded but stable. The third victim was lightly wounded.

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