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Get fitness clearance or face action

HC asks vehicle owners to update fitness certificates by Sept 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the owners of the vehicles without valid fitness documents to collect their fitness certificates in two months, starting from August 1.

If an owner fails to do so, his or her vehicles would not be allowed to ply on the roads after September 30, the HC also said, adding that it would pass necessary order to this effect during the next hearing on October 15.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice KM Hafizul Alam issued the suomoto (voluntary) rule yesterday after the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) submitted a report before it, saying a total of 4,79,320 vehicles without valid fitness certificates were running on the roads across the country.

Among the vehicles, 2,61,113 are operating in Dhaka division, 1,19,588 in Chattogram division, 26,240 in Rajshahi, 6,588 in Rangpur, 15,668 in Khulna, 44,805 in Sylhet, and 5,338 in Barishal division, the report mentioned.

The vehicles are registered with the BRTA but their fitness clearances have expired, the report also said.

BRTA's lawyer Advocate Rafiul Islam submitted the report to the HC as per its June 24 order.

During the hearing, the HC asked the BRTA's lawyer what BRTA was doing while vehicles without fitness

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A bus with no rear view mirrors, windscreen wipers, and indicators plying the Mohammadpur Beribadh road in the city's Rayerbazar area yesterday. Although operating unfit vehicles is illegal, such seemingly unfit buses run on obscure routes putting lives at risk.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

RIFAT MURDER

Minni files fresh bail prayer

STAR REPORT

A Barguna court yesterday fixed July 30 for hearing the petition seeking bail for Aysha Siddika Minni in the case filed over the murder of her husband Rifat Sharif.

Lawyer Mahmudul Bari Aslam, general secretary of Barguna District Lawyers' Association, filed the bail petition with Barguna District and Sessions Judge Court around 10:30am yesterday.

After receiving the bail prayer, Barguna District and Session's Judge Md Asaduzzaman fixed the date for the hearing.

Aslam told The Daily Star that he would visit Minni along with a female lawyer in jail today and inform her that she could withdraw her previous confessional statement and submit a new one through jail authorities.

On Sunday, Senior Judicial Magistrate Serajul Islam Gazi rejected her bail petition.

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Look out for tomorrow's special supplement on

Bikes and Ridesharing

Reports on safe and comfortable bike riding experience and female riders, safety tips, experts' comments, plus an industry insight on the Bangladeshi two-wheeler sector.



Multidrug-resistant malaria spreading in Southeast Asia

REUTERS, London

A strain of malaria resistant to two key drugs has spread rapidly from Cambodia and has become dominant in Vietnam, Laos and northern Thailand, with a "terrifying prospect" that it could reach Africa, scientists warned on Monday.

Using genomic surveillance to track the spread of drug-resistant malaria, the scientists found that the strain, known as KEL1/PLA1, had also evolved and picked up new genetic mutations that may make it yet more resistant.

"We discovered (it) had spread aggressively, replacing local malaria parasites, and had become the dominant strain in Vietnam, Laos and northeastern Thailand," said Roberto Amato, who worked with a team from Britain's Wellcome Sanger Institute and Oxford University and Thailand's Mahidol University.

The risk is rising that the new strain could threaten sub-Saharan Africa, where most malaria cases and deaths occur, largely among babies and children.

"This highly successful resistant parasite strain is capable of invading new territories and acquiring new genetic properties, raising the terrifying prospect that it could spread to Africa ... as resistance to chloroquine did in the 1980s, contributing to millions of deaths," said Olivo Miotto of Oxford University, who co-led the work.

Malaria is caused by Plasmodium parasites, which are carried by mosquitoes and spread through their blood-sucking bites.

Almost 220 million people were infected with malaria in 2017, according to World Health Organization estimates, and 400,000 succumbed to it.

Malaria can be treated with medicines if caught early enough, but evolving drug-resistance - such as the spread of chloroquine-resistant

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4 'suspects' killed in 'shootouts' with police, Rab

STAR REPORT

Four suspected criminals were killed in "gunfights" with Rab and police yesterday.

Of them, two alleged robbers were killed as they got engaged in a "gunfight" with Rab members at Chandpai Range of the Sundarbans in Bagerhat's Sarankhola upazila.

The dead are Khalek and Belal, members of a robber gang locally known as Khalek Bahini.

Major Shajibul Islam, deputy commander of Rab-8, claimed a team was patrolling the area when Khalek Bahini opened fire on them, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate.

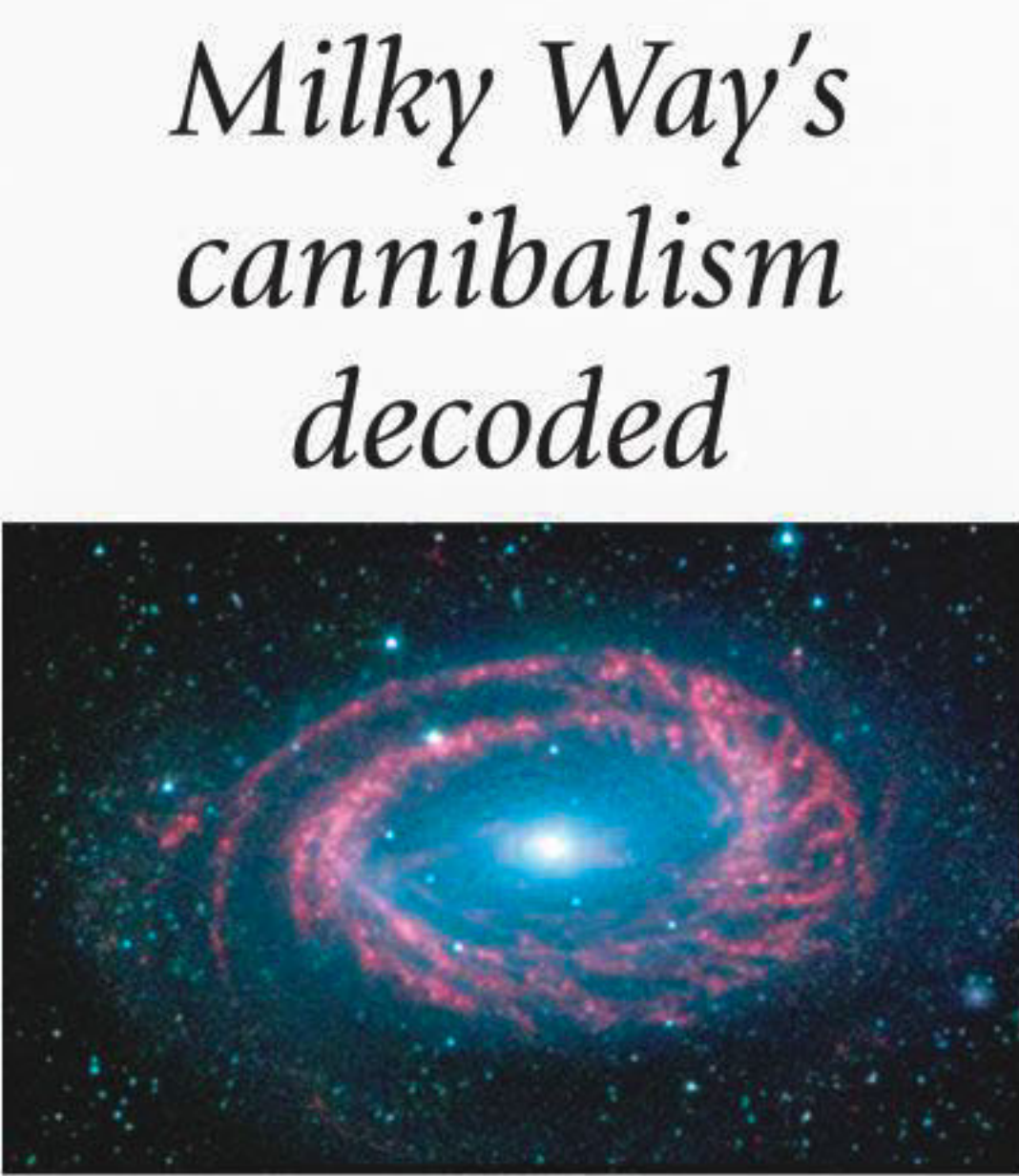
At one point of the "gunfight", the duo sustained bullet injuries. Around 7:00am, Rab members rushed the two to Khulna's Dacope Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared them dead, he added.

Locals later identified them as Khalek and belal, he further added.

Rab also claimed to have recovered huge amount of firearms and ammunition from the spot.

Meanwhile, a suspected drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" between two groups of drug traddlers at Govipur village in Meherpur's Sadar upazila.

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AFP, Paris

The Milky Way gobbled up a galaxy one quarter of its mass 10 billion years ago in a "violent collision" that didn't fully settle for eons, astronomers said in new research published Monday.

Previous studies had suggested that our home galaxy was composed of two separate sets of stars, but the precise chronology of the galactic merge remained elusive.

Researchers from the Instituto de Astrofisica de Canarias (IAC) used the Gaia space telescope to take exact measurements of the position, brightness and distance of around one million stars in the Milky Way within 6,500 light years of the Sun.

They identified two distinct stellar sets -- one

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Railway not responsible for casualties

Minister says about accidents at unauthorised level crossings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The railway will not take any responsibility for casualties at unauthorised level crossings, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon said yesterday.

"Why would the railway take the responsibility if someone falls victim to an accident by obstructing

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PRAYER TIMING JULY 24

Fazr Zorh Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-15 12-45 5-00 6-54 8-15
JAMAAT 4-50 1-15 5-15 6-58 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Farmers arrange guavas on boats at Kuriyana floating market in Pirojpur's Nesarabad upazila. Wholesalers from across the country visit different floating markets in the upazila, known for tasty guavas, to buy this nutritious fruit during the harvesting season. The photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

JP LEADERSHIP 'Quader not appointed properly'

Claims 'press release by Raushan Ershad'

RASHIDUL HASAN

A press release purportedly issued by some senior Jatiya Party leaders has questioned the appointment of GM Quader as JP chairman.

The undated press release sent to the media said Quader's appointment was not made following discussions at the proper forum of the JP.

The handwritten statement was issued on the official pad of Deputy Leader of Opposition Raushan Ershad, also the senior co-chairperson of the JP.

The Daily Star couldn't independently verify the authenticity of the press release as Raushan couldn't be reached over phone.

There had been a rift within the JP over its leadership for several months. The rift grew

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MEDIATING KASHMIR ISSUE

Trump was not asked to help

Indian foreign minister denies that Modi sought US president's intervention; rules out third party involvement

AFP, Ndtv

India's foreign minister was forced to issue a strenuous denial to an infuriated opposition in parliament yesterday, after US President Donald Trump said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had invited him to mediate in the bloody conflict with Pakistan over Kashmir.

While Pakistan has often sought third-party mediation in the decades-old dispute which has cost tens of thousands of lives, the idea is anathema to India, which has always insisted the issue can only be resolved bilaterally.

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