### Govt to work for development of medical science: PM

BSS, Dhaka

Putting emphasis on advancing the country's medical science further, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said her government will do whatever is necessary to develop the field.

"We want to do everything necessary for the development of medical science, education and higher education," she said.

The PM was addressing the medical team, comprising Bangladeshi and Hungarian doctors and other staff members, who recently carried out a critical surgery on conjoined twins Rabeya and Rokeya at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka. The team called on the premier at the Gono Bhaban on Friday night.

Hasina said, "We will have to pursue all types of education so we can do more critical works like the successful operation of conjoined SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

### Domingo

FROM PAGE 1

While making the announcement, BCB President Nazmul Hassan said Domingo's vision for Bangladesh made him the ideal candidate for the

"He has a wealth of experience and we were very impressed with his passion and coaching philosophy. He has a clear idea of what is required to take the team forward." said Nazmul. For Domingo, who plans to

develop some bright prospects, the ICC T20 World Cup, which is scheduled to begin on October 18 in 2020 in Australia, will be the biggest challenge for him in his two-year period as it is a format where the Tigers are yet to vastly improve. "It is a massive honour to be

appointed as head coach of the Bangladesh national cricket team. I have followed Bangladesh's progress with keen interest and I am extremely excited to assist the team in reaching the goals they are capable of." Domingo said as quoted in a press release from the BCB yesterday.

Domingo gave an interview to the BCB earlier this month and the board officials were satisfied with his plan and vision during the presentation.

### India eases

FROM PAGE 1

US President Donald Trump urged the nuclear-armed rivals to come back to the negotiating table, speaking to Khan by phone on the importance of "reducing tensions through bilateral dialogue".

India yesterday meanwhile gradually restored phone lines following an almost two-week communications blackout in its part of Kashmir, imposed hours before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's surprise August 5 gambit.

Seventeen out of around 100 telephone exchanges were restored Saturday in the restive Kashmir Valley, the local police chief told AFP.

But mobiles and the internet remained dead in the Muslimmajority Kashmir Valley, the main hotbed of resistance to Indian rule in Jammu and Kashmir state in a 30-year-old conflict that has killed tens of thousands. In the Jammu area, which is mainly Hindu, mobile services have been restored in some districts.

Fearing an angry and potentially violent response, India also sent 10,000 extra troops to the area, severely restricted movement and arrested some 500 local politicians,

activists, academics and others. The state's Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam had said Friday there would be a "gradual" restoration of phone lines over the

weekend, with schools to resume classes in some areas next week. The transformation of Srinagar into an eerie maze of barricades,

soldiers and concertinas of barbed wire has failed to stop public anger boiling to the surface.

"We want peace and nothing else, but they have kept us under this lockdown like sheep while taking decisions about us," resident Tariq

Madri told AFP. "Even my nine-year old son asked me why they had locked us inside,"

he added. Several hundred protesters clashed with police in the city on Friday, who responded with tear gas

and pellet-firing shotguns. People hurled stones and used shop hoardings and tin sheets as

improvised shields, as police shot dozens of rounds into the crowd. No injuries were reported. The clashes broke out after

more than 3,000 people rallied in the city's Soura neighbourhood, which has witnessed regular

demonstrations this month. A week earlier around 8,000 people staged a protest which also ended in a violent confrontation

with police, residents said.

"I want the government to know that this aggression and aggressive policies don't work on the ground," said 24-year-old Adnan Rashid, an

engineering student.



People climb on to the locomotive and the roof of an overcrowded train heading for the capital from Chapainawabganj yesterday as Eid holidaymakers return to Dhaka in large numbers. The photo was taken at Tangail Railway Station.

MIRZA SHAKIL

## Hassles also on return journey

FROM PAGE 1

The last working day before Eid was on August 8. A two-day weekend began on August 9 and the official three-day Eid holidays on the 11th. August 14 was the only working day before the National Mourning Day and another weekend, which ended yesterday.

Some office goers took leave on August 14 (Wednesday) and made a nine-day holiday.

At Shimulia Ferry Terminal in overcharging. Munshiganj, thousands of people from the southern districts were seen crossing the Padma on ferries, launches, and boats.

Most of the launches on Shimulia-Kawrakandi route were seen overcrowded and the operators were charging passengers more than usual.

"The government-set launch fare is Tk 33. But they are charging us Tk 50," said Habibur Rahman, who came from Faridpur.

After crossing the river, people had to wait a long time to get on buses to Dhaka and the bus operators

also were charging more than usual, alleged passengers.

"I had to wait for around an hour to get on the bus. They are charging each passenger over Tk 100 when the actual fare is Tk 70," said Solaiman Miah, who was traveling to Dhaka from Satkhira yesterday.

Munshiganj's Mawa Zonal Traffic Inspector Helal Uddin claimed that they kept watch to prevent

Soumitra Ghosh, who was traveling to Dhaka from Rajbari via the Paturia Ferry Terminal in Manikganj, said, "Bus operators demanded Tk 300 for a trip to Dhaka from Paturia Ferry Terminal. The usual fare is Tk 120. When I refused to pay the extra money, they forced me off the bus."

Even, state-run Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) buses were also overcharging, alleged passengers.

"I got on a BRTC bus from Paturia and was heading towards Savar. The normal fare is Tk 80. But they charged

me Tk 200," said Akhtar Hossain, who also came from Rajbari. Manikganj Deputy Commissioner

SM Ferdous also claimed that they

kept watch to prevent overcharging. At Tangail New Bus Terminal, over 150 passengers were seen waiting in

front of a bus counter around 11:00am. "I have been waiting for around three hours but no bus is available," Nizamuddin told The Daily Star

correspondent around 11:00am. Tangail's Traffic Inspector Raifqul Islam said there were no tailbacks on the Dhaka-Tangail highway but traffic was very heavy and slow.

At Barishal Launch Terminal yesterday evening, every vessel was packed as a huge number of passengers poured into the terminal to board launches for Dhaka.

Azmal Huda Mithu, deputy director of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) of Barishal River Port, claimed that over one lakh people left for Dhaka on launches

"I have been trying to get a ticket for two hours. If I fail to get one, I will have to come back to the terminal tomorrow," Bashudeve Mazumder, a resident of Barishal city, said around 7:00pm yesterday.

The Patuakhali Launch Termina was crowded. Eight launches left for Dhaka yesterday; all overcrowded.

A gang was occupying space on the launch decks with bed sheets and then selling the space to passengers.

"After reaching the terminal, found the launch was filled with passengers. Seeing me upset, a few people came to me and offered me space for money. I paid them Tk 200 and got a small space which they had kept occupied," said Abul Hossain, a resident of Nilganj under Kalapara upazila in Patuakhali.

At Kamalapur Railway Station, all incoming trains were full.

"Despite the crowd, I prefer trains because there is no traffic jam to worry about," said Zakir Hossain who arrived from Sirajganj yesterday.

Students

than that of adults.

FROM PAGE 1

Kankar said that analysing information about 856 dengue patients admitted to Dhaka Shishu Hospital

because their immune system is weaker

between May to August 16, they found 49 percent were aged 6 to 11 plus. In efforts to tackle the situation, the DGHS yesterday lunched a mobile App called Stop Dengue, which will help people detect potential mosquito breeding places. This App, available on

Google Play Store, will also help create a map of mosquito breeding grounds around the country.

FURTHER SPREAD FEARED Health experts have warned of a further

spread of the viral disease as Aedes mosquitos may have used the empty homes, schools and offices to breed in large numbers during the Eid vacation. Worried that things could get worse during Eid holidays when many homes in the capital remain unattended for

days, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) on August 7 had instructed citizens to cover traditional and western commodes before they left the town. It also asked them to remove water from the trays at the bottom of

refrigerators, from air conditioning drain pipes, buckets, plant pots, and barrels. On the other hand, the education

ministry had asked school authorities to form special committees comprising teachers, staffers, scouts and students to monitor the institutions during the holidays so that Aedes mosquitos cannot breed easily. These correspondents visited seven

schools in the capital yesterday and found the school authorities took various preventive measures. Five people were seen cleaning the premises of Holy Cross Girls' High

School yesterday noon. They also kept unused flower tubs upside down and cleaned those that have plants in them. Mirpur Girls' Ideal Laboratory Institute acting principal Afrina Parvin was monitoring the cleaning activities herself. She said their two teams

regularly cleaned or destroyed possible breeding grounds during the vacation. Matiur Rahman, headmaster of Gendaria High School, said their team applied mosquito repellent every day during the vacation.

He said they were also spraying Aerosol supplied by the Dhaka South City Corporation.

"It is very important to destroy mosquitos at workplaces. But there is a huge negligence as in many offices people do not want to take responsibility," said Prof Mahbubur Rahman, principal of Norail Govt Mohila College, who did his doctoral research on Aedes mosquito.

On August 7, the Cabinet Division issued a circular asking all ministries and divisions, departments as well as other agencies to take necessary steps so that Aedes mosquitos cannot breed in offices and their surrounding areas

during the holidays. Contacted yesterday, Cabinet Division Deputy Secretary Sazzad Ul Hasan said they did not have any

monitoring teams. "But we believe that all offices acted accordingly," said Sazzad, who had

signed the circular. Many private offices are also taking

steps to prevent mosquito breeding.

Nadim Haider Rauf, managing director of Market Fit, Dhaka, said they had dedicated staff for cleaning so that no Aedes mosquito can breed in their office.

Of the four deaths reported yesterday, two were in Faridpur and one each in Dhaka and Sirajganj.

Monowara Begum, 55, died of dengue at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said her husband Saiful around 750 shanties at the slum and

Haque, from Kishoreganj. Sumon Bashar, 20, a student of Sortajitpur College in Magura, died of the viral disease at Faridpur Medical College Hospital around

9:30am, said Kamonda Proshad Saha, superintendent of the hospital. Yunus Sheikh, 55, from Sultanpur village in Sadar upazila of Rajbari, died

of dengue at the same hospital in the evening, the official added.

In Sirajganj, college student Mehedi Hasan, 17, died around 8:00pm at Sirajganj General Hospital. He was admitted with dengue fever at the hospital on August 14, said Faridul Islam, resident medical officer of the hospital.

# Faulty gas pipes fed the blaze

fire to make things worse, he added.

According to fire officials, several deadly fire incidents earlier took place at the slum because of the defective gas supply lines. The illegal and risky gas connections remain a serious threat to people and households as the quality of distribution lines and the way they were installed fall far below standard.

Galvanised Iron (GI), plastic pipes and even rubber pipes were being used for gas connection. Some were precariously hanging overhead.

Locals allege that syndicates run by some ruling party men with the connivance of unscrupulous Titas Gas employees steal gas from the main transmission and distribution lines of the company.

The Daily Star contacted Titas Gas Managing Director Mir Mashiur Rahman several times over the phone. But he didn't respond.

Asked, Director (operations) of Titas Gas M Kamruzzaman Khan said that he does not know about the illegal gas lines and that local Titas Gas workers in the area would know about it.

Firefighters began a search operation at the slum yesterday morning, during which they found there were

combustible substances in the shanties. committee was formed yesterday to investigate the slum fire. The committee has been asked to submit a re-port to the fire service headquarters

in this regard within 15 workdays. The committee comprises deputy

director (ambulance) Abul Hossain as cylinders, which exploded during the its head, assistant director (operation) Abul Hossain as member secretary and deputy assistant director (Mirpur Zone) Newaz Ahmed as member.

> LIVING ON THE STREETS Most of the slum dwellers spent the night on the streets and in the still in the dark about it. open space of nearby Public Works

Department (PWD) office premises. Around 100 people suffered minor injuries while escaping the fire and took primary treatment from local

pharmacies. The DNCC has set up a temporary primary-treatment booth yesterday morning where 41 people took treatment, mostly for cuts sustained while trying to escape the fire in a rush,

till 2:00pm. slum, said the fire originated from the northern side of the slum and took some time to reach the other end,

where she resided. "I thought the fire would not come here. But it engulfed everything in a few minutes. I couldn't save anything," she said in despair.

She added they did not have an exit and so they had to escape after breaking a wall.

Many residents of the shanties were Meanwhile, a three-member probe seen coming to the site in the morning to find anything sellable out of the ruins, in order to buy daily necessities.

The DNCC and some volunteers

provided food for the slum dwellers

at Bangabandhu Bidyaniketon School

located nearby, where some of the

victims have been taking shelter for the repeated fire incidents at different time being.

'DO A FAIR PROBE'

Multiple versions surfaced about the cause of the fire. Some suspect shortcircuits while some others suspect an act of sabotage. Officials, however, are

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir demanded a fair and neutral investigation into the fire as such incidents are on the rise.

He visited the spot yesterday around 12:00pm.

Talking to reporters after the visit, Fakhrul also urged the government to rehabilitate the victims and provide them with compensation. "Fire incidents at city slums have

seen a rise these days, hitting the des-Soheli Begum, who lives in the titute hard. So, a neutral probe body needs to be formed to look into the matter," he said. The BNP leader also said stern

> body's involvement in the fire incident is found. Visiting the fire-ravaged area, Gonoforum President Dr Kamal yesterday urged the Hossain

punitive actions must be taken if any-

government and social organisations to come forward in aid of the victims. "Following the fire, thousands of people are living under the open sky without food, shelter and clothes in a dengue-hit city. I call upon the government and the social organisations to immediately stand by

them," he said. He voiced deep concern over the homes once were.

Researcher and writer Syed Abul

Maksud also visited the area. After a visit yesterday, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor

Atiqul Islam promised all kinds of

assistance to rehabilitate the victims.

Fire Service and Civil Defence Assistant Director Rezaul Karim said as many as 3,000 families have been affected in the massive fire. "There were 500 to 600 shanties in

the slum. We managed to save only some of those," he said, adding that they have enlisted 300 victim families However, local MP Elias Uddin

Mollah said around 1,200 shanties were affected by the fire. Replying to a query, he said he had heard that a ruling party man owned

all were burned to ashes. The fire broke out in the 35-yearold Chalantika slum around 7:22pm on Friday. After a six-hour long effort, 24 firefighting units doused the blaze

The firefighters rescued four injured

around 1:30am.

people and took them to hospital. Friday's blaze left thousands of slum dwellers homeless. Most of them are low-wage earners, including garment workers, rickshaw-pullers, hawkers, house maids and day labourers.

Most of the families went to their hometowns to celebrate Eid. Many returned to find only ashes where their

## Kazakhstan court frees anti-Beijing activist

AFP, Almaty A rights activist in Kazakhstan who faced

seven years imprisonment over his outspoken opposition to neighbouring China was unexpectedly freed Friday as public and international pressure over his case mounted. Serikjan Bilash, whose activism in defence

of Muslim and Turkic minorities in Xinjiang earned him global media attention, told AFP he struck a plea bargain with the court that allowed him freedom but will end his activism. "I had to end my activism against China. It was that or seven years in jail. I had no choice,"

Bilash told AFP at a restaurant where he held a

celebratory midnight feast with his family and about 40 supporters. Bilash agreed to accept guilt over inter-ethnic incitement charges triggered by his call for an "information Jihad" against the Chinese authorities over their policies in Xinjiang earlier this year.



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