

# UK PM

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"I am cautiously optimistic. "Whatever happens, we'll come out on October 31."

EU spokeswoman Natasha Bertaud said Juncker and Johnson would have a working lunch.

Meanwhile in Ireland, Varadkar said on RTE radio: "We are exploring what is possible", adding that "the gap is very wide". He said he would "fight for and work for" a deal, but "not at any cost".

The central sticking point is the so-called "backstop" -- a compromise intended to keep the UK-Irish border open for trade and crossings in all post-Brexit scenarios.

It was part of the withdrawal agreement struck between Brussels and Johnson's predecessor Theresa May, but that deal was rejected three times by Britain's parliament -- with the backstop one of the key problems.

Varadkar said that while Dublin had always been willing to explore alternative arrangements, what has been proposed so far "falls very far short" of what is needed.

MPs passed a law instructing Johnson to seek a deadline extension beyond October 31 if no deal emerges from the October 17-18 EU summit.

However, Johnson maintains Britain must leave on time, regardless.

The outgoing House of Commons Speaker John Bercow on Thursday warned Johnson not to disobey the law by refusing to ask for a Brexit delay and vowed to thwart any attempt to circumvent legislation.

Bercow said disobeying the law would set "the most terrible example".

Johnson asked Queen Elizabeth II to close the current parliamentary session on Tuesday and reopen it on October 14, claiming the reset was necessary to roll out his domestic agenda.

The unusually long suspension was widely seen as a bid to thwart opposition to a no-deal departure, and provoked uproar across the political spectrum as well as legal challenges.

Johnson's Rotherham speech was interrupted by a heckler who urged him to "get back to parliament" and "sort out the mess you've created".

## UZ chairman

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Latif, along with some locals, came to the upazila parishad office with some dead fish and claimed that Dulal's men had poisoned his pond.

As he refused to go their citing illness, Shahin got infuriated and threatened to kill him, Dulal added.

Later, Shahin stopped Akhi in front of the upazila parishad office on her way to the court and assaulted her, said the victim at a press conference yesterday afternoon.

"What the upazila chairman done to me is unacceptable," Akhi told journalists. She demanded justice for the chairman's offence.

Shahin, at a separate press conference organised at upazila parishad office yesterday, however, denied the allegation of assault.

Galachipa OC Akhter Morshed said they would take steps in this regard after investigation.



Pro-Beijing protesters display a large Chinese flag as they gather to sing and chant slogans inside a shopping mall in the Tai Kok Tsui district in Hong Kong yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# BB failed

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only diminish the BB's credibility, but also would open floodgates of further similar compromises that, in turn, would further deepen the ongoing crisis in the country's financial sector.

According to media report, the central bank is going to allow the rescheduling of Beximco's Tk 430.05 crore demand loan following its request, although it was not supposed to get another chance to reschedule its loans.

Iftakharuzzaman said loan defaulters, irrespective of identity or status, cannot be allowed to dictate terms to the BB and get illegitimate extension for rescheduling loans.

"Taking the advantage of loan rescheduling, a section of the plunderers gets the opportunity to become lawmakers," he said.

The graft watchdog called upon the central bank to have the courage to play its role for the sake of national interest and refrain from making any such move.

The TIB executive director said the state is reportedly starving for cash and in such a situation the BB cannot continue to protect loan defaulters and shift the economic burden on people.

"We reiterate our call upon the government to form a fully independent committee of experts consisting of reputed, independent and credible specialists to analyse the deepening crisis in the sector," the TIB said.

# ADB to lend

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Besides, it is aligned with the government's new manifesto that highlights the priorities and sets the stage for the next five-year plan.

During the meeting, Hasina appreciated ADB assistance and highlighted her government's priorities for infrastructure and human capital development, science and technology research, rural and agricultural development, and private sector promotion.

Complimenting Hasina on strong economic performance, Parkash said that the new COBP was consistent with government priorities and a pathway to prosperity.

He reaffirmed ADB's continued assistance to further strengthen its partnership to promote sustainable growth in Bangladesh.

In 2018 alone, ADB approved a record \$2.5 billion in assistance to the country.

This included a grant of \$100 million as the first phase of a projected \$200 million support for the immediate needs of people sheltered in the camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar region.

# India sets

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and public distribution ministry said in a statement.

A notification to this effect was issued yesterday by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Department of Commerce and Ministry of Commerce and Industries, it added.

The Indian government last month warned of strict action against hoarding of onion amid supply disruption fears due to floods in parts of major growing states -- Maharashtra and Karnataka.

It had decided to cap the retail price of onion at Rs 23.90 a kg for grade A variety of onion.

On an average, India exports 1.5 million tonnes of onion a year and produces around 17-18 million tonnes a year.

## Police want new tool for probe

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admissible before the court as evidence, a former district judge, requesting anonymity told The Daily Star on August 26.

Besides, the suspects often brought allegations against law enforcers that they were forced to give statements in custody, said a high official working for the counterterrorism unit of DMP.

"But the new technology will help detect involvement of suspects in the crime and what they saying are true or false. The test result can be submitted to the court as corroborative evidence," he told this correspondent, wishing anonymity.

"We face problem quizzing militant suspects. They do not divulge much information during interrogation as they are trained. This issue can be solved now."

It will also help save time in investigation, added the official.

Md Raisul Hoque Rahat, head of sales and marketing of Digital Security Solutions (DSS), a company that provides different security products, said four countries in Asia already use the technology. They are India,

Pakistan, Malaysia and Dubai.

DSS recently proposed the Police Headquarters to supply iCognitive. The minimum cost for the device is eight lakh US dollar, said Rahat.

Counterterrorism officials said a team from the US company, Brainwave Science, recently visited Bangladesh and demonstrated how to use the technology.

Another high official, who was present during the demonstration, said a suspect will be given a wireless headset, which uses sensors to collect brain responses from the scalp and muscle movements.

Then the investigators will present a series of crime or event specifics, words, phrases, or pictures flashed on a computer screen in front of the suspect, he said, requesting anonymity.

The brain responses of the suspect to those words, phrases or pictures will be analysed to determine whether the information provided by the suspect is true or false.

**LIMITATIONS**

However, there is one problem in using the device, said the official.

Too much mobile network frequencies in Bangladesh will create obstacles to receiving brain waves from the sensors, and a soundproof room will be needed for the test, he said.

"Besides, we have to create a dummy crime scene every time if we want to interrogate suspects with the device, or else it would be difficult to get accurate results," said the official.

"For this reason, we need to keep several big rooms or select some spots to recreate crime scenes to interrogate suspects."

Md Omar Faruk, associate professor of Criminology and Police Science department of Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, welcomes the initiatives of police.

But, he said, if the device is not operated by an expert, it will yield no result.

The person who will operate it must have both technical and medical knowledge. No one can handle this just having some trainings, he added.

"I doubt if the Bangladesh police have that expertise."

Tanvir Momtaz, assistant inspector

general (equipment) at the Police Headquarters, told The Daily Star that they are working to strengthen police by adding modern devices.

"Recently, we have conducted an experiment on iCognitive but we did not finalise the purchase yet, as we are facing some difficulties to use it because of network frequencies in the country," he said.

"We are working to overcome the difficulties and then we would take decision."

The Police Headquarters is also working to get a total containment vehicle (TCV), a unique bomb disposal van and a storage house, according to counterterrorism officials.

The TCV is mainly used in carrying highly powerful explosives to a safe place so that nearby structures or innocents are not harmed while defusing those.

The bomb disposal van will have all the equipment like jammer, x-ray machine and detector, and officials can move by it quickly.

The storage house is where recovered explosives can be stored and bombs can be defused.

## Fires in Brazil wetlands quadruple in 2019: report

AFP, Rio De Janeiro

Fires recorded in the Brazilian Pantanal, a biodiversity sanctuary in the southern Amazon rainforest, have quadrupled in 2019 compared to the same period last year, the country's space research agency said Thursday.

The number of fires recorded by satellite since January in the Pantanal hit 4,515, an increase of 334 percent from the same period in 2018 where only 1,039 fires were recorded, the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) said.

The Pantanal, which is the world's largest tropical wetland and located primarily in Brazil along with parts of neighboring Paraguay and Bolivia, is 80 percent flooded during the wet season from October to May.

That leaves the vegetation, which is particularly rich and diverse, vulnerable to fires during the summer dry season.

On Thursday, the fire-affected Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul declared a state of emergency, which would allow the government to quickly release funds to fight the blazes.

The local government estimated more than one million hectares of its land had burned, most of them in the Pantanal.

Neighboring state Mato Grosso declared a similar state of emergency on Tuesday.

Experts say manmade deforestation is the main cause of the fires, though a decrease in precipitation and a recent heat wave together with strong winds are also factors.

## No rest in peace!

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Cairns to Sydney every month to check on the progress of a cadaver.

Her subject was one of seventy bodies stored at the Southern Hemisphere's only "body farm", which sits at a secret bushland location on the outskirts of Australia's largest city.

Officially known as the Australian Facility for Taphonomic Experimental Research (AFTER), the farm is carrying out pioneering research into post-mortem movement.

Wilson and her colleagues were

trying to improve a commonly used system for estimating the time of death using time-lapse cameras and in the process found that human bodies actually move around significantly.

Her findings were recently published in the journal "Forensic Science International: Synergy".

A better understanding of these movements and the rate of decomposition could be used by police to estimate time of death more accurately.

She hopes the knowledge could, for

example, narrow down the number of missing persons that could be linked to an unidentified corpse.

A better understanding of post mortem movement could also help to reduce the incorrect cause of death or misinterpretation of a crime scene.

"They'll map a crime scene, they'll map the victim's body position, they'll map any physical evidence which is found, and they can understand the cause of death."

The CQ University criminology graduate says she started her unique project after a trip to Mexico to help

classify Mayan-era skeletal remains.

"I was fascinated with death from a child and was always interested in how the body breaks down after death."

"I guess that comes about from being raised on a farm and seeing livestock die and watching that process," she said.

"Once I observed a movement in a previous study, I started researching and couldn't find anywhere in the world that looks at quantifying the movement, so I thought OK, I'm going to do this."

## HURRICANE-HIT BAHAMAS

### 1,300 still missing: officials

AFP, Miami

Some 1,300 people are still unaccounted for in the Bahamas following Hurricane Dorian, officials said Thursday, down from the 2,500 previously reported.

The Bahamian National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) attributed the drop to cross-referencing names of missing persons with those in shelters.

"It's very fluid," NEMA spokesman Carl Smith told reporters at a press conference in Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas.

The Bahamian authorities have put the death toll from the devastating Category 5 storm at 50 so far.

But they have said they expect that number to rise significantly and a former prime minister said he feared the final toll could be in the hundreds.

"Based upon information I have, based on my knowledge, there are hundreds of people who died," the Nassau Guardian newspaper quoted former premier Hubert Ingraham as saying on Wednesday.

"I pay no attention to 50," Ingraham said after touring hurricane-ravaged Abaco Island.

"Hundreds of people have died in Abaco, and significant numbers in Grand Bahama," the other island severely damaged by the storm, he said.

"And I don't make wild statements," he said. "I don't make uninformed statements."

Bahamian police commissioner

Anthony Ferguson was asked at the press conference about the search for victims of the storm.

"It's a slow process," Ferguson said. "We have to go through all of that rubble, take our time and search."

"It's going to take a long time before you can really say (final) numbers," he said.

Search operations could be impacted by approaching weather.

The Miami-based National Hurricane Center said in its 5:00 pm (2100 GMT) bulletin that a weather system in the Atlantic was expected to become a tropical storm and bring strong winds and heavy rainfall to the northwest Bahamas in the next 36 hours.

Smith, the NEMA spokesman, said 150 people were currently in shelters on the island of Grand Bahama and 2,000 on New Providence, where Nassau is located.

"We are no longer receiving a lot of displaced persons from Abaco," he added.

The NEMA spokesman also said the authorities were suspending deportations of illegal immigrants who were affected by the storm. The Bahamas has a large community of Haitians and some who are in the archipelago illegally have expressed fears of being sent home.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres announced meanwhile that he would go to the Bahamas to express his "deep solidarity" with the Atlantic archipelago.

## Police thwart climate activists' drone bid to close Heathrow

AFP, London

London police yesterday deployed a sweeping security cordon around Heathrow Airport and made seven arrests to thwart climate activists' efforts to shut down Europe's busiest travel hub using toy drones.

Campaigners from Heathrow Pause -- an offshoot of the Extinction Rebellion group backed by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg -- had hoped to disrupt the travel plans of tens of thousands of passengers from across the world over the weekend.

But their first miniature device failed to take flight after receiving no signal from its hand-held remote control.

"They are jamming -- we can't get the signal," one campaigner said in a video posted on social media from what appeared to be the airport's outer edge.

"The passengers will be happy. We are not happy."

A London police spokesman refused to confirm or deny the use of jamming devices.

"We do not discuss security tactics," the spokesman told AFP.

But the department said it was imposing a "dispersal order" under a criminal statute act covering "anti-social behaviour" in areas surrounding the airport's vast grounds through to Sunday morning.

The campaigners' official aim is

to prevent construction of a third Heathrow runway and to cut harmful gas emissions to a net level of zero by 2025.

Yet their chosen means of protest also points to the hazards drones of any size pose to airports long term.

Heathrow rules stipulate that it must temporarily close should a drone be spotted within its five-kilometre (three-mile) exclusion zone.

It was expected to make exceptions should this only involve miniature drones flying close to the ground and away from runways or flight paths -- the rules Heathrow Pause intends to keep.

"Like-minded citizens just know that what we are doing is not a criminal act," group member Sylvia Dell told AFP as she prepared to fly her own drone in the coming days.

The retired mother-of-four said she was stirred to action by a United Nations report warning governments in October that they had 12 years left to stop the earth from warming to dangerous levels.

"We're the fire alarm ringing in the middle of the night telling people to wake up, your house is on fire," Dell said.

Several still-unexplained drone sightings around Heathrow and London's Gatwick Airport shut them down for several days over the winter holidays.

## Woman raped

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Centre at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday for tests.

He said they were trying to identify and arrest the accused.

**SCHOOLGIRL RAPE**

In Mymensingh, police arrested a man in a village of Dhobaura upazila yesterday evening for allegedly raping a 13-year-old schoolgirl, reports our district correspondent.

The arrestee is Abdus Sattar, 30, a farmer from the same village.

According to a case, filed with Dhobaura Police Station on Thursday night by the victim's father, the girl's neighbour Sattar asked her on Thursday morning to go to his house when she was on the way to school. The man raped the seventh grader there.

Hearing screams for help, some locals rushed to the house and rescued the girl. But Sattar managed to flee.

Police said the victim was sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital yesterday for tests.

## Minister factory

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No causality has been reported as of afternoon and the fire fighters were searching the building if there was anyone trapped, he added.

After inspecting the spot, Motaleb Mia, deputy inspector general of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments, told journalists that establishment of warehouse on the fourth floor or above in any building was illegal.

A seven-member probe committee, led by an additional district magistrate, was formed to investigate the incident.