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Foreign trips for knowledge? Doesn't seem so

SANJOY KUMAR BARIUA, Bandarban

Although the three hill district councils spend over Tk 1.5 crore each year for sending their and Chattogram hill tracts affairs ministry's staff members abroad for study tours, the application of knowledge from such trips remains vague.

According to Chief Executive Officer of Khagrachari Hill District Council Md Nuruzzaman, each council receives Tk 50-60 lakh per year from the ministry to send the members to different countries.

The funds are allocated under a project called "Strengthening Hill District Councils and Developing Skills of Their Officials".

However, when The Daily Star approached at least 10 persons who went on these tours at different times this year, none of them could say what exactly they learnt from the trips.

Between January and September, a total of 83 officials and other members of the three hill district councils and the ministry visited Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, and Japan in seven phases.

The Daily Star obtained copies of official letters of the ministry approving the tours.

Those who went on the tours include councillors, chairmen, accounts officers, audit officers and other staff members of the councils and the ministry. Some of them were accompanied by their family members, according to the letters.

The letters also stated that expenditure for the officials and the other employees would be made from government funds, but their family members would have to bear their own expenses.

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Hundreds of trucks laden with goods in a queue stretching several kilometres on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Shiboloy, Manikganj, yesterday as ferries on Shimulia-Doulatdia route have been prioritising buses and smaller vehicles.

PHOTO: STAR

FERRY DISRUPTION 400 vehicles stranded and counting

STAR REPORT

Ferry operations at Shimulia-Kathalbari route have remained suspended for the fourth consecutive day because of navigability crisis.

Over 400 vehicles, mostly trucks laden with goods, were stranded at both sides of the Padma as the authorities halted all ferry operations.

But authorities have kept three small ferries standby at the terminal for carrying emergency vehicles like ambulance.

Shimulia point is located in Munshiganj district and Kathalbari is in Madaripur district.

Contacted, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) Secretary Kazi Wakil Nawaz said, "We have been compelled to stop ferry operation due to strong current and siltation. We hope to resume the operation tomorrow [today] through alternative channel."

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Ex-BCL man arrested for murder of SSC examinee

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A former Chattra League man was arrested yesterday in connection with the murder of a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinee in Ishwarganj upazila.

The victim Md Jahidul Islam, 15, of the upazila's Dauttapara area succumbed to his stab wounds at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) early yesterday. He was a student of Protisruti Model High School.

A group of masked miscreants waylaid the rickshaw he was on near the Ideal College area around 9:45am on Tuesday, said Ahmed Kabir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Ishwarganj police station, quoting locals.

When Jahidul sensed he was in trouble, he got off the rickshaw and began to run, but the attackers caught up with him and one of them stabbed him in the throat, leaving him critically injured, said the OC.

The miscreants also beat up Jahidul with sticks after stabbing him, the OC

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Jahidul Islam

Deadly day in J&K Three militants killed in gun battle with Indian troops; migrant worker shot dead

REUTERS, Srinagar

Indian security forces yesterday killed three separatist fighters, while suspected militants shot dead a migrant worker on one of the bloodiest days in Kashmir since New Delhi revoked the disputed region's autonomy and special status more than two months ago.

The killings were the first since mobile telephone services were restored as part of gradual relaxation of security measures taken to curb violent unrest in Jammu and Kashmir state.

The government had cut off telephone and internet lines before it revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special rights on August 5, striking down long-standing constitutional provisions for the Muslim-majority region that is also claimed by neighbouring Pakistan.

A security lockdown is still largely in place, and broadband and mobile internet connections remain unavailable to most Kashmiris.

The militants were killed during a gun battle after soldiers, acting on a tip-off, raided a village in south Kashmir yesterday, two police sources told Reuters.

"Three terrorists were killed and the bodies were retrieved from the site of the encounter," Kashmir police said in a statement. "Incriminating material, including arms and ammunition, was recovered."

Neither the soldiers or police, who were also present, suffered casualties, according to the police sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to talk to the media.

Security forces imposed travel restrictions near the site of the gun battle to prevent unrest, the sources said. Many Kashmiris hostile to India's rule often gather to throw stones at security forces after militants are killed.

In a separate incident in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, suspected militants shot dead a migrant worker from Chhattisgarh state, in central India, in an execution-style killing, police said.

"Area has been cordoned and searches are going on," Kashmir police said in a tweet.

WAR CRIMES IN 1971 Ex-NSI chief indicted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday framed a charge against Wahidul Haque, former acting director general of National Security Intelligence (NSI), for allegedly committing crimes during the Liberation War.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Md Shahinur Islam also set November 24 for starting his trial with the recording of testimony of prosecution witnesses.

Wahidul, who allegedly worked for Pakistan Army as its captain during the Liberation War and was involved in the killing of 500 to 600 people near Rangpur Cantonment on March 28, 1971, however, pleaded not guilty before the tribunal and sought justice.

On April 24 last year, police arrested Wahidul, also a former additional inspector general of police,

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Nasa unveils future moon spacesuits



AFP, Washington

Bye bye to bunny hops: when US astronauts next touch down on the moon, expect them to walk almost as they do on Earth, thanks to a new generation of spacesuits offering key advantages over those of the Apollo-era.

Prototypes of the Orion Crew Survival Suit that will be worn on the journey and the Exploration Extravehicular Mobility Unit (xEMU) for the lunar surface were unveiled at Nasa's Washington headquarters Tuesday ahead of the agency's planned return to the moon by 2024.

Standing in front of a giant US flag, spacesuit engineer Kristine Davis wore a pressurised red, blue and white xEMU suit, showing off a vastly improved range of motion thanks to bearings systems on the waist, arms, and legs.

They are also extendable and therefore one-

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RIFAT MURDER Court denies accused bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A Barguna court yesterday rejected bail prayer of an accused in the Rifat Sharif murder case.

Al Kaiyum submitted the bail prayer with the District and Sessions Judge's Court. Judge Md Asaduzzaman denied his bail after hearing from the prosecution and defence.

Besides, two more accused -- Rakibul Hasan Rifat Farajee and Tiktok Redoy -- filed their bail prayers with the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court, but the court did not hear

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PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 17

	Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4:50	12:45	4:00	5:38	7:15
JAMAAT	5:25	1:15	4:15	5:41	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

BCMCL COAL SCAM Ex-MD, two more officials land in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Three officials of Barapukuria coal Mining Company Limited (BCMCL), including a former managing director, were sent to jail after a Dinajpur court rejected their bail prayers in a Tk 244 crore coal scam case yesterday.

They are former MD Habib Uddin Ahmed, General Manager (mine operations) Abu Taher Mohammad Nuruzzaman Chowdhury, and Deputy General Manager (store) AKM Khaledul Islam.

Md Anisur Rahman, a manager (admin) of BCMCL, filed a case in July 2018 with Parbatipur police station accusing 19 people, including Habib who was the then MD. Habib was later suspended by Petrobangla.

In the case, it was mentioned that around 1.45 lakh metric tonnes of coal were found to be missing from the coal yard in early July last year.

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Smoke rising from the Syrian town of Ras al-Ain on the eighth day of Turkey's military operation against Kurdish forces yesterday. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he would not meet US Vice President Mike Pence during his visit to Ankara to discuss the military operation.

PHOTO: AFP

Turkey rejects US push for Syria ceasefire

Kurds defend key border town; hundreds seek refuge in Iraq

AFP, Ceylanpinar

Turkey rebuffed international pressure to curb its military offensive against Kurdish militants in Syria yesterday as US President Donald Trump dispatched his deputy Mike Pence to Ankara to demand a ceasefire.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan rejected any negotiations, telling parliament the only way to solve Syria's problems was for the Kurdish forces to "lay down their arms... destroy all their traps and get out of the safe zone that we have designated."

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