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“We will not seek permission in future. Whenever necessary, we will hold rallies and take to the streets as it is our constitutional and democratic right.”
BNP SECRETARY GENERAL MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR AT A BNP RALLY (PAGE 16)



“Many [people] are facing the ACC [for corruption] right now and many more will have to face it.”
ACC CHAIRMAN IQBAL MAHMOOD AT THE ACC HEADQUARTERS (PAGE 3)



“It is true that I never had the desire to enter politics, nor I ever thought about it.”
INDIAN PM NARENDRA MODI DURING A RADIO PROGRAMME (PAGE 8)



CHECKING ROAD ACCIDENTS

Long wait for effective steps

Formation of committees, paperwork takes months; taskforce goes slow in implementing 111 recommendations

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Formed in February with former shipping minister Shajahan Khan at its helm, a committee two months later made a 111-point recommendation on how to reduce road crashes and bring discipline in the transport sector.

Another four months went by to form a taskforce that would implement the recommendations. An additional one-and-a-half month was taken to issue a gazette about formation of the taskforce led by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

In the meantime, the country witnessed over 15 percent rise in the number of crashes and casualties, compared to last year.

Yesterday, the 33-member taskforce held its first meeting, in which it included three additional members and assigned four secretaries to recommend and plan how the recommendations can be implemented.

The top-tier bureaucrats of the country will have to submit their action plan in two months, meaning a year will have gone doing paperwork to curb road crashes.

“We formed four sub-committees led by four secretaries to find our weaknesses and they will give us a plan on how we will work,” Home Minister Asaduzzaman told reporters after yesterday’s meeting at his secretariat office.

When the sub-committees submit their recommendations after two months, the taskforce will sit again.

The sub-committee led by the secretary of Road Transport and Highways Division will look into the weaknesses of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and other related issues while the sub-committee led by

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Bangladesh tail-enders Al Amin Hossain (L) and Abu Jayed walk off dejectedly after the Tigers fell to an innings-and-46-run defeat to India on the third day of the second and final Test at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Yet another disastrous Test series

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Kolkata

Bangladesh wilted under the Kolkata sun, surviving for just 47 minutes on the third to lose the second Test at the Eden Gardens by an innings and 46 runs yesterday. At the end of the second day, Mushfiquir Rahim was left alone for an impossible task of trying to bat with tail-enders and make India bat again, trailing by 89 runs. The Tigers survived just 8.4 overs, bowled out for 195 on Day Three with Mahmudullah Riyad, who suffered a hamstring strain on Day Two and retired hurt, unable to bat.

From the start of the day, Mushfiquir, who had batted brilliantly the prior day, looked to unsettle the India pacers. But a rash charge

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Onion prices spike, so do vegetables’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With onion prices remaining high and unstable, consumers are bearing the brunt of high prices of essential foods, including vegetables, according to shoppers and market data.

Onion prices, which began falling after hitting a historic high of around Tk 250 per kilogram, increased again since the beginning of this week amid supply shortage due to low import and a declining stock of locally grown bulbs.

Yesterday, prices of the essential spice, used mainly for cooking, rose both at wholesale and retail levels and the bulb was found being sold up to Tk 240 per kg, said retailers in several markets of the city.

“Prices usually fall when there is ample supply. But supply of domestically grown and imported onions has been below the required amount,” said Mohammad Shahidul Islam Mia, owner of Matribhandar, an onion wholesaler at Shyambazar -- the biggest wholesale market in Dhaka.

He said prices of locally grown onion rose yesterday for the lack of availability at bazars of onion-producing region Pabna.

RELATED STORY ON B1

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ELECTION COMMISSION 4 ECs protest being left in the dark

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four election commissioners yesterday sent a letter to the chief election commissioner expressing dissatisfaction over “not involving them in the commission’s activities”.

In the letter, they also alleged that they were not informed of recent appointment of employees, financial issues, and other activities of the commission secretariat.

These are in violation of the constitution, Representation of the People Order 1972, Election Commission Secretariat Act-2009 and related rules, they mentioned in the letter obtained by The Daily Star.

The four election commissioners are:

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BTRC AUDIT CLAIM

SC asks GP to pay Tk 2,000cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday directed Grameenphone to pay Tk 2,000 crore, around 10 times higher than what the carrier was willing to pay as adjustable deposit, to the telecom regulator.

Whether the sum would be considered a deposit or an advance payment was unclear.

The SC also ordered the leading mobile operator to pay the amount within the next three months. Failure to do so could result in Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) taking measures -- including appointing administrators -- against Grameenphone.

Earlier on November 14, Grameenphone agreed to pay BTRC a sum of Tk 200 crore against the regulator’s audit claim of 12,580 crore. This was in line with an out of court settlement between the two.

The apex court, however, rejected the settlement and issued the fresh order yesterday.

The SC also said that if the Tk 2,000 crore was not paid in three months, it would stay the High Court order which issued an injunction on BTRC’s move to realise the total sum, Barrister Mehedi Hasan Chowdhury, a lawyer for Grameenphone, told The Daily Star.

A seven-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the

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CREDIT CARD TRANSACTIONS ABROAD

BB revokes rules on prior approval

Backtracks on its decision amid criticism; Uber payment through cards still blocked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank yesterday walked back on its stance of forcing international credit cardholders to take prior approval from banks for every cross-border transaction, as better sense prevailed amongst the decision makers of the regulatory body of the country’s financial system.

The development will come as a huge relief to upwardly mobile Bangladeshis, whose day-to-day lives are progressively becoming intertwined with the rest of the world.

Amid severe criticism from different corners, the central bank higher-ups were forced to sit with officials of banks and payment companies, and leaders of the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) yesterday -- a day ahead of schedule.

The decision to backtrack was taken at the meeting and a notice was sent out to

banks right away.

With the view to cracking down on online gambling and illicit fund transfers, BB on November 14 asked banks to get their customers to fill in the online transaction authorisation form (OTAF) for every foreign payment -- a cumbersome process in every sense.

Cardholders would have to submit a host of information via a mobile app including their name, card number, beneficiary name, amount of foreign currency and details of products and services to be purchased.

The bank will then activate the respective card if the reason for the foreign transaction is deemed satisfactory.

The process could take up to several hours, leaving customers hanging on the payment’s page of the website or even timing the customer out of the transaction.

To speed up the process of OTAF

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BANGLADESH: First innings 106 all out in 30.3 overs

INDIA: First innings 347 for 9 dcd in 89.4 overs (Kohli 136, Pujara 55, Rahane 51; Al-Amin 3-85, Ebadot 3-91)

BANGLADESH: Second innings 195 all out in 41.1 overs (Mushfiquir 74, Mahmudullah retired hurt 39, Al-Amin 21; Ishant 4-56, Yadav 5-53)

Result: India won by an innings and 46 runs and clinched the two-match series 2-0.

Player-of-the-match: Ishant Sharma.

Player-of-the-series: Ishant Sharma.



People queue up in front of a Trading Corporation of Bangladesh truck to buy onions imported from Egypt in the capital’s Shantinagar yesterday. The onions were being sold at Tk 45 per kg, whereas the same kind were being retailed for Tk 140-150 per kg. Onion prices have begun to rise again, reaching Tk 240-260 per kg.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

LIFE-SAVING ANTIBIOTICS

Bacteria become more resistant

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

At least 10 types of bacteria have become more resistant to 17 life-saving antibiotics used for treating patients with various infectious diseases across the country, according to a government study.

The first of its kind in the country, the study conducted by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) is based on laboratory analysis of the samples of 10 common bacteria collected from 14,669 patients at nine hospitals.

These antibiotics are becoming ineffective in killing the 10 types of bacteria that cause a number of diseases, including urinary tract infection, septicaemia, diarrhoea, pneumonia and wound infection, according to the findings.

For example, ceftriaxone, a widely used drug, was found ineffective in killing infectious bacteria, including E coli, proteus spp, non-typhoidal salmonella and Acinetobacter complex, in 10 to 92 percent cases.

The IEDCR conducted the study from 2017 to September this year with technical support from the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (US-CDC), and the World Health Organization.

“It is a surveillance study; not a complete picture. However, it gives us an indication of the gravity of the situation... The threat of antibiotic resistance is growing in the country,” Dr Zakir Hossain Habib, principal scientific officer at the IEDCR, told The Daily Star.

Experts and officials from government and private organisations, and representatives from the WHO and the US-CDC attended the programme at the institute where Zakir presented the study yesterday.

Prof Mahbubur Rahman, head of the Department of

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