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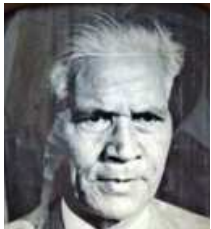
SHAH CEMENT

# A free man and a lost kingdom

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

In the hilly terrain of Sunamganj's Tahipur upazila, right at the foot of the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, there is the grave of a visionary leader who dreamt of an independent Khasi state till his last day.

Though his state declared independence in 1948, it was made a part of the Indian Dominion and he was exiled.



Wickliffe Syiem

Wickliffe Syiem, the khynnah (deputy king) of Hima Nongstoin (State of Nongstoin), located in present-day South Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya, vowed neither to go back to his own land nor to set foot on any other Indian territory.

"If I wish to do so, I'll go as a conqueror, not as a captive to surrender under the control of the foreigners," Wickliffe used to say, according to his living family members in Bangladesh.

However, his political negotiations and diplomacy failed and he was unable to materialise his dream of an independent state, according to historians and researchers on Khasi independence.

After Wickliffe vowed never to go back, the then Pakistan government permitted him to settle down in Rajai village, where he could be near among others from his own community, his son Andrew Sholomar told The Daily Star.

"The village was historically part of the Khasi Hills."

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Locals gathered to collect fuel spilled from the wagons of a freight train that came off the lines near Satgaon Railway Station in Moulvibazar's Sreemangal upazila yesterday. Inset, ripped out rail lines and undercarriages after wagons of the train derailed. There was another rail accident in Gazipur in which a bus and a train collided. At least two people died in that incident.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## Freight train derails in Sreemangal

*Snaps communication with Sylhet; 2 die as bus-train collides*

STAR REPORT

Rail communication between Sylhet and the rest of the country was suspended for hours yesterday after the derailment of a fuel oil-laden train in Sreemangal. Meanwhile, two people died after a train hit a bus in Gazipur.

In Moulvibazar's Sreemangal, the derailment of seven wagons of the train occurred around 11:40am, which caused the fuel to spill at Satgaon Rail Station.

Till the filing the report at 6:30pm, a rescue and repair operation was underway and railway officials hoped that rail communication would resume early today.

Immediately after the incident, locals thronged the spot and stole large amounts of spilled oil.

Many were seen collecting oil in buckets, jar and other pots.

"People seemed to be

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## Myanmar goes to polls today

*Despite accusations of genocide, Suu Kyi's party set for another term*

CNN ONLINE

Myanmar is set to vote today in its second democratic general election since the end of oppressive military rule -- a poll that's expected to be marked by ethnic divisions and health concerns over rising coronavirus infections.

Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy party (NLD) won a landslide in 2015 and established the first civilian government after 50 years of isolation and military authoritarianism.

In the biggest city Yangon, there was optimism and real hope that Suu Kyi would lead the country forward in its development and democratic transition. Five years later, Suu Kyi remains popular among the ethnic Bamar majority and the NLD is expected to take another win.

But 2020 is vastly different from 2015.

Internationally, Suu Kyi is no longer the democracy icon once adored in the West, primarily because of her handling of the military crackdown against the ethnic Rohingya Muslim population, which the United Nations said had "the hallmarks of genocide."

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## FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

### First Eid on free soil of Bangladesh



Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman offering his Eid prayer at Dhanmondi Maidan on November 8, 1972.

November 8, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### EID-UL-FITR OBSERVED

The Eid-ul-Fitr on the free soil of Bangladesh is celebrated today in an atmosphere of joy and celebration. The Eid is observed after a month of abstinence and self-purification. Last year the people of Bangladesh could not celebrate Eid due to the atrocities of the Pakistan occupation army. In spite of high cost of essential commodities this year, the people are remarkably enthusiastic to celebrate the Eid with due festivity.

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## 4 'Neo-JMB' men arrested in Bogura

*Firearms, explosives seized*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

The Detective Branch of police claimed to have arrested four members of militant outfit "Neo JMB" in Bogura's Sherpur upazila early yesterday.

The arrestees are Tanvir Ahmed alias Abu Ibrahim, 25, Jakaria Jamil, 31, Atiqur Rahman, 28, and Abu Saaid, 32, hailing from Gopalganj, Tangail and Mymensingh respectively, said Abdul Baten, deputy inspector general (DIG) of DB's Rajshahi range.

Tanvir was a member of the IT section of Neo-JMB while Jakaria was the head of the media wing of the outfit, Baten said in a press briefing at the office of the Superintendent of Bogura police.

Acting on a tip off, a team of DB police arrested the four in Chandihara area around 1:30 am, said the DIG.

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## Ancient skeleton offers clues on prehistoric diet



AFP, Berlin

German researchers are piecing together the life of a prehistoric woman who died more than 5,000 years ago in the Neolithic period, after her skeleton was found during excavation works for wind turbines.

The "Lady of Bietikow," as she has been named, was found near a village of the same name in northeastern Germany's Uckermark region.

The skeleton had been buried in a settlement in a squatting position, one of the oldest known forms of burial, according to local media.

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## 3 held for gang-raping woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Police yesterday arrested three people on charges of gang raping a woman in Narayanganj Sadar upazila.

The arrestees are Nurul Islam, 65, Ainul Mia, 22, and Raj Ballav, 63, said Aslam Hosen, officer-in-charge of Fatulla Model Police Station.

The trio were arrested during raids -- between Friday night and yesterday morning -- conducted in Fatulla area, he said.

The incident took place

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#### PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 8

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-55 12-45 4-00 5-30 7-15  
JAMAAT 5-30 1-15 4-15 5-34 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## 13 more die, 1,289 test positive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirteen people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With this, the death toll from the virus rose to 6,049 in the country. This is 1.44 percent of all confirmed cases.

A total of 1,289 new infections were recorded in those 24 hours, taking the total number of people infected or confirmed cases to 418,764, added the release.

Against a total of 11,419 tests in 113 laboratories in those 24 hours, the positivity rate was 11.29 percent while the overall positivity rate was at 17.23 percent.

Bangladesh is currently 22nd in the list of worst affected countries in the world in terms of the number of cases.

The position is one step behind Indonesia and one step ahead of the Czech

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People, mostly fathers of newborns, sleeping under the open sky with their children and relatives admitted at the Agargaon Shishu Hospital in the capital. The hospital allows only one attendant with patents inside their territory. Many of these people came from other districts and have no place to stay in the capital. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## US sees record Covid cases 3rd day in a row

*Biden vows virus action on 'day one' as Europe suffers under second wave*

AFP, Washington

The United States reported record new coronavirus cases for the third day in a row, as Joe Biden vowed to act against the pandemic on "day one" if he wins the presidential election in the world's worst-hit nation.

Global infections have surged past 49 million and Europe has become the new pandemic epicenter in recent weeks with more than 300,000 deaths -- nearly a quarter of the global total.

More than 127,000 new infections were reported in the US on Friday, the third straight day of record cases, as votes from the bitterly fought election were still being counted.

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 1,243,513 people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT yesterday.

On Friday, 9,018 new deaths and 610,768 new cases were recorded worldwide. Based on latest reports, the countries with the most new deaths were the United States with 1,149 new deaths, followed by France with 828 and India with 577.

No winner has been declared but Biden promised he would not waste time in addressing the pandemic if he is victorious.

"I want everyone, everyone to know on day one we're going to put our plan to control this virus into action," the Democrat said.

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