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RELIEF MISAPPROPRIATION

UP members alone at fault?

Suspended public representatives point the finger back at local admin officials

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Whenever the issue of relief misappropriation arises, the finger is usually pointed toward public representatives. In many cases, they are found to be involved in relief misappropriation.

But some local representatives The Daily Star talked with said they were made scapegoats by power-abusing local administration officials in the recent uproar over relief misappropriation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Local Government Division (LGD) has so far suspended 108 union parishad chairmen and members across the country for Covid-19 relief misappropriation. The LGD covers 4,568 unions.

On April 12, Kabir Hossain, the Ward 8 member of Pirjopur Union Parishad under Sonargaon upazila of Narayanganj, was suspended by the LGD upon the recommendation of the then UNO Saidul Islam for misappropriating relief.

But Kabir said the allegation of relief misappropriation against him is baseless. He was framed for his refusal to comply

with "the upazila nirbahi officer's request of donating Tk 2 lakh for relief".

Kabir alleged that he was suspended two days after his refusal to "donate" the amount to UNO Saidul.

He filed a writ petition with the High Court on July 22 challenging the LGD's suspension order and won a stay for six months.

Kabir also lodged complaints at several government bodies including the Anti-Corruption Commission, where he bought an allegation against UNO Saidul of asking for the money.

The Daily Star has obtained copies of the letter submitted to the ACC and certification of the relief distribution by Pirojpur UP Chairman Masudur Rahman Masum.

In the letter to the ACC, Kabir said he received relief from the union parishad on two dates -- four packages on March 28 and six packages on April 2 -- which he duly distributed.

Each package contained 10kg of rice, 2kg of potatoes, 1kg of lentils, salt, and soap.

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Pipes have been piled up by Dhaka Wasa on the footpath of English Road for over a month, forcing pedestrians to walk in the middle of the street near Bangshal Police Station in Old Dhaka. Wasa is installing new water supply lines there. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

COVID FALLOUT PACKAGE

Let barriers be removed

Govt to hold dialogue series to find ways to speed up implementations

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

In the face of criticisms, the government is going to evaluate its economic rescue scheme announced six months ago to tackle the fallout of the pandemic.

The finance ministry will hold a dialogue series, styled "Stimulus Packages for Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery from Covid-19 Fallout in Bangladesh" on three separate dates with economists, development partners, local think-tanks and other stakeholders.

The move comes amid criticisms over the effectiveness of the scheme as disbursement of the funds to small and medium enterprises and farm sectors is still very slow.

A local think-tank also noted that the stimulus packages could not create the required number of jobs.

"We will present reports on the progress and achievements of the fiscal packages before the stakeholders. The stakeholders will also come up with suggestions. We will then set the next course of action," a

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The universe is like a giant human brain!



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The universe is similar to a huge human brain, scientists have found.

A new study investigated the differences and similarities between two of the most complex systems in existence, though at entirely difference scales: the cosmos and its galaxies and the brain and its neuronal cells.

They found that while the scale is clearly different, the structure is remarkably similar. In some cases, the two systems seemed more similar to each other than they did to the parts that make

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HC TERMS FOR BAIL

Rape accused marries victim in Feni jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man detained in a rape case yesterday married his victim at Feni jail gate in order to get bail in line with a directive from the High Court.

The marriage took place in the presence of family members from both sides around noon.

Moniruzzaman, local assistant commissioner of land and executive magistrate, and marriage registrar Abdur Rahim were also present.

Zahirul Islam Zia, the accused, son of a local union parishad member, raped the woman of Chardarbesh area in Feni's Sonagazi on May 27, according to the case statement.

The following day, the victim filed the case under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act with Sonagazi Police

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Families of POWs, internees to be repatriated

November 20, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

HUMANITARIAN GESTURE BY BANGLADESH AND INDIA Bangladesh and India have decided to repatriate to Pakistan members of the families of Pakistani civilian internees and prisoners of war as "a humanitarian gesture", the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry announces today. The repatriation offer covers "the families -- women and children-- of Pakistani civilian internees who sought protection with the joint command of India and Bangladesh forces and the families of POWs who had surrendered to the joint command."

The announcement expresses the hope that Pakistan "will [be] set in the same humanitarian spirit and allow the families of all Bangladesh nationals who are detained or held up in Pakistan to return to Bangladesh".

Arrangements to give effect to this proposal will be made on receiving "positive response" from Pakistan, the announcement adds.

A Pakistan government spokesman welcomes the decision regarding the release of 6,000 Pakistani women and children under detention in India. But, beyond claiming that Pakistan had already unilaterally released and repatriated all Indian civilian internees

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No separate tribunal for trying drug offences

JS passes narcotics control bill dropping the provision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The "Narcotics Control (Amendment) Bill, 2020" was passed in parliament yesterday, dropping the provision of setting up separate narcotics control tribunals to pave the way for competent courts to try the narcotics-related crimes.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq placed the bill on behalf of Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan as he was not present in the House yesterday.

The bill was later passed by voice vote.

Several opposition lawmakers of BNP and Jatiya Party placed proposals to send the bill to the select committee for eliciting public opinion.

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ROHINGYA CRISIS

UN adopts resolution for urgent solution

UNB, Dhaka

The United Nations has adopted a resolution stating that there should be an urgent solution to the Rohingya crisis to ensure safe and sustainable return of Rohingyas to their homes by creating a conducive environment inside Myanmar.

The resolution on "The situation of human rights of the Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar" called for specific actions on part of Myanmar, such as addressing the root causes

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A pond heron in hunting mode in a lake on Jahangirnagar University campus. The bird, which has long legs and a long beak, is very common in the country. It feeds on insects, fish and amphibians.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Oxford Covid vaccine safe for older adults

Show results; WHO says vaccine won't arrive in time to fight virus second wave

AGENCIES

AstraZeneca and Oxford University's potential Covid-19 vaccine produced a strong immune response in older adults, data published yesterday showed as the world Health Organisation warned that vaccines would not arrive in time to defeat the second wave of the pandemic.

The data, reported in part last month but published in full in The Lancet medical journal yesterday, suggest that those aged over 70, who are at higher risk of serious illness and death from Covid-19, could build robust immunity.

"The robust antibody and T-cell responses seen in older people in our study are encouraging," said Maheshi Ramasamy, a consultant and co-lead investigator at the Oxford Vaccine Group.

"We hope that this means our vaccine will help to protect some of the most vulnerable people in society, but further research will be needed before we can be sure."

Late-stage, or Phase III, trials are ongoing to confirm the findings, researchers said, and to test whether the vaccine protects against infection with SARS-CoV-2 in a broad range of people, including people with underlying health conditions.

Results of those trials should definitely be known by Christmas, the Oxford Vaccine Group's director, Andrew Pollard, said, adding it was too early to know whether and

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PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 20

Fajr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-05	12-30	3-45	5-21	7-00
JAMAAT 5-40	1-15	4-00	5-24	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION