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Your Right to Know

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"Use of mask is a must. Those not wearing masks will have to pay fine. This is very clear. The prime minister is serious about it."

ROAD TRANSPORT AND BRIDGES MINISTER OBAIDUL QUADER



"I think often of persecuted peoples: the Rohingya, the poor Uighurs, the Yazidi."

POPE FRANCIS POPE SAYS AS HE HOPES FOR A BETTER POST-COVID WORLD



"Greater latitude will be required from the world's largest powers to accommodate the individual interests of their partners and allies. We all need a bit more room to move."

AUSTRALIA PRIME MINISTER SCOTT MORRISON AMID US-SINO RIVALRY



AMPHETAMINE SMUGGLING

Stopover Dhaka

Banned chemical brought from India by road, sent abroad by air

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

A group of chemical traders in Chennai are found to be the kingpins of amphetamine smuggling from India through Dhaka, according to an investigation by the Department of Narcotics Control.

About a year ago, the unscrupulous traders started to use Bangladesh as a smuggling route and ship the banned chemical to several destinations, mostly in Australia and Malaysia, under false declaration and without the knowledge of courier companies.

Amphetamine could be processed into yaba and sold to addicts in the countries where the crazy pills of Myanmar have started to get popular.

Bangladesh banned import of this chemical and its use in the production of cold medicine in February 2017. India also has banned its export, say DNC officials.

The Chennai-based group linked up with some chemical importers at Mitford medicine hub to run the smuggling smoothly for a year, until a package of 12.32kg amphetamine powder was seized from the cargo village area of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on September 9.

The Mitford allies were being paid handsomely by the drug racket upon every successful shipment of couriers, found narcotics officials.

The contraband was brought to Dhaka by land "every three days" and sent to different countries -- each consignment containing 12 to 20 kilogrammes of amphetamine powder.

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- Amphetamine widely used in producing yaba
- Bangladesh banned its import in February 2017
- Chennai-based syndicate teamed up with chemical importers in Mitford area
- Smuggling continued through Dhaka at least for a year



Firefighters at work at Jahuri Mahalla slum in the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday. The fire, which broke out around 4:15pm and was put out after an hour and a half, razed 60 shanties to the ground. No casualties were reported.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Defiant Trump allows Biden transition

Legal battles to continue; president-elect names top cabinet picks

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump came his closest yet to admitting election defeat Monday after the government agency meant to ease Joe Biden's transition into the White House said it was finally lifting its unprecedented block on assistance.

Trump acknowledged it was time for the General Services Administration (GSA) to "do what needs to be done."

In the same tweet he insisted that he was still refusing to concede, saying: "Our case STRONGLY continues, we will keep up the good fight, and I believe we will prevail!"

But for the Republican to sign off on the GSA's decision to work with the Biden transition team

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METRO EXTENSION, TRANSPORT HUB

Kamalapur station may shift northward

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Railway and the metro rail authorities have agreed to a new plan which requires shifting of Kamalapur Station Plaza to a nearby location to make space for extending the MRT-6 line up to Kamalapur from Motijheel.

The existing plaza will be demolished and a similar one will be built north of it as per the new plan that will turn the station into a true transport hub, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon told The Daily Star after a meeting between the two sides yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will make the final decision in this regard as the existing plaza, an iconic structure, has to be demolished to implement the new plan, he mentioned.

"The metro rail authorities [Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited] agreed to the new plan proposed by Kajima Corporation [a Japanese company]. We also accepted the plan, subject to the prime minister's approval," he said.

Seeking anonymity, a railway official, who attended the meeting, said the station plaza has to be shifted 130 metres north of its current location to implement the new



plan.

"If the existing plan is implemented, the station will be completely shadowed by the MRT-6 [Mass Rapid Transit] structure. There is no option but to shift the station because even if the existing plan is modified, the station will be partially shadowed by the MRT-6 structure," the official pointed out.

Officials of Kajima Corporation, which is leading the Kamalapur Multimodal Transport Hub (MmTH) Sub Working Group, placed the new plan at yesterday's meeting at Rail Bhaban.

The BR and the DMTC, the implementing authority of the country's first metro rail, have been in a dispute over extension of the MRT-6 line from Motijheel to Kamalapur.

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COVID-19 VACCINE

Work to ensure smooth supply, distribution

PM directs officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As Covid-19 cases yesterday crossed the 4.5 lakh mark, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked officials concerned to prepare for the proper supply and distribution of the vaccine before it arrives in the country.

The premier issued the directive at the meeting of Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) held at the NEC conference room in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday, Planning Secretary Mohd Asadul Islam said following the meeting.

Hasina also said there should be proper management to ensure there is no waste as the vaccine is a "sensitive" drug.

On November 5, the government signed a trilateral memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bangladesh's



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SMART NID FOR EXPATRIATES

EC sending staff to 40 countries

Tk 100cr set aside for this

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission will send its officials to 40 countries to hand smart NID cards to the Bangladeshis living there.

The work in this regard will start once the Covid-19 situation improves and the EC plans to deliver the cards in Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and the UK in the first phase.

Tk 100 crore was set aside for the work from the funds of Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (phase-II) Project, which will be implemented from this December to November 2025 spending Tk 1,805.09 crore.

Phase-II of the IDEA project was approved at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council yesterday. After the weekly Ecne meeting, Planning Commission member Abul Kalam Azad said the new project had been undertaken as the tenure of the first phase of the IDEA project would expire in December.

He said the EC would send its teams to 40 countries which host the largest number of Bangladeshis to include their names in the voter list and provide them with NID cards.

He also said the EC teams would work in coordination with the respective embassies under the new project.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday evening, IDEA Project Director Brig Gen Mohammed Saidul Islam said they planned to spend Tk 2.5 crore for the work in each country on average.

"But we will need more than Tk 2.5 crore for some large countries as we will need to send several teams at the registration points there," he said.

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Veteran journo Muntiruzzaman passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Celebrated journalist and acting editor of the Daily Sangbad, Khandaker Muntiruzzaman, who upheld progressive ideals, secular politics and freedom of speech, passed away yesterday.

Muntiruzzaman, 71, breathed his last around 7:40am at Mugda Medical College Hospital. Earlier, he was undergoing treatment at his Shantinagar home after he tested positive for Covid-19.

As his condition deteriorated, he was admitted to the hospital on October 31.

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Faridul takes oath as state minister for religious affairs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League MP Faridul Haque Khan took oath as the state minister for religious affairs last evening.

President Abdul Hamid administered his oath taking ceremony at Bangabhaban, the President's residence cum office, around 7:00pm.

Khandker Anwarul Islam conducted the oath taking ceremony in presence of only three ministers and few other officials concerned for Covid-19 situation.

The three-time lawmaker from Jamalpur-2 succeeded Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who died after having a cardiac arrest on June 14 at the age of 75.

According to the rules, the Prime Minister's Office conducted the activities of the religious affairs ministry after the demise of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

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A mobile court hands a mask to a woman in the capital's Jhigatola intersection during a drive to enforce health safety rules yesterday. The court fined people for not wearing masks and also distributed face coverings among many others who admitted they should not have come out of home without wearing one.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Good initiative, yet ineffective

Committees formed in unions to prevent repression of women mostly non-functional, doing little to support victims

NILIMA JAHAN

While the government has taken steps to ensure victims of gender-based violence such as rape can go to local-level bodies for remedy, these initiatives largely fall flat because of little action and follow-up.

In 2014, the women and children affairs ministry formed a Nari Nirjaton Protirodh Committee (NNPC) in every union with the aim of combating the scourge of child marriage and violence against women in the country.

The role of the committee, headed by the union parishad chairman, is to create awareness about gender-based violence and child marriage by holding a ward-based monthly meeting, according to a gazette published on May 11, 2015.

Each committee also includes three female and three male UP members nominated by the UP chairman, one teacher nominated by the UNO, one community police, one local NGO representative, one imam, and one Nikah registrar (kazi).

The ministry also formed an NNPC in every upazila and district, where the UNO and the DC respectively are the heads of the committee.

At the union level, these committees are supposed to

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