

8 iconic mosques for 8 divisions:PM

Will be built with Saudi support
BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said eight “iconic mosques” with all modern facilities will be built in eight divisions of the country with Saudi assistance.

The prime minister discussed the issue when newly-appointed Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh Essa Bin Yusef Al-Duhailan paid a courtesy call on her at her official residence Gono Bhaban in the morning.

After the meeting, PM’s Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters.

The premier said 560 model mosque and Islamic cultural centres are being constructed at upazila level with Saudi assistance.

She also recalled development of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the capital with Saudi cooperation, the press secretary said.

Noting that her government gives priority to the agriculture sector, Hasina said Bangladesh could provide farm labourers to Saudi Arabia.

Pointing out the traditional relationship between the two brotherly countries, she said Bangladesh always values these ties.

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An executive magistrate of Rab gets ready to place over the face of a person not wearing a mask at Shahbagh intersection yesterday. Covid-19 cases and deaths have been on the rise recently, and experts say the coming winter may worsen the situation. Authorities are also conducting drives to ensure people are following the health guideline.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Grassroots orgs standing up against gender-based violence

Speakers tell MJF webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sirajganj’s Husne Ara Jolly married at an early age. She has been subjected to violence throughout her married life, and at one point, she attempted to take her own life.

However, considering the future of her children, she left her husband and started working for the good of survivors of domestic violence like herself.

It was difficult to work alone, so she decided to form an organisation called Programme for Women Development with like-minded women in 1999. They registered it with Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

Initially, she developed a good relationship with union parishads, community leaders, journalists, police station, court, hospital and other service providers and with their help, she started working on preventing all forms of violence against women and girls and empowering them.

“At one point I was engaged with Manusher Jonno Foundation. Afterwards I formed different groups in the grassroots level consisting of women, men, adolescents, and youth, gave them the training to prevent all sorts of gender-based violence. In the last one year, we have stopped 123 weddings and prevented 775 marriages from happening, trained 169 female arbitrators, who are taking part in different village arbitrations,” shared Husne Ara, at a webinar yesterday.

The webinar titled “Grassroots Response to Address Violence against Women and Girls” was organized by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF).

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Drive against graft, irregularities in AL to continue: Quader

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said the drive Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina started against irregularities and corruption in the party will continue.

AL is a disciplined political party, he said, adding, “The party does not tolerate irregularities and corruption. Organisational steps are taken as soon as any allegation is found to be true.”

He made the remarks while speaking at a briefing at his official residence in the morning.

There is no chance to commit crimes in AL using political identity, Quader said, adding that a culprit is a culprit in the eyes of party president Sheikh Hasina.

He said the government’s achievements cannot be allowed to fade due to crimes of a few people.

The main goal of AL, a strong and people-oriented organisation, is to establish understanding among its different units. Stalemates happen in

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Graft in health sector, violence on women, pressure on media

TIB expresses concern over irregularities amid pandemic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday expressed deep concern over the graft in the country’s health sector and irregularities occurred during the coronavirus pandemic.

Besides, the anti-graft watchdog expressed concern over the gradual rise of incidents of violence against women and children and continuous institutional and non-institutional pressure on the media.

The TIB members voiced the concerns during the annual members’ meeting that was held virtually, said a press release.

During the meeting, the TIB

members called upon the authorities concerned to ensure effective participation of youths in fighting global disastrous events like the coronavirus pandemic as well as in the decision-making process to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Besides, they called upon the government to work for ensuring flourish of effective institutions those uphold transparency and accountability.

They also urged the authorities to ensure safe and orderly banking system to bring back people’s trust in the sector.

Moreover, they stressed for

implementing the promises of building a democratic Bangladesh through taking effective measures in curbing corruption.

TIB members also expressed deep concern over the failure of Anti-Corruption Commission and other related institutions in controlling massive corruption that persists in the country, despite sufficient legal basis.

They think, TIB has been subjected to “unwanted and premeditative” comments because of its activities and research reports, which turned out to be an ill-attempt to avoid responsibility.

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Shaheed Dr Milon Day today

CITY DESK

Shaheed Dr Milon Day will be observed across the country today, commemorating the 30th martyrdom anniversary of Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon, who was joint secretary general of Bangladesh Medical Association.

Milon, a teacher of Dhaka Medical College, was killed by thugs of then authoritarian ruler HM Ershad near TSC of Dhaka University, at the height of the anti-autocracy movement on this day in 1990.

The sacrifice of Dr Milon transformed the movement into a mass uprising that prompted the fall of the regime, paving way for restoration of democracy.



A one-stop info service for migrant workers

IOM, Brac launch bdeshjatra app, website

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Organization for Migration yesterday launched an online platform for migrant workers that provides information on safe migration, sustainable reintegration, and remittance management.

A smartphone application -- bdeshjatra -- is available for download from Google Play store. Besides, users will be able to use it via web on www.bdeshjatra.com.

The application, developed in Bangla language, provides information on all stages of the migration-cycle, including pre-decision, pre-departure, migration, and return.

It can also be used in low data usage mode.

The app was developed under the European Union-funded project “Bangladesh: Sustainable Reintegration and Improved Migration Governance (Prottasha)” implemented by IOM in partnership with Brac under the leadership of Bangladesh government.

It is hosted by bdjobs, Bangladesh’s largest job site.

IOM Bangladesh formally launched the platform in a virtual ceremony.

Addressing the ceremony, IOM Bangladesh Chief of Mission Giorgi Gigauri said the purpose of the platform is to ensure that migrants and their family members know their rights, can access to support and services inside Bangladesh and the countries of destination.

Bangladesh is a major labour-sending country and Bangladesh government is committed to ensuring welfare of migrants and promoting regular migration, said Giorgi.

He said both governmental and non-governmental organisations are working to promote safe and orderly migration practices and ensuring access to correct and authentic information on migration process, remittance management and many other aspects of migration.

However, total elimination of irregular migration and human trafficking remains the major challenge in many countries including Bangladesh, he added.

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Snake venom worth Tk 9cr seized, 2 held

CID suspects smugglers were using Bangladesh as a pit-stop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminal Investigation Department of police has seized snake venom worth Tk 9 crore and arrested two smugglers from Gazipur on Wednesday.

The arrestees are Mamun Talukder (51) and his associate Md Mamun (33). They were arrested from Kaliakoir of Gazipur, CID Additional Deputy Inspector General Sheikh Rezaul Haider told a press briefing yesterday.

Investigators suspect the arrestees were using Bangladesh as a route to smuggle the venom into Indonesia and Malaysia. Police suspect Mamun is the kingpin of the smuggling ring.

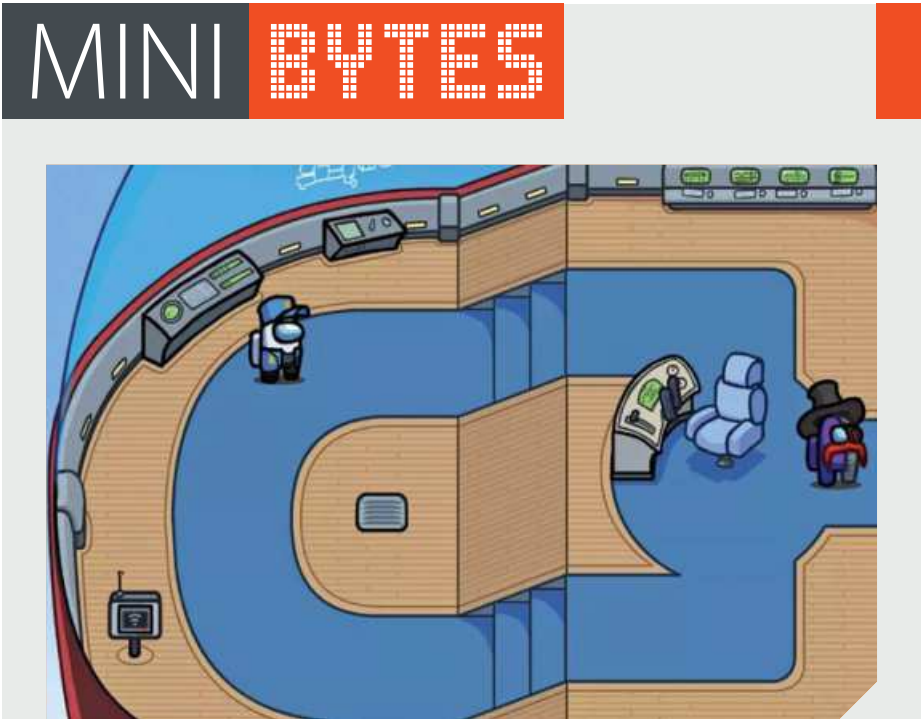
During the drive, CID recovered two lockers containing six bottles of snake venom from their possession. The bottles were brandished with ‘COBRA Snake Poison of France, Red Dragon Company, Cobra Code No-80975, Made in France’.

“The snake venom somehow entered the country through the smuggling ring, although we’re not sure from where,” the CID official said.

CID already has information that some consignments have been smuggled from Bangladesh, he added.

DIG Rezaul said a team of CID had previously conducted a drive in the district on November 17 and busted a snake venom smuggling ring and found out of another ring.

Snake venom is used in Asian traditional medicine, but does not have widespread use in Bangladesh. CID said it is illegal to trade snake venom in the country.



Boredom busters and content verification

EH SANUR RAZA RONNY

4TH LEVEL IN AMONG US

Among Us is the biggest hit game this year. The indie game has a team of players work together to performing simple tasks on three available maps. There are randomly assigned “Imposters” who will have to directly, or indirectly, kill the other players without getting caught.

The game is two years old but it rose to sudden fame this year, with people stuck at home and wanting something more than just killing time. It has been downloaded 217 million times. Want to see if it will rack up something close to PUBGs 734 million downloads?”

The latest update to the game is a new fourth level. Developer InnerSloth gave a screenshot of the new map which looks like a large cockpit complete with the all-important vent through which players get around. It will be revealed at The Game Awards on December 10th where Among Us is nominated for “Best Multiplayer,” and “Best Mobile Game.”

CONTENT VERIFICATION ON YOUTUBE AND TWITTER

Covid vaccine news getting you hopeful? YouTube is adding a verification panel so that viewers can be directed towards legitimate sources of information related to Covid-19 vaccines. This is in an attempt to combat misinformation. Relevant videos will also prompt more verified info linking sources like CDC and WHO.

YouTube is a massive hotbed of misinformation especially for conspiracy theorists and anti-vaxxers. Twitter also announced a relaunch of its verification process early next year. Once verified, users will get that all important small, blue badge. Accounts will need to meet certain criteria to be verified such as like being profiled in a media outlet. Among other rules, verified users can have their badge revoked if they change their name or bio to mislead people. Twitter is taking surveys on its policy and users can tweet their feedback before December 8th with the tag #VerificationFeedback.

DRAW UP YOUR OWN MONSTER

Have you heard of Chimera? It’s a genetic anomaly where one organism contains two sets of DNA. In Greek mythology (and sounding much cooler) it was a fire breathing creature made of two animals. You can play with Chimera though. It is an AI tool made by Google researchers. It will turn your strange doodles into monsters. You draw, it applies textures and fine tunes it. Random blobs will be textured blobs. So you’ll have to put a little effort into it. It uses machine learning similar to how Nvidia made landscapes, MIT and IBM created buildings. You have segmentation map overlays that divide different parts of a monster for you to draw (muzzle, limb, claw etc). Lot of options, super easy, so try it (https://storage.googleapis.com/chimera-painter/index.html) or just look for chimera painter. I’ve been spending all day on it.



Sixty-year-old Abed Ali sets up his makeshift station for men’s grooming and haircuts, but this road in Savar’s Fulbaria remains fairly empty. Before the pandemic, Abed Ali’s daily income averaged at Tk 300. But now he barely makes Tk 100 per day. The elderly man has been passing his days in hardship as the pandemic disproportionately affect lower-income groups.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN