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SHAH CEMENT

FARMING AFTER FLOODS

Battered, they keep on trying

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Abdus Samad could not harvest a single grain of coriander (dhoney) or sesame (til) or an ounce of jute from his five bighas of land due to this year's prolonged flood.

The 65-year-old farmer in Khanurbari village of Tangail's Bhuapur upazila also did not get any government assistance or flood rehabilitation support.

Yet Samad, a father of four, continued the battle for survival and has started cultivating fresh crops after the floodwater receded from his fields on the bank of the Jamuna river.

Samad was seen preparing his fields to cultivate peanut with his wife and other family members joining hands with him.

"No matter the government helps me or not, I can't sit idle. I have to earn for my family," Samad told this correspondent, who recently visited Khanurbari village.

Displaced by the erosion of the Jamuna a decade ago, Samad now lives on others' land. He said he has taken loan from a bank to cultivate peanut and different kinds of pulses on his farmland.

"I have to engage my family members in the cultivation as I can't afford to pay labourers. I have to start paying instalments of loan," he said.

Samad is not alone. Many farmers in char areas of the Jamuna under the worst-affected Bhuapur upazila are facing similar financial hardship due to the prolonged floods.

During the visit to the char areas, including in Gabsara, Arjuna, Nikrail and Govindasi, this correspondent saw many farmers along with their family cultivating different Robi crops like peanut, vegetables and pulses.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Farmer Abdus Samad, holding the plough, and his wife and son-in-law try to sow peanut seeds again at a char on the Jamuna in Khanurbari of Tangail's Bhuapur upazila after missing out on three crops due to prolonged floods. Displaced by the erosion of the Jamuna a decade ago, Samad now lives on others' land.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Govt plans to evict forest grabbers

STAR REPORT

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change yesterday decided to conduct drives to evict illegal grabbers of protected forest land.

The ministry made the decision in a special meeting presided over by Minister Md Shahab Uddin. They did not reveal any date for the drives.

A total of 1,38,613.06 acres of 33,10,907.52 acres protected forest land have been grabbed by 88,215 individuals and entities, the ministry said in a press release.

Among them, 140 grabbers built factories grabbing 820.34 acres of forest land, while another 5,982 built markets, resorts, farms, and educational institutions grabbing 14,149.17 acres.

Moreover, 82,093 others built houses and turned 1,23,643.55 acres of forest land into farmland, an official of the ministry said.

In the meeting, the ministry decided to start drives in Gazipur, Tangail,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

US ELECTIONS

Electoral college votes to confirm Biden win

REUTERS, Washington

Electors gathered in state capitols across the country yesterday to formally vote for Joe Biden as the next US president, effectively ending President Donald Trump's frenzied but failing attempt to overturn his loss in the November 3 election.

The state-by-state votes, traditionally an afterthought, have taken on outsized significance this year in light of Trump's unprecedented assault on the nation's democratic process. Pushing false claims of widespread fraud, Trump has pressured state officials to throw the election results out and declare him the winner.

In the United States, a candidate becomes president not by winning a majority of the national popular vote but through an Electoral College system, which allots electoral votes to the 50 states and the District of Columbia largely based on their population.

Election results show Biden, the Democratic former vice president, won 306 of the 538 electoral votes available - exceeding the necessary 270. Trump, a Republican, earned 232.

In capitols such as Lansing, Michigan;

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Indira felicitates Bangabandhu

December 15, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

INDIRA'S MESSAGE TO BANGABANDHU

Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi has sent a message today felicitating Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the occasion of Victory Day. In her message she and her colleagues in the government of India pays glowing tribute to the martyrs of Bangladesh and send sincere good wishes to Bangabandhu personally as well as to the people of Bangladesh and shares Bangabandhu's pride on the consolidation of the independence of Bangladesh as reflected in the adoption of the constitution.

MCAS HAVE FULFILLED THEIR PLEDGE: BANGABANDHU

Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman says in Gono Parishad today that the members of the assembly have fulfilled their pledge by giving the country a constitution. In a tone of obvious satisfaction, the prime minister says that by suggesting the dissolution of the Gono Parishad, the members have created a history unique in the annals of parliamentary democracy. He requests the speaker to announce the dissolution of the Gono Parishad today.

SOURCES: December 16, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.



8 to die for murder, rape of 9-yr-old

3 others get death penalty for killing 2 boys

STAR REPORT

A court in Chattogram yesterday sentenced eight people to death and fined them Tk 1 lakh each for murdering a nine-year-old girl after gang-raping her in the port city's Akbar Shah area in 2018.

In another incident, three people were handed death penalty, three jailed till death while three others were given life-term imprisonment in a case for killing two boys after abduction in Tangail's Mirzapur in 2016.

In Chattogram, Md Jamiul Haider, judge of Chattogram Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-4, delivered the verdict in the presence of seven accused in the courtroom, said Public Prosecutor MA Naser of the tribunal.

The seven convicts are Md Belal Hossen alias

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Hubble observes strange, distant exoplanet



CNN ONLINE

A massive exoplanet orbiting in a double star system 336 light-years away may be similar to the alleged "Planet Nine" that may exist on the outskirts of our solar system, according to a new study.

The exoplanet, or planet located outside of our solar system, is called HD106906 b and it's 11 times the mass of Jupiter, the largest known planet in our solar system. It takes 15,000 Earth years for the exoplanet to complete one orbit around the pair of stars.

The study published in The Astronomical Journal.

Although the exoplanet was discovered in 2013

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

37 more die, 1,799 infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 37 people have died from Covid-19 in 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday, according to a press release issued by the DGHS.

With this, the total number of deaths has reached 7,089 and the death rate 1.44 percent.

In the same 24 hours, a total of 1,799 new infections were recorded, taking the total number of people infected to 4,92,332, the release added.

Against a total of 16,828 tests in those 24 hours, the positivity rate was 10.69 percent, while the overall positivity rate was 16.49 percent.

In the 24 hours, a total of 2,949 Covid-19 patients have recovered, taking the total number of recoveries to 4,23,845. This was around 86.09 percent of all confirmed cases.

Among the 37 deceased, 27 were men and 10 were women.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

FACEBOOK.COM, BD

Court stops domain use as facebook files case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following a hearing of a case filed by the authorities of social media giant Facebook against a Bangladeshi firm called A1 Software, a Dhaka court has banned the "facebook.com.bd" domain in Bangladesh.

The court has issued an interim injunction against the defendant, along with a show-cause notice, and has asked to respond within the next 15 days, said Moksadul Islam, Facebook's appointed lawyer in Bangladesh for the case.

The next hearing date has been set to March 9, 2021, Moksadul said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 15

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:20 12:45 3:45 5:22 7:00
JAMAAT 5:55 1:15 4:00 5:25 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Up to 900 migrant workers wishing to travel abroad for work get tested for Covid-19 at this designated area of Chattogram General Hospital every day. They need to arrive a day ahead to register. The migrants usually start to queue up as early as 4:00am to get tested.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

'Healing is coming'

Says New York nurse after being first in US to get the vaccine

REUTERS, New York

An intensive care unit nurse became the first person in the United States to receive the newly authorized Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine yesterday, calling it a sign that "healing is coming" as the US coronavirus death toll approaches 300,000.

Sandra Lindsay, who has treated some of the sickest Covid-19 patients for months, was given the vaccine at Long Island Jewish Medical Center in the New York City borough of Queens, an early epicenter of the country's Covid-19 outbreak, receiving applause on a livestream with New York Governor Andrew Cuomo.

"It didn't feel any different from taking any other vaccine," Lindsay said. "I feel hopeful today, relieved. I feel like healing is coming. I hope this marks the beginning of the end of a very painful time in our history. I want to instill public confidence that the vaccine is safe." Cuomo tweeted a picture of Lindsay, wearing a mask and staring resolutely ahead, as a doctor injected her in the arm, and said she was the first American to get vaccinated.

"This is what heroes look like," Cuomo wrote.

Minutes after Lindsay received the injection, President Donald Trump sent a tweet: "First Vaccine Administered. Congratulations USA! Congratulations WORLD!" Northwell Health, New York state's largest health system, operates some of the select hospitals in the United States that were administering the country's first inoculations of the a Covid-19 vaccine outside of clinical trials yesterday.

The vaccine, developed by Pfizer Inc and German

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5