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# Fake NID for Tk 1.5 lakh

Nexus between EC men and brokers busted; 556 cases filed against such card holders

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

A syndicate of brokers and some dishonest staffers of the Election Commission had been forging national ID cards for years due to a lack of strict monitoring and loopholes in the system, found a police investigation.

The fake NID cards, each of which sold at Tk 1.2 lakh to Tk 1.5 lakh, were used in fraudulence related to bank loans and land, said people with the knowledge of this illegal business.

While issuing of a dual NID is a punishable offence, the syndicate keeps the name and photo same and changes the rest of the information.

This card is sold to a person who already has an authentic NID against that name and photo, and is used mostly in bank loan scams. In another kind of forgery, the photo is changed and such a card is used mostly for selling someone else's land.

The NID wing of EC has identified around 1,057 people who have received the cards for a second time for ill motives, said a high official of the wing, adding they already blocked the cards with the EC's legal wing filing around 556 cases against these card holders.

"We have sacked some 42 employees of

the NID wing for their involvement with the nexus," the official told this newspaper on December 23 last year, on condition of anonymity.

There are around 10 crore registered NID card holders in the country and around another 2.7 lakh fresh applications submitted since 2019 are under process, according to the NID wing.

**THE SYNDICATE**

The Detective Branch of police on September 5 last year arrested five people, including two EC employees, from the capital's Mirpur for their alleged involvement in providing forged NIDs.

The DB also recovered around 12 forged NID cards from their possession. In interrogation, the arrestees disclosed names of four others, including two more EC employees who worked in Lalmonirhat.

A high official of DB, requesting anonymity, said these syndicate members would make a deal of up to Tk 1.5 lakh for supplying a fake NID card.

For completing the process in the NID wing, an EC staffer would get Tk 30,000 to Tk 40,000 for each card, the official told the Daily Star on December 22.

Sometimes, the offer comes from

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The surface of this canal, surrounded by makeshift shops, in Deb Dholaikhal is completely obscured by garbage, polythene and weeds. Not only is the canal's current state an environmental hazard, its stagnant water has also become a breeding ground for mosquitoes, which is a health risk and nuisance for people living nearby. The photo was taken from Kajlarpar area in the capital's Jatrabari yesterday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Let Bangladeshi workers return to Malaysia

Dhaka urges Kuala Lumpur

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has requested Kuala Lumpur to allow the Bangladeshi migrants, who got stranded after coming here on leave due to the pandemic, to return to their workplaces in Malaysia.

It also sought to widen cooperation on trade and investment with the Southeast Asian country.

The calls were made when newly appointed Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Hazanah Md Hasim called on State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam at the foreign ministry on Thursday.

Malaysia is home to around a million Bangladeshis. The annual trade volume between the two countries is about \$2.4 billion with Bangladesh exporting products to Malaysia worth \$260 billion.

Shahriar congratulated the new Malaysian envoy on her appointment and said the two countries have huge opportunities to widen trade and investment. The potential areas of cooperation include sectors like science-technology, healthcare, education, trade, tourism, energy etc.

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**BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES**

## Election will be absolutely free: Bangabandhu

January 9, 1973

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

**BANGABANDHU VISITS NATORE**

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today reiterates that elections set for March 7 would be absolutely free and fair. Pointing out that Bangladesh is a democratic country, he says there would be no interference in the elections. Addressing a public meeting at Natore, the prime minister says he would like to warn those who want to create disorder and foil elections. They would not gain anything by showing arms. The people of Bangladesh are capable of snatching those arms, he adds.

Bangabandhu regrets that some greedy elements are indulged in corruption even with regard to relief materials. He gives a fervent call for mass resistance against corruption and crimes.

**PETRO-CHEMICAL COMPLEX IN THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN**

The government is learnt to have been negotiating with the World Bank and other international financing agencies to finance the proposed petro-chemical complex at Ashuganj. The project is likely to be taken up in the first Five-Year Plan and the total cost of the project will be about Tk 250 crores. Before liberation, a scheme of Tk 100 crore was prepared by the World Bank for the project. The cost of the project has increased following the devaluation of the

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## Mirza again claims his life under threat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

The younger brother of Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader has once again claimed that his life was under threat.

Addressing a street rally as part of mayoral polls campaign in Noakhali's Companiganj upazila yesterday, Abdul Quader Mirza alleged that his election posters were torn down by conspirators from Majidee of Noakhali and Feni.

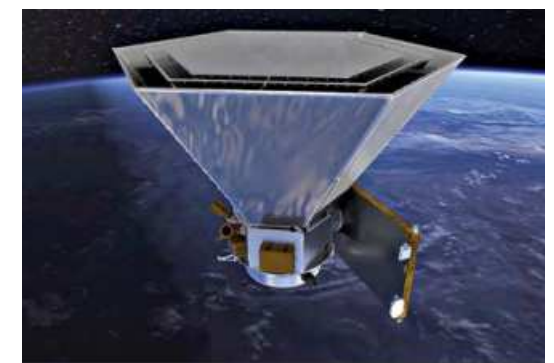
Mirza, who is the incumbent mayor of Basurhat municipality in Noakhali, is contesting the municipality polls, slated for January 16, for the mayoral post on the AL ticket.

He stirred up a debate in the political arena with some remarks recently.

At a rally on Wednesday, Mirza said he was receiving death threats

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## Nasa's new telescope to unlock mysteries of Big Bang



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Nasa is bringing its latest space telescope one step closer to launch, the agency announced Tuesday.

The Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization and Ices Explorer (SPHEREx), has three main goals: its first aim is to look for evidence of the Big Bang and map the resulting pattern of galaxies that came from the expansion, which could give physicists more information about the formation of our universe.

Its second aim is to study faint glows left by all the galaxies in the universe in order to understand how the said galaxies were formed.

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## MUMBAI ATTACKS Pakistan jails militant leader

AFP, Lahore

A Pakistani court yesterday sentenced a militant leader accused of plotting the 2008 Mumbai attacks to five years in jail for terror financing.

Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, a senior figure in the banned militant organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), was arrested in the eastern city of Lahore on Saturday where he was running a medical dispensary.

The police counter-terrorism department in the Pakistani province of Punjab accused Lakhvi of using the dispensary to collect funds for militant activities.

The court order, seen by AFP, sentenced Lakhvi to "rigorous imprisonment for five years" on three separate counts involving terror funding.

"All the sentences shall run concurrently," it said.

LeT and Lakhvi are accused by India and the United States of plotting the four-day Mumbai assault in

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## RMG worker stabbed to death in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A readymade garment worker was stabbed to death allegedly by his brother-in-law at Nayabazar in Narayanganj Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The victim Sumon Miah, 26, of Kishoreganj, used to live with his sister and her husband at a rented house in Nayabazar, said police.

Sumon's sister Hosne Ara, also a witness of the incident, said Sumon criticised her husband Habibullah, 32, for taking drugs and not providing

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People campaigning for the Chattogram City Corporation elections, slated for January 27, while ignoring safety guidelines amid the coronavirus pandemic. Not only are they crowding together, many are not wearing masks or wearing them improperly. This photo was taken from the port city's Jail Road yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

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## COVID VACCINES Poorest nations can expect doses within weeks

Says WHO; Pfizer vaccine 'neutralises key mutation' in new strains

AGENCIES

The world's poorest countries can expect to start receiving their first Covid-19 vaccine doses between the end of January and mid-February, the World Health Organization said Thursday.

Vaccination is already under way in some of the world's wealthiest nations, including the United States, Britain, European Union countries and Canada.

Covax, the globally-pooled vaccine procurement and distribution effort, has struck agreements to secure two billion doses -- and the first of those will start rolling out within weeks, said the WHO's head of vaccines, Kate O'Brien.

Covax aims to secure vaccines for 20 percent of the population in each participating country by the end of the year, with funding covered for the 92 lower- and lower-middle income economies involved in the scheme.

It is led by the WHO, the Gavi vaccine alliance and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI).

Asked how quickly lower-income African nations would get vaccines, O'Brien told a WHO live social media event: "The facility has access to over two billion doses of vaccine."

"We will start to deliver those vaccines probably by the end of January, and, if not, certainly by early February and mid-February."



**PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 9**  
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:30 7:00  
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION