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Your Right to Know

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"History says they [Myanmar] took back over 2 lakh Rohingyas who came here in 1992. So, we are hopeful that this time also they will take back them."
FOREIGN MINISTER AK ABDUL MOMEN



"The United States government took these actions unilaterally... I am lifting all of these self-imposed restrictions."
US SECRETARY OF STATE MIKE POMPEO ON LIFTING CURBS ON OFFICIAL AMERICAN CONTACTS WITH TAIWAN



"I believe that ethically everyone should take the vaccine."
POPE FRANCIS URGES EVERYONE TO GET COVID SHOTS



PFIZER'S COVID-19 VACCINE

Govt may go for it despite challenges

Worries remain over lack of facilities needed to store vaccine at -70C, special syringe availability

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government decided to take the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine from COVAX despite challenges of maintaining the cold chain and ensuring the supply of the particular syringes required.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) will soon inform COVAX about the decision along with a detailed deployment plan.

Distribution of this vaccine can be complicated because it needs to be stored at very low temperatures of about minus 70 degrees Celsius, far below the normal refrigerator levels.

Many have pointed out that Bangladesh lacks the system required to store the doses.

But DGHS Director General ABM Khurshid Alam said, "We have interest in taking the vaccine and there is no reason to shun this opportunity. We are working to submit a complete plan... on its supply, distribution and storage."



Officials are trying to overcome the challenges, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

An official of the government's Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) said officials were evaluating the existing cold chain equipment.

The COVAX programme, led by the World Health Organisation and global alliance GAVI, has offered Bangladesh around four lakh doses of the vaccine developed by US drugmaker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech.

COVAX has promised to deliver a total of 2 billion doses of vaccines to at least 172 countries by the end of this year.

Industry insiders said some organisations in Bangladesh have the equipment to store the doses. But not all of them can be made available for this vaccine.

Others pointed out that the 0.3 ml syringe needed to administer the vaccine

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Scores of vessels moored haphazardly along the banks of the Shitalakkhya river. Traders have anchored their ships here without permission and built bamboo walkways extending more than 100 feet into the river to offload bricks, sand and cement to be sold locally. This practice has also contributed to the pollution of the river. The picture was taken from the northern side of Kanchpur bridge in Narayanganj yesterday.

UTTARA FINANCE & INVESTMENTS LTD

BB probe reveals Tk 5,100cr scam

Irregularities done by board, management in loan disbursement and mobilisation of deposits

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

When one applies for a loan from any financial institution, the lender has to make sure that the loan application goes through at least five layers of scrutiny.

But Uttara Finance and Investment Ltd (UFIL), a non-bank financial institution, has not followed any of the procedures in disbursing a huge amount of loans.

For instance, it gave Tk 336 crore loans to Uttara Motors and other concerns of Uttara Group without any credit proposals, breaching the banking rules.

The loans were not shown in the UFIL's annual report and the financial balance sheet to dodge both its stakeholders and Bangladesh Bank, a central bank probe has found.

The BB also detected that the UFIL management created two sections in

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THE ANOMALIES

- Tk 521 cr siphoned off in the name of buying shares
- Tk 1,224 cr embezzled in the form of fake loans
- Tk 725 cr not shown as term deposit in financial statement despite taking from depositors
- Tk 1,998 cr loan given but not included in financial statement
- Tk 381 cr embezzled through call money market
- Tk 236 cr fake term deposits issued in favour of a director
- Uttara Finance MD apologises for the scam

Bangabandhu killer Mosleh Uddin stripped of FF status

51 others get same treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has cancelled the freedom fighter certificate of former army officer Risaldar Mosleh Uddin, a convicted killer of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs issued a gazette notification on January 5 cancelling the certificate of Risaldar Mosleh Uddin, a self-confessed killer of Bangabandhu in August 1975.

Mosleh Uddin is also facing the death penalty for his involvement in the killing of four national leaders at Dhaka Central

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COVID VACCINATION

Registration likely to begin Jan 21

An app developed to help people register for the jobs

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The country's Covid-19 vaccination drive will soon begin, with an app for online registration set to be operational from January 21.

People will have to fill out information through a mobile and web-based app called "Surokkha", developed by the Department of Information and Communication Technology, the Dhaka DC office, and the Directorate General of Health Services.

Health officials said they are planning to vaccinate 25 lakh people in the first phase and for this, people have to register through the Surokkha app.

"We are trying heart and soul to open the app for registration by January 21. Tomorrow [Monday] there will be a press briefing where every details of the app will be disclosed," ABM Khurshid Alam, director general of DGHS, told The Daily

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HOW IT WILL WORK

- 1 People to REGISTER with web portal Surokkha (NID required)
- 2 Surokkha to issue VACCINE CARD (with vaccination date, time)
- 3 TEXT MESSAGES to alert vaccination date, time
- 4 FIRST DOSE administered on specified date, time
- 5 SECOND DOSE administered on specified date, time
- 6 Surokkha to issue VACCINE CERTIFICATE

Homecoming speech had guidelines to run country

PM says about Bangabandhu's address

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh



Hasina yesterday said Bangabandhu's January 10, 1972 speech has all the guidelines required to run an independent state.

"The January 10, 1972 speech of Bangabandhu at the Racecourse Maidan on his return to the country from Pakistani captivity has all the required guidelines to run an independent state. There was no written speech in his (Bangabandhu's) hand.

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Unworthy of a response

Mayor Taposh says about criticism made by his predecessor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday said a person of his stature should not reply to comments made by his predecessor Sayeed Khokon.

The mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) was referring to Khokon's comment that Taposh lost the eligibility to remain in office by transferring hundreds of crores of taka from the corporation to a bank he owns.

Taposh said Khokon's comment was of little importance. "If someone says something out of personal grievance, it is improper to reply while holding a responsible post," he said after placing wreaths before a portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the capital's Dhanmondi.

At a human chain in front of the High Court on Saturday, Khokon said

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Athletes from various nations, including Bangladesh, taking part in the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Dhaka Marathon-2021 in the capital's Hatirjheel yesterday. The marathon is part of the celebrations surrounding the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

STABILISING RICE MARKET

Experts call for effective policy

Govt should form a commission for agriculture goods pricing, they say

STAR REPORT

An efficient government policy to collect, reserve and import rice is crucial to maintaining a balanced price in the market, said the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh yesterday.

At the virtual dialogue titled "Why price of rice is soaring? Who's gaining, who's losing?" the speakers also emphasised on prioritising marginalised farmers in the policy and increasing accuracy in estimates of food grain production.

The dialogue, moderated by Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, convener of the platform, also advised the government to form a commission for the pricing of agriculture goods.

Dr M Asaduzzaman, former research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) said, "Marginalised farmers are being neglected in the present marketing system, just like they were in the colonial period. "As the price of rice started soaring, there are many unanswered questions. Why has the government failed to collect the targeted rice; why the delay to start importing and how is the government planning to pressurise hoarders?" he queried.

Shykh Seraj, director and head of news at Channel I, said, "Farmers are not benefiting from the price hike as they sell right after harvest. Many farmers are moving away from paddy to cultivating exotic crops... that may be

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