



THE DAILY

SECOND EDITION
Star

ON FRIDAY



REGD. NO. DA 781 | Vol. XXXI No. 2 | MAGH 1, 1427 BS | Your Right to Know | JAMADIU SANI 1, 1442 HIJRI | 16 PAGES PLUS TOGGLE PRICE : Tk12.00



"Bangladesh doesn't patronise militancy and we never said we eradicated militancy. We say that we have been able to contain militancy."
HOME MINISTER ASADUZZAMAN KHAN



"Today, in a bipartisan way, this House demonstrated that no one is above the law - not even the president of the United States..."
US HOUSE SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI



"There is never a justification for violence. No excuses, no exceptions: America is a nation of laws."
TRUMP URGES AMERICANS TO AVOID VIOLENCE IN HIS FIRST COMMENTS AFTER BEING IMPEACHED

Beware of bird strike!

Aircraft safety compromised at ill-equipped Shahjalal airport



RASHIDUL HASAN

Around mid-February in 2019, a Bangladesh Biman pilot felt something hit his aircraft while taking off from Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

Assuming it was a bird, the pilot immediately contacted the airport tower asking them to inspect the runway and check if anything was there.

Upon confirmation that a bird, which might have hit the plane, was lying dead on the runway, the pilot decided to make an emergency landing for the safety of the several hundred passengers on board.

"The bird strike could have caused major damage to the aircraft had it hit the engine. Thank God, it was nothing major," the pilot of the KSA-bound flight told The Daily Star recently.

Bird strikes are a common phenomenon at airports around the world.

To tackle such incidents - often leading to flight cancellation, damage to the aircraft engine or, in worst case scenarios, loss of life due to crash

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CNG-run auto-rickshaws are parked while a bus stops to pick and drop off passengers at an intersection in Postagola flyover in the capital. The intersection is marked by yellow boxes meaning one can't even stop there, let alone park. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

6 airlines ask for permit to operate in Bangladesh

RASHIDUL HASAN

Six foreign airlines have expressed interest in operating flights to Dhaka, thanks to favourable regulatory policy, vibrant market, and high profitability.

Garuda Indonesia, Korean Air, Iran Air, Iraqi Airways have already applied to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) while two airlines from India have shown interest, said Group Captain Chy M Zia Ul Kabir, member (flight standard and regulations of the authority.

Besides, Pakistan said its national flag carrier PIA is willing to resume direct flights to Bangladesh after almost six years.

Earlier, British Airways, one of the world's leading airlines, also officially informed CAAB that it wanted to resume operations to Dhaka after a recess of 11 years.

Garuda Indonesia and

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First shipment of vaccine to arrive on Jan 25-26

Govt may allow pvt companies to import, distribute vaccines

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first consignment of Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid vaccine, produced by Serum Institute of India, will arrive in the country on January 25 or 26, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

He also said the government is likely to allow private companies to import and distribute Covid vaccines.

The minister was talking to journalists at his Secretariat office after a meeting with the cabinet secretary-led committee on vaccination campaign.

"We have been informed by Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd that the first consignment of vaccine will arrive in the country on January 25 or 26. We have made arrangements to transport those..."

"We can keep more than seven lakh

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SWINDLE BY PK HALDER

Tk 1,000cr of those who helped frozen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities have frozen over Tk 1,000 crore in different bank accounts of 62 people, who allegedly abetted former NRB Global Bank MD PK Halder to launder money abroad from four non-bank financial institutions.

The move was taken upon a plea from the Anti-Corruption Commission. "It's a big issue now. He [Halder] had links with different people. We've interrogated many of them and so far have found names of 62. About Tk 1,057.80 crore has been frozen," ACC Secretary Md Anwar Hossain Howlader said while talking to reporters at his office yesterday.

In another development, close aides of Halder and proprietors of MTB Marine and Nature Enterprize Nawsher Ul Islam, his wife Momtaz Begum, Basudev Banarjee, and Papi Banarjee were quizzed at the ACC yesterday by its Deputy Director Gulshan Anwar Proshan. The four had skipped a previous ACC quizzing.

ACC officials alleged that Halder along with the four used fake documents to get loans of about Tk 3,520 crore from three NBFIs - International Leasing and Financial Services (ILFSL), FAS Finance and Investment and People's Leasing and Financial Services - between 2015 and 2019.

An ACC official involved in the investigation claimed that the four during the interrogation yesterday admitted having links in laundering money. "They got financial benefits in return," the official said.

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MUNICIPALITY POLLS Violence claims two lives

STAR REPORT

At least two people died and three others got injured since Wednesday in clashes ahead of the municipality polls in Jhenidah and Barguna.

In Shaikupa, Jhenidah, two Awami League men were killed allegedly by rival groups on Wednesday night and early yesterday.

Liakat Hossain Baltu, 45, brother of councillor hopeful Shawkat Ali, and another councillor aspirant Alangir Khan Babu, who were rivals, got killed in a space of four hours, locals said.

Baltu and his brother along with some of their supporters were returning home after a campaign rally around 6:30pm, when some 20 to 25 people attacked them with sharp weapons and left them critically injured.

Both of them were taken to Shaikupa Upazila Health Complex. But doctors referred Baltu to a hospital in Kushtia. He died on the way around 9:30pm, said his nephew Mashiuzzaman.

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Lengthy rape trials frustrate victims

A study on 25 rape cases finds delay, anomalies in trial process

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All the accused in 25 rape cases filed from 2012 to 2016 were granted bail between 24 hours and 15 days of arrest, although the offence is not bailable under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000.

Most of the accused have tried to influence the procedures in different ways, according to the Manusher Jonno Foundation.

The findings, based on case follow-ups done by its partner NGOs, were presented by MJF at a virtual press conference yesterday.

MJF's partner NGOs followed up the current status of the 25 rape cases in their working areas to identify the reasons behind the lengthy trial procedures.

Seven NGOs conducted the follow-up research in Dhaka, Gazipur, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Dinajpur, Kishoreganj, Netrakona, Sherpur, Jamalpur and Joypurhat.

Currently, 20 of the 25 accused are out on bail, three are in jail, while two are roaming free under the protection of influential locals.

The exception in section 19 (4) of the act, which entitles any person accused of the offence to get bail upon the court's satisfaction to ensure that justice is not hampered, is being misused in current practise, MJF said.

In addition, investigation and charge sheet submissions were delayed as an overwhelming majority of these cases are still under trial and at the

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CRACKED BRIDGE People get stuck on Dhaka-Aricha highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

One side of Salehpur bridge on Dhaka-Aricha highway has been closed to traffic after officials detected cracks on a girder Wednesday afternoon.

The bottleneck caused about 1.5km tailbacks between Turag bridge and Aminbazar, subjecting thousands of people to hours of congestion.

Mohammed Shamim Al Mamun, executive engineer (Dhaka division) at Roads and Highways Department, said the bridge is vulnerable because of the cracks on the girder constructed in the 1970s.

Vehicles were asked to use the two lanes that were built much later, he told The Daily Star.

It might take three weeks to repair the girder and reopen the lanes to traffic, he said.

Dhaka-Aricha Highway is one of the busiest roads in the country. Thousands

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The authorities closed one side of Salehpur bridge on Dhaka-Aricha highway near Aminbazar after cracks, inset, were detected on a girder Wednesday afternoon. It created huge tailbacks on one of the busiest highways in the country throughout yesterday, forcing many to get down from vehicles and walk towards their destination. The photo was taken in Aminbazar, on the outskirts of the capital, in the afternoon.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

'No one' above the law

Says Pelosi after Trump impeached; security ramped up around Capitol ahead of Biden's inauguration

AFF, Washington

Donald Trump's impeachment Wednesday confirmed that "no one is above the law," US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said after the defiant Republican president was impeached for the second time in 13 months.

"Today in a bipartisan way the House demonstrated that no one is above the law, not even the president of the United States," the top Democrat in Congress said at a ceremony at which she signed the article of impeachment.

Trump, 74, was impeached for "incitement of insurrection" after he exhorted his supporters to march on the US Capitol and "fight," leading to a mob storming the seat of American democracy.

The Senate will not hold a trial before January 20, when Democrat Joe Biden assumes the presidency, meaning the real estate tycoon will escape the ignominy of being forced to leave early.

He is set, however, to face a Senate trial later, and if convicted he might be barred in a follow-up vote from seeking the presidency again in 2024.

"Given the rules, procedures, and Senate precedents that govern presidential impeachment trials, there is simply no chance that a fair or serious trial could conclude before President-elect (Joe) Biden is sworn in next week," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said in a statement.

But "even if the Senate process were to begin this week and move promptly, no final verdict would be reached until after President Trump had left office," added McConnell.

He noted that the three previous impeachment trials

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