



BANGLADESHIS IN MALAYSIA

Worries grow as KL declares emergency

Restrictions to stay till August to curb rise in Covid cases

PORIMOL PALMA

Expatriate workers, including Bangladeshis, in Malaysia are facing concerns over their jobs and income after the country declared a nationwide state of emergency until August 1 to combat the rising Covid-19 cases with the daily case number recently crossing the 3,000-mark.

Migrants and rights activists said many foreign workers either lost their jobs or had their wages slashed amid the pandemic since February last year when a lot of businesses faced closure or downsizing.

With some businesses reopening in June, the economy began recovering. But the country saw another wave of Covid-19 late last year, prompting Malaysian King Al-Sultan Abdullah to declare a state of emergency on Wednesday.

The state of emergency allows the state to take over private hospitals and deploy additional military and police forces. Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin warned that the health system was at “breaking point”.

According to Malaysian media reports, much of the businesses face closure because of the state of emergency.

The state of emergency gives the incumbent cabinet extraordinary powers to suspend parliament and introduce laws without approval of the House. Opposition parties say the PM was using the declaration to cling to power as he faces calls to step down and hold a general election.

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Vehicles bound for the capital lined up as far as the eye can see on the Dhaka-Aricha highway near Aminbazar in Savar, on the outskirts of the capital. Authorities closed one side of the nearby Salehpur bridge because they spotted cracks on the girder, creating severe congestion leading up to the bridge. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

KALABAGAN RAPE

Investigators hope to finish probe soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police said the investigation into the rape and murder of a schoolgirl in Kalabagan has progressed well and they are trying to complete it soon.

“The accused gave a confessional statement; the witness gave a statement too. We have collected some evidence and documents,” Abul Hasan, assistant commissioner (New Market zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star yesterday.

“The dope test of the accused has been done. We are now waiting for the result. Besides, we are trying to get the medical certificate. There has been substantial progress and we will try to complete the probe soon.”

The police official, however, did not disclose details for the “sake of the investigation”.

The victim’s father on January 7 filed the case with Kalabagan Police

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LALMONIRHAT BORDER

Bangladeshi man shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A 29-year-old man was shot dead yesterday morning by the Indian Border Security Force in Sreerampur area of Patgram, Lalmonirhat.

Abul Kalam Azad died while he was being taken to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. He was a resident of Jhalangi area in Patgram.

Officials of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) said Azad and six others were trying to smuggle in cows from India by crossing the international border when he got shot around 5:30am.

Patrolling officers of Border Security Force Battalion 140 of Cooch Behar, West Bengal, opened fire at them. Azad was shot in the neck and head, said Jhalangi BGB Camp Commander Nayek Subedar Jalal Sardar.

He added that a protest letter was sent to the BSF.

Tintin painting sells for record €3.2m at auction



AFP, Paris

An original painting by Tintin creator Hergé sold for a record 3.2 million euros (\$3.9 million) at an online auction on Thursday, auction house Artcurial announced.

The item, intended as a front cover for “The Blue Lotus” volume from 1936, easily beat the previous record for the sale of comic book art of 2.65 million euros, which was reached in 2014 for a double-page drawing by Hergé.

The gouache, ink and watercolour creation measures 34 by 34 centimetres (13 inches) and features Tintin and his dog Snowy emerging from

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Turkish flag carrier fined Tk 3 lakh

The airline brought 3 passengers sans Covid negative certificates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport fined Turkish Airlines Tk 3 lakh for carrying three passengers without Covid-19 negative certificates.

The three returned to Bangladesh from the US via a stopover in Turkey on Wednesday, Ahmed Jamil, a magistrate of the mobile court at HSLA, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The passengers, members of the same family, are Bangladeshis. They are well-educated and one of them even works at the health department in the US, Jamil added.

They were sent to institutional quarantine, he said.

“It’s unfortunate that those who didn’t

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Strong quake kills 42 in Indonesia

Many trapped under toppled buildings on Sulawesi island

AFP, Jakarta

A powerful earthquake rocked Indonesia’s Sulawesi island yesterday, killing at least 42 people, levelling a hospital and severely damaging other buildings, authorities said, as they warned there were people still trapped beneath rubble.

Hundreds were also injured when the 6.2-magnitude quake struck in the early hours, triggering panic among the terrified residents of the island, which was hit by a huge quake and tsunami two and a half years ago that killed thousands.

So far, 34 bodies have been hauled from beneath crumpled buildings in Mamuju, a city of about 110,000 in West Sulawesi province, while another eight were killed south of the area after the quake struck.

“We don’t know how many more are missing,” said Arianto from the rescue agency in Mamuju, who like many Indonesians goes by one name.

“There are still people trapped beneath the rubble.”

Rescuers were searching for more than a dozen patients and staff trapped under a levelled Mamuju hospital.

“The hospital is flattened -- it collapsed,” Arianto said.

Earlier, rescuers said they were also trying to reach a family of eight who were under their destroyed home.

At least one hotel had partially collapsed, while the regional governor’s office also suffered extensive damage after the quake struck at 2:18 am local time yesterday (1818 GMT Thursday).

A Mamuju resident said damage across the city was severe.

“Roads are cracked and many buildings collapsed,” said 28-year-old Hendra, who also goes by one name.

Landslides triggered by heavy rains and the quake blocked the main access road out of Mamuju.

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2ND COLD SPELL

Miseries pile up for poor in the North

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

The northern part of the country is witnessing a sharp fall in temperature as the second spell of cold wave from the Himalayan sweeping through the region.

The bone-chilling cold, accompanied by mild cooler wind, during the last four days disrupted normal life in different areas of Panchagarh and Thakurgaon.

The lowest temperature was recorded between 8.7 degree Celsius and 13.8 degree Celsius in Tentulia whereas the highest temperature was between 16.8 and 21.4 degree Celsius in the last four days, said Assistant Met Officer Rasel Shah of Bangladesh Meteorological Department (Tentulia).

The severity of cold is increasing due to a less fog for several days, he added.

As the gap of temperature between day and night time is being reduced, people feel colder than the last spell of cold wave that swept through in December, he said.

It would continue for four more days, he further added.

The adverse weather hit many, especially the low income group people like farm workers, day labourers and rickshaw-

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MAJ GEN MANZUR MURDER

CID submits supplementary charge sheet to Dhaka court

Drops HM Ershad’s name

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department has submitted a supplementary charge sheet in Maj Gen Abul Manzur murder case, stating that their further investigation found nothing new.

The investigation officer of the case dropped the names of late Jatiya Party chairman HM Ershad and Major Abdul Latif (ret’d) from the charge sheet as they died earlier. The first investigation had found five accused, including the two, involved in the incident.

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 16

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
5:30	12:45	4:00	5:36	7:40

JAMAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:40 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Rods sticking out of a manhole on the side of a road at the north-west corner of the Panthapath intersection in the capital. According to locals, the cover of the manhole had broken around a month ago and people had bent its rods outward to ward off vehicles. However, contrary to that purpose, the rods pose a danger to vehicles which pass perilously close. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Biden promises ‘new chapter’ for Americans

Calls for unity, unveils \$1.9tn virus stimulus package

AFP, Wilmington

President-elect Joe Biden unveiled plans Thursday for fighting Covid and injecting \$1.9 trillion into a battered US economy, but already his ambitious first 100 days agenda is overshadowed by the looming Senate trial of his soon-to-be predecessor Donald Trump.

Biden promised “a new chapter” for the nation on the day after Trump became the first US president to ever be impeached twice, as the incoming Democrat sought to seize the narrative in a primetime address and get Americans looking forward again.

“We will come back,” he said in a speech from his hometown of Wilmington.

“We didn’t get into all this overnight. We won’t get out of it overnight. And we can’t do it as a separated and divided nation,” he said.

“The only way we can do it is to come together, to come together as fellow Americans.”

With his Democrats narrowly controlling both houses of Congress, Biden, 78, has a shot at passing what would be the third massive pandemic aid package.

What he is less keen to talk about, however, is the impending trial of Trump, something that will introduce a potentially nightmarish mix of scheduling complications and political drama into an already tense Senate.

In his 25-minute televised speech Biden made no mention of Trump, impeachment or the deadly violence

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