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FERRY SERVICE

Many suffer as dense fog causes chaos

Commuters wait for 8-10hrs to board ferries on Paturia, Shimulia routes

STAR REPORT

Dense fog forced the authorities to suspend ferry services on Paturia-Daulatdia and Shimulia-Banglabazar routes for hours, causing immense sufferings to passengers.

Many travellers had to wait for eight to 10 hours yesterday to board ferries plying the two major routes to cross the Padma as the ferry operations remained suspended.

Paturia is in Manikganj and Daulatdia in Rajbari. The Shimulia ferry terminal is in Munshiganj, while Banglabazar is in Madaripur.

Meanwhile, four domestic flights were delayed landing at Saidpur Airport in Nilphamari for over four hours due to thick fog.

Yesterday's weather forecast said, "Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country from midnight to morning and it may continue till noon at places over the country."

"Night temperature may rise by one to three degrees Celsius and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country," said the bulletin of Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

"Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy

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Ferry services on Daulatdia-Paturia route remained suspended between 3:00am and 11:00am yesterday due to dense fog. As a result, long tailbacks were seen at the ferry terminals on both sides of the Padma river. The photo was taken in Paturia around noon.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Jute price soars to record high

Growers fail to reap benefit due to middlemen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Jute has been selling at the highest rate after independence of Bangladesh. The benefit, however, is being reaped by the middle men instead of jute growers.

After mixing sand and water to make the jute heavier, these middle men are selling per maund of jute for Tk 4,000-4,200 at the local markets and making profits.

Ananda Saha, a jute trader of Kanaipur bazar in Faridpur's Sadar upazila, said, "The supply in local market is very low, so the price is high. During the harvesting season, the government exported a big amount to India. So, most of the growers sold all their jute at that time."

Md Khokon Matbar, another trader of the bazar, said, "I have been in this business since 1993."

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RAPE COVERAGE BY MEDIA

Writ seeks HC order to shield victim's identity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rights organisation yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court seeking its directive to restrain the media from publishing and broadcasting the identity of rape and sexual assault victims.

Justice Watch Foundation submitted the petition as a public interest litigation to the HC requesting it to order authorities concerned of the government to strictly enforce section 14 of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000 which bans publishing and broadcasting names and photos of victims of rape and sexual assault.

In the petition, the organisation requested the HC to issue a rule asking the information secretary and the chairman and secretary of Bangladesh Press Council to show cause why their inaction and failure to strictly enforce section 14 of the act should not be declared illegal.

Executive director of Justice Watch Foundation and its lawyer Mahfuzur Rahman Milon told The Daily Star that different print and electronic media and online news portals have been broadcasting and publishing names and photos of rape and sexual assault victims, including those of the O-level student who was killed after being raped, despite the ban under section 14.

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WHO, China could have acted faster

Say experts on Covid response; WHO, EU move to secure vaccines for poorer nations

AGENCIES

China and the WHO could have acted faster to avert catastrophe during the early stages of the coronavirus outbreak, a panel of independent experts concluded, as the global health body and EU moved to secure vaccines for poorer nations.

The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response said its evaluation of the start of the crisis in China "suggests that there was potential for early signs to have been acted on more rapidly".

Containment measures should have been implemented immediately in all countries where transmission was likely, the panel said in their second report presented to the WHO's executive board yesterday.

The pandemic has exposed how underfunded and powerless the World Health Organization (WHO) is to carry out the tasks the world expects of it, the panel said.

But the panel stressed that the delays and failures could largely be attributed to the weak position of the UN agency, and said more funding and reforms were desperately needed.

"The world is more reliant on an effective WHO than ever before," said former Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who co-chairs the panel with former New Zealand prime minister Helen Clark.

Covid-19 was first detected in the central city of Wuhan in late 2019 before seeping beyond China's borders to wreak global havoc, costing more than two million lives and eviscerating economies.

The panel said it was clear that "public health measures could have been applied more forcefully by local and national health authorities in China in January".

The report also criticised the WHO for dragging its feet at the start of the crisis, pointing out that the UN health agency did not convene its emergency committee until January 22, 2020.

And the committee failed to agree to declare the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) -- its highest alert

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Man held over gang rape of woman

STAR REPORT

A man was arrested in Gazipur on charges of the abduction and gang rape of a woman. Meanwhile, another man was arrested in Jamalpur for raping a garments worker.

In Gazipur, a Rab team arrested the accused Sohag Mia, 35, of Myemensingh, from Joydevpur's Manipur area around 1:30pm yesterday.

The victim, 23, was abducted from a village in Mymensingh on September 5 and taken to a house in Gazipur's Sreepur upazila, said Abdullah Al Mamun, in-charge of Rab Porabari camp.

Later, Sohag and three of his friends forced her to drink a sedative, after which they raped her, Mamun said, adding they also filmed the incident and released the video on social media.

On December 3, the victim filed a case with Sreepur Police Station

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'Baby Trump' blimp lands at London museum



AFP, London

The infamous blimp of outgoing US President Donald Trump dressed as a baby could soon greet visitors to the Museum on London, which on Monday announced it had acquired the inflatable effigy.

"Having toured the world, the Trump Baby blimp is now heading to its final resting place, the Museum of London, where it will be conserved and potentially displayed in the museum's future new home," the central London museum said in a statement.

The institution said in 2019 that it wanted to acquire the blimp, "recognising its importance in the protests" that met the president during his 2018 visit to Britain.

The over-sized orange balloon depicting the bequipped US leader in a nappy flew above Parliament Square.

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ILLEGAL LEVEL CROSSING

One killed as train hits 3-wheeler in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A man was killed and six more were injured as a train and a motorised three-wheeler collided at an illegal level crossing in Pabna's Sujanager upazila yesterday.

The dead is Dabir Uddin Khan, 60, of Tatiband village in the upazila, said police.

According to Mohammad Bodruddoza, officer-in-charge of

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 20

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:43 7:15
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:47 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Unaware of the risks, a rag-picker in a used hazmat suit collects discarded personal protective equipment from a dustbin. Such hazardous wastes should be disposed of carefully to avoid the spread of novel coronavirus. The photo was taken in the capital's Shahjahanpur area.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

DEATH OF COUPLE

Cops arrest bus driver in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police yesterday arrested the driver of Ajmeri Glory Paribahan that hit and ran over a couple in the capital's Airport area on Monday morning.

A team of CID arrested Tasikul Islam from Mouchak area in Gazipur, CID Additional Superintendent Mukta Dhar, who led the drive, told The Daily Star.

Tasikul had been driving vehicles like bus for long although he had professional licences for driving light vehicles only, she added.

During primary interrogation, he admitted that he was behind the steering when the accident took place.

The couple -- Akash Iqbal and his wife Maya Hazarika -- were on their

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SS POWER I
CAREER OPPORTUNITY

We are looking for a Qualified Chartered Accountant to fill up the position of Head of Internal Audit.

Company Profile:
SS Power I Ltd. a joint venture company between S. Alam Group of Bangladesh and Chinese companies, SEPCOIII Electric Power Construction Co., Limited and HTG Development Group Co., is one of the largest investments ever in the power sector of Bangladesh which is currently executing the 2 x 660 MW Coal fired Super Critical Thermal Power Plant at Banskhal near Chittagong, Bangladesh.

Major Responsibilities:

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- The position is expected to be organized with problem-solving and analytical skills and constantly deliver on tight deadlines.
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Job Type:
Full time

Application Deadline:
All applications to be sent through e-mail: resume@sspowerbd.com by 31 January 2021.