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HIGHEST SELLING 15 CEMENT for more than years

SHAH CEMENT

# Graft blights safety scheme for disabled

Recipients pay up to Tk 3,000 extra to be on the list, finds TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Persons with disabilities have to pay between Tk 1,000 and Tk 3,000 extra to be included in the government's disability allowance scheme, said a new report of Transparency International Bangladesh.

They also need to pay between Tk 1,000 and Tk 3,000 extra to receive the government's "Suborno card" designated for them, the report said.

It added that Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,500 is illegally charged at government hospitals for identification of persons with disabilities and a further Tk 100 to Tk 200 is required for inclusion in the database.

TIB, the Bangladesh chapter of the global graft watchdog Transparency International, disclosed the findings of the report titled "Inclusiveness in Development and Disability: Governance Challenges and Way Forward" during a virtual press conference yesterday.

Research for the report was done between December, 2019 and November, 2020.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said due to a significant gap in ensuring inclusion and rights of and justice for persons with disabilities in all sectors -- including education, health, employment, transportation, and infrastructure -- Bangladesh's present development process is mostly not "meaningful" to them.

He said a lack of sensitivity among service providers

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People through a vaccination centre at Chattogram Medical College Hospital to take the Covid-19 jab yesterday. The situation was similar throughout the day at other inoculation centres in the port city. DGHS data shows over two lakh people were given the shots across the country yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

# Stop hotel construction on Mro land

Civil society members write to CHT affairs minister, army chief

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Fifty-nine eminent civil society members yesterday sent letters to the Chattogram Hill Tracts affairs minister and the ministry secretary, army chief, and defence and environment ministries demanding the authorities stop the construction of a five-star hotel on Mro land in Bandarban.

They also wrote to Marriott International, an international hotel chain, to withdraw its all types of involvement in the project, said a press release.

The eminent personalities said as the army installations in the CHT should be reduced as per the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, carrying out such a massive construction work in the area is a clear violation of the terms of

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# Cops discover grisly murder by chance

Hunt for missing person leads them to the killer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police teams tracking a woman in connection with a general diary unexpectedly ended up at the scene of a gruesome murder at an apartment near Sayedabad Bus Terminal in the capital yesterday.

Three days ago, a man lodged a diary with Wari Police Station stating that his wife Shahnaz Parveen went missing with lots of gold ornaments, said Hannaul Islam, assistant commissioner of Wari Zone of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Policemen found that Shahnaz's phone was last used on the fourth floor of a six-story building on KM Das Lane, he added.

A police team reached the building around 12:30pm yesterday and found Shahnaz in an apartment.

She was talking to the police while standing at the door as the officers told her that her husband filed a diary mentioning that she was missing for the last three days. Then a policeman noticed that there were pieces of a dead body by the side of a bed

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ASTRAZENECA VACCINE

# WHO okays it for people over 65, Covid variants

AFP, Geneva

The AstraZeneca-Oxford Covid-19 vaccine can be used for people aged over 65, and also where coronavirus variants of concern are circulating, WHO experts has said, soothing fears about the jab.

The World Health Organization's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) issued interim recommendations for when and how to use the two-shot vaccine, which has yet to receive WHO emergency use authorisation.

The announcement came after the vaccine suffered setbacks, raising questions about whether it should be used on older people, or in places where a variant of the virus first found in South Africa is circulating.

SAGE chief Alejandro Cravioto acknowledged the lack of data on the vaccine's efficacy for people aged over 65, which has prompted a number of countries to withhold recommending its use in older people, who are by far the most vulnerable to the virus.

But the experts concluded that given its performance with younger adults, "it is likely that the vaccine will be found to be efficacious in older persons. The trial data indicate that the vaccine is safe for this age group."

Cravioto told journalists: "We feel that the response of this group cannot be any different from groups of a younger age."

SAGE, he said, recommends it be used "for 18 years and above, without an upper age limit".

Cravioto said the experts were awaiting more specific data on the vaccine's efficacy in people over 65, but said it "would not be appropriate" to wait with its recommendations.

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# AL leader, 2 aides sued for raping teenager

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police in Dinajpur are looking for a 50-year-old local Awami League leader accused of raping a teenage girl several times and filming the acts to blackmail her and her parents.

The girl's father, a labourer, filed the case against Anwar Hossain, the general secretary of Sundarban Union AL, his chauffeur Manik, 45, and one of his cohorts Hafez, 48, on February 7.

After giving her statement at a court, the 16-year-old girl told reporters on Monday that she was once raped in Anwar's car while Manik was driving.

According to the case statement, Anwar and the 16-year-old girl are acquaintances, and he invited her to his home one day about two years ago.

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# Earliest shell horn played for first time in 17,000 years



AFP, Paris

After more than 17,000 years of silence and decades forgotten in a French museum, a shell fashioned into a horn by our prehistoric ancestors has been played again as a result of new research published Wednesday.

Scientists believe the ancient conch, from a species of large sea snail still present in the Atlantic and North Sea, is the oldest wind instrument of its type yet found.

The shell was unearthed in 1931 at an archaeological dig in the Pyrenees near the mouth

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# UN PEACEKEEPING Army chief reiterates continued support

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Army Chief General Aziz Ahmed reiterated Bangladesh's unwavering commitment and continued support to the UN peace operations during his meetings with top UN officials this week, said an ISPR press release issued on Wednesday.

The army chief, who is now on a visit to the USA, also called for the deployment of more Bangladeshi peacekeepers

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## PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 12

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:25 12:30 4:30 5:57 7:15  
JAMAAT 6:00 1:15 4:45 6:01 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# Factory fire kills 6 Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

At least six Bangladeshi migrants were killed in a factory fire at the Saudi Arabian city of Madinah on Wednesday night.

Identities of five of them are Mizanur Rahman and Md Arafat Hossain Manik -- both from Lohagara in Chattogram, and Ishak Mia, Abdul Aziz, and Md Rafiq Uddin -- from Maheshkhali in Cox's Bazar.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Saudi Arabia yesterday said in a statement that the consulate in Jeddah is trying to learn the identity of the sixth victim.

The statement further said a total of seven foreign workers, including six Bangladeshis, were killed in the fire at a sofa factory near Heraz Market, which is 25 kilometers from Madinah city. The Saudi fire department could not yet confirm the origin of the fire.

The bodies were kept at the morgue of King Fahad Hospital in Madinah.

The Bangladesh

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As spring approaches, nature has adorned herself with the brightest of blooms such as the Shimul and Palash. An array of birds, like this pair of Chestnut-tailed Starlings, can be seen foraging for food. The photo was taken recently at Court Hill area in Chattogram.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

# DISPUTED HIMALAYAN LAKE India, China agree to pull back troops

REUTERS, New Delhi

India and China began to pull back troops and battle tanks from a bitterly contested lake area high in the western Himalayas yesterday in a breakthrough after a months-long standoff on the disputed border.

Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told parliament the two sides had reached an agreement to withdraw from Pangong Tso, a glacial lake at 14,000 ft (4,270 metres), after several rounds of talks between military commanders and diplomats from the nuclear-armed neighbours.

"Our sustained talks with China have led to agreement on disengagement on the north and south banks of the Pangong lake," he said.

China's defence ministry announced on Wednesday that frontline troops from the two countries were pulling back from the shores of the lake on Wednesday.

The standoff began in April last year when India said Chinese troops had intruded deep into its side of the Line of Actual Control or the de facto border in the Ladakh area in the western Himalayas.

China said its troops were operating in its own area and accused Indian border guards of provocative actions.

Video released by the Indian army showed troops saluting and shaking hands with each other in the barren mountains where the lake is located. A few battle tanks are seen turning around away from the frontlines.

In June, 20 Indian soldiers were killed when the two sides clashed with iron rods and stones in the Galwan Valley, the first combat losses on the border in 45 years.

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