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CRISIS IN MYANMAR

# Willing to engage with all parties

*Says China as anti-coup protesters defy ongoing crackdown; official from Suu Kyi's party beaten to death*

REUTERS

China is willing to engage with "all parties" to ease the crisis in neighbouring Myanmar and is not taking sides, the Chinese government's top diplomat State Councillor Wang Yi said, as thousands of anti-coup demonstrators defied an ongoing military crackdown yesterday.

Beijing has said the situation in Myanmar, where the military seized power last month, was "absolutely not what China wants to see" and has dismissed social media rumours of Chinese involvement in the coup as nonsense.

"China is ... willing to contact and communicate with all parties on the basis of respecting Myanmar's sovereignty and the will of the people, so as to play a constructive role in easing tensions," Wang told a news conference on the sidelines of China's annual gathering of parliament yesterday.

While Western countries have strongly condemned the February 1 coup, China has been more cautious, emphasising the importance of stability.

"China has long-term friendly exchanges with all parties and factions in Myanmar, including the National League for Democracy (NLD), and friendship with China has always been the consensus of all sectors in Myanmar," Wang said.

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A delivery man struggling to manage his bicycle and a cake in Chattogram city's Dewanhat area yesterday. Md Sakib Hossain is a fourth-year computer science student at a private university. He along with four other university students, started online delivery service Pedal. He is the company's recruitment manager and delivery man.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

# She could only watch as racing buses crushed her mother

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A daughter watched her mother being crushed to death between two buses, the drivers of which were competing to get ahead, at an intersection in Gulistan yesterday.

Witnesses said the tragic incident happened around 1:00pm when the deceased, Parveen Begum, 48, and her daughter Suraiya Akhter were crossing the road to catch a Munshiganj-bound bus to return home.

Parveen Begum arrived in Dhaka from Munshiganj for her daughter's treatment.

Talking to reporters, Suraiya, who was also trapped between the buses but managed to escape in the nick of time, said she came to Dhaka with her mother in the morning to visit Shaheed Suhrawardi Medical College Hospital.

"From the hospital, we boarded a bus which dropped us in Gulistan. As we were crossing the road near Golap Shah Mazar to catch a bus home, we were trapped between two buses," Suraiya said.

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# ATTEMPTED MURDER SC clears way of trial of magistrates, ex-DC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A lower court can now continue the trial proceedings of a case that accused former Kurigram deputy commissioner Sultana Parvin, three executive magistrates, and several ansar members of attempting to murder a journalist in March, 2020.

The Supreme Court yesterday cleared the way for the lower court concerned.

The SC dismissed a leave to appeal petition, filed by one of the executive magistrates Nazim Uddin, that challenged the trial proceedings of the case.

Nazim's petition sought stay on the proceedings, saying that a departmental proceeding had already been initiated against him and he was not involved in assaulting journalist Ariful Islam.

The bench of the Appellate Division of the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

# ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

## Tikka Khan refused oath

MARCH 8, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN



**TIKKA KHAN REFUSED THE OATH OF OFFICE**

Tikka Khan was handed over responsibilities of both the governor and martial law administrations in East Pakistan. He was also the commander of Eastern Command. However, the all-powerful governor could not find a judge to swear him in as Justice BA Siddiqui, chief justice of the East Pakistan High Court, refused to administer the oath for "reasons of ill health".

The martial law officer in Dhaka tried to make alternative arrangements but failed. According to the president's legal parchment, the swearing in ceremony must be administered by the chief justice of the concerned province. His nominee or a local judge of the Supreme Court cannot perform the task. General Tikka himself rang up the chief secretary of East Pakistan, Shafiqul Azam, to arrange the ceremony but he also refused. [Siddiq Salik, Witness to Surrender, UPL 1997, pp.55-56]

This was powerful evidence of the success of the non-cooperation movement and the disassociation of the Bangalee public from military rule. [Richard Sisson and Leo E Rose, War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh, UCP, 1990, pg. 102]

**NEW AL DIRECTIVES**

Awami League, virtually in control of East Pakistan,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

# 11 more die, 606 get Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven people have died from Covid-19 in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday and at least 606 new infections were recorded in that period.

The total number of deaths has now reached 8,462 and the death rate stands at 1.54 percent, according to a press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The 606 new infections took the total number of people infected to 5,50,330, added the release.

The current positivity rate is 4.3 percent, up from 4.13 percent the previous day. The total positivity rate in the country stands at 13.27 percent.

A total of 14,092 samples were tested across the country in the 24 hours.

At least 1,037 Covid-19 patients have recovered during the period.

The total number of

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# S'pore builds floating solar farms

AFP, Singapore

Thousands of panels glinting in the sun stretch into the sea off Singapore, part of the land-scarce city-state's push to build floating solar farms to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

It may be one of the world's smallest countries, but the prosperous financial hub is among the biggest per capita carbon dioxide emitters in Asia.

And while authorities have been pushing to change that, renewable energy is a challenge in a country with no rivers for hydro-electricity and where the wind is not strong enough to power turbines.

So the tropical country turned to solar power -- however, with little land space in a place half the size of Los Angeles, it has resorted to setting up energy plants off its coasts and on reservoirs.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



# PRAYER TIMING MARCH 8

	Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5-15	12-45	4-30	6-05	7-30
JAMAAT	5-50	1-15	4-45	6-10	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A group of workers hired by Rapid Acton Battalion uprooting opium plants at Bonkhur village under Dinajpur's Joypurhat Sadar upazila. A group of local farmers had planted the illegal crop on around five acres of land. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

# TRIAL FOR COVID TREATMENT

## Oral drug yields promising data

*Say US, Germany drugmakers; Biden Covid rescue plan clears Senate*

AGENCIES

German pharmaceutical giant Merck and a US partner reported promising results Saturday in trials of a drug administered orally to fight Covid-19, saying it helps reduce patients' viral load.

"At a time where there is unmet need for antiviral treatments against SARS-CoV-2, we are encouraged by these preliminary data," said Wendy Painter, chief medical officer of the US firm, Ridgeback Biotherapeutics.

In January, Merck halted work on two Covid vaccine candidates but has pressed on with research into two products to treat the disease, including a pill-based one called molnupiravir, which it has developed with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics.

This drug caused a significant drop in patients' viral load after five days of treatment with it, Merck said at a meeting with infectious disease experts.

This Phase 2a test -- drug trials have three stages before a product can be approved -- was carried out among

202 non-hospitalised people with symptoms of Covid-19.

There was no alert in terms of safety, and of four serious adverse events that were reported, none were considered to be related to taking this drug, Ridgeback said.

Anti-viral oral drugs such as oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza) are sometimes prescribed for seasonal flu but researchers have yet to come up with something similar to fight the coronavirus.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

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