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# Fear, despair grip them

Mob gathering pre-declared before attack on Shalla Hindus



DWOHA CHOWDHURY, back from Noagaon, Sunamganj

"They took away all of my savings and the gold jewellery we had for my daughter's wedding. We managed to flee minutes before they attacked," 55-year-old Jhorna Rani Das said, describing the attack on her house.

Her four daughters have gone to their uncle's home and are too afraid to return to Noagaon village in Shalla, Sunamganj, where houses of Hindu people were vandalised in a communal attack on March 17.

After losing their job in a garment factory during the lockdown, her two daughters came back home in April last year. "Now we are completely broke."

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People express their displeasure to the person sitting in a counter at Mugda Medical College Hospital yesterday after being refused for Covid test at 11:00am yesterday. Many of them had waited hours to get tested at the hospital only to be told that sample collection was done for the day.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

# COVID-19 India reports worst day in months

Some hospitals begin to run short of beds

REUTERS, New Delhi

India reported its most Covid-19 cases and deaths in months yesterday, on the first anniversary of the start of a chaotic nationwide lockdown that left many people jobless and shrank the economy.

Authorities reintroduced some curbs to slow the spread of the virus, especially in the western state of Maharashtra, which accounted for nearly two-thirds of the 46,951 new infections and the majority of the 212 deaths.

Some hospitals in the country's worst-affected districts have begun to run short of beds, and there is a rising clamour for the immunisation campaign to be widened to cover more people, instead of just the elderly and those suffering from other health conditions.

With the biggest rise in cases since early November, SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

# COUP IN MYANMAR EU imposes sanctions on military

Targets generals; 3 more protesters killed

REUTERS

The European Union yesterday imposed sanctions on 11 people linked to last month's military coup in Myanmar as the repression of pro-democracy protesters by security forces reached what Germany's foreign minister called "an unbearable extent".

The sanctions marked the 27-nation bloc's most significant response since the overthrow of Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government on February 1. The individuals targeted included General Min Aung Hlaing, the commander-in-chief of the Myanmar military.

The United States targeted Myanmar's police chief and an army special operations commander with sanctions yesterday over the government's deadly crackdown on pro-democracy protests.

Washington had already sanctioned Min Aung Hlaing and the new measures expanded the list of targets.

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## ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

### 'Let's hope for the best and prepare for the worst'



Members of Joy Bangla Bahini saluting Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 23, 1971.

MARCH 23, 1971 SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

**A DILATORY TACTIC**  
The representatives of President Yahya Khan and an Awami League team met twice today. The AL team arrived at the President's House flying the Bangladesh flag -- a sight which clearly disturbed the junta. However, an agreement

on the implementation of the principles embodied in the Six Points was ultimately achieved.

MM Ahmed, economic adviser to Yahya, agreed that the Six Points scheme could be given effect with minor adaptations. He also showed some flexibility with regards to foreign trade and aid.

Lt Gen Peerzada, principal

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

# Bids opened despite leak of bidders' names

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Bids for the construction work of two student halls at Kushtia Islamic University (IU) for Tk 108 crore have been opened despite the fact that names of the bidders had been leaked a few days ago.

The university authorities, while opening the electronic government purchase (EGP) tenders on Monday afternoon, said they completed the process following all relevant rules.

"The construction company MS-MRT (JV) has been selected as the lowest bidder," HM Ali Hasan, director at the department of planning and development (P&D) of the university, told The Daily Star.

He said a total of 10 companies took part in the process. Four bids were made for one hall and six for the other.

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# WORK AND TEST RELIEF Govt raises allocation by 81.25pc

Seeks to boost pandemic-hit rural economy

REJAUJ KARIM BYRON and DWAIPAYAN BARUA

The government has increased the allocation for its Money for Work and Test Relief (TR) programmes by 81.25 percent for the current fiscal year to revitalise a pandemic-hit rural economy and provide money to people through development of rural infrastructure.

The original allocation for the two schemes was Tk 1,216 crore. Following the increase by Tk 987.77 crore, the amount now stands at Tk 2,203.77 crore. The money will be spent for construction and repair of roads and development of infrastructure in rural areas.

Mid Mohsin, secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, said an additional amount of around Tk 2.5 crore was allocated for each upazila. The allocation was increased during the Mujib Borsho, he added.

The secretary said the rural infrastructures at the upazila level would be changed through the implementation of this initiative and people would have extra cash in hand, which would give a big push to the rural economy.

If such an initiative can be continued for next two or three years, it would help improve the lives of the rural people, he added.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

# Tarique, 24 others sued under DSA

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and 24 others were sued under the Digital Security Act in Sunamganj yesterday for claiming Ziaur Rahman to be the first president of the country and the first to declare its independence.

The case was filed by Moinul Islam, 47, a Bangladeshi expatriate in the United Kingdom, with Sunamganj Judicial Magistrate's Court.

Accepting the case, the court ordered Sunamganj police to investigate the matter, said the plaintiff's lawyer Akhtaruzzaman Ahmed.

According to the case statement, on December 19 last year Moinul saw on YouTube a video clip of a zoom meeting, attended by Tarique and 24 others, which was uploaded on the video-sharing platform on December 16.

In the video clip, SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

# Student hung from ceiling fan, beaten

Madrasa teacher held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Police arrested a madrasa teacher on charge of beating up a student by hanging him from a ceiling fan in Bagerhat's Rampal.

Syed Mohammad Osman Gani, 30, of Haji Arif Keratul Quran Hafizia Madrasa, was held from Sreefaltala Uttarpara on Sunday night.

In the evening, Moni Sheikh filed the case with Rampal Police Station for beating up his son Shukur Sheikh, 11.

Mohammad Shamsuddin, officer-in-charge of the station, said they produced Osman before a court that sent him

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



A sand-laden truck causes a Bailey bridge on the Mara Chitra river in Mollahat upazila of Bagerhat to collapse early yesterday. Bagerhat Roads and Highways Department executive engineer said there were 10 such bridges on that stretch of road and none of them could withstand so much load.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

# Europe can have immunity by July

Says EU commissioner; AstraZeneca's Covid jab found safe, effective in new trial data

AGENCIES

Europe could have herd immunity against Covid-19 by July, a European Union commissioner has said, as incoming jabs are expected to speed up the continent's sluggish vaccine rollout.

The note of optimism comes even as several European countries have started reimposing restrictions as they contend with surging coronavirus infections, and after mixed messaging on the safety of a key jab.

"Let's take a symbolic date: by July 14, we have the possibility of achieving immunity across the continent," Thierry Breton, the EU's commissioner for the internal market told French broadcaster TF1.

"We're in the home stretch, because we know that to beat this pandemic there's just one solution: vaccination. The vaccines are arriving," he said.

More than a third of France's population is now under renewed lockdown, while frustrations over virus curbs spilled into weekend demonstrations in Germany, Amsterdam, Bulgaria and Switzerland.

Europe's battle to prevent a deadly third wave of infections has been complicated by a patchy vaccine drive that included several nations temporarily halting AstraZeneca's shots in response to isolated cases of blood clots.

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**PRAYER TIMING MARCH 23**

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:55 12:45 4:45 6:16 7:45

JAMAAT 5:30 1:15 5:00 6:20 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION