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SPL FLIGHTS FOR WORKERS

Those cleared by bureau to get priority

Govt allows 100 spl flights to KSA, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Singapore for a week

RASHIDUL HASAN

Expatriate workers only having clearance from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training will get priority in getting special flights to return to their workplaces in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Oman and Singapore.

In an inter-ministerial meeting on Thursday night, the government decided to operate around 100 special flights in those countries in one week from today so that several thousand migrant workers, who remained stuck in the country due to the weeklong ban on international flights, can go back to their workplaces.

The government on April 11 suspended operation of all international passenger flights to and from Bangladesh for a week from April 14 to contain the spread of Covid-19.

In the inter-ministerial meeting, it was decided that migrant workers, who have visit visa but do not have the BMET clearance, will not get priority in returning to their respective workplaces.

Besides, migrant workers will be given priority to go abroad based on duration of their visa and Iqama (valid work permit), the meeting decided.

The meeting also decided that ground handling charges

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An eerily empty parking lot of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka. The country's international and domestic air travel hub usually teems with inbound and outbound passengers, but the suspension of flights amid "lockdown" means the airport is all but deserted. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Nine years gone, still no word on Ilias Ali

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Nine years have passed since former BNP lawmaker M Ilias



Ali and his driver Ansar disappeared from the capital, but their families are still waiting anxiously for their return home.

They are yet to obtain a legal remedy from either the court or the law enforcement agencies. The families don't have any information about their fate or whereabouts.

Ilias, then organising secretary (Sylhet division) of BNP, and his driver Ansar went missing on the night of April 17, 2012. The party alleged that the government's law enforcement agencies picked them up.

BNP had staged protests, including a countrywide hartal, over the "enforced

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UN positive about refugee relocation to Bhasan Char

PORIMOL Palma

The UN has made positive observations on Bhasan Char, but suggested expanding protection, education and livelihood options for the Rohingyas at the project meant to shelter 100,000 Rohingyas.

It has submitted a report to the foreign affairs ministry this week, also recommending quick completion of the embankment around the housing facility and having an emergency management plan in the case of severe weather events.

The 18-member UN delegation led by Fumiko Kashiwa, assistant representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, visited the island in Noakhali's Hatiya where some 14,000 Rohingyas were relocated from Cox's Bazar since December last year.

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Scientists uncover 'monkeydactyl' dinosaur



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Paleontologists have discovered the first-known fossil of a flying dinosaur with opposable thumbs.

Nicknamed "Monkeydactyl", the 160-million-year-old pterosaur likely used its dexterity to climb trees and hunt for insects and other prey.

A team of international researchers unearthed the Jurassic remains in Liaoning, northeastern China, a hotbed for fossil discovery.

The monkeydactyl is the earliest known animal with the ability to touch the inside of its thumbs to the inside of its index fingers, according to the

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TIT-FOR-TAT SANCTIONS

Russia asks 10 US diplomats to leave country

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia will ask 10 US diplomats to leave the country in retaliation for Washington's expulsion of the same number of Russian diplomats over alleged malign activity, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said yesterday.

The US government on Thursday imposed a broad array of sanctions on Russia, including curbs to its sovereign debt market, to punish it for interfering in last year's U.S. election, cyber hacking, bullying Ukraine and other alleged malign actions.

Russia denies all the US allegations.

Yesterday, Lavrov, speaking at a news conference with his Serbian counterpart, laid out Russia's response.

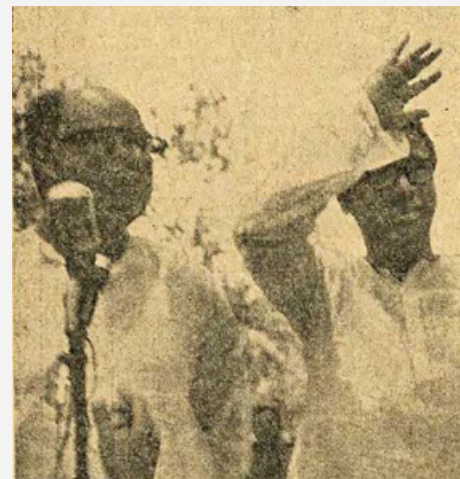
Apart from expelling 10 US diplomats, he said Moscow would place eight

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ROAD TO FREEDOM

THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Mujibnagar government sworn in



APRIL 17, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

MUJIBNAGAR GOVERNMENT TAKES OATH

The independence of Bangladesh was formally proclaimed today at Baidyanathala, Meherpur. Cabinet members of the provisional government took oath at a ceremony which was conducted by Abdul Mannan MNA, and the proclamation of independence was read out by Professor Mohammad Yusuf Ali. A guard of honour was given to Syed Nazrul Islam, the acting president of the newly formed government.

Sayed Nazrul Islam, and Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad

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Tajuddin Ahmad, the prime minister of the Mujibnagar government, is waving at the crowd gathered at the Baidyanathala, Meherpur to witness the swearing-in ceremony of the provisional government on April 17, 1971.

2019 PROTESTS IN HK

Jimmy Lai among 5 activists jailed

AFP, Hong Kong

Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai was jailed yesterday for 14 months along with four other veteran democracy activists for their roles in protests that helped trigger a sweeping crackdown on dissent by China.

Lai was given two jail terms for separate rallies in August 2019, at the peak of a democracy uprising that paralysed the financial hub for months.

The jail terms were the first ever for the 73-year-old millionaire, who has spent decades using his media empire to support democracy in Hong Kong, a campaign that has seen him denounced by China as a "traitor".

The sentences were the latest in a relentless and successful campaign by China since the protests to silence dissent.

Lai and four other campaigners were initially sentenced for leading a rally that organisers said attracted up to 1.7 million people.

Nine of Hong Kong's most prominent democracy campaigners had been found guilty of organising and participating in it. Many of them have spent decades

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Three land in jail for raping woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A Bogura court yesterday sent three men to jail in connection with the rape of a woman in the district's Sherpur upazila.

The victim, a domestic help, filed a rape case with Sherpur Police Station accusing four men on Thursday.

The accused are Mamun Pramanik, 35, Mohammad

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Shopkeepers of the wholesale fruit market in the capital's Karwan Bazar sleeping under a shade yesterday afternoon. Business is slow at that time of day, and in the intense heat the shopkeepers opted for some respite. They are apparently unconcerned about social distancing and wearing masks amid the Covid-19 spike.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN INDIA

Vaccinations fall from peak

Raw-material shortage hits output targets as New Delhi vows to ramp up production

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's daily Covid-19 vaccinations have slowed from their peak early this month while new infections have set a record, government data showed yesterday, as its main producer of shots urged the United States to end a ban on raw material exports.

After giving and selling tens of millions of Covid-19 vaccine doses abroad, India has suddenly found itself short of the drug. It has abruptly changed rules to allow it to fast-track vaccine imports, having earlier rebuffed foreign drugmakers like Pfizer.

Vaccinations peaked at 4.5 million doses on April 5 but have averaged about 3 million a day since then, according to the government's Co-Win portal to coordinate immunisations.

Facing debacle, India yesterday pledged to raise monthly production of its own Covid-19 vaccine, Covaxin made by Bharat Biotech, about tenfold to nearly 100 million doses by September.

The ministry of science and technology, giving the September target, pegged current capacity at 10 million doses a month.

The ministry added that the government would provide \$17 million in funding to boost Covaxin output. Apart from Bharat Biotech, two state-sector firms - Haffkine Biopharmaceutical and Indian Immunologicals Ltd - will

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PRAYER TIMING APRIL 17

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN	4-12	12-45	4-45	6-24	7-45
JAMAAT	4-22	1-15	5-00	6-34	8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN APRIL SEHRI	IFTAR		
4	17	6:24	
5	18	4:11	6:25
6	19	4:10	6:25