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UN positive about refugee relocation

PORIMOL PALMA

The UN has made positive observations on Bhasan Char, but suggested expanding protection, education and livelihood options 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.

"Rohingya refugees were generally positive about their experiences so far and appreciated the quality of the shelters and other facilities, the overall security situation, as well as the space available to them," Charlie Goodlake, a UNHCR spokesperson in Dhaka, told The Daily Star yesterday in response to an email.

He said while currently limited in scale and scope, a number of Rohingya refugees were found to be engaged in livelihood, skills training, and informal education activities on the island.

The UNHCR said the UN team recognises the extensive investments made by Bangladesh, but at the same time it is critical that the ongoing extension of the embankment is

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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 disappearance" of the former lawmaker.

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MAYHEM IN DHAKA

Another top Hefajat leader arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested Vice-president of Hefajat-e-Islam's Dhaka city unit Maulana Jubair Ahmed from his house in the capital yesterday.

Maulana Jubair became the third Hefajat leader who was held, after the arrests of Mufti Sharifullah, central assistant organising secretary, on Tuesday, and Shakhawat Hossain, central assistant secretary general, on Wednesday.

Asaduzzaman, deputy commissioner (Motijheel division) of Detective Branch of police, confirmed Jubair's arrest to The Daily Star.

Jubair was involved in the recent incidents of Hefajat mayhem and also involved in the 2013 mayhem in Dhaka, the police official said.

"We are taking legal action against Jubair," he added.

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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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2019 PROTESTS IN HK

Jimmy Lai among five 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

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ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Mujibnagar government sworn in

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

APRIL 17, 1971
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

MUJIBNAGAR GOVERNMENT TAKES OATH

The independence of Bangladesh was formally proclaimed today at Baidyanathtala, 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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100 spl flights for migrants

Those cleared by govt bureau to get priority

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.

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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

Fazr 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