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No progress yet in trial of murder case

HC stay orders main reason

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

The trial proceedings in the murder case filed in connection with the Rana Plaza collapse in Savar have made no progress in the last five years due to High Court stay orders. The prosecution said the trial is stalled as some accused filed criminal appeals with the higher courts challenging indictment orders in the case.

The status of the trial proceedings in another case filed over violation of building codes is the same.

At least 1,136 people, mostly garment workers, were killed and over 2,500 others injured as the nine-storey building came crashing down in Savar on April 24, 2013, raising questions about labour and human rights standards in Bangladesh.

The survivors and their family members have expressed frustration over the apparent halt in the trial proceedings.

"It is extremely frustrating that many sensational cases are being quickly disposed of, but we did not get justice in eight years," Ebadul Islam Emdad, a survivor, told The Daily Star.

He hoped the authorities would take initiatives to dispose of the cases without any further delay.

Hours after the disaster, Wali Ashraf, sub-inspector of Savar Police Station, had filed the murder case against building owner Sohel Rana, his father and several others.

The Criminal Investigation Department of police on May 24, 2015 pressed charges against Sohel Rana and 41 others in the murder case.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Shoppers throng an open-air fruit market in the capital's Purana Paltan opposite Baitul Mukarram after Juma prayers yesterday. Even amid restrictions imposed to curb the spread of Covid-19, the tightly packed crowd of people show very little awareness of social distancing.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

CASES OVER MAYHEM

Another Hefajat leader, 10 activists held

STAR REPORT

Eleven more Hefajat-e-Islam leaders and activists, including central leader Nur Hossain Noorani, were arrested yesterday in different cases.

Ten of the Hefajat men were held from Brahmanbaria in connection with last month's mayhem by the organisation in the district, police said.

Noorani, also president of Khatme Nabuwat Andolon Bangladesh, was arrested by the Detective Branch of police in cases filed over attacking police personnel and setting fire to houses in Munshiganj's Sirajdikhan upazila during Hefajat's strike on March 28.

He was held from Munshirhat area of the district's Sadar upazila.

A seven-day remand was sought for him after the Hefajat central member was produced before a Munshiganj court yesterday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Khaleda now has no Covid symptoms

To undergo test today or tomorrow, say doctors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health condition of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has further improved as she no longer has coronavirus symptoms, said her physicians.

Khaleda's physician Mohammad Al Mamun yesterday told The Daily Star, "We will conduct another test either on Saturday or Sunday to check whether she tests negative for the virus."

The next course of treatment for Khaleda will be decided by the medical board after conducting some other tests, he added.

Khaleda was infected with coronavirus on April 11 but she did not have any symptoms. Eight other people, living at her residence, were also infected with the virus.

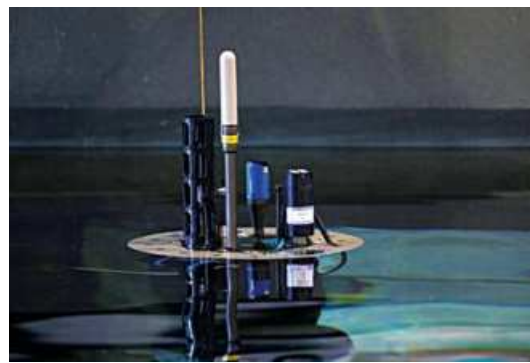
A medical board has been treating her since she tested positive for the deadly virus.

Amid the coronavirus outbreak, the government freed Khaleda from prison for six months through an executive order, suspending her sentences on March 25 last year.

She was released from the prison cell at

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Robots to fan out across oceans to monitor their health



REUTERS, Moss Landing

After years studying the icy waters of the Southern Ocean with floating robotic monitors, a consortium of oceanographers and other researchers is deploying them across the planet, from the north Pacific to the Indian Ocean.

The project known as the Global Ocean Biogeochemistry Array, or GO-BGC, started in March with the launch of the first of 500 new floating robotic monitors containing computers, hydraulics, batteries and an array of sensors scientists say will relay a more comprehensive picture of the ocean and its health.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

ARRIVAL BY SPL FLIGHT

Institutional quarantine reduced to five days

RASHIDUL HASAN

The government has decided that passengers arriving from abroad on special flights will have to stay under institutional quarantine in government-designated hotels for five days instead of 14 days.

The decision came at a virtual inter-ministerial meeting on Thursday, with Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen in the chair. The decision became effective on the same day.

According to minutes of the meeting, inbound passengers having taken two shots of a coronavirus vaccine and having Covid-19 negative certificates will be allowed to quarantine at their homes for 14 days. In that case, the local administration will ensure their stay under home quarantine.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

ROAD TO FREEDOM

THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

US urges restraint in wake of Indo-Pak confrontation

APRIL 24, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

US STATE DEPARTMENT TELEGRAM

US State Department sent a telegram to the US Embassy in Pakistan on April 24, 1971. The telegram provided a critical overview of the East Pakistan situation based on US Assistant Secretary Sisco's meetings with Pakistan Ambassador Hilaly and Indian Ambassador Jha.

The telegram revealed that Sisco suggested Hilaly to consider availing Pakistan of international offers of humanitarian assistance. The US was prepared to participate in such international effort if the Government of Pakistan desired, he added. Sisco also expressed concern regarding extensive loss of life, suffering and damage in East Pakistan.

Sisco asked Hilaly to convey to the Pakistan government the following supplemental points:

- Recent developments (incidents between Indian and Pak military forces, heated rhetoric and charges and counter-charges between India and Pakistan, refugee influx into India, siege of Pak Deputy High Commission in Calcutta) increased international tension in the area and prospects for Indo-Pak confrontation.
- In view of these circumstances, as a friend, the US hoped the Government of Pakistan would exercise maximum restraint despite what it might consider provocations from other side.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



3 APBn men arrested with yaba tablets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Three members of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) posted at a Rohingya camp in Ukhiya were sent to jail yesterday after they got arrested with 1,954 yaba pills and fake money.

They were also charged for asking a Rohingya leader to sell yaba pills.

APBn-8 Sub-Inspector Sohag and constables Miraz and Nazim Uddin were arrested on Thursday night in their room at Tanjimarkhola Camp-13, said APBn-8 Captain Shihab Kaiser Khan.

"The arrestees used to steal a portion of the pills seized at different times in the camp. Then they forced the local Rohingya people to sell them," he added.

There were complaints that SI Sohag, who was in charge of the camp security, had been asking Mohammad Ekram, 38, a Rohingya community leader, to sell yaba pills for the last few days.

An APBn team on Thursday night searched the room of the accused in the APBn living quarters and found the pills.

He added that departmental action will be taken against them.

The arrestees were handed over to Ukhiya Police Station, said Officer-in-Charge Sanjur Morshed, adding that a court later sent them to jail yesterday.



Farmers feeding freshly harvested Boro paddy into a threshing machine and spreading the processed crop out on the Barishal-Khulna highway. The photo was taken from Daharpara area of Jhalokathi district on Thursday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

COVID PANDEMIC

Indian hospitals grapple with acute oxygen shortage

Air force mobilised to transport emergency supports as the country keeps breaking infection records

AGENCIES

Hospitals in India yesterday launched desperate appeals for oxygen as the nation's Covid crisis spiralled, while Japan issued a state of emergency in some areas just three months before the Olympics are due to open.

Covid-19 surges are placing a major strain on healthcare systems across the world, with no end in sight to a pandemic that has killed more than three million people.

Governments are desperate to accelerate vaccine campaigns to help their countries -- and economies -- recover from the virus, and the EU yesterday said it would have enough vaccines to inoculate 70 percent of adults in July.

The announcement came as Europe's medicines regulator said the benefits of the controversy-plagued AstraZeneca vaccine increase with age -- and reiterated that it should be taken despite links to rare blood clots.

But in India, healthcare facilities sounded the alarm on oxygen supplies for patients on ventilator support.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose government has been criticised for relaxing virus curbs too quickly, met chief ministers of the worst-affected states.

Later he said the government was making a "continuous effort" to increase oxygen supplies, including steps to divert industrial oxygen.



PRAYER TIMING APRIL 24

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:05 12:45 4:45 6:28 8:00
JAMAAT 4:10 1:15 5:00 6:38 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN APRIL SEHRI IFTAR

11	24	6:28
12	25	4:05 6:28
13	26	4:04 6:29