

NEWS IN BRIEF

Chinese rocket to crash on Earth this weekend

A large segment of a Chinese rocket is expected to make an uncontrolled re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere on the weekend, but Beijing has downplayed fears and said there is a very low risk of any damage. A Long March-5B rocket launched the first module of China's new space station into Earth's orbit on April 29. Its 18-tonne main segment is now in freefall and experts have said it is difficult to say precisely where and when it will re-enter the atmosphere. Re-entry is expected to be around 2300 GMT on Saturday, according to the Pentagon, with a window of nine hours either side. Chinese authorities have said most of the rocket components would likely be destroyed on re-entry.

Nasheed feeling 'good' after surviving bomb blast

Former Maldives president Mohamed Nasheed is conscious after life-saving surgery, his family said yesterday, as police made two arrests in connection with a blast they said was being treated as a terror attack. Nasheed, the president of the ruling Maldivian Democratic Party and the current parliament speaker, was critically injured after a bomb exploded as he left his family home in the capital Male on Thursday. Police gave no details on the arrests. Nasheed, the Maldives' first democratically-elected president, is an outspoken critic of Islamic extremism in the Sunni Muslim island archipelago, and has been instrumental in investigating graft allegations against opposition leaders.

'Small time flu which got too much press'



Indian controversial actress Kangana Ranaut has tested positive for Covid-19, she announced yesterday. The actress, who was recently suspended permanently from Twitter for hate speech, wrote dismissively of the virus that has devastated the country. "It is nothing but a small time flu which got too much press," Kangana Ranaut wrote on social media. Don't give the virus power over you, the actress added, in a somewhat tone-deaf manner. India, battling a brutal second wave compounded by a shortage of oxygen, hospital beds and vaccines, has seen over 4,000 reported deaths from Covid in the last 24 hours and over 4 lakh new infections. In her post, Kangana Ranaut explained that she had been feeling tired and weak and had herself tested in order to travel to her hometown in Himachal Pradesh.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Stun grenades burst in the air amid clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli security forces at the al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem, on Friday night.

PHOTO: AFP

EAST JERUSALEM LAND DISPUTES

Clashes wound over 200

Arabs condemn aggression; US, EU urge authorities to deescalate tensions

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel braced for more protests yesterday after clashes at Jerusalem's flashpoint Al-Aqsa Mosque compound wounded more than 200 people and as the US, EU and regional powers urged calm after days of escalating violence.

In the unrest following Muslim prayers on Friday, Israeli riot police fired rubber bullets, tear gas and stun grenades at Palestinians who hurled rocks and fireworks at Islam's third-holiest site which is also revered by Jews.

Israeli police said 17 officers were wounded while the Palestinian Red Crescent reported that 205 Palestinians were injured in the violence at Al-Aqsa and across annexed east Jerusalem.

Video footage showed Israeli forces storming the mosque's sprawling plaza and firing sound grenades inside the building, where throngs

of worshippers including women and children were praying on the last Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

The clashes came after tensions soared in recent weeks, over Israeli restrictions on access to parts of the Old City during Ramadan and the threat of eviction hanging over four Palestinian families in east Jerusalem to make way for Jewish settlers.

The United States said it was "extremely concerned" by the events and urged both sides to "avoid steps that exacerbate tensions or take us farther away from peace".

"This includes evictions in east Jerusalem, settlement activity, home demolitions and acts of terrorism," the State Department said.

The European Union called on the authorities "to act urgently to de-escalate the current tensions in Jerusalem,"

saying "violence and incitement are unacceptable and the perpetrators on all sides must be held accountable".

Jordan condemned Israel's "barbaric attack" in Jerusalem, calling on the international community to stop the "escalation and violations" at Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Turkey, Qatar and Bahrain also blasted Israeli forces for the confrontation.

Iran called on the United Nations to condemn the Israeli police actions, arguing that "this war crime once again proved to the world the criminal nature of the illegitimate Zionist regime".

The Al-Aqsa mosque compound has an explosive history. In 2000, the second Palestinian intifada broke out after then Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon made a high-profile visit that Palestinians viewed as an intolerable provocation.

Blasts at Kabul school kill 40

Most victims are females; dozens hurt

REUTERS, Kabul

Multiple blasts at a school in the Afghan capital Kabul on Saturday killed at least 40 people and wounded dozens more, mostly female students, officials said.

A senior interior ministry official told Reuters on condition of anonymity that most of the casualties were students coming out of the Sayed ul Shuhada school.

Footage on TV channel ToloNews showed chaotic scenes outside the school, with books and school bags strewn across a bloodstained road, and residents rushing to help victims.

A spokesman for the interior ministry, Tariq Arian, put the death toll at least 25 but did not specify the cause or the target.

Ghulam Dastagir Nazari, spokesman for the health ministry, said 46 people had been taken to hospitals so far.

Kabul is on high alert since Washington announced plans last month to pull out all U.S. troops by Sept. 11, with Afghan officials saying the Taliban have stepped up attacks across the country.

No group has claimed responsibility for yesterday's attack. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid denied the insurgent group's involvement and condemned the incident.

The explosions took place in western Kabul, a heavily Shia Muslim neighbourhood that has frequently been attacked by Islamic State militants over the years.

The school is a joint high school for girls and boys, who study in three shifts, the second of which is for female students, Najiba Arian, spokeswoman for the Ministry of Education, told Reuters.

Trump admin 'obtained phone records of journos'

AFP, Washington

The Trump administration secretly obtained the phone records of Washington Post journalists who reported on allegations of Russian meddling in the 2016 election, the newspaper reported Friday, prompting concerns over freedom of speech.

The Justice Department sent letters to three reporters -- Ellen Nakashima and Greg Miller, and former Post reporter Adam Entous -- saying that it had received work, cell or home phone records "for the period from April 15, 2017 to July 31, 2017," according to the Post.

The newspaper was "deeply troubled by this use of government power to seek access to the communications of journalist," Post acting executive editor Cameron Barr was quoted as saying.

"The Department of Justice should immediately make clear its reasons for this intrusion into the activities of reporters doing their jobs, an activity protected under the First Amendment," he continued.

The letters did not specify why the records were seized.

But, near the end of that period, the three wrote a story about US intelligence which suggested that Jeff Sessions, who later became attorney general under Donald Trump, had discussed the Trump campaign with the Russian ambassador.

They also wrote a story on the Obama administration's efforts to counter Russian interference in the 2016 election.

US intelligence agencies have concluded Russia hacked into the computer servers of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) during Trump's campaign against Democratic rival Hillary Clinton.

Homegoers would stop at nothing

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, road transport leaders yesterday placed a five-point demand including the resumption of long-haul bus service at half capacity. They also threatened to wage a movement if their demands were not met.

MAD RUSH CONTINUES

Like Friday, people heading home yesterday thronged the capital's inter-district bus terminals in Gabtoli and Sayedabad.

Getting no transport at Gabtoli, many went to Amin Bazar on foot or on auto-rickshaws to take a bus and other transport from there.

They then went to Paturia ferry terminal in Manikganj or to Chandra in Gazipur by bus to avail other transport that would take them closer to their homes in the north and south of the country.

Google map showed a redline, indicating traffic at standstill, at the capital's western exit -- from Amin Bazar to Hemayetpur -- through which thousands left yesterday.

One of our correspondents visited Amin Bazar around 11:00pm and saw hundreds of people waiting for vehicles. Ambulances were seen asking passengers Tk 1,500 for a trip to Rangpur.

Many, who could afford it, rented vehicles to leave the city. Others changed vehicles multiple times to go to their destinations.

Showing indifference to physical distancing, transport workers were charging extra taking advantage of the people's desperation.

Talking to this newspaper, many passengers said they were being charged almost double the usual fares.

Yesterday, the fare was higher than that of the previous days. For every route, transport workers were asking Tk 100-300 more.

From Amin Bazar, buses were asking Tk 300 fare for a trip to Paturia or Chandra. A car heading for Paturia was asking for Tk 600-700 per passenger.

People of the low-income group were seen getting on smaller vehicles like human haulier and auto-rickshaws to reach the ferry terminals. Some even got on trucks and pick-ups.

The situation on the Dhaka-

Chattogram and Dhaka-Sylhet highways was similar, our correspondents report.

Microbuses with 10-12 people in them were seen leaving for Chattogram, Cumilla, and Chandpur and policemen nearby took no action.

Even long-haul buses were seen on the Dhaka-Tangail highway. The highway police fined 34 buses until yesterday's morning, Yasir Arafat, in-charge of Elenka Highway Police Outpost, told our Tangail correspondent.

Sources also said about 25,000 vehicles, including 13,000 private vehicles, crossed the Bangabandhu Bridge between Friday and 6:00am Saturday.

Sirajganj police stopped around 150-200 long-haul buses carrying passengers from Dhaka.

SUFFERING FOR FERRIES

Ferry services on the Paturia-Daulatdia and Shimulia-Kathalbaria routes, gateways to the 21 south and southwestern districts of the country, had been suspended since early yesterday to control the rush.

As the decision was made late at night, many were unaware. They realised it when they reached the terminals. A huge crowd formed.

Heading back was not an option for many as they did not have the money for it. People, including women and children, were seen waiting in the terminal areas in the sweltering heat.

Finding no option, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) authorities allowed some ferries to run and carry the thousands of people, ambulances, and hearses across.

Ahmed Ali, BIWTC's marine manager at Shimulia, said three ferries -- Kunjalata, Enayetpuri and Shah Poran -- carried more than 10,000 people and 13 ambulances and hearses.

Two more ferries departed later.

Police put a barricade 4kms ahead of Shimulia early yesterday to stop vehicles but people walked the 4km to the terminal.

Many got hurt as the crowd tried to get into the ferries.

Jalal Uddin said, "I am fasting. I stood for four hours in the sun. I am sick. Now I am resting in the shade of a truck. I will spend the joy of Eid with my family in

Madaripur. For this, I came from Jatrabari at 5:00am in a CNG [auto rickshaw]."

The situation at the Paturia terminal was almost the same.

At one stage, the angry passengers boarded the ferry "Madhobilata" and forced the BIWTC authorities to operate it around 10:00am.

After that, two others ferries left the terminal around 12:15pm.

The angry passengers also chased local journalists in the terminal area from where they were broadcasting live.

Zillur Rahman, deputy general manager (commerce) of BIWTC at Aricha, said they were forced to run some ferries following pressure from passengers.

Deputy Commissioner SM Ferdous of Manikganj yesterday said three teams of BGB would be deployed to enforce the restrictions on movement. One team would be at Paturia, one at the entrance to the district and the other at Barbaria.

The Munshiganj DC said two teams of BGB would be deployed in his district.

LONG-HAUL TRANSPORT

Shahjahan Khan, president of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation, yesterday placed a five-point demand, including the resumption of long-haul buses.

The federation along with Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association (BRTOA) and Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners' Association made the demands during a press briefing at the Jatiya Press Club.

Their other demands include giving financial and food aid to workers who lost jobs during the lockdown and allocating Tk 5,000 crore stimulus package -- at low-interest rates -- to transport owners to ensure workers' salaries and Eid bonuses.

Responding to a question, Shahjahan, also an Awami League lawmaker, said the "lockdown-related experts" do not understand the ground reality.

"They don't understand the sentiments of workers. That's why people are crowding on the ferries. The workers are being left without food...We are experts in this field. The government should seek advice from us, not the experts," Shahjahan said.

Our correspondents in Tangail, Manikganj and Munshiganj contributed the report.

Khaleda's O2 dependency decreases

FROM PAGE 1

she had dependency on oxygen support has decreased largely.

The former prime minister has passed critical times on Wednesday and Thursday. Her condition started improving from Friday.

The doctor said, "She [Khaleda] is stable now but her stability needs to be continued for the next few days. She may fly abroad if her situation continuously improves."

Her blood pressure is normal and blood sugar under control though it went up to 26, the doctor said.

Meanwhile, Khaleda's family members have talked with a private hospital in London and two hospitals in Singapore.

Family members have already talked with National University Hospital and

Mount Elizabeth Hospital for Khaleda's treatment.

According to sources, Khaleda's family members were now waiting for the government's permission. Once they get it, they would complete the rest of the procedures.

To take Khaleda abroad, her brother Shamim Iskandar wrote to the home ministry seeking approval on Wednesday night.

But till yesterday the government did not give any decision in this regard.

Khaleda did a medical checkup in Singapore before her imprisonment, and if the government of the city-state allows, she might be flown there.

Khaleda was admitted to Evercare Hospital on April 27, three days after she tested positive for coronavirus for a second time.

She first tested positive for the virus on April 11. She also has arthritis, diabetes and eye problems.

She was taken to the hospital's Coronary Care Unit (CCU) with breathing difficulties on Monday afternoon.

The government released Khaleda from jail on March 25 last year, suspending her sentence as per section 401 (1) of the Criminal Code of Procedure.

The suspension was later extended twice.

The BNP chairperson landed in jail on February 8, 2018, after a special court sentenced her to five years in prison in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case.

On October 30, 2018, the High Court raised her punishment to 10 years.



A handout picture provided by the Saudi Royal Palace yesterday, shows Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (R), receiving Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan, in Saudi Arabia's Red Sea city of Jeddah.

PHOTO: AFP

“মুজিববর্ষের আহবান  
দক্ষ হয়ে বিদেশ যান”

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
**Wage Earners' Welfare Board**  
Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare & Overseas Employment  
Probashi Kallyan Bhaban  
71-72 Eskaton Garden, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.

Memo No: 49.04.0000.009.07.001.20(22)-105      Dated: 04.05.2021

**Re-e-Tender Notice (OTM)**

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works as mentioned in the following table:

Tender ID No	Name of Work	Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing Date and Time
576458	Internal Renovation & Decoration Work Including Civil, Sanitary, Electrical and Supply of Furniture for Making Conference Room In The Extended Space of The Wage Earners' Welfare Board at Level-10 of Probashi Kallyan Bhaban.	23-05-2021 5.00 PM	24-05-2021 12:00 PM

This is an online Tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

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GD- 909