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SAFE MOTHERHOOD DAY

New mothers skip check-ups for fear of Covid

NILIMA JAHAN

Thirty-one-year-old Mushfika Akter, a teacher at a renowned school in the capital, is currently in her eighth month of unplanned pregnancy.

However, due to the ongoing pandemic, like many pregnant mothers, Mushfika could barely visit a gynaecologist for antenatal appointments, even though she faced several health complications.

The mother of two said she used to visit the doctor every month for routine check-ups during her first pregnancy.

"But this time, from fear of the second Covid-19 wave, I couldn't make any appointments even though I am facing severe health issues like low haemoglobin levels and urinary tract infection. I find it even more risky as I haven't been vaccinated yet."

With her due date approaching, Mushfika is now considering giving birth at a local hospital in her village home as the risk of contracting Covid, according to her, is low there.

The situation is similar for 28-year-old Radifah Chowdhury, who is currently in the 14th week of her pregnancy, with no antenatal check-ups. According to her, she has been going through the most uncertain period of her life.

After getting pregnant without planning to within the first few months of her marriage, Radifah is panicking about her pregnancy. She decided to keep the baby after extensive talks with her husband and after consulting a doctor who strongly discouraged her to discontinue the pregnancy.

However, with so many uncertainties that came along with her pregnancy, she was recently diagnosed with depression and anxiety. And while maternal mental health is of high importance, she does not know

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The decked-out "special mango train" with flowers and ribbons at Chapainawabganj Railway Station yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina via video conference inaugurated the special freight train to cheaply transport mangoes to the capital via Rajshahi for the welfare of mango farmers and traders amid the Covid-19 situation.

PHOTO: RABIUL HASAN



PM flags off 'spl mango train'

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday inaugurated a "special mango train" on Chapainawabganj-Dhaka route via Rajshahi in order to transport mangoes at lower cost.

She opened the train service virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

The West Zone of Bangladesh Railway has taken the initiative to transport mangoes at lower cost for the welfare of mango farmers and traders amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The train, having a SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

ORIGINS OF COVID-19 Biden orders new probe

China fumes; India's health ministry says 2nd wave on downswing

AGENCIES

China hit out at the "dark history" of the US intelligence community yesterday, after President Joe Biden ordered a probe into the Covid-19 origins which threatens to set the course for relations between world's top economies.

Washington is reviewing its diplomatic position with China on issues spanning trade, technological supremacy and rights, while it steps up efforts to hook Western democracies into a united diplomatic front against perceived Chinese aggression.

President Biden on Wednesday reopened a barely healed sore between the countries by ordering US intelligence agencies to report to him within 90 days on whether the Covid-19 virus first emerged in China from an animal source or from a laboratory accident.

The lab-leak theory, initially trotted out by Trump then dismissed as "highly unlikely" by a delayed World Health Organization mission to China, has resurfaced in recent days, driven by Washington.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 2

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Nixon asks India, Pakistan to show maximum restraint

MAY 28, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

NIXON'S LETTER TO INDIRA GANDHI

In a letter dated May 28, 1971, American President Richard Nixon urged Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to continue to act with maximum restraint.

"I am also deeply concerned that the present situation not develop into a more widespread conflict in South Asia, either as a result of the refugee flow or through actions which might escalate the insurgency which may be developing in East Pakistan. The problems involved in this situation can and should be solved peacefully," said Nixon.

Nixon assured Indira Gandhi of continuing his government's effort to persuade Pakistan to ensure a peaceful political accommodation and restoration of conditions under which the refugee flow would stop and the refugees would be able to return to their homes.

"I feel that these approaches were at least in part behind President Yahya's press conference on May 24 and especially his public acceptance of international assistance, offer of amnesty to the refugees and commitment to transfer of power to elected representatives," added Nixon.

Nixon also pledged a generous contribution to the UNHCR relief fund for supporting the refugees who had taken shelter in India.

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NBR seeks bank info on former RU VC

ANWAR ALI and ARAFAT RAHAMAN

The National Board of Revenue has asked different banks to provide it with detailed financial information of former Rajshahi University vice-chancellor Prof Abdus Sobhan and four others of his family.

The other family members are: his wife Monowara Sobhan, son Mushfique Sobhan, daughter Sanjana Sobhan and son-in-law ATM Shahed Parvez.

In a letter sent to different banks on May 24, the Central Intelligence Cell of NBR asked for the bank information of the five persons within seven days of receiving the letter.

Meanwhile, Prof Sobhan, who was the RU VC for two four-year terms of 2009-2013 and 2017-2021, was suspected to

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Ancient Roman bath complex discovered in Spain

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



A highly-preserved ancient Roman bath complex has been discovered beneath the sand dunes of a Spanish beach.

The sprawling compound spreads across an estimated 2.5 acres close to the village of Canos de Meca in the southern Andalusia region. It includes multiple rooms complete with 13ft high wall, doors and windows all still intact.

Red, white and black stucco and marble were also discovered suggesting the baths would have been lavishly decorated.

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Internet may slow down for over 7 hrs today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Internet users will suffer slow connection today due to maintenance work on a submarine cable between 2:30pm and 10:00pm.

State-owned Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited (BSCCL) recently issued a statement saying that one of its two submarine cables will remain completely dysfunctional during the time.

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PRAYER TIMING MAY 28

Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-30	5-00	6-43	8-05
JAMAAT 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-47	8-35

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

High salinity threatens fish spawning in Halda river

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

The Halda river, the lone natural breeding ground of carp-like fish in South Asia, has seen a poor yield of eggs mainly due to heavy salinity in the river water this year.

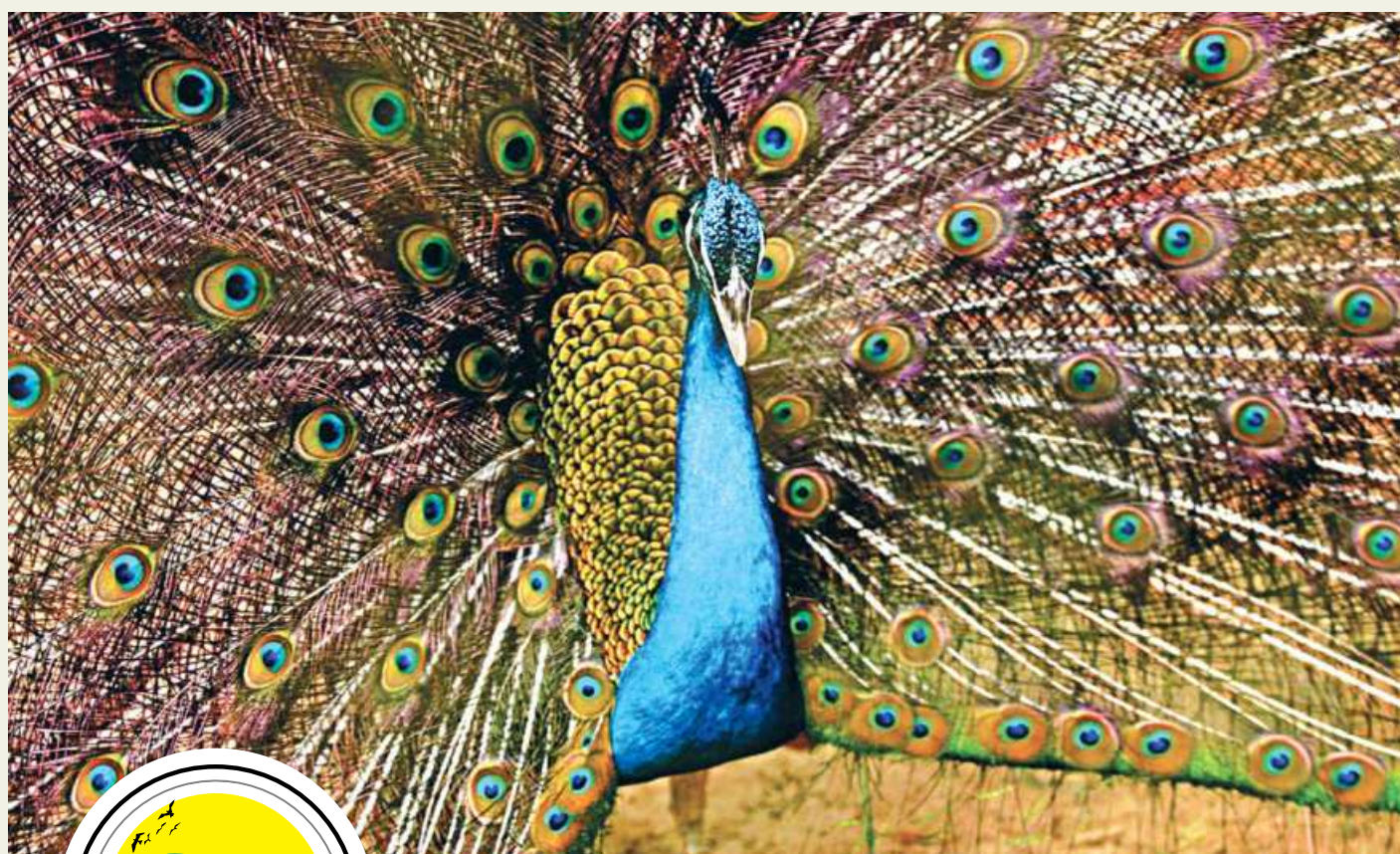
Saline water entered the river from the sea due to cyclone Yaas. Besides, there was absence of favourable natural phenomena, including heavy torrential rain, gusty wind and thunderstorm, which contributed to the poor breeding of fish, said an eminent Halda researcher.

Brood fish spawned on Wednesday night.

Several hundred egg collectors on both banks of the Halda in Hathazari and Raozan upazilas were frustrated as they expected more eggs this year for the decrease in manmade activities that pollute the Halda.

The authorities concerned had taken multiple measures to this end.

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A peacock spectacularly spreads its feathers at the wildlife conservation centre in Tilagarh of Sylhet Sadar upazila, which has been closed due to the pandemic for a long time. As visitors do not come, birds and animals there move freely. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Israeli strikes on Gaza may be war crimes

Says UN rights chief

AGENCIES

The UN high commissioner for human rights yesterday said that Israel's deadly strikes on Gaza might constitute war crimes and that Islamist group Hamas had violated international humanitarian law by firing rockets into Israel.

Michelle Bachelet said her office had verified the deaths of 270 Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including 68 children, during violence this month. Most were killed in Hamas-controlled Gaza, where Israel fought militants for 11 days. The conflict ended with a ceasefire.

Hamas rockets killed 10 Israelis and residents. She was addressing a special session of the UN Human Rights Council, held at the request of Muslim states who have asked for a UN commission of inquiry to investigate possible crimes and to establish command responsibility.

The resolution, presented by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Palestinian delegation to the UN Human Rights Council, was set to be voted later yesterday.

The United States, Israel's closest ally, did not sign up to address the talks, where it has observer status, appearing to shun the ninth session held on Gaza since 2006.

"Regrettably, the self-professed global champions of human rights continue to shield the occupier from global accountability, and literally provide arms and ammunition for its widely reported war crimes and crimes of apartheid against the Palestinian people," Pakistan's ambassador to the OIC, Khalil Hashmi, said, speaking on behalf of the Islamic group.

The conflict erupted after Hamas demanded Israeli forces SEE PAGE 12 COL 1