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G7 to counter China's BRI

Offers alternative grand infrastructure plan to developing nations

REUTERS, Carbis Bay

The Group of Seven richest democracies yesterday sought to counter China's growing influence by offering developing nations an infrastructure plan that would rival President Xi Jinping's multi-trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The G7, whose leaders are meeting in southwestern England and who discussed strategic competition with Beijing, has been searching for a coherent response to the growing assertiveness of Xi after China's surging economic and military rise over the past 40 years.

US President Joe Biden and other G7 leaders hope the plan, known as the Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative, will provide a transparent infrastructure partnership to help narrow the \$40 trillion needed by developing nations by 2035, the White House said.

"This is not just about confronting or taking on China," a senior official in Biden's administration said. "But until now we haven't offered a positive alternative that reflects our values, our standards and our way of doing business."

The G7 and its allies will use the initiative to mobilise private sector capital in areas such as climate, health and health security, digital technology, and gender equity and equality, the White House said.

It was not immediately clear how the plan would exactly work or how much capital it would ultimately allocate.

China's BRI is a multi-trillion-dollar infrastructure scheme that Xi launched in 2013, involving development and investment initiatives that would stretch from Asia to Europe and beyond.

More than 100 countries have signed agreements with

SEE PAGE 12 COL 2



The tanneries have been moved to Savar from the capital's Hazaribagh on paper, but some unscrupulous businessmen are still processing rawhide there, causing environment degradation and spreading a foul smell for the locals endure. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



New Air Force chief takes charge

UNB, Dhaka

Newly appointed Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Shaikh Abdul Hannan yesterday took over the command of Bangladesh Air Force, an ISPR press release said.

He took over from outgoing chief of air staff Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Serniabat at a ceremony at Chief of Air Staff's secretariat.

Principal staff officers, along with other senior officers, of Air Headquarters were present during the occasion, said Inter Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR).

Earlier in the morning, the outgoing air chief

SEE PAGE 12 COL 6

FAILURE TO PAY FDR Climate Trust threatens to sue Padma Bank

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

The Bangladesh Climate Trust Fund (BCTF) has warned Padma Bank of legal action over its failure to pay back the fixed deposit receipt (FDR) worth Tk 29.1 crore upon maturity.

The FDR had matured on May 25, and despite sending a letter to the troubled bank on May 20 of legal action if the amount was not returned on its date of maturity, no pay order came through.

"We will go for legal action," Mashud Ahmed, managing director of BCTF, told The Daily Star yesterday.

In 2016, the government agency had deposited about Tk 508 crore with the bank, then known as Farmers Bank, in the form of one-year FDRs at varying interest rates.

But due to acute cash crunch, the bank had failed to return the sum then, too.

While a major portion has been recovered since then after the bank's liquidity position propped up following the onboarding of five state-owned financial institutions as shareholders of the then-Farmers Bank in 2018, the bank also renewed some of the FDRs at favourable rates, said an official of BCTF

SEE PAGE 12 COL 2

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Our victory is assured: Tajuddin

JUNE 13, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZZA SAJEN

TAJUDDIN'S RADIO BROADCAST

Bangladesh Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad said today that the refugees now in India were keen on coming back home. In a broadcast over the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, Tajuddin Ahmad said the refugees were actively trying to hasten the day of their return by joining the liberation forces of Bangladesh in great numbers.

He expressed his gratitude to the government of India for what the country had been doing to relieve the distress of these people. But regretted that even after the appeal of the UN secretary general, the offer of help from the other countries was not commensurate with the magnitude of the problem.

He appealed to the big power not to aggravate the monumental wrong done to a peace- and freedom-loving democratic people by interfering in favour of the blood-thirsty military dictatorship of West Pakistan. The Bangladesh prime minister was more outspoken when he charged the big powers of having a large share in the "vast evil being enacted in Bangladesh today." The big power, he said, had assisted the rise of dictatorship and a capitalist-bureaucratic-military oligarchy in Pakistan by giving it arms and economic aid.

"I urge them not to try to prop up the crumbling economic base of the Islamabad government either directly or through the World Bank and IMF unless it withdraws its occupation army of Bangladesh. Let there be no doubt that aid given to Islamabad now will be sucked in cynical and devious ways into the war machine

SEE PAGE 12 COL 2



Man traffics wife, her sister to India

Rab arrests him, another suspect

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two suspected human traffickers conducting separate raids in Mymensingh early yesterday.

The arrestees are Mohammad Yusuf Mia, 32, of Mymensingh's upazila, and Mohammad Robbil Sheikh, 29, of Narail's Kalia upazila, said the elite force.

Mohammad Anwar Hossain, assistant director and media officer of Rab-14, told The Daily Star that the arrestee Yusuf introduced himself as a factory worker and married a 22-year-old woman of Mymensingh's Gafargaon upazila.

Primarily, he did not inform family members about the marriage, but as it was revealed, he started living with his wife and 19-year-old sister-in-law.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

People with large pupils more intelligent



MAIL ONLINE

People who have larger pupils in their eyes are more intelligent than those with smaller pupils, according to a new study.

Volunteers sat reasoning, attention and memory tests so the Georgia Institute of Technology team could investigate the link between pupil size and intelligence.

They found that as well as being linked to arousal and exhaustion, pupil dilation can be used to understand the individual differences in

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

3 bodies found in Naf river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Three unidentified bodies were found in the Naf river in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila yesterday, said police.

Teknaf Police Station Inspector (Investigation) Abdul Alim said the bodies of two children and a woman were recovered from the river near Hnila Union around 12:30pm.

Police are trying to confirm the identities of the victims, he said.

The police official said the locals informed the

SEE PAGE 12 COL 6



PRAYER TIMING JUNE 13

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-05 12-45 5-00 6-50 8-15
JAMAAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-55 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

TIB report on Covid response 'false'

Health minister claims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The latest TIB report on the government's response to Covid-19 consisted of "wrong information from the first to the last", Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

"When the health sector was praised worldwide during the coronavirus crisis, the TIB has published a false report on the health sector," Zahid Maleque said.

As chief guest, he was addressing a virtual remembrance programme marking the first death anniversary of Covid-19 martyr Dr Mahmud Monwar yesterday.

On Tuesday, the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), in a report titled "Tackling Coronavirus Crisis: Good Governance Challenge in Covid-19 Vaccine Management" said there was a lack

SEE PAGE 12 COL 6



A 70-year-old man, admitted to a dedicated building for coronavirus patients at Khulna Medical College Hospital, being taken to the x-ray room. Hospital staffers and the attendant had to take him out of the restricted area and in the open as there was no other way to the x-ray room. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

COVID-19 TREATMENT India cuts taxes on medicines, equipment

REUTERS, New Delhi

India yesterday cut taxes on medical equipment such as oxygen concentrators and drugs used to treat Covid-19 infections, after widespread criticism over healthcare costs during a devastating second wave of the virus in April and May.

The government cut taxes on medical grade oxygen, ventilators, the remdesivir antiviral drug, diagnostic kits, pulse oximeters and hand sanitizers to 5% from 12-18% with immediate effect.

The new levies will be in place until the end of September, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, adding it would include taxes on electric furnaces in crematoriums and ambulances.

"The rate cut has not been done with any cost implication (on government finances) in mind, it has been done so that people get some ease...the decision has been taken to provide ultimate ease to patients," Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj told a news conference.

The government, however, would continue to tax vaccines at 5%, he added.

The world's second-most populous country, where coronavirus cases hit a peak of 400,000 a day in May, reported 84,332 new infections on Saturday, the lowest in more than two months, data from the health ministry showed. There were 4,002 deaths.

The South Asian country's total Covid-19 cases stands at 29.4 million, with 367,081 fatalities.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 6