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DEVOURING JAMUNA

They can only look back in despair

Villagers in Shahzadpur move inland only to see the river coming towards them every year

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, back from Sirajganj

After the Jamuna river eroded the banks on which his ancestral home stood in Shahzadpur upazila's Koizuri village a few years ago, Md Shawkat Ali shifted his residence further inland into Koizuri union.

But that has not ended Shawkat's woes as, with the Jamuna swelling up as it does every year, he is now worried once again about losing his home.

"The Jamuna comes nearer to my house every year and it is very close this year. A part of my house has already eroded and now I am worried about losing this home too," Shawkat said last week.

Over 500 victims, like Shawkat, living near flood protection embankments in the same area face the risk of losing their shelter to loss of shelter as the erosion of river bank began in mid-May.

Their woes are compounded as they say nobody has come forward to help.

Over the past month, the rapid swelling of the river has devoured homesteads and crop lands of 13 villages in five unions -- Koizuri, Jalalpur, Sonatoni, Gala and Khukni -- in

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The Jamuna has devoured homesteads and croplands of 13 villages in Sirajganj's Shahzadpur upazila over the last couple of weeks. The photo was taken in the upazila's Pachil area recently.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

Transmission too much for reopening schools

Says edu minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said there was no conducive atmosphere for reopening educational institutions as the Covid transmission rate was still high.

"We are not thinking about reopening the educational institutions right now as the transmission rate stands at about 13 percent. The number of deaths is also going up," she said.

Talking to journalists after inaugurating a tree plantation programme at the capital's Eden Mohila College, the minister also said the transmission rate in the country was lower than that of many other countries since the institutions have remained closed.

She also said the government did not have any intention right now to reopen schools and colleges in areas where the

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JS PASSES HAJJ, UMRAH BILL

Errant agencies to face music

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Hajj and Umrah Management Bill 2021 was passed in parliament yesterday aiming to ensure the smooth performing of hajj and umrah and remove irregularities and mismanagement in the sector.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Md Faridul Haque Khan placed the bill before the house and it was unanimously passed by voice votes with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair.

Piloting the bill, Md Faridul said the enactment of the law will help ensure smooth hajj and umrah for the Muslims and bring hajj agencies under a registration process.

"We need a legal structure to deal with hajj management. Without having registration under the proposed law, no one will be able to deal with any hajj [hajj pilgrim]. And the registration authorities can take action against irregularities."

According to the bill, the registration of any hajj and umrah agency can be cancelled over anomalies.

Also, a hajj agency can be slapped with a fine of maximum Tk 50 lakh, while an umrah agency with Tk 15 lakh for irregularities, it said.

"If any agency gets a warning for

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ROAD TO FREEDOM

THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Indian foreign minister meets Nixon

JUNE 16, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZZA SAJEN

SWARAN SINGH CARRIES PLEA FOR US HELP

Indian Foreign Minister Sardar Swaran Singh carried to US President Richard Nixon today an urgent plea for help to achieve a political settlement in East Pakistan and enable the return of six million Bangladeshi refugees to their homes.

Nixon assured him of providing a fund of \$70 million for maintenance of the refugees. As to political settlement he added, "The problem is going to go away only as the deeper causes are resolved. And I am aware of that. How we get at those deeper causes is a very sensitive problem as you well know ... One way the public pressure, another way the private, shall we say persuasion. I have always believed in the latter myself as the most effective way, particularly when I know the individuals fairly well."

PRESSURE PUT ON PAKISTAN BY THREAT TO WITHDRAW AID The West was taking an increasingly tough line with Pakistan's military government. According to extremely well-informed sources, reported the Guardian (UK), the Aid to Pakistan Consortium would almost certainly not meet in July, 1971 as planned.

This postponement, which could be several months, would amount to an effective suspension of both commodity loans and some project aid to Pakistan.

Another key official spoke of the need for an overt, credible, and obvious move towards return to civil rule. These commodity loans, which Pakistan needed to buy essential raw materials for her industries and fertiliser and pesticides for her agriculture, were the

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GUARD OF HONOUR TO FFS

When will their mindset change?

Chumki, Shirin blast JS body's recommendation for excluding female UNOs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League lawmaker Meher Afroz yesterday in parliament joined the ongoing protest against a parliamentary body's recommendation to exclude female UNOs in giving the guard of honour to freedom fighters after their death.

In the discussion on the proposed budget for 2021-22, Meher Afroz, chief of the parliamentary standing committee on the women and child affairs ministry, said she couldn't even imagine how a parliamentary watchdog, in this case, the Liberation War Affairs ministry, could come up with such a recommendation.

Besides, Jatiya

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Scientists discover Earth's core is growing 'lopsided'



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The Earth's core is growing lopsided, scientists have discovered, but it is unclear why.

The solid-iron core in the middle of the planet has been growing faster under Indonesia's Banda Sea, seismologists at the University of California in Berkeley found.

The growth on one side of the molten metal is the product of iron crystals that form as the molten iron cools, but something in the Earth's outer core or mantle under the south Asian country is removing heat at a faster rate than on

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GRABBING ARABLE LAND

HC orders judicial probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered for a judicial inquiry into allegations of grabbing 60 acres of agricultural land at Muhuripara in Cox's Bazar and converting its nature by earth filling.

In response to a writ petition, the court directed the chief judicial magistrate of Cox's Bazar to conduct an inquiry into the allegations and submit the probe report to it within two months.

The HC also issued status quo on the possession of the land till further order.

At the same time, the court issued a rule asking the authorities concerned of the government to explain why their inaction and failure to prevent or restrain the land grabbers from grabbing 60 acres of agricultural land at Muhuripara, adjacent to Bakkhali river, and thereby allowing them to change

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S Korea to give \$700m in loans

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

South Korea has decided to provide development cooperation loans of \$700 million to Bangladesh between 2021 and 2025.

South Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh, Lee Jang-keun, shared the decision with Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Fatima Yasmin at the official development assistance (ODA) projects review meeting held virtually yesterday, according to a statement of the embassy.

The two governments have been discussing this plan since last year and, upon the completion of necessary domestic

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PRAYER TIMING JUNE 16

Fajr 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



Long tailbacks near the flyover in Khilkhet cause delays for commuters in the capital. Different development projects hamper regular commutes on the Airport Road. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Virus outpacing vaccine effort

Says WHO after G7 doses pledge

AGENCIES

The WHO warned that Covid-19 was moving faster than the vaccines, and said the G7's vow to share a billion doses with poorer nations was simply not enough.

Global health leaders also warned the pledge was too little, too late, with more than 11 billion shots needed.

Faced with outrage over disparities in job access, the Group of Seven industrialised powers pledged during a weekend summit in Britain to take their total dose donations to more than one billion, up from 130 million promised in February.

"I welcome the announcement that G7 countries will donate 870 million (new) vaccine doses, primarily through Covax," World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told journalists on Monday evening.

"This is a big help, but we need more, and we need them faster. Right now, the virus is moving faster than the global distribution of vaccines.

"More than 10 thousand people are dying every day... these communities need vaccines, and they need them now, not next year."

While people in many wealthy nations are enjoying a return to a sense of normalcy thanks to high vaccination rates, the shots remain scarce in less well-off parts of the world.

In terms of doses administered, the imbalance between the G7 and low-income countries, as defined by the World Bank, is 73 to one.

Many of the donated G7 doses will be filtered through Covax, a global body charged with ensuring equitable vaccine distribution.

Run by the WHO, the Gavi vaccine alliance and CEPI,

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