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## COVID DELTA VARIANT Indonesia faces 'worst-case scenario'

'Toughest curbs' fail as daily cases climb past 50,000; WHO warns world in early stages of 3rd wave

AGENCIES

Indonesia is now fighting a "worst-case scenario" epidemic, a senior minister said yesterday, adding the government was preparing for a further spike in coronavirus cases as the more virulent Delta variant spreads.

The world's fourth most populous country is struggling to slow Covid-19 transmission even after imposing its "toughest mobility curbs" yet, while its immunisation rate is low, with just 5.8% of its 270 million people fully vaccinated.

Indonesia recorded 56,757 new cases yesterday, surpassing the daily infections tally of India, which at its peak in May saw more than 400,000 daily cases.

"It's very fair to say that Indonesia is the epicentre of Asia," said Dicky Budiman, an epidemiologist at Australia's Griffith University.

Senior minister Luhut Pandjaitan said daily cases could still climb as the Delta variant, first identified in India, has a two- to three- week incubation period.

"We're already in our worst-case scenario," Luhut said.

"If we're talking about 60,000 (daily cases) or slightly

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Commuters crowd at the capital's Kamalapur Railway Station to buy tickets. Rail communication with the capital resumed yesterday after over three weeks of suspension to curb coronavirus spread. Inter-city train tickets, however, were being sold online.

## Strife in JP over new committee

RASHIDUL HASAN

A feud in the Ershad family is once again troubling the Jatiya Party as Eric Ershad, son of JP's founding chairman HM Ershad, has unveiled a new committee of the main opposition in parliament.

At a milad mahfil, marking Ershad's second death anniversary on Wednesday, Eric announced that Raushan Ershad is the lifetime chairperson of the party.

At the mahfil, held at Ershad's President Park residence in the capital's Baridhara, Eric also announced that his mother, Bidisha Ershad, and Ershad's other son Rahgir Al-Mahi, lawmaker from Rangpur-3, are co-chairpersons, adding that Kazi Mamunur Rashid, chairman of the Ershad Trust, is the secretary general of the new JP committee.

Raushan was not present at the milad mahfil organised by the Ershad Trust.

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## N'GANJ FACTORY FIRE Owner, official sued for not informing related dept

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'Ganj

Hashem Foods owner and another official were sued yesterday at the labour court for not informing the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) about the July 8 fire that killed 51 people and left several injured.

Shaikat Mahmud, labour inspector of Narayanganj DIFE, filed the case against the factory owner Md Abul Hashem and its Deputy General Manager Mamunur Rashid.

As per the law, the DIFE deputy inspector general must be informed within two working days in case of loss of life or injury due to accidents caused by fires, explosions, etc, in any factory.

On July 8, a devastating fire at Hashem Foods factory killed 51 people. The charred bodies of 48 people were found on the third floor where the only exit was locked.

Most of the victims were women and children. At least 10 others were injured

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## ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

### A country in the grip of fear

JULY 16, 1971  
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

**BOTH SIDES OF THE DISASTER**

Reg Prentice, a member of the British parliamentary delegation which had visited both Pakistan and India to study the present crisis, wrote an account of his tour today in the New Statesman:

"Everywhere we saw symptoms of a country in the grip of fear. The basis of this fear became apparent as each member of our party in turn received confidences from people who spoke to one of us quietly, snatching a few words in a corner and giving us a picture of the real situation. Between us we received a significant number of these confidential statements from a wide variety of people. They all added up to the same conclusion: not only had the army committed widespread killing and violence in the March/April period, but it still continued. Murder, torture, rape and the burning of homes were still going on. It was a story that would be powerfully reinforced by the accounts given us by the refugees in India a few days later.

"The worst example we saw was near the Comilla-Chittagong railway line, where two bridges had been blown up. Just south of the large one, the Feni bridge, between 30 and 50 villages had been completely destroyed, apparently a reprisal by the army.

"There was a great deal of propaganda about the country returning to normality but the facts belie this. Even in areas, where the army has been in firm control since the end of March, the economic and social life of the country is at a very low ebb.

"Four days later we saw the refugee situation on the Indian side. Any temptation to accept the smallest part of the Pakistan version would have been swept away by the awful reality of what is happening. As we drove up the road towards the frontier at Boyra, about 70 miles north-east of Calcutta, we drove past thousands of new refugees crowding the road on either side. They just kept

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## PK Halder, 74 others involved

Say investigators about Tk 2,000cr embezzlement from two NBFIs

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Investigators have found the involvement of Proshanta Kumar Halder alias PK Halder and 74 others in embezzling about Tk 2,000 crore through forgery from two non-banking financial institutions (NBFIs).

The money was misappropriated from NBFIs -- International Leasing and Financial Services Limited (ILFSL) and FAS Finance and Investment -- in the disguise of loans between 2014 and 2019.

"We've found involvement of the then board of the directors of FAS Finance including the chairman and the managing director. They will be made accused among the 75 persons," said an ACC official preferring to be unnamed.

Investigators have already submitted their findings before the Commission for approval. Once the three-member ACC committee gives approval, investigators will file 30 separate cases, sources said.

On June 6, Bangladesh Bank refused to allow FAS Finance Limited's former Managing Director Pritish Kumar Sarker to travel to the US.

The non-bank financial institution, which has faced a wide range of financial scams in the recent period, is being scanned by the central bank.

Earlier, the anti-graft watchdog filed 15 cases against 70 persons for misappropriating about Tk 1,132 crore of ILFSL.

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## New sections of Jerusalem's ancient wall discovered

AFP, Jerusalem

Archaeologists said Wednesday that the recent discovery of two stretches of stone bulwark from the Iron Age "unequivocally" prove a huge wall once protected the entire eastern flank of ancient Jerusalem.

Previous finds over the decades had uncovered two sections, one stretching for 90 metres and the other 30 metres, but a 70-metre gap between those two segments left doubts as to whether the ancient city of Jerusalem, with

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**PRAYER TIMING JULY 16**

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-15 12-30 5-00 6-54 8-15

JAMAAT 4-50 1-15 5-15 6-58 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

**আমরা শোকাহত**

শোক সন্তপ্ত পরিবারের প্রতি গভীর সমবেদনা জ্ঞাপন করছি

হাসেম ফুডস লিমিটেডের রূপগঞ্জ কারখানায় অগ্নি দুর্ঘটনায় ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত কয়েকটি পরিবারকে ইতোমধ্যে আর্থিক ক্ষতিপূরণ প্রদান করা হয়েছে। আর্থিক ক্ষতিপূরণ এখনো পায়নি এমন পরিবারের সদস্যদের নিম্নোক্ত নম্বরে যোগাযোগের জন্য বিনীত ভাবে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছেঃ

৩ ০১৭১১২৯৮৯১৮

হাসেম ফুডস লিমিটেড

**A Cinnamon Bittern, locally known as Laibak, spotted flying from a water body at Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur. The bird is very shy. The photo was taken recently.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SHABBOSACHI DAS

**NATURE QUEST**

## Raw hide price hiked by Tk 5 per sqft this year

STAR CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday hiked the prices of salt-applied rawhide of sacrificial cattle by Tk 5.

This year, the salt-applied rawhide of cows will sell between Tk 40 and Tk 45 per square foot in Dhaka, up from Tk 35-40 last Eid.

Outside of the capital, the cowhide will sell between Tk 33 and Tk 37 per square foot, up from Tk 28 and Tk 32 of last year.

The commerce ministry had proposed a higher price -- Tk 50 to Tk 55 per square foot of cowhide in Dhaka and Tk 40 to Tk 45 for elsewhere, said Commerce Secretary Tapan Kanti Ghosh yesterday at a virtual press briefing to announce the new rates.

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**বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক**

আন্তর্জাতিক কার্ড ব্যবহার করে ফরেন্স ড্রেডিং/ডিলিংসহ বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা যে কোনো ধরনের অবৈধ ক্রয়-বিক্রয় হতে বিরত থাকুন

সম্প্রতি বিভিন্ন ব্যাংকের আন্তর্জাতিক কার্ড ব্যবহার করে ফরেন্স ড্রেডিং/ডিলিং হিসাবে ফান্ড ট্রান্সফার করার মাধ্যমে বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার অবৈধ ক্রয়-বিক্রয়ের ঘটনা পরিলক্ষিত হয়েছে।

Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947 (০৯ সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০১৫ পর্যন্ত সংশোধিত) মোতাবেক বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের লাইসেন্সধারী অনুমোদিত ডিলার/ম্যানি চেঞ্জার ছাড়া অন্য কোনো ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান কর্তৃক অনলাইন বা অন্যান্য মাধ্যমে বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার ক্রয়-বিক্রয় বেআইনি ও দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ।

এ প্রেক্ষিতে আন্তর্জাতিক কার্ড ব্যবহার করে বাংলাদেশ থেকে অনলাইন বা অন্যান্য মাধ্যমে বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা প্রেরণপূর্বক অবৈধ কার্যক্রমে অংশগ্রহণ যেমন- ক্যাসিনো/জুয়া খেলা, ফরেন্স ড্রেডিং/ডিলিং এর মাধ্যমে বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার অবৈধ ক্রয়-বিক্রয়, ক্রিপ্টো কারেন্সি ক্রয়-বিক্রয়, লটারির টিকেট ক্রয় ইত্যাদি হতে বিরত/সতর্ক থাকার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে পরামর্শ দেয়া যাচ্ছে।

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।