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FACTORY CLOSURE FBCCI warns of supply disruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) says if factories processing food and other essentials remain shut amid Covid restrictions, consumers will ultimately have to suffer due to price hike resulting from a disruption in the supply chain.

It also says exporters will not be able to ship goods timely if production is suspended, leading to cancellation of work orders.

If factories are closed for 18-20 days, there is a possibility that a good number of work orders centring late summer, Christmas and winter might get cancelled, FBCCI President Md Jashim Uddin said in a press statement yesterday.

If one month's export schedule is disrupted, it is going to affect the schedule for the next six months, he said, urging the government to keep the factories out of the purview of the restrictions.

The government has recently enforced a 14-day nationwide lockdown to step surges in Covid-19 cases and deaths. It had enforced restrictions on the movement of people and vehicles on multiple occasions in the past.

The FBCCI president said priority must be given on protecting lives, but people will suffer if the production of food and other essentials remains grounded.

Earlier, garment, textile, terycloth and garment accessories makers sent a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina demanding that the garment factories be kept open during the lockdown.

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Violating health safety rules, Eid holidaymakers bound for southern districts head towards Shimulia Launch Ghat in Munshiganj yesterday to board vessels. With the "strict lockdown" withdrawn for eight days for the Eid-ul-Azha, bus and launch terminals are now seeing huge crowds of people. Health experts have expressed alarm at such gatherings which may result in the exponential increase of novel coronavirus cases.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journo killed in Afghanistan

REUTERS, Spin Boldak

Reuters journalist Danish Siddiqui was killed on Friday while covering a clash between Afghan security forces and Taliban fighters near a border crossing with Pakistan, an Afghan commander said.



Danish Siddiqui, a Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer from India, was embedded with Afghan forces attempting to retake a handful of districts in Kandahar that recently fell to the militants.

Afghan special forces had been fighting to retake the main market area of Spin Boldak when Siddiqui and a senior Afghan officer were killed in what they described as Taliban crossfire, the official told Reuters.

"We are urgently seeking more information, working with authorities in the

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Ansar Al Islam leader arrested

He tried to recruit Rohingya, says Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rab yesterday said it arrested Mahmudul Hasan Gunobi, a spiritual leader of pro-al Qaeda militant outfit Ansar Al Islam, in the capital's Shah Ali Beribandh area on Thursday.

Gunobi, 36, also known as Hasan, used to deliver religious speeches at different madrasas to pick a target group of people to motivate them in militancy and train them in secret dens in the country's hilly areas, said law enforcement officials.

He also delivered religious sermons to Rohingyas at a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar a few months ago with an aim to recruit Rohingyas, the officials added.

Gunobi, who was once involved with banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-

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Mystery of Jupiter's X-ray auroras solved



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have solved the decades-long mystery over how Jupiter produces regular-as-clockwork auroras of X-ray light.

The X-rays are part of the gigantic planet's bursts of visible and invisible light triggered by charged ion particles interacting with its atmosphere.

A similar phenomenon occurs on Earth, which creates the aurora borealis - also known as the Northern Lights - that is seen during the colder months in the northernmost countries.

But Jupiter's auroras are much more powerful than Earth's in that they release hundreds of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Teenage girl gang-raped at knifepoint in Bogura

5 sued; 3 land in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A Bogura court yesterday sent three men to jail in a case filed over the gang-rape of a teenage girl on Tuesday.

The accused are Mohammad Arefeen, 25, his younger brother Nishad, 21, and Abdullah, 19, said police.

The victim filed a case against five men - accusing two of raping her and three others for filming the incident - early yesterday. The two other accused are Golam Rabbi, 19, and Firoz, 23.

According to the case statement, she was raped at knifepoint in the district's Shajahanpur upazila.

Rabbi and Arefeen raped the 18-year-old girl at knifepoint while the three others filmed the incident, the case statement read.

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ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Bangladesh's cautious reaction to Nixon's China visit

JULY 17, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU IN WEST PAK JAIL

A three-member Canadian parliamentary delegation that visited Pakistan was told by Pakistani officials in Islamabad that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was at present in a jail in West Pakistan. This was the first official disclosure that Bangabandhu was in West Pakistan, although unofficial reports had earlier said he was taken from Dhaka to West Pakistan.

HOSSAIN ALI'S COMMENT ON NIXON'S CHINA VISIT Hossain Ali of the Bangladesh mission in Kolkata said at a Press Club meeting today that US President Richard Nixon's proposed visit to China might create a difficult situation for small powers if the power equilibrium was disturbed by this visit.

Hossain Ali further said since China was a potential superpower it was necessary that all the powers should come to terms with China and from this point of view the proposed visit of the US president to China was a good sign. But it was difficult to say how it would affect the strategies of the big powers towards small countries, he added.

The Bangladesh mission chief made it clear that Bangladesh was a reality whatever the situation might be. He, however, believed that the combination of international forces, if properly balanced, might help the Bangladesh government in reaching its goal.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Flashflood adds to woes of over 5,000 villagers

Onrush of water from India pushes up water level of Teesta in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Although there has been no rainfall for the last weeks, the water level of the Teesta has increased in Lalmonirhat due to the onrush of water from the upstream in India.

Many char and villages near river basins have already been flooded.

At least 5,000 people of around 20 villages in Lalmonirhat Sadar, Aditmari and Hatibandha upazilas have been left marooned.

According to the Lalmonirhat Water Development Board, the Teesta was flowing 30cm above the danger level at Teesta Barrage point in Hatibandha upazila.

But the water level started decreasing and the water was flowing 5cm below the danger mark at Teesta Barrage point from yesterday morning. The water level started falling as water flow from the upstream has stopped. But the river water is rising in the barrage's downstream, it said.

Mizanur Rahman, executive engineer of Lalmonirhat Water Development Board, said the Teesta basin is flooded with rising

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ASP dies from Covid in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An additional superintendent of police, who was infected with Covid-19, died at the capital's Central Police Hospital early yesterday.

Ahsan Habib, 32, breathed his last at the hospital's intensive care unit (ICU) around 12:30am, Saiful Islam Shanto, a superintendent of police, told The Daily Star.

Ahsan was posted to Armed Police Battalion, a specialised unit of Bangladesh Police. He was admitted to the hospital

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Two children enjoying themselves on the platform of Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital yesterday before boarding a train with their guardians. Confined to their abodes for months due to the pandemic, they are now overjoyed to be able to start their Eid journey home. In the background, two passengers wait for a train.

PHOTO: PRABR DAS

Covid cases rise across the globe

WHO warns of 'more dangerous' variants; EU fears five-fold rise in cases

AGENCIES

Global infections soared to half a million daily, largely driven by the virulent Delta strain as the World Health Organization (WHO) warned that "more dangerous" variants of Covid-19 could tear across the world.

An AFP tally of official sources found that after an initial dip, cases have been rising again worldwide since the end of June, topping 540,000 on Tuesday and again on Wednesday.

"The pandemic is nowhere near finished," the WHO's emergency committee said in a statement on Thursday.

It highlighted "the strong likelihood for the emergence and global spread of new and possibly more dangerous variants of concern that may be even more challenging to control".

The EU's disease agency said yesterday it was predicting a sharp increase in cases, with nearly five times as many new infections by August 1.

The expected rise in cases was linked to the highly-transmissible Delta variant, first identified in India, along with the relaxing of measures in European countries.

In its coverage area -- which includes the European Union, Norway and Iceland -- the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) expected to see 420 cases per 100,000 inhabitants for the week ending on August 1, up from just under 90 last week, it said in a weekly report.

By the week after, the number of new cases is expected to rise above 620 per 100,000 inhabitants.

The virus has reappeared in places long believed to have dodged the worst of the pandemic, with Australia -- lauded

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PRAYER TIMING JULY 17

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:15	12:45	5:00	6:54	8:15
JAMAAT 4:50	1:15	5:15	6:58	8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION