

'OVEREXPLOITATION OF THE EARTH'
Scientists say our planet's
'vital signs' worsening as
humanity's impact deepens
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The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

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ZILHAJ 18, 1442 HURI

16 PAGES PLUS SHOUT PRICE : Tk12.00



"The changing geopolitics and development paradigm coupled with the recent pandemic constrained our efforts to promote orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration."
FOREIGN SECRETARY MASUD BIN MOMEN



"I want to ask the people - there is a weapon Narendra Modi has planted in your phones... should there not be a discussion in Parliament?"
INDIA'S CONGRESS PARTY LEADER RAHUL GANDHI



"I want truth and transparency. The nation owes a debt to French Polynesia."
FRENCH PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON STOPS SHORT OF APOLOGISING OVER NUCLEAR TESTS IN THE REGION

AMENDMENT TO SAUDI LAW

Business blessing for Bangladeshis

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Saudi Arabia's recent amendment to a law allowing non-citizens to run businesses without local sponsors has opened up opportunities for Bangladeshi traders in the kingdom.

Bangladeshi running businesses with mandatory Saudi sponsors had long been subjected to exploitations, said manpower experts.

The sponsors often use the renewal of "Iqamah" (temporary residency permits) as leverage to extract huge sums from Bangladeshis and take a cut from the profits without any investment, they pointed out.

The amendment to the Anti-Commercial Concealment Law, which took effect in March, would enable Bangladeshis to do business independently and also allow them to send more remittance back home, the experts said.

As per the changes in the law, both Saudi and non-Saudis can get their businesses registered by August 23 this year. Besides, a provision was included in it through another amendment for stricter punishment for running illegal businesses.

The move is part of the Kingdom's Vision 2030, which seeks economic reforms by providing investment opportunities,

"Once they get their businesses registered, they will enjoy all sorts of support from the Saudi government and our foreign ministry. They will be able to run business peacefully and earn legally."

GOLAM MOSHI
FORMER BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR TO SAUDI ARABIA

stimulating local investment, and attracting foreigners by providing assistance to investors and incentive programmes, according to my.gov.sa.

Over two million Bangladeshi migrants live in Saudi Arabia, said Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh.

Sources at the embassy said many Bangladeshis expressed eagerness to get their businesses registered. However, it could not be known how many have applied for registration.

MA Rashid Shah Shamrat, former secretary general of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh, said, "The Saudi sponsors, while renewing the Iqamah after three to four years, take a handsome

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An ailing Rokeya Begum arrives at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital along with two of her relatives on a rickshaw yesterday. She has been suffering from fever for the last three days and was taken to Mitford Hospital in the morning. Finding no vacant beds there, she visited various hospitals in the capital, changing rickshaws several times, before arriving at the DMCH. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Covid death toll crosses 20,000-mark

237 die; record 16,230 cases logged in a day

UNB, Dhaka

As the highly transmissible Delta variant keeps sweeping through the country, Bangladesh recorded 237 deaths from Covid-19 in 24 hours till yesterday morning, taking the death toll to 20,016.

The country has been seeing nearly 200 deaths a day for the past two weeks, and shattered the records of daily cases and deaths almost every other day.

Besides, 16,230 more people came out Covid positive after the test of 53,877 samples, according to a handout issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

This is the highest-ever single-day transmission after the country saw the largest-ever 15,192 Covid cases on Monday.

With the new numbers, the caseload mounted to 1,210,982.

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DENGUE MENACE

Deadlier variant at work again

Like in 2019, most people are infected by Serotype-3, which raises risk of mortalities

HELEMUL ALAM

Most of the dengue patients this year are being infected by Serotype-3, a variant of the dengue virus which can increase mortality risk, warn doctors.

"We have tested samples collected from 20 patients admitted to different hospitals across the country and found that all of them were carrying the Serotype-3 variant," said Prof Dr Tahmina Shirin, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

The variant can cause much trouble if the patient was infected by any of the other dengue variants in the past. But early detection of the infection and immediate hospitalisation can significantly lower the risk, she told The Daily Star yesterday.

Tahmina further said it is the same variant that wreaked havoc across the



country in 2019.

During the dengue outbreak that year, the total number of confirmed cases was 101,354 and at least 179 people died, shows data from the Directorate General of Health Services

(DGHS).

According to experts, the dengue virus has four variants -- Serotype-1, 2, 3, and 4. Serotype-4 has not been detected in the country yet.

According to the DGHS control room, 153 dengue patients were hospitalised across the country in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday. With this, the number of confirmed cases this year reached 2,098.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, said Serotype-3 can increase the severity of a patient's condition.

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INT'L TIGER DAY Little progress in fulfilling commitment

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Eleven years ago, at a summit in Russia, Tiger Range Countries committed to double the global tiger population by 2022.

Bangladesh was among the 13 Tiger Range Countries -- where tigers still roam in the wild -- at the tiger summit in 2010, but it has made little or no progress in increasing its tiger population, experts said.

The tiger summit had also decided that the countries would conduct surveys every two years, but Bangladesh has conducted only two since the summit.

The current tiger population in the country is yet to be known as there

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Landslides keep taking lives

6 more killed in Cox's Bazar; rains wash away houses; 3 drown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A day after seven people died in rain-induced landslides, incessant rain in Cox's Bazar caused the deaths of nine more, including five siblings, yesterday.

In Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar, a large chunk of earth broke off a hill, rolled down the slope, and destroyed a house in which the five siblings aged between eight and 16 were sleeping around 2:00am yesterday.

Rashed Mahmud, chairman of Hnila Union Parishad, told The Daily Star that the family of Syed Alam lived in the house in Villagerpara and the children died on the spot.

Md Hossain, sub-inspector of Teknaf Police Station told The Daily Star that a police team went there and recovered the bodies from inside the mud pile.

Rashed said the deceased were Abdus Sukkur, 16, Mohammed Jobayer, 12, Abdul Latif, 10, Kohinur Akther, 14, and Joynab Akther, 08.

He said hundreds of homes got washed away as heavy rain inundated parts of the union.

Meanwhile, a man and two children drowned when they were fishing in the rapids at Eidgaon upazila of Cox's Bazar yesterday morning.

Somen Barua, an official of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, Cox's Bazar, said they were able to recover the bodies after seven hours of frantic efforts in Eidgaon canal.

The deceased were identified as Omar Faruk, 23, Delwar Hossen, 16, and Mohammad Morshed, 15.

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SAMPADAK PARISHAD 'We always worked on the basis of consensus'

Mahfuz Anam's comments on Naem Nizam's resignation
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two newspapers -- Bangladesh Pratidin and Kaler Kontho -- and online news portal Banglanews24.com published reports on Tuesday, stating that Sampadak Parishad Secretary General Naem Nizam resigned in protest against "unethical" activities of its President Mahfuz Anam.

All the three reports -- which published exactly the same text, citing an anonymous source -- claimed that Anam was engaging in personal attacks against the owners of some newspapers, who are members of the Parishad. Nizam is the editor of Bangladesh Pratidin.

In response, Mahfuz Anam issued a statement yesterday. The text of the

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Children taking full advantage of the empty roads during the ongoing lockdown to enjoy a game of football on the street which in normal times would have been full of traffic. The photo was taken yesterday in the capital's Azimpur.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

A SNAPSHOT OF LIFE

Tested positive, negative and the trouble

ZINA TASREEN

Grey area. The place between black and white -- and that is where life happens. This begs the question: shouldn't the government's communication be clear and concise for events that might fall in the grey area?

One event that can fall in the grey area is two different results of RT-PCR tests taken within hours of one another. Airline rules state that a passenger must provide a negative PCR test taken no more than 72 hours before the flight from a list of authorised laboratories, which consist of both government and private hospitals.

Implicit in this is that the later the test is, the better it is as it gives heightened assurance that the passenger does not have Covid-19, which has turned the world upside down for the best part of the past 18 months or so.

In line with that reasoning, I had arrived at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) on the 26th of July in good time to catch my flight at 6:35am with a negative PCR certificate from a test taken less than 36 hours earlier at a government-authorised private hospital.

What transpired after that was most definitely up there amongst the most traumatic experience in my life, and it was all because of the absence of clear communication from the Directorate of General Health Services (DGHS) and the HSIA authorities on events that fall in the grey area.

On the morning of the 24th of July, I had taken another test at the walk-in testing facility at the Bangladesh Army Stadium dedicated to foreign travellers.

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