

Indian state

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sect -- have been vandalised and shops and households belonging to the Matuas were demolished in Khulna, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

"People belonging to the Hindu community are in a jeopardised situation. Their assets, shelter and properties had been looted by the anti-social elements. [They are facing] discrimination where a campaign or programme is initiated to destroy, intimidate and punish a group because of its religious or moral beliefs," he wrote in the letter.

Electorally, Matua Nama Shudras are an influential community in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district bordering Bangladesh.

During his visit to Bangladesh in March this year, Modi had visited the shrine of Harichand Thakur in Gopalganj.

Shantanu, a BJP leader, is the state minister for ports, shipping and waterways.

On Saturday night, criminals, armed with sharp weapons, launched the attack in Shiyali village in Khulna's Rupsha. They vandalised and ransacked several houses, shops and five temples of Matua Hindus community.

Bangladesh Hindu Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad, Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad, Bangladesh Jatiya Hindu Mohajote, Sammito Sangskritik Jote and other organisations formed a human chain on Wednesday in Khulna city and demanded immediate arrest of those involved in the incident.

Missing Chinese

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The body was sent to Chattogram Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

S Alam Group is installing the 1,224-megawatt coal power plant at Pachim Gandamara in Banskhali.

SS Power I Plant is a joint venture of six companies of S Alam Group (holding 70 percent of the equity), SEPCOIII Electric Power Construction Corporation, China, and HTC Development Group Co Ltd, China, according to the official website of S Alam group.

Yahya a power

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Thousands of men, women and children evacuees from Bangladesh staged massive demonstrations before the Bangladesh mission and the consulates of the USA, the USSR and the UK in Kolkata today demanding release of Bangabandhu. The demonstrations were organised under the auspices of the Bangladesh Liberation Council of the Intelligentsia, the Bangladesh Teachers' Association, and the Bangladesh Film Artists and Technicians Association.

Dr AR Mullick, vice chancellor of Chittagong University, addressing the rally maintained that to justify the murder of Bangabandhu, Pakistan had organised a sham trial. He also pointed out that the evil designs of the Pakistani military junta would not defeat the people's liberation struggle in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh intellectuals urged Senator Kennedy to exert his influence to free Bangabandhu from Pakistan army custody. Kennedy had about an hourlong meeting with intellectuals yesterday.

ISLAMIC STATES URGED TO SUPPORT BANGLADESH

Twenty Muslim MPs of the Indian parliament appealed to all Muslim countries to raise their voice against the most "un-Islamic acts" of the military junta in Pakistan which had created a situation endangering the peace of the subcontinent.

In a statement, they said, "We feel that Muslim countries' silence may be taken as an approval of all these inhumane atrocities perpetrated by the military junta which is against the basic and fundamental principles of Islam."

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

Female

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accused while both were posted in Sudan in May 2019 as part of a United Nations peace-keeping mission.

According to the case statement, the accused raped her on six different occasions.

The complainant said the first two times she was raped without consent, while on the other four occasions, she was told by the accused that they would be married in the future.

Four of the six rape incidents took place in Sudan, while two occurred in Dhaka when both were home on vacation.

The incidents took place between December 2019 and November 2020.

According to the complaint, on April 12 this year, the complainant went to the accused's house at Razarbagh in Dhaka and told him to complete the marriage registration, but the accused refused to do so, threatened her, and physically assaulted her.



Residents use a boat to move in a flooded neighbourhood in Kareli Gaus Nagar area of Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, India yesterday following heavy monsoon rainfalls that caused the overflowing of the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers. Thousands of stranded people were rescued from flooded villages along the Ganges after the river rose above its danger level in the country's most populous state.

PHOTO: AFP

Russia posts record daily

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The coronavirus pandemic has killed at least 4,323,957 people worldwide since the virus first emerged in late 2019, according to an AFP compilation of official data.

The US is the worst-affected country with 618,479 deaths, followed by Brazil with 565,748, India with 429,669, Mexico with 246,203 and Peru with 197,146.

In China, authorities have suspended operations at a terminal in the world's third busiest cargo port after a worker was infected with the coronavirus.

The closure of a key terminal at the Ningbo-Zhoushan port on the east coast, which handled almost 1.2 billion tons in 2020, reflects China's

determination to squash its worst coronavirus outbreak in months no matter the economic costs.

The worker at the port's Meishan terminal tested positive for coronavirus Wednesday, Ningbo city officials said.

The company "immediately stopped production work and closed the port area," as soon as the infection was detected, Jiang Yipeng, the CEO of Meidong Container Terminal, which operates the Meishan zone, said.

The worker had been fully vaccinated and it remains unclear how he became infected.

Almost 2,000 front-line workers at Ningbo-Zhoushan port have been placed under "closed management" -- effectively unable to leave the port

-- as a result of the infection, Chinese media reported.

The latest closure threatens further disruption to the stretched global shipping network, which worsened after a typhoon hit China's east coast last month.

China reported 81 new cases Thursday, of which 38 were local transmissions. Domestic transmissions surpassed 100 on Tuesday -- the first time since January.

Officials have said many of those infected had already been vaccinated.

Meanwhile, Australia's capital Canberra is ordered into a seven-day lockdown after a single case is detected in the city that has largely avoided virus restrictions.

Only slight chance of asteroid Benu hitting Earth: Nasa

AFP, Washington

An asteroid known as Benu will pass within half the distance of the Earth to the Moon in the year 2135 but the probability of an impact with our planet in the coming centuries is very slight, scientists said Wednesday.

OSIRIS-REx, a NASA spacecraft, spent two years near Benu, an asteroid that is about 1,650 feet (500 meters) wide, observing its size, shape, mass and composition and monitoring its orbital trajectory

around the sun.

Using its robotic arm, the spacecraft also collected a sample from the surface of the asteroid that will help researchers determine the future trajectory of Benu.

The rocks and dust collected by OSIRIS-REx are scheduled to return to Earth on September 24, 2023.

Benu was discovered in 1999 and is classified as a potentially hazardous asteroid.

It will make a close approach with Earth in September 2135.

Scientists want to figure out how

Earth's gravity and a phenomenon known as the Yarkovsky effect will affect its future trajectory and the potential for an impact on a subsequent orbit.

"The OSIRIS-REx data give us so much more precise information, we can test the limits of our models and calculate the future trajectory of Benu to a very high degree of certainty through 2135," said Davide Farnocchia, a scientist with the Center for Near Earth Object Studies at Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California.

Neo JMB planned to make

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"We have already held meetings with chemical suppliers so that chloroform is not available in the black market ...," he said.

Nazrul Islam Selim, former president of Bangladesh Scientific Instrument Dealers Association, told The Daily Star that chloroform is mainly used by pharmaceutical companies in the country. Besides, the authorities concerned of the education sector buy the chemical, he said.

"We do not sell chloroform without documents. We are now more aware and check every record even though chloroform alone cannot be harmful. Someone needs to add something to the chemical [to make it lethal]," Selim claimed.

CITC officials claimed that since getting hold chloroform was difficult, Furkan, with instructions from Jon, was trying get a job in a chemical factory to siphon out the knockout drug.

Furkan was a chemistry student of Jahangirnagar University.

"Furkan applied for assistant manager post in two chemical factories just two and half months ago and his plan was to bring barrels of the chemical out of these factories," said a high official of CITC unit requesting anonymity.

"He trained a member of the military wing of the outfit on how to make the chloroform bombs. We are

now trying to identify the member by interrogating Furkan on remand," said the official.

Furkan and his two associates -- Saiful Islam Maruf alias Basira and Rumman Hasan Fahad alias Abdullah -- were arrested by CITC on Tuesday at Kafu in the capital.

Yesterday was the first day of their four-day remand.

Investigators said Neo JMB was trying to make time bombs too as their attempts to trigger remote-controlled bombs failed on a number of occasions over the last couple of years due to defective controllers.

Another official of the CITC claimed that Furkan made the circuit for the time bombs.

"We have recovered the circuit details from his possessions. We are now trying to find out how many of the outfit members know the technique."

Rahmat said they have learnt that Furkan trained at least 15 Neo JMB members on making IEDs.

"We have already arrested some of them and we are now trying to get details of the members on the run," he added.

Prof Ridwanur Rahman, medicine specialist at the Ayesha Memorial Hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday that excessive chloroform can be lethal. "So, we always need to be cautious while applying chloroform on human body," he added.

Technical body

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locomotives in Bangladesh, the BR commissioning committee found that the technical specifications of four key components -- engines, alternators, compressors and traction motors -- of the supplied locomotives did not match the specifications mentioned in the agreement.

Subsequently, the project authority halted 65 percent of the payment for the locomotives and the railways minister in October last year ordered an investigation into the matter.

In March this year, the technical committee was formed to determine whether the 10 locomotives can be commissioned. It has now recommended receiving those.

Asked whether the contract-related issues have to be placed before the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase again, Mazumder said, "No. Only the approval of the railways ministry is needed."

Mohammad Hassan Mansur, the project director, told this newspaper yesterday that the committee suggested receiving the locomotives as the BR is operating trains with locomotives of similar configuration.

The next steps regarding the locomotives would be taken based on the report of the technical committee, he said.

Though the committee led by Borhan Uddin, chief mechanical engineer (east) of the BR, submitted its report recently, it is yet to be accepted

officially, according to Mansur.

The issues involving the 10 locomotives made waves within the BR and beyond.

Nur Ahmed Hossain, the then-project director who had halted the payment and also raised allegations against "some senior BR officials" of joining hands in an unethical activity to release the funds, was changed on March 31 this year and posted under a junior in his batch in Bangladesh Civil Service.

A probe committee led by Md Farukuzzaman, an additional secretary of the ministry, recommended actions against Hyundai for supplying locomotives in deviation from the contract, and also CCIC Singapore, which the BR employed for pre-shipment inspection, for failing to carry out its duties.

But the authorities did not take any action against Hyundai; rather, they wrote to the Korean company in April this year, asking it to change the alternator, a major equipment of the locomotives, or else the company will get less payment.

"They [Hyundai] did not give alternators as per the contract, so we have asked them to change the alternators," Mansur told this newspaper on May 25.

The engines, traction motors, compressors and other equipment can be used as they are.

Hyundai sought six months to check whether the alternators can be replaced, he added.

stay safe to stay alive

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However, despite facing three waves and losing numerous friends and family members it seems that many of us are still complacent.

When the bolt struck us from the blue for the first time last year, like others on this planet we also thought that the answer was lockdown. We started to believe that if we keep ourselves indoors for two weeks or at best a few more that will see the end of the Covid transmission.

The next hope was vaccine. We began to see a ray of hope at the end of the not so long tunnel, as we eagerly followed the race between multinationals in multiple countries.

The vaccine ultimately did come. But it's now evident that currently, there is an inadequate quantity of vaccines to inoculate sufficient number of people all over the world, in order to achieve herd immunity and finally bid farewell to this nasty guest.

Many of us are still not proactive.

Many still believe that this is a "disease of affluent city dwellers" and will not cause any casualty in the villages. This impression, however, changed dramatically after we experienced Covid's delta variant, which is now ravaging the globe. Now, finally we know that none is immune, none will be spared and although the ultimate target is mass vaccination, that won't be easily achievable.

So, as we now prepare for the "new normal", our only option is to be extra cautious till 80 percent of our population are vaccinated. How do we do that? We must adapt to health measures -- namely, wearing masks properly, washing hands frequently, avoiding going out unless absolutely necessary, and maintaining physical distancing. These are the only practices that can keep us going to witness better days.

The writer is head of Interventional Hepatology Division at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and member secretary, Sampritee Bangladesh.

Chinese scientists

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its hardness reached 113 gigapascals (GPa) while natural diamond stone usually scores 50 to 70 on the same test.

"Consequently, our measurements demonstrate that the AM-III material is comparable in strength to diamond and superior to the other known strongest materials," the scientists noted in the study.

According to the scientists, AM-III has tunable energy absorption properties comparable to semiconductors commonly used in solar cells such as hydrogenated amorphous silicon films.

While in diamond crystals, the organised internal structure of its atoms and molecules contribute to their immense strength and hardness, in AM-III the researchers found that a combination of order and disorder of its molecules give rise to its strange properties.

Using fullerenes, which are

materials made of hollow football-like arrangements of carbon atoms, the researchers produced different types of glassy materials with varying molecular organisation among which AM-III had the highest order of atoms and molecules.

To achieve this order of molecules, the scientists crushed and blended the fullerenes together, gradually applying intense heat and pressure of about 25 GPa and 1,200 degrees Celsius in an experimental chamber for about 12 hours, spending an equal amount of time cooling the material.

Increasing the order further, the scientists observed, could potentially kill the semiconductivity and other properties that required the atoms and molecules to be chaotic.

"The emergence of this type of ultrahard, ultrastrong, semiconducting amorphous material offers excellent candidates to [the] most demanding practical applications," the researchers wrote in the study.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Barishal

E-mail: ee_bar@eedmoe.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

Tender Notice No. 131/EED/BARI/Project Code: (224149400) e-Tender/2021-22 Date: 12/08/2021

Name of Project: Vertical Extension of Selected Non-Govt. Secondary Schools.

e-Tender is invited through the National e-GP Portal for the following procurement of works.

Sl.	Name of the tender	Tender ID	Type method	Last date & time of selling documents	Last date & time of submission documents
01	VER-51: Horizontal & Vertical Extension & Repair and Renovation of Existing Academic Building in/c Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Babugonj Pilot Secondary School, C-3 (Est.) Babugonj Upazila Barishal District.	597564	NCT, LTM	31-Aug-2021 15:00	01-Sep-2021 12:00
02	VER-52: Horizontal & Vertical Extension & Repair and Renovation of Existing Academic Building in/c Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Rahmatpur Pilot Secondary School, C-3 (Est.) Babugonj Upazila Barishal District.	597565	NCT, LTM	31-Aug-2021 15:00	01-Sep-2021 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender document of following packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


Md. Jahangir Alam
 Executive Engineer
 Education Engineering Department
 Barishal

GD-1471