

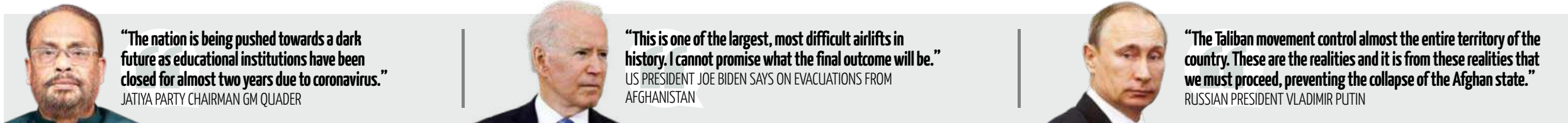


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Do users really need those?

Initiatives for state-owned social media, messenger draw quizzical response

ZARIF FAIAZ and NAHALY NAFISA KHAN

Social media users are seemingly sceptical of the government's move to introduce home-grown alternatives to Facebook, WhatsApp and other digital platforms.

They cited serious privacy and data security concerns regarding platforms developed locally when they cannot even fully trust foreign and well-established social media services.

Some said that they were unsure if "Jogajog", the government proposed alternative to Facebook, and "Alapon", the fill-in for WhatsApp, Viber and other messenger apps, would be any good at all or if they would get any traction in a market dominated by global software giants like Facebook, Tencent and Google.

They also questioned if they would get services as per their requirements.

Nadia Jahan, an executive of a marketing firm, said there was no reason why she would be willing to move to "Jogajog" from Facebook.

"I am perfectly okay with using Facebook and a localised platform does not make any sense to me. I also have friends from other countries with whom I connect on

Facebook; should I expect them to shift to "Jogajog" as well?"

Rafid Shadman, a university student, mentioned his concerns about privacy and data security.

"At a time when we are sceptical even about Facebook harvesting our data, and others monitoring our activities on Facebook, I don't feel assured about local alternatives.

"I have no way of knowing that my data and privacy will not be breached and I don't think I will feel safe exercising my freedom of speech on state-owned social media platforms."

Rasel Alam, a shopkeeper in Chandpur, said he had heard about "Jogajog" and "Alapon" being in the pipeline but he was unsure of what to feel about them.

"It can be a good initiative if the local social media is more simplified and is offered in Bangla. We want to see local news and local stories more. I mostly watch clips of Bangla TV shows and music videos on Facebook. If the local alternatives are offered fully in Bangla, showcasing all local materials, I think we will find it more

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The scenic Shada Pathor area in Companiganj, Sylhet, has started to see tourists after a long time. Coronavirus restrictions have put many, whose livelihood depends on the tourists, out of business. Many of the tourists, however, were not maintaining social distancing or wearing masks.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK Carried out with patronage of BNP-Jamaat Says PM



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said it was not possible to carry out an attack like that of August 21, 2004, had there been no direct patronage from then BNP-Jamaat government.

"They [BNP-Jamaat] thought that I had been killed [in the grenade attack], but when they came to know that I did not die they allowed four criminals to flee the country," she said.

She said the then BNP-Jamaat government assembled the terrorists and militants for carrying out such an attack

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GOVT FORMATION TALKS Taliban co-founder now in Kabul

Anti-Taliban forces say they've taken three districts in the north; the Islamist group accused of door-to-door search for opponent

AGENCIES

Taliban leaders gathered in the Afghan capital yesterday to begin mapping out an "inclusive government", as thousands scrambled to leave the country via a chaotic evacuation dubbed one of the most difficult airlifts in history.

A senior Taliban official told AFP that Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar -- who co-founded the group -- would meet jihadi leaders, elders and politicians in the coming days, stirring faint hope they may hold good on pledges to rule differently this time around.

But the gathering also included top officials from the Haqqani network, a US-designated terrorist organisation with million-dollar bounties on its leadership.

Meanwhile, forces holding out against the Taliban in northern Afghanistan yesterday said they have taken three districts close to the Panjshir valley where remnants of government forces and other militia groups have gathered.

Defence minister General Bismillah Mohammadi, who has vowed to resist the Taliban, said in a tweet that the districts of Deh Saleh, Bano and Pul-Hesar in the neighbouring province of Baghlan to the north of Panjshir had been taken.

It was not immediately clear what forces were involved but the incident

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Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar

Barishal AL, admin at odds

SUSHANATA GHOSH, Barishal

The local administration and the ruling Awami League men in Barishal appear to be at loggerheads following the violence in front of Barishal Sadar UNO's office which left around 50 people injured on Wednesday night.

Panic has gripped Barishal city with many AL activists on the run to avoid arrest.

The situation appears to have worsened after Sheikh Sayed Ahmed Manna, councillor of ward 21 and president of the ward AL, was arrested in Dhaka on Friday night over the incident, said local politicians.

Wednesday night's violence took place after dozens of ruling party men went in front of the UNO's office on C&B Road in Barishal city to take down banners put up marking the National Mourning Day.

Witnesses said the AL men misbehaved with UNO Munibur Rahman and broke open the gate of his official residence after being barred by on-duty Ansar members from removing the banners. Later, Ansar and police members baton-charged the crowd and dispersed it.

At least 600 people, including Barishal City Corporation (BCC) Mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah, were accused in two cases filed over the incident.

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Serving in silence

Country's lone human tissue bank offers hope, especially for the poor patients

NILIMA JAHAN

When Shreyon Paul suffered a second-degree burn to his back, doctors at a local hospital were not sure if the nine-year-old would ever fully recover.

The deep burn from boiled water had destroyed the affected tissues, they told his father Swapan Paul, from Gazipur.

After he was taken to Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital in Gazipur, doctors told the desperate father about amniotic membrane treatment. It is a therapy to help stimulate tissue growth more quickly and efficiently than traditional skin grafting and is available at the public hospital.

The thought of the cost worried Swapan. However, when he went to collect the tissue at the Institute of Tissue Banking and Biomaterial Research (ITBBR), the country's lone tissue bank in Savar, he was surprised and relieved at once.

There was little hassle and it cost him almost "nothing", given the gravity of the burn in his son's body. "I collected the tissue for a token amount, which was a great help for me," he said.

If recommended by a public hospital doctor, poor patients can get it even for free.

Back at Shaheed Tajuddin hospital, doctors placed the required amnion tissue on Shreyon's wound a day after its collection, and it started healing rapidly.

"My son is doing great now and the scars have also faded," Swapan told The Daily Star.

Shreyon is not alone. Many patients in need of tissue for transplant and bone grafting are turning to the Institute.

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A fire at a building on Airport Road in the capital's Banani causes a gridlock on the key city street. City dwellers waited hours as traffic hardly moved on streets affected by the knock-on effect. Inset, members of fire service trying to douse the fire.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Fire sparks gridlocks in busy city areas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Traffic in some parts of the capital came to a standstill yesterday due to a fire at a commercial building on Airport Road at Banani's Chairmanbari.

As the north-bound side of the road remained closed to traffic for nearly seven hours since the fire broke out around 9:15am, different roads across the city saw long tailbacks with thousands suffering.

There were gridlocks in Uttara, near the airport, and Gulshan as well. This caused particular stress to those who were scheduled to fly out of the country.

CNG driver Alamgir Hossain said it took him four hours to drive past the Chairmanbari area. "The distance is merely a kilometre. I picked up a woman and two children from Mohammadpur. They

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What is Alesha Card

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