10k fake freedom fighters struck

In a written answer, the minister also informed that the number of gazetted freedom fighters in the

"The matter is under process," he

Once ready, the digital certificates will be distributed simultaneously throughout the country through Union Nirbahi Officers.

The temporary certificates are now void, he added.

STATE HONOR TO THE FAMILIES OF 1,700 MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN ARMED FORCES

In response to a question from Mamunur Rashid Kiran of Noakhali-3, the minister said the government has decided to give state honours to the families of 1,700 members of the Indian Armed Forces for their contribution to the liberation war.

So far, 13 families have been honoured. The remaining crests of honour, which is made of precious metal and silver, are in a safe vault at the Bangladesh Bank.

Once the pandemic is over, the crest will be delivered to the recipients'

No vaccines for healthy 12- to 15-year-olds

Decide UK advisers

Britain's vaccine advisers said they were not recommending the vaccination of all 12- to 15-year-olds against Covid-19, preferring a precautionary approach in healthy children due to a rare side effect of heart inflammation.

The advice could see Britain pursue a different approach to the United States, Israel and some European countries, which have rolled out

However a final decision has not been taken, as the British government said it would consult medical advisers to look at other factors, such as

scientists have spoken out in favour of vaccinating more children amid concern that Covid-19 could spread in schools that are re-opening after summer holidays, further disrupting

Britain has reported more than

Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on Friday said children with underlying conditions that made them more at risk from Covid-19

For healthy children, there was still a small benefit from receiving Covid-19 vaccination, and advisers said the risk-benefit was "finely

balanced". However, the JCVI said it wanted next few days.

more information on the longterm effects of rare reports of heart

with Pfizer's shot. Myocarditis is rare and normally mild, with patients usually recovering in a few days.

inflammation, known as myocarditis,

in young people following vaccination

"Of course these vaccines do work and would be beneficial to children in terms of preventing infection and disease, but the number of serious cases that we see of Covid in children this age are really very small," JCVI member Adam Finn told Reuters.

"There are uncertainties about the long-term implications of myocarditis), and that makes the risk-benefit balance for these children really quite tight and much tighter than we would be comfortable to make the recommendation."

UK health minister Sajid Javid, who sets policy for England, and his counterparts from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, wrote to the chief medical officers (CMOs) of the four nations, asking for further advice. "including on educational impacts".

"Given the importance of this issue, we would be grateful if you could provide your advice as soon as possible," the four health ministers said in a letter to the CMOs.

The JCVI is also expected to advise on a potential booster vaccine programme for the elderly and vulnerable which could start this month. read more JCVI member Finn said there would

be an update on boosters "within the

Worn tires waiting to be retreaded are left on what used to be a canal by the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Sanarpar. Nearby neighbourhoods get inundated almost every monsoon, partly because of such occupation of drainage systems.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Children 12 and above to get jabs FROM PAGE 1 20. For others, the minimum age for the Sinopharm vaccines.

Bangladesh has so far received only 1 million shots of the two-dose Pfizer vaccine. It is not known when the next shipment of the vaccine will arrive in the country. Administering this particular vaccine also has its own challenges in rural settings because of its rather strict cold-chain requirements.

The country has now the capacity to store over 1 crore doses of the Pfizer vaccine after receiving 26 special fridges from Unicef last week.

Besides, there has been frequent hiccups in the country's regular mass inoculation campaigns mostly because of shortage of doses. The government could not continue the special vaccination campaign held from August 7-12 because of the shortage of doses.

Talking to reporters after an event in the capital, Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday said, "People aged 18 and above can get any [Covid-19] vaccine, but those below 18 cannot be given just about any vaccine."

The health department has been allowing students aged 18 and above to register for vaccination since August registration is 25.

He added, "There is a guideline of WHO on vaccinating children aged 12 and above and we have seen that many countries, especially America and Britain are giving Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to children. We will follow the process [adopted in other countries]."

Switzerland, Norway, San Marino, Spain, Lithonia, Italy, Hungary, France, Germany, Austria and Estonia are either planning or have approved giving Covid shots to children.

Asian countries like China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, the Philippines, the UAE, Palestine, Pakistan, and India are also considering the possibilities. If Bangladesh is to vaccinate every

child aged 12 and above, it will need two shots for each of the secondarylevel students and many other out-ofschool children in this age group. The health minister on Thursday

said that there are around 1.5 lakh students in different medical and dental colleges and technical institutions across the country.

The government currently has around 1.79 crore doses of mostly of

Friday said the government was trying to get hold of the vaccines suitable for children aged 12-17.

In another development, Professor authority resuming in-person classes.

must have at least one shot of a

decided that universities would reopen in mid-October but if the authorities of a university want to reopen sooner, they can do it afterSeptember 12.

in Chandpur that the government had specific plans to make up for the losses in learning due to the pandemic.

Education Minister Dipu Moni on

Kazi Shahidullah, chairman of the University Grants Commission, told this newspaper that the commission would consider if any university expresses willingness to reopen its campus even before October 15, the date set earlier for He added that the resident students

Covid-19 vaccine and the national positivity rate must be between 5 and Dipu Moni on Friday said it was

Dipu Moni yesterday told reporters

On campus classes were suspended

on March 17, 2020 to curb the spread

Families' wait for justice gets longer

Bangladesh nationals, dead off the Tunisian coast.

Complainants of four other cases could only say their loved ones went to European countries like Greece, Spain, Turkey, and Malta and then went missing.

Investigators of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) said collecting evidence had been the main challenge as they found no information about the recovery of the bodies or any circumstantial evidence.

"We wrote to our embassies in the countries concerned requesting information as to whether those countries or any other agencies have any records about the victims, but we did not get any reply," a CID investigator said with frustration.

Sixteen survivors narrated to the media the perilous journey they were forced to take and how the victims drowned one by one.

Family members said traffickers took between Tk 8 lakh and Tk 10 lakh from each job seeker.

They filed the cases on receiving news of deaths of their near ones or after failing to contact them for a long

The cases were filed with Bianibazar, Jalalabad, Biswanath, Golapganj, Borolekha, and Goainghat, and Kotwali police stations in Sylhet. The CID investigator said they

wrote to the Interpol recently seeking information about the capsize and the trafficked victims, but to no avail.

Currently, CID is investigating at least 110 human trafficking cases, including the nine in question that has no headway despite all-out efforts, the officer added, requesting anonymity. Saidur Rahman Khan, Special Superintendent of CID's Serious Crime unit, said they were yet to traceless since he last spoke to his

he told The Daily Star According to a criminal law expert, it is difficult to prove charges in these

"If the investigators and the prosecution fail to produce hard evidence, it is highly likely there will be no conviction," Supreme Court

Reports (DLR), said, "It is possible to prove the charges against the accused even if the victims cannot be found. In that case it needs strong circumstantial

He suggested formation of a separate investigation agency and appointing special prosecutors to deal with cases involving human trafficking, money laundering, and suspicious transaction as these crimes

information about the victims, reports of fortune seekers perishing in boat capsize in the Mediterranean continue to pour in.

Quoting Organisation for Migration (IOM), international news agencies reported that around 500 migrants died in the central Mediterranean route in the first four months of this year.

Last year, more than 2,200 people perished at sea, IOM said in a report in March this year. **BROKEN HOPES**

mother of Abu Sufian, who remains

resolve several cases as the victims mother from Libya in December 2018. Hasna Begum, mother of Sufian

"Investigations are still underway," from Noagaon village in Bianibazar, said local manpower broker Motiur Rahman offered a job for her 18-yearold son in Italy. Despite financial hardships, she

gave Tk 8.5 lakh to the broker. She had to borrow heavily and sell whatever little properties she had to collect the money, in the hope that one day her son would be able to change their fortune. "My son called me from Libya on

December 22, 2018, exactly seven months and 22 days after he left home," Hasna told The Daily Star by phone. "'Amma, I will fly to Italy today.

Keep me in your prayers' -- this was the last thing he ever told me... Since then there is no trace of him," said the grieving mother. Three days after the conversation

with her son, she called Motiur to know her son's whereabouts, but Motiur only said Sufian would call her. "But my son never called again." She called Motiur three days

later again, only to find her number blocked. Finally, she sued Motiur and his

wife Mahbuba, who allegedly received parts of the contract money from her, in December in 2019. CID records show Sufian was killed

in a boat capsize in the Mediterranean Sea near Tunisia coast. Sabbir Khalid is another trafficking

victim. His elder brother Shahnaj Mia filed a case with Jalalabad police in October 2019 against seven people. "The only information we got from

Billal, who survived the boat capsize, is that my brother drowned in front of his eyes," he said.

NZ Covid outbreak claims first death in six months

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand recorded its first Covidrelated death in six months yesterday, but health authorities said there were signs the outbreak of the highly infectious Delta variant was coming under control. A woman in her 90s, who had

underlying health conditions and could not receive a ventilator or intensive care support, died in an Auckland hospital on Friday night. She is the 27th person to die with Covid-19 in New Zealand and the first

largest city with a population of around 1.7 million. New Zealand has been battling a

coronavirus outbreak since the first locally transmitted case in six months was detected in mid-August, thrusting the country of five million into lockdown.

recorded, primarily in Auckland, which remains at its highest level of restrictions while the rest of the country has eased back restrictions.

of why the measures we are undertaking right now are so important," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said. "Our older New Zealanders and

those with underlying health issues are by far the most at risk from the virus, and one of the reasons lockdowns are such an important tool

'BSF' shoots man dead

Our Correspondent, Lalmonirhat

A Bangladeshi man was shot dead allegedly by Indian Border Security Force at Dantbhanga border in Kurigram's Roumari upazila early

The dead, Shahibar Rahman, 36, was from Ambari village in Dantbhanga union of the upazila, police said.

The incident took place near Kauniar Char area of Dantbhanga Upon receiving the information,

police recovered the body of Shahibar

Rahman in the presence of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) members on Saturday morning and brought it to the police station. Quoting locals, Dantbhanga

Union Parishad Chairman Reazul Haque said a group of people, including Shahibar, went to India on Friday night to smuggle cattle into Bangladesh.

At that time, BSF members from Dwipchar camp in India opened fired at the Bangladeshis, leaving Shahibar with bullet wounds to the chest.

Shahibar's partners rescued him from the spot, but he died on the way home. Police recovered the body from his house in the morning and took it to the police station, the UP chairman However, family members of the

deceased claimed that some locals, including Shahibar, went fishing in a river in the border area. Shahibar was shot dead when the BSF members opened fire on him taking him for a smuggler. They said Shahibar was not involved in smuggling. BGB 35 Battalion's Dantbhanga

Company Camp Commander Subedar Jayen Uddin said Shahibar's family members and locals told them that he was shot dead by BSF. "We have sent a letter to the BSF

asking them about the firing at border, but the BSF didn't reply until 3:00pm [yesterday]," he said. Roumari Police Station Officer-in-

Charge Montaser Billah said the body would be handed to the deceased's family members after an autopsy.

Below 10pc after FROM PAGE 1

26,493.

The deaths rate stands at 1.75

Of yesterday's deceased, 30 were male and 31 female. The highest 32 of the deaths

occurred in Dhaka division followed by 13 in Chattogram, six in Khulna, four in Rajshahi, two each in Barishal and Rangpur and one in Sylhet division.

Since March 8 last year when the first three cases were reported in the country, the first wave of Covid-19 ended as the positivity rate declined below five percent in February this

AL runner wins

result at 9:00pm.

agents misguided voters to vote for Habibur as most people were unfamiliar with EVMs. They, however, did not lodge any

officer in this regard. M Kazi Emdadul Islam, deputy commissioner of Sylhet and the returning officer (RO), declared the

written complaint with the returning

However, only 1,20,591 votes were cast from 3.49 lakh, from Dakshin Surma, Fenchuganj and Balaganj upazilas, which means only 34.46 percent of all voters exercised their voting rights.

Around 8:50am, only 25 out of 1,932 votes were cast at the Purbobhag Govt Primary School centre in Dakshin Surma upazila.

A total of 399 votes were cast till 4:00pm -- only 20.65 percent of the total, said Md Abdul Momin, the centre's presiding officer.

This correspondent visited 15 of

the 149 centres and witnessed a low turnout of voters in all of them. At Kotalpur Government Primary School centre in Fenchuganj upazila,

27 percent votes were cast till around 2:00pm. Alauddin, a farmer in Dakshin Surma upazila, voted at the Haji Mohammad Raja Chowdhury High School, said, "People are busy these days with farming and no longer

interested in elections as the result is

predictable. However, RO Emdadul Islam said the votes cast ranged between 30-40

EVMs (electronic voting machines) were used in all centres, which confused many voters, but they were happy as there were no long queues.

Polin Begum, of Fenchuganj upazila, after casting her vote at Dargapur Govt Primary School, said, "I was afraid before coming to the polling centre, but it was easier than I thought."

off list

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque yesterday told parliament that the certificates of

The process of verification and selection regarding the new inclusion of heroic freedom fighters and cancellation of the names of the

country is 1,83,560. FREEDOM FIGHTERS WILL GET

League MP Benjir Ahmed, Haque said the government will distribute digital certificates (permanent certificates) among the valiant freedom fighters while smart cards among the living families, Haque said.

10,000 fake freedom fighters accepted from 2002 to 2010 in the civil gazette list have been cancelled.

Responding to a question from Awami

accused persons is underway, he said in reply to a query from ruling Awami League MP Nurunnabi Chowdhury.

DIGITAL CERTIFICATE

REUTERS, London

vaccinations to children more broadly.

disruption to schools. Many politicians and some

133,000 deaths from Covid-19 and nearly 7 million cases, and while ransmission among children can be high, they are rarely severely ill from

should get vaccinated.

Fighting rages on for Panjshir

on the border between Kapisa province and Panjshir but were pushed back. The defence of the stronghold of Afghanistan is unbreakable," Front

spokesman Fahim Dashty said in a

Facebook post, Massoud

insisted his forces would resist and said Panjshir "continues to stand strongly in the fight". A Taliban source said fighting was continuing in Panjshir but the advance

was slowed by landmines placed on

the road to the capital Bazarak and the

provincial governor's compound. "Demining and offensives are both going on at the same time," the source It was not immediately possible

to get independent confirmation of

events in Panjshir, which is walled

off by mountains except for a narrow

Celebratory gunfire resounded in

Kabul on Friday as reports spread of the Taliban's takeover of Panjshir, and news agencies said at least 17 people were killed and 41 hurt in the firing. Meanwhile, Pakistan's spy chief Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed flew into Kabul yesterday, sources in both capitals said. It was not clear what his agenda was, but a senior official

in Pakistan had said earlier in the

week that Hameed, who heads the

powerful Inter-Services Intelligence

(ISI) agency, could help the Taliban

reorganise the Afghan military. Washington has accused Pakistan and the ISI of backing the Taliban in the group's two-decade fight against the US-backed government in Kabul, although Islamabad has denied the

Analysts have said Pakistan's role in Afghanistan will be much enhanced

TALIBAN RULE IN AFGHANISTAN Pakistan spy chief flies to Kabul to 'help

reorganize military' Kabul airport reopens to receive aid,

domestic flights restart At least **17** killed in celebratory gunfire

in Kabul

UN to convene Afghanistan aid confer-

ence on Sept 13

with the Taliban in power, although the Pakistani government has said that its influence over the movement has waned. "I assure the people that we strive

to improve their living conditions,

and that the government will be

responsible to everyone and will

provide security because it is necessary

for economic development, not just in

Afghanistan but in the whole world,'

Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the head of the Taliban's political office, told Al Jazeera from Kabul. Baradar added security was

necessary to kick-start major economic

projects in the country. The Taliban swept into Kabul virtually unopposed on August 15 following rapid advances across Afghanistan, as United States-led foreign forces withdrew from the country and President Ashraf Ghani fled.

On Friday, sources within the Taliban told Reuters news agency Baradar, a co-founder of Taliban, would lead the new government in Afghanistan, with Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob - the son of late Taliban founder Mullah Omar - and Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai taking

cases without concrete evidence.

lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Khurshid, also editor of Dhaka Law

evidence."

are often interlinked. With law enforcers struggling to get

The Daily Star has spoken to families of six victims and they all wait for

justice, but with shattered hopes. One of the cases was filed by the

recorded since February 16 this year. Authorities said the woman was a household contact of a person who had already tested positive for the virus in Auckland, New Zealand's

Since then, 782 cases have been to stop its spread."

The death was "a deeply sad reminder