

New private

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that astra means star in Greek.

The airline is planning to initially run flights with ATR 72-600 aircraft.

As per the rules, the airlines will get permission to operate flights on international routes after operating flights on domestic routes for at least one year.

Air Astra's entry comes at a time when the existing private players are struggling to stay afloat despite a steady increase in people's purchasing power and the spread of economic activities all over the country for regulatory handicaps and the global coronavirus pandemic.

In the last 25 years, at least eight private airlines were forced to cease their operation for cash crunch.

And Regent Airways, one of the three private players, remains grounded since March last year.

Yahya's

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district today and damaged the Pakistan military police camp.

In Sylhet district, Mukti Bahini raided Pakistan troops in Dilkhush area and killed 12 of them.

In Kushtia-Jashore-Khulna Sector, Mukti Bahini today engaged Pakistani troops with mortars in Bhomra, killing four. In Kakkanda they inflicted six casualties on Pakistani troops.

In Rangpur-Dinajpur Sector, Mukti Bahini demolished two power pylons between Thakurgaon and Parganj.

On the Ranishankoil-Haripur road, one Pakistani vehicle was blown up with a mine laid by Mukti Bahini, killing five of its occupants and causing severe damage to the vehicle. They also ambushed enemy troops approaching the area, killing six and injuring four.

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US warns

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they can consolidate power as they seek to shift from a guerrilla force to government.

"I think there's at least a very good probability of a broader civil war," said Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in a bleak assessment.

"That will then in turn lead to conditions that could, in fact, lead to a reconstitution of Al-Qaeda or a growth of ISIS (Islamic State group)," he told Fox News Saturday.

Britain's most senior military officer, General Sir Nick Carter, told the BBC yesterday that "everybody got it wrong" on how quickly the Taliban would take over Afghanistan.

Asked whether military intelligence was wrong, he said the government received intelligence from a variety of sources.

"It's not purely about military intelligence... I don't think what anybody predicted was how fragile that Afghan government was and how fragile it was in relation to the command of its armed forces," he added.

Afghanistan's new rulers have pledged to be more accommodating than during their first stint in power, which also came after years of conflict -- first the Soviet invasion of 1979, and then a bloody civil war.

They have promised a more "inclusive" government that represents Afghanistan's complex ethnic makeup -- though women are unlikely to be included at the top levels.

But few in Panjshir, a rugged valley north of Kabul which held out for nearly a decade against the Soviet Union's occupation and also the Taliban's first rule from 1996-2001, seem to trust their promises.

'HUMANITARIAN CRISIS'

Taliban official Bilal Karimi yesterday reported heavy clashes in Panjshir, and while resistance fighters insist they captured hundreds of Taliban troops, analysts warned they are struggling.



Demonstrators take part in a protest over the Thai government's handling of the coronavirus disease pandemic and to demand Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha's resignation, in Bangkok, Thailand yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Eyewitness describes how Liaquat shot

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mosque are located near the murder spot.

A few moments later, another police team rushed to spot. The officer leading the team kicked the man lying on ground.

Ali later came to know that the team leader was Pradeep Kumar Das, former officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station.

Around an hour later, a policeman loaded Sinha's body on a pick-up and there was a discussion about whether he should be taken to hospital. Sinha was bleeding profusely.

All the people gathered there assumed that the man had died by this time, the court source quoted Ali as saying.

Judge Ismail Hossain recorded Ali's deposition, which began at 10:30am

and continued for around an hour and half. The defence then cross-examined his statement, said the court's Public Prosecutor Faridul Alam.

However, after that, defence lawyer Rana Dasgupta told journalists that the witness's statement before court did not match the statement he earlier gave to the investigation officer.

All 15 accused in the case were present at the court yesterday, said Faridul Alam.

In the first phase, the court recorded statements of two witnesses -- Sinha's sister and the complainant Sharmin Shahriar Ferdous and one of Sinha's associates Shahedul Islam Sifat -- between August 23 and 25.

In second phase, the court began recording statements of other witnesses yesterday and will continue till September 8. The court has

summoned 15 witnesses to place their depositions during this period.

According to the charge sheet, 83 people were witnesses to the incident.

On June 27, the court framed charges against the 15. Of them, 12 are policemen, including OC Pradeep Kumar Das, police inspector Liaquat Ali, sub-inspector Md Shahjahan and assistant sub-inspector Liton Mia -- all suspended from their posts.

On December 13, the investigators submitted the charge sheet.

Sinha was killed in a police firing at a check post in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila on July 31 last year.

His elder sister filed the murder case with Teknaf Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court against Pradeep, Nandadul and several others on August 5 last year.

Now set to open in 2022 partially

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signed a deal with Italian-Thai Development Public Company to build the expressway at a cost of Tk 8,703 crore.

The deal was revised and inked again in December 2013, with the cost revised at Tk 8,940 crore after bringing several changes to the design. The government will give Tk 2,413 crore (27 percent) as viability gap funding while the private partner will bear the rest.

Besides, the government is to spend Tk 4,885 crore on land acquisition, resettlement and relocation of utility service lines, meaning the total cost of the project is Tk 13,825 crore.

But the scheme faltered time and again over the years, mainly due to the failure of the private investor -- Italian-Thai -- to manage funds for the project, the government's delay in handing over the project, and problems related to land acquisition, said officials involved in the project.

However, the fund-related crisis was resolved after Italian-Thai handed over 49 percent of its share to two Chinese companies -- China Shandong International Economic and Technical Corporation Group (34 percent) and Sino Hydro Corporation Ltd (15 percent) last year.

THREE DEADLINES

The much-talked about project is being implemented in three phases.

The first phase is from Kawla to Banani, while the next one is from Banani to Moghbazar and the last one from Moghbazar to Kutubkhali.

Quader yesterday said the first phase witnessed 66.25 percent progress until August this year, while the second one saw 21.5 percent and the third one 2.33 percent progress.

The overall progress of the project is 30.50 percent, he added.

While visiting the project site at Kawla on Jun 18, 2019, Quader said a part of the expressway -- stretching from airport to Moghbazar -- will be opened by December 2020 after the second phase of the project is completed.

The first phase was supposed to be completed by January 2020, as per his announcement that day.

Joining a contract-signing ceremony at Setu Bhaban on February 25 last year, Quader said, "As the funding-related issue is over, we hope the work will get momentum and will move quickly towards its completion."

As per the document the project authorities shared with journalists on that day, construction work of the first phase was supposed to be completed by October 2020 and the second one by October this year. The third one was supposed to be finished in October next year.

Talking to reporters yesterday, Project

Director AHMS Aktar said they had a plan to open the first phase first, but later changed the decision as vehicle owners may not be interested in using the short portion (Kawla to Banani).

So, they have decided to inaugurate around 11km portion from Kawla to Tejaoga as there are several ramps in this part, he added.

Asked about the extensions of deadlines, Quader said, "There was a funding-related problem, which is now over. I have already said this. How many times I have to tell you?"

But when he was reminded about setting the new deadline in February last year and overcoming the fund crisis and asked what was the reason behind the delay, the minister said, "What I am now saying is ground reality."

The project director said they faced problems in bringing construction materials from abroad due to the pandemic. Besides, many experts could not arrive in Dhaka on time due to this situation, he added.

In reply to a query about the design-related tussle over some pillars with Bangladesh Railway, Quader said the problem would be solved through discussion.

About the allegation of some project workers not getting paid for two months, the minister said this was unlikely to happen as there was no fund crisis.

several thousand officials, scientists and campaigners are laying the groundwork for United Nations talks on biodiversity in the Chinese city of Kunming next year.

How to protect

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Occasionally, it develops into severe dengue -- more common in the ages 6-12, said Dr Rukhsana Parvin, assistant professor of the Department of Paediatrics at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College.

Dengue shock syndrome is a dangerous complication of the infection, which is associated with high mortality especially in children, she added.

According to the paediatrician, early detection and access to proper medical care can lower the fatality rates of severe dengue.

Lack of awareness about the disease and its prevention are the main reasons behind the surge in dengue cases. Dengue prevention and control depend on effective mosquito population control measures, she said.

As mentioned earlier, children are vulnerable to the disease and it is important to take necessary precautions to protect them.

Since schools have been closed due to the pandemic, children are mostly staying at home. Parents have to ensure that there is no breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes in their home and that their children are

inside mosquito nets when they are sleeping, Dr Rukhsana said.

Mosquito repellents can also be used to save children from mosquito bites.

If they go out, they should wear long-sleeved shirts, full pants, shoes and socks, she further said, adding that careful fluid management and supportive therapy are the mainstays for the recovery of children infected with dengue.

Dr Jesmin Akter, assistant professor (Neonatology) of Sir Salimullah Medical College, said infants are highly vulnerable to the impacts of dengue.

The warning signs include abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, lethargy, irritability or sudden behavioral changes, bleeding from the gum or nose, passage of black stool, blood in vomit, increased hematocrit and concurrent decrease in platelet count.

If one or more of these symptoms are noticed in a child, they should be admitted to hospital immediately, she suggested.

Since management of severe dengue in children is challenging, it's better to protect your child from mosquitoes.

No decision yet on Covid vaccines for healthy children: UK minister

REUTERS, London

British vaccines minister Nadhim Zahawi yesterday said a decision had not yet been taken on whether healthy children aged 12- to 15-year-olds should be vaccinated against COVID-19, following reports that a rollout could begin in the coming days.

Britain's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on Friday declined to recommend vaccinations for children in that group, taking a precautionary approach due to a rare risk of heart inflammation, but adding the issue was finely balanced.

The government is consulting medical advisers to seek advice on wider considerations, such as the impact on schools, and may still give the go-ahead to broad vaccination of the age group.

Some newspapers reported confidence among ministers that the chief medical officers would swiftly back shots for healthy 12- to 15-year-olds, but Zahawi said the government would not prejudice the decision.

"No decision will be made until we hear back from the chief medical officers," Zahawi told the BBC.

Children are being widely vaccinated already in the United States, Israel and many European countries.

British officials have emphasised

that 12- to 15-year-olds who are vulnerable to Covid-19 are already eligible for vaccination, as well as all people over 16.

The four nations of the United Kingdom, which have recorded 133,000 Covid deaths, control their own health policy, although all have followed JCVI advice on vaccine rollout thus far.

Crew of 5 in Pacific copter crash presumed dead: US Navy

AFP, Los Angeles

The US Navy said Saturday that five crew members from a helicopter that crashed off the California coast are now presumed dead.

A sixth crew member was rescued and is recovering.

The Navy has released few details concerning the Tuesday crash, which occurred some 60 miles (96 kilometers) off the coast of San Diego.

However the San Diego Union-Tribune said the MH-60S helicopter crashed on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln before falling into the sea.

Court defers date for 2 cases

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Asaduzzaman Nur passed the order after Khaleda's lawyer Masud Ahmed Talukder submitted two separate petitions seeking adjournment of the hearings in the cases.

In the petitions, the lawyer said Khaleda Zia could not appear before the court due to her illness. Moreover, she had tested Covid-19 positive in April and that has contributed to her not yet recovering from the other health complications. So, the hearing should be adjourned, Masud added.

Khaleda tested negative for Covid-19 on May 8, after testing positive twice -- on April 11 and April 25.

Complainants of the cases were not present at the makeshift court set up inside Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

One of the cases was filed by AB Siddique, president of Bangladesh Jananetri Parishad, a pro-Awami League organisation, with a Dhaka court on November 3, 2016 accusing Khaleda and her late husband, former president Ziaur Rahman, of "undermining" the country's map and national flag.

The court dropped Ziaur Rahman's

name from the charges as he is dead.

The second case accusing Khaleda of celebrating her "fake birthday" on August 15, the National Mourning Day, was filed by Gazi Zahurul Islam, former joint general secretary of Dhaka Union of Journalists, with another Dhaka court on August 30, 2016.

Ten other cases were filed in the first three months of 2015 over arson attacks. Another case was lodged with a Dhaka court on charge of making seditious comments on freedom fighters and the martyrs of the Liberation War.

Besides these, Gatco, Niko and Boropukuria coal mine graft cases are now pending with three other courts in Dhaka.

Several other cases, including three arson cases filed with Cumilla's Chaudhagram Police Station, are also pending with Cumilla courts.

Khaleda, who is now out of jail following an executive order from the government, is staying at her Gulshan residence.

She was released from the capital's Evercare Hospital on June 19 after 54 days of treatment for Covid-19 and other complications.

Tender Notice for Procurement & Selling

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited from reputed companies for following works:

Name of the Works	Available Tender Schedule		Submission & opening Date
	From	To	
Purchasing of Privileged Access Management (PAM) Solution with Hardware	06.09.2021	15.09.2021	30.09.2021
Purchasing of Next-Generation Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) Solution with Hardware	06.09.2021	15.09.2021	30.09.2021
Selling of Bank's Used Vehicle- Microbus (Brand: Hyundai H1, Model: 2013, Reg. No: DM-Cha-53-7974, Mileage (KM): Variable)	06.09.2021	15.09.2021	16.09.2021

Interested companies/bidders may collect tender schedule/s by submitting an application addressing the undersigned from General Services Division during office hour (10.00 am to 4.00 pm) on payment of Tk. 3,000.00 for (PAM) and Tk. 5,000.00 for (SIEM) and Tk. 1,000.00 for selling of Bank's vehicle in the form of payment order (non-refundable) favoring "Midland Bank Limited" as per above mentioned schedules. Each tender must be submitted in the sealed envelope mentioning the name of work on top of the envelope within 3.00 PM on the above mentioned submission date and will be opened at 3.30 PM on the same date.

MDB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

***Terms & Conditions Apply** **Head of General Services Division**

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UAE loosens residency requirements with 'green visa'

AFP, Dubai

The UAE yesterday announced a new visa allowing foreigners to work in the country without being sponsored by an employer, loosening residency requirements in an attempt to boost economic growth.

Foreigners in the oil-rich United Arab Emirates are generally only given limited visas tied to their employment, and long-term residency is difficult to obtain.

But those holding the new "green visa" will be able to work without company sponsorship, and can sponsor their parents and children up to 25 years old, officials said.

"It targets highly skilled individuals, investors, businesspeople, entrepreneurs, as well exceptional students and postgraduates," said Minister of State for Foreign Trade Thani al-Zeyoudi.

Resource-rich Gulf countries such as the UAE are increasingly seeking to diversify their economies and reduce reliance on oil.

The coronavirus pandemic has also impacted tourism and businesses in the UAE, whose economy was already slumping in recent years due to low oil prices.

In 2019, the UAE launched the 10-year "Golden visa" to attract wealthy individuals and highly skilled workers, the first such scheme in the Gulf.

Similar programmes have since been launched in other resource-rich Gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

SHANG-CHI

LEGEND OF THE TEN RINGS

QUIZ CONTEST

The Daily Star | STAR CINEMA

10 WINNERS EVERYDAY! 2 PREMIUM TICKETS FOR EACH WINNER

Email your answer to starquiz@outlook.com by 4.00 pm today with your name, DOB, mobile number and address. The winners of the quiz will be announced tomorrow in this newspaper and through email. Winners are requested to follow the instructions given in email

QUIZ - 02 What does Shang do to make a living in the movie?

WINNERS LIST OF QUIZ - 01

1. Shajid Hasan Nabil, Mirpur-1
2. Imrozsoha Chowdhury, Eskaton Garden
3. Ashik Mahmud, Mirpur 14
4. Fairuz Imam, Baridhara
5. Sheikh Rashid Bin Islam, Gulshan 1
6. Mohin Khan Sagor, Bangshal
7. Rafsan Rahman, Bashundhara R/A
8. Kazi Mashruul Islam, Shantibagh
9. Samiha Nidhi, Bailey Road
10. Sibgat Ahmed, Sylhet