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Your Right to Know

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“We'll extend support if people's desire is reflected in the new Afghan government.”
FOREIGN MINISTER AK ABDUL MOMEN

“A special force should be engaged in conducting a drive to recover illegal firearms and bringing those involved in arms smuggling under the ambit of law.”
JATIYA PARTY CHAIRMAN GM QUADER

“With this victory, our country is completely taken out of the quagmire of war.”
TALIBAN CHIEF SPOKESMAN ZABIHULLAH MUJAHID

AMENDMENT TO TELECOM ACT

Govt set to clip BTRC WINGS

It is to become regulator and operator

SHAHID BAPPY and MD ABU TALHA SARKER

The telecom regulatory commission will be shorn of whatever independence and powers it has if the government presses on with the planned amendment to Bangladesh Telecommunications Act. Experts said this would be highly detrimental to the growth of the telecom industry at a time when the world is on the verge of the fourth industrial revolution. Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) was formed under the telecom act in 2002, in a move to have an independent body regulating all matters concerning telecommunications. But the draft Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulation Act 2021 has removed the word “independent” in relation to the BTRC.



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The BTRC will have to cede most of its powers to the telecommunication ministry. It will not be able to take any effective measures quickly; it will have to wait on a decision from the ministry. The original act, which took effect in 2001, stated that the commission can issue and revoke various types of licences for telecommunication services, allocate wireless frequencies, and fix tariffs on telecom services, call charges and so on. Those powers were partially curtailed by an amendment in 2010. That amendment required the BTRC to take the ministry's approval when it came to issuing telecom licences, renewing, transferring or revoking licences and setting tariffs on different services. But the 2021 draft amendment goes

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The authorities of Kajalpar Government Primary School in the capital's Jatrabari have solved the institution's waterlogging problem by dumping earth. They made the move after The Daily Star ran a multimedia report on the problem in August. Inset, a previous photo showing how the school premises remained submerged in murky greenish water.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

PECE exams likely in Nov

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is likely to hold Primary Education Completion Examination for fifth graders in late November or early December if the Covid-19 situation continues to improve. Senior education ministry officials also said English medium schools will need to reopen in phases as well. “We have taken preparations for holding exams. We plan on taking the exams if the Covid-19 situation improves,” State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Zakir Hossen said at a press conference at the Secretariat yesterday. The press conference was organised ahead of International Literacy Day 2021, set to be celebrated with a programme titled “Literacy for a human-centred recovery: Narrowing the digital divide” on Wednesday. He said the exams would be held on a shortened syllabus. Asked whether there

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Social media giants don't listen to us

Says telecom minister on removing defamatory content

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Facebook and YouTube often do not respond to Bangladesh's requests to remove defamatory content from their platforms, said Posts and Telecom Minister Mustafa Jabbar yesterday. “The government is helpless,” he told a press briefing at the headquarters of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) in the capital. The BTRC does not have the power and capability to block any content from the platforms. “So it is unfair to blame the BTRC for not removing these contents,” he said, adding that none will be able to control the digital

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NEWS ANALYSIS |

INOCULATING 12 TO 17 YEAR OLDS A plan divorced from reality



With the vaccine supply still plagued with uncertainty and over two crore people including the vulnerable ones awaiting their first jab weeks after registration, the plan to inoculate students aged 12-17 may look rosy but not feasible at the moment.

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government's plan to inoculate people from almost all age groups including adolescents without ensuring a steady supply of vaccines appears to be anything but practical. Add to that, a lack of supply-chain infrastructure and logistics required to administer vaccines among such a large swathe of population across the country. Covid-19 mass vaccination started on February 7 this year for people aged 65 and above, and then the government gradually lowered the age bar to 25. The bar was further brought down to 18 years to include

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STUDENT'S DEATH Bashundhara MD, 7 others sued for rape and murder

STAR REPORT

Bashundhara Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir was sued yesterday over the rape and murder of a college student in a flat at the capital's Gulshan. Chairman of the group Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam and six others were also made accused in the case on charge of abetting the crime. The six other accused are: Shah Alam's wife Afroza Begum, Anvir's wife Sabrina Sayem, model Faria Mahbub Piyasha, Saifa Rahman Mim, the flat's landlord Ibrahim Ahmed Ripon and his wife Sharmim. The elder sister of the victim filed the case with

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COMPENSATING N'GANJ FIRE VICTIMS Company buys 'legal immunity'

ZYMA ISLAM

For a sum of Tk 2 lakh per deceased worker, Hashem Foods Ltd bought legal immunity from being prosecuted further. When Hashem Foods gave Tk 2 lakh to the families of each dead worker, the company took an undertaking saying that the families have no more demand to make from it. “I have no demands to make or claims left against the authorities of Hashem Foods Ltd concerning the death in the accident,” said the undertaking, a copy of which was obtained by this correspondent. The undertaking further stated, “I will lawfully distribute this money among the descendants of the deceased. If any claims arise later on, I will be responsible for solving them.” At least 54 workers and staffers died when a fire erupted in a factory of the company in Narayanganj on July 8. Forty-eight of them died, being trapped on the third floor with its lone exit locked, when the blaze engulfed the building. Even though the labour law says that employers have to pay Tk 2 lakh in compensation for a workplace death, there is an existing writ petition that

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OC Pradeep stomped on Sinha's neck

Eyewitness tells court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Suspended police inspector Liaqat Ali shot Major (ret'd) Sinha Rashed Khan twice and then former officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station Pradeep Kumar Das confirmed his death by stomping on the victim's neck. Eyewitness Md Kamal Hossain said this while testifying before the Cox's Bazar District and Sessions Judge's Court yesterday. Kamal is a resident of Shamlapur area of Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila and drives a CNG-run auto-rickshaw. “At the night of the incident, Kamal was driving his auto-rickshaw and was behind the car in which Major (ret'd) Sinha was travelling,” said a court

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Start process of Rana's extradition

PHQ asks Delhi cops; detectives looking into Banani cop's wealth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Central Bureau (NCB) of the Police Headquarters (PHQ) has written to its counterpart in India to start the process of extraditing Banani Police Inspector Sheikh Sohel Rana, who was recently held by Indian Border Security Forces for trespassing. Mohiul Islam, assistant inspector general (NCB) of the PHQ, told The Daily Star they have sent an email to the NCB-New Delhi on Sunday to know about the arrested inspector and to start processing his extradition. “They [India] did not officially communicate the matter to us yet. We wanted details about how the Banani inspector was detained in Cooch Behar. We already started the

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The Payra Bridge on the Barishal-Kuakata highway was lit up on an experimental basis on Saturday night before the inauguration of the much-awaited bridge. The authorities plan to open the cable-stayed bridge to public soon.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

MIGRANTS GOING ABROAD Their pleas finally heard

Govt moves to set up RT-PCR labs at 3 int'l airports

JAMIL MAHMUD AND RASHIDUL HASAN

Mohiuddin Belal, an engineer based in UAE, heaved a sigh of relief on August 4 when he heard that his host country had lifted the flight ban from Bangladesh after about three months. But his elation was short-lived: the Gulf state has made negative result from a PCR test done six hours before departure compulsory for entry. Such a rapid test result is possible if there are testing facilities at the airports. But none of the Bangladeshi airports has them -- yet. Belal is not alone. More than 20,000 UAE residents from Bangladesh, including migrant workers and professionals, are unable to re-join their workplaces after the UAE had imposed a flight ban on May 12 following a huge spike in cases in the preceding weeks and the emergence of the highly transmissible Delta variant of the coronavirus, he says. “The visas of many expatriates have expired. Many more will face a similar fate if it takes more time to set up the facilities,” Belal added. This leaves the expatriate Bangladeshis in the UAE, who sent home about 10 percent of the \$24.8 billion of remittance the country received last fiscal year, at the risk of losing their jobs. “Some other countries who are in the UAE's restricted list have already set up the PCR labs, but ours is yet to come through,” said Salauddin, another engineer in the UAE stranded in Bangladesh for several months now.

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