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'A fantasy' to think UN can fix Afghanistan

Says Guterres; US envoy blames Ghani's abrupt exit for scuttling Taliban power sharing chance

AGENCIES

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday said any suggestion the world body can solve Afghanistan's problems is "a fantasy" and that its capacity to mediate for a more inclusive Taliban government is limited.

Asked in an interview with Reuters a month after the Taliban took control of Afghanistan from a Western-backed government whether he felt pressure to repair the country's plight, Guterres said: "I think there is an expectation that is unfounded" of UN influence as the main international organization still on the ground there.

The world has watched a number of countries send thousands of soldiers to Afghanistan and spend vast sums of money for 20 years since a US-led invasion ousted the Taliban for harboring al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

The United States spent \$1 trillion, only to see the Afghan government and military it supported collapse ahead of a full withdrawal of US and other foreign forces in August.

"To think - given that they have failed with all these resources to fix the problems of Afghanistan - that we can now, without those forces and money, solve the problems they couldn't solve for decades is a fantasy," Guterres said

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A mother white-breasted waterhen with its chicks searching for food in a pond adjacent to Ramna Kali Mondir in Suhrawardy Udyan. This bird, which was found in almost every natural pond and marshland across the country, is now becoming rare as natural ponds are in decline.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ASKER IBNE FIROZ

RENTAL POWER Crores looted, no action taken

Opposition MPs say in House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid protests from opposition lawmakers, a bill was passed in parliament yesterday to extend the tenure of a law that allows rental power plants for another five years.

The government said the deadline was being stretched for ensuring reliable, uninterrupted and affordable electricity across the country.

Objecting to the extension, opposition BNP and Jatiya Party MPs said massive corruption and looting was going on in the power sector.

Terming the bill "a black law", they added that there was no scope for raising questions about it. Thousands of crores of taka were looted, but no action was taken against anyone. The five-year term was being extended for the benefit of some people.

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Covid positivity rate lowest in six months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate yesterday reported 5.98 percent Covid positivity rate, which is the lowest in more than six months.

On March 11, the positivity rate was 5.82 percent. Since then, it started rising and reached the all-time highest -- 33 percent -- on July 24.

Positivity rate is one of the important parameters to measure the level of virus transmission. The World Health Organization recommends easing virus curb restrictions when the positivity rate remains below five percent for two weeks at a stretch.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) yesterday reported 1,862 confirmed cases of Covid-19 after testing 31,149 samples across the country.

With this, the total number of cases rose to 15,38,203.

As the number of cases continued declining every day, most beds in the Covid dedicated hospitals have been going vacant.

Yesterday, over 83 percent of all general beds, 61 percent of all beds in the high dependency units and 70 percent of beds in intensive care units were vacant, according to the DGHS data.

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ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

No request made for Israeli arms

SEPTEMBER 17, 1971 SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

A MONSTROUS LIE

Justice Abu Sayeed Chaudhury today described as a "monstrous" lie worthy of a Joseph Goebbels to say Bangladesh "wants to buy arms from Israel". He denied a report published in the Haaretz saying the Bangladesh leader Mahmoud Kassem had asked the Israeli government for arms. It was just a trick on the part of the regime of Pakistani President Yahya Khan, said Abu Sayeed. He explained that Bangladesh could not do such a thing because it would divide its 75 million inhabitants from the Arab states.

MALIK INSTALS PUPPET CABINET

A civilian "Council of Ministers" was installed in office today in Dhaka in pursuance of the Pakistani regime's plan to give the provincial administration a new look.

Dr AM Malik, who had replaced Lt General Tikka Khan as the governor of East Pakistan, announced in the morning the formation of a 10-member council of ministers. Nine of them took the oath in the afternoon swearing-in ceremony. There was no official explanation for the failure of the 10th minister to assume charge. With the martial law still in force, the civilian cabinet's power was very limited.

ON THE WAR FRONT

In the Rangpur-Dinajpur-Rajshahi sector, Mukti Bahini disrupted telecommunication between Chargkai-Hilli, and also blew up two road bridges in the same area. On the same day they demolished

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



Kushtia youth sent to jail under DSA

He made 'derogatory comment' on PM, says case statement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A Kushtia court has sent a youth to jail hours after he was sued under the Digital Security Act (DSA) for making derogatory comments about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Sabbirul Alam, officer-in-charge of Kushtia Model Police Station, said Tipu Sultan Ibrahim, 23, of Kumargara on the outskirts of Kushtia town, went live on Facebook around 12:45am Wednesday and spoke on different issues.

He alleged that the government itself was involved in the establishment of e-commerce platform eorange, which has recently been facing criticisms and cases for failing to deliver products on time.

At one point, he spoke harshly about the

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SpaceX sends first all-civilian crew into orbit



AFP, United States

A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carrying four space tourists blasted off Wednesday night from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida for the first mission to orbit the globe with an all-civilian crew.

A huge fireball illuminated the sky as the rocket's nine engines began to pull away from Earth at 8:02 pm (0002 GMT yesterday).

Around 12 minutes later, the Dragon capsule separated from the rocket's send stage as the crew entered orbit, while the re-usable first stage made its way back to Earth for a vertical landing on a sea barge.

"A few have gone before and many are about to follow," said Jared Isaacman, the 38-year-old

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Classes twice a week for 8th, 9th graders from Monday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of eighth and ninth grades will attend in-person classes two days a week from Monday, instead of once in a week.

Candidates of Higher Secondary Certificate and Secondary School Certificate exams of 2021 and 2022 will continue attending classes every day.

Eighth graders will attend classes on Sundays

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PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 17

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:35 12:30 4:30 6:09 7:45
JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 4:45 6:12 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Journos need not worry

Info minister says about BFIU seeking bank account details

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalist leaders do not need to be worried about Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit seeking their bank account details, said Information Minister Hasan Mahmud.

He made the statement while addressing the annual general meeting of the Dhaka Union of Journalists yesterday.

Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) sought bank details of 11 leaders of four top journalist organisations including the National Press Club.

The minister said bank statements of members of parliament, politicians and businessmen were sought and it was also his question why BFIU included journalist leaders in the list.

He tried to know about the matter in detail and thought that there was no need to be worried, he said.

"I know them and about their financial conditions.

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A motorcyclist going through iron rods, installed to prevent bikers from using this pavement, in the capital's Banglamotor yesterday. Such scenes are common in the city. This practice puts pedestrians in harm's way.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Star HEALTHLINE

Inflamed tonsils WHEN IS SURGERY A MUST?

STAR HEALTH DESK

Tonsils are two lumps of tissue hanging at the back of our throats without drawing any attention. It's our first line of defence against germs and bacteria entering our bodies through our mouths.

Commonly affecting children, the signs of tonsillitis (inflammation of the tonsils) are always obvious: sore throat, difficulty or pain while swallowing, a throaty or muffled voice with the occasional fever.

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