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PLANNED EPZ IN SANTAL PALLI BEPZA to go ahead despite protests

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

The government is forging ahead with its plan to set up the country's largest export processing zone on 1,842 acres of farmland under the Gobindaganj upazila of Gaibandha district that the local santal community says belongs to them.

In 1952, the then-Pakistan government had taken the farmland from the santals for the Rangpur Sugar Mill.

Since the farmland was not in use, the government in November 2019 decided to build the EPZ, which would provide employment to the backward santal community.

But the community would much rather get the land back and has been in a movement since 2013.

"The then-government took the land for the Rangpur Sugar Mill on the condition that if sugar cane was not cultivated on it, it would be handed back to the original owner -- which is us," said Philimon Baske, president of the Shahebganj-Bagda Farm Bumi Udhhar Songram committee.

In the last 60-65 years, the sugar mill only counted losses and leased the land out to the locals for cultivating other crops, he said.

"Therefore, according to the condition, we can get our forefather's land back from the government."

If the government wants to establish the EPZ, then about 1,200 santal families will be destitute from losing their ancestral land as well as their cultural heritage and lifestyle, Baske said.

"Therefore, we are urging the local administration to establish the EPZ in some other place," he added.

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Garbage and industrial waste make Chaktai Khal (canal) look like a stream of filth. Land grabbing and siltation choke this and other canals in Chattogram, resulting in waterlogging in the port city. The canals were once used for transporting goods. Now, boats can ply only during high tides. This photo was taken from Chaktai Khal at Fisherighat on Saturday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

BANK ACCOUNTS OF 11 Journo bodies to stage demo on Thursday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalist associations will demonstrate across the country on Thursday, demanding that the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit stop summoning the bank account details of 11 journalist leaders.

Different journalist associations made the announcement yesterday at a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club.

Addressing the rally, Jatiya Press Club President Farida Yasmin said, "The information minister and home minister are not aware of the summoning of bank account details. There is a conspiracy to pit the journalists against the government."

An investigation can be launched against an individual or an organisation over specific allegations. But the wholesale probe targeting the top leaders of established associations seems to be on purpose, she said.

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UN worried over shrinking civic space, inequality

Says Mia Seppo on Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UN is concerned over signs of shrinking civic space, growing inequality, and violence against women in Bangladesh.

"There are areas that the UN is concerned about. We are concerned about the increasing violence against women, we are concerned about growing inequality... we are concerned about the signs of shrinking civic space ...," said UN Resident Coordinator Mia Seppo at the Talk of Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAB), at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

She said growing inequality and shrinking of civic space is a global concern, which has been aggravated during the pandemic -- a reality that triggers the call for global and national actions to address these.

"I don't think for any country that aspires for democracy that that's healthy. So, we obviously encourage protecting civic space," the UN official said.

The review of the Digital Security Act (DSA) from the Universal Periodic Review

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ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Nations urged to recognise Bangladesh

SEPTEMBER 20, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

CABINET MEETING ON DEFENCE BUDGET

The Bangladesh cabinet met today and discussed the budget of the Ministry of Defence.

The acute shortage of winter clothing and other necessary items for the fighting forces and the youth camp trainees was brought to focus. The cabinet decided that the Defence Secretary would immediately prepare estimates for procurement of winter clothing including blankets, covering the requirements of both the fighting forces and the youth camp trainees.

RESOLUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The international conference on Bangladesh today called upon governments of the world to recognise the Bangladesh government and to stop all military assistance to the West Pakistani regime. It declared in a resolution that the political struggle of the people of Bangladesh should be viewed by the international community as a national struggle for freedom.

It appealed to governments and people across the world to offer immediate and effective assistance to the Bangladesh government. Such assistance, the resolution said, might mean military aid to some nations and individuals, to others this might imply economic and non-violent aid.

ON THE WAR FRONT

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Court orders filing of case against imo hackers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A Natore court ordered police to file cases against a group in Lalpur upazila that has been hacking into different accounts on social media app "imo" and tricking people into sending them money.

The district's Senior Judicial Magistrate Abu Saeed passed the order yesterday afternoon.

The court has directed the officer-in-charge of Lalpur Police Station to file a regular case against the hackers and to inform the court in writing by September 22, which is also the scheduled date for the next order, court sources said.

Razu Ahmed, the court's bench assistant, said the court issued the order after a video story, titled "How a ring in Natore is pocketing thousands

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French daredevil takes hair-raising tightrope walk



AFP, Paris

A French tightrope walker has crossed the Seine in Paris 70 metres up in a breathtaking feat watched by cheering crowds on the Eiffel Tower and along the riverbanks.

Attached by a strap to a safety lanyard, 27-year-old Nathan Paulin slowly progressed barefoot on a line stretched across the river between the Eiffel Tower and the Chaillot Theatre.

He stopped for a few breaks, sitting or lying on the rope.

"It wasn't easy walking 600 metres, concentrating, with everything around, the pressure ... but it was still beautiful," he said after the performance on Saturday.

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Shipbreaking yard worker dies after fall

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An employee of a shipbreaking yard in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila fell from the stairs of a ship and died on Saturday night.

Abdullah Al Sakib Mubarrat, deputy inspector general of Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments, Chattogram, said the victim was a worker of SN Corporation Yard in the upazila's Shitolpur area.

The dead is Liton Pal, 28, of Sandwip upazila, he added.

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PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 20

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-40 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30
JAMAAT 5-15 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Single mother gang-raped in Rampura

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 25-year-old woman accused three men of forcing her to drink alcohol and raping her at a flat in the capital's Purba Rampura on Sunday night.

The single mother was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as she fell sick yesterday morning.

Her brother said an acquaintance named Sharif invited her to his flat where there were two other men named Ibrahim and Mainuddin. The three men forced her to drink alcohol and raped her, he said, adding that another woman aided and abetted the gang-rape.

She fell sick after they let her go in the morning and her family members then took her to a hospital.

Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Rampura Police Station, said he received a complaint about the gang-rape.

"We will record a case after her treatment [at the hospital]," he said. "We are looking for the suspects."



A reader going through a book at a second-hand bookshop on a pavement in Sylhet city's Chowhatta yesterday. Shop owner Shazid Islam is happy as he could reopen the shop after 18 months. His shop had closed due to the pandemic. It is the only source of his income. He hoped that the number of book lovers coming to his store will rise when all educational institutions reopen.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

POST-COUP MYANMAR Military convoy hit by bomb

Anti-junta dissidents carry out the attack on security forces near Yangon, several killed in ensuing firefight

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar anti-junta dissidents have carried out a bomb attack on security forces near Yangon, with several killed in an ensuing firefight, the military and media said.

The Southeast Asian nation has been in turmoil since the military toppled Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government in February, sparking mass pro-democracy protests and a bloody crackdown by the military.

Various townships across Myanmar have formed so-called "people defence forces" to fight back against the junta, although the majority of clashes have been reported in rural areas.

Security forces were travelling through Khayan, a suburb of Myanmar's commercial hub Yangon on Friday when they were attacked with a homemade bomb, the junta said in a statement.

"Both groups fired back and forth -- a member of the security forces was injured," the statement said, adding that firearms and ammunition were confiscated after the clash.

"Some terrorists were... (killed), one of them was wounded."

Local media reported at least two dissidents were killed and one arrested.

Earlier this month a "National Unity Government" made up mostly of lawmakers affiliated with Suu Kyi's

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