

## China pledges

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independence.”  
Speaking extemporaneously before an audience of 400 at Columbia University’s School of International Affairs, Indira Gandhi warned that “the limits of [India’s] endurance had been reached”.

“India is determined to safeguard her interests, India is united as never before,” said Indira Gandhi. “We want your help. We want your support. We want your sympathy. But India is prepared, to fight alone for what it thinks is worth fighting for.”  
**ON THE WAR FRONT**

In the Rangpur-Dinajpur-Rajshahi sector, Mukti Bahini today raided Pakistani Army position in Paharpukur area killing 10 enemy soldiers. During the operation one freedom fighter embraced martyrdom. On the same day, 8 Razakars with 5 Rifles were captured by Freedom fighters in Karnai area of Rangpur district.

In the Dhaka-Cumilla-Chattogram sector, two enemy soldiers were killed and three wounded due to explosion of mine laid by freedom fighters in Chandidwar area. On the same day Mukti Bahini fired on the Pakistani troops in the same area killing 2 enemy soldiers and injuring four.

In the Mymensingh-Sylhet, Mukti Bahini clashed with the occupation troops in Melandaha-Mahmudpur area. During this clash 12 enemy soldiers including one JCO were killed and four were wounded. One of our freedom fighters also laid down his life.

A United Nations vessel loaded with wheat was heavily damaged by a mine deployed by Mukti Bahini at Chandpur. The freedom fighters had been preying heavily on water vessels in East Pakistan in recent weeks, but this was the first report that a United Nations vessel had been attacked. *Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com*

## Goitre associated

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iodine. Iodine deficiency may be made worse by a diet high in hormone-inhibiting foods, such as cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower. The other causes include hyperthyroidism, hypothyroidism, thyroid nodules and thyroid cancer. A hormone produced during pregnancy -- human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG) -- may also cause thyroid gland to enlarge slightly. Not all goitres cause signs and symptoms but if it shows, they may include a swelling at the base of neck, tight feeling in throat, coughing, hoarseness and difficulties in swallowing and breathing. Women are more prone to thyroid disorders especially during pregnancy and menopause. It is more common after 40. A personal or family history of autoimmune disease increases risk of goitre. Certain medications, including the heart drug amiodarone and the psychiatric drug lithium and others, increase the risk also. If anyone had radiation treatments to neck or chest area, the person is at risk. Goitres that result from other conditions, such as hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism, may be associated with a number of symptoms, ranging from fatigue and weight gain to unintended weight loss, irritability and trouble sleeping. Treatment of goitre depends on its size, symptoms and the cause. Small goitres that aren’t noticeable and don’t cause problems, usually don’t need treatment. But if thyroid hormone levels are too high or too low, then treatment is needed. Doctors may suggest a wait-and-see approach if goitre is small and doesn’t cause problems, and if thyroid is functioning normally. But a goitre case associated with hyperthyroidism may need medication to normalise hormone levels. In case of a large goitre, the doctor may remove all or part of thyroid gland.

Anti-Covid pill

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It will submit the data to the Food and Drug Administration as soon as possible as part of its “rolling submission” for Emergency Use Authorization. “Today’s news is a real game-changer in the global efforts to halt the devastation of this pandemic,” said Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla. “These data suggest that our oral antiviral candidate, if approved or authorized by regulatory authorities, has the potential to save patients’ lives, reduce the severity of Covid-19 infections, and eliminate up to nine out of 10 hospitalizations,” he added. The main analysis of the data looked at numbers from 1,219 adults in North and South America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Several companies are working on so-called oral antivirals, which would mimic what the drug Tamiflu does for influenza and prevent the disease from progressing to severe. Pfizer started developing its drug in March 2020. Other companies are also testing existing oral antivirals against Covid -- but Pfizer’s is the first specifically designed against the coronavirus.



People sit at a cafe in a flooded St. Mark’s Square during seasonally high water in Venice, Italy, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Nasa to deflect asteroid in test of ‘planetary defence’

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“Although there isn’t a currently known asteroid that’s on an impact course with the Earth, we do know that there is a large population of near-Earth asteroids out there,” said Lindley Johnson, Nasa’s Planetary Defense Officer. “The key to planetary defence is finding them well before they are an impact threat,” Johnson said. “We don’t want to be in a situation where an asteroid is headed towards Earth and then have to test this capability.” The DART spacecraft is scheduled to be launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon

9 rocket at 10:20 pm Pacific time on November 23 from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California. If the launch takes place at or around that time, impact with the asteroid some 6.8 million miles from Earth would occur between September 26 and October 1 of next year. The target asteroid, Dimorphos, which means “two forms” in Greek, is about 525 feet in diameter and orbits around a larger asteroid named Didymos, “twin” in Greek. Johnson said that while neither asteroid poses a threat to Earth they are ideal candidates for the test

because of the ability to observe them with ground-based telescopes. Images will also be collected by a miniature camera-equipped satellite contributed by the Italian Space Agency that will be ejected by the DART spacecraft 10 days before impact. Nancy Chabot of the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, which built the DART spacecraft, said Dimorphos completes an orbit around Didymos every 11 hours and 55 minutes “just like clockwork.” The DART spacecraft, which will weigh 1,210 pounds at the time of

impact, will not “destroy” the asteroid, Chabot said. “It’s just going to give it a small nudge,” she said. “It’s going to deflect its path around the larger asteroid.” “It’s only going to be a change of about one percent in that orbital period,” Chabot said, “so what was 11 hours and 55 minutes before might be like 11 hours and 45 minutes.” The test is designed to help scientists understand how much momentum is needed to deflect an asteroid in the event one is headed towards Earth one day.

## Slip of tongue!

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public gathering. Omor Faruk sought votes in favour of the AL-nominated chairman candidate, promised development work and threatened the party’s rebel candidate with bad consequences and asked him to refrain from participating in the Kolma union polls, scheduled to be held on November 11. Such activities of a lawmaker are prohibited in the Electoral Code of Conduct, said local election officials, preferring anonymity. Contacted, Omor Faruk told The

Daily Star that his speech that violated the Electoral Code of Conduct was a “slip of tongue.” “I was speaking on the Jail Killing Day, but there is an election in the area. People wanted to know from me whether I was favouring the Awami League-nominated candidate or not. I was replying to people and these words slipped through my tongue,” he said. “If I cannot speak my mind a little bit at public meetings, it would become difficult for me to do politics,” the lawmaker said. Mainul Islam has got AL

nomination for the chairman post of Kolma union elections. Khademun Nabi Chowdhury, former AL president of the union unit, is contesting the polls as a rebel candidate as he failed to secure the party ticket. The lawmaker also said, “I want to know from him [Nabi Chowdhury] through you [people] what will happen to him after the elections.” After this, Nabi Chowdhury filed a complaint with the returning officer on Thursday and sought security for participating in the polls.

About the threats, Omor Faruk said he did not issue threats with anyone’s life during his speech. “All I meant that anyone will be defeated in the election, people will reject them and our party will never allow them to return to the party.” Contacted, Shamimul Islam, the returning officer, said he received the complaints and forwarded it to the executive magistrate for investigating the incident and taking action. He said he was not aware of any action against the lawmaker till yesterday.

## Greek Covid deniers fight back as ICUs fill up

AFP, Thessaloniki

Giannis Sariannidis, a 37-year-old Greek trader, does not believe there’s a pandemic. He’s so furious with restrictions that he pulled his son out of school. Then he got arrested. Like thousands of Covid deniers in Greece, especially in the north, he opposes government rules on masks and tests, at all costs. “There is no pandemic,” he insists, branding as “genocide” requirements that his eight-year-old son submit to self-testing twice a week and mask-up at school because Greece currently offers no vaccinations to children under 12. In northern Greece, vaccination rates in some areas are lower than 50 percent, compared to national average of 63 percent, and doctors say hospital ICU units have reached capacity. Teachers, doctors and nurses have been hit with lawsuits from untrusting members of the public and infection rates are growing. Yet Sariannidis is unrepentant. “We have nothing to fear. It is an inalienable right of every citizen on earth to be free. The wealth and land belong to us,” he tells AFP from the northern city of Thessaloniki. Last month, he was arrested after causing a commotion at his child’s

school over Covid rules and sentenced to 15 months in prison with a three-year suspension. In court, he told judges that he did not recognize their authority. While anti-vax sentiment spans the world, in Greece observers say it is strongest in the north, traditionally considered a heartland of fervent nationalists and religious hardliners susceptible to conspiracy theories. Forty percent of new cases recorded on Tuesday were in the north, the public health agency said, even though the region accounts for only 3.1 million of Greece’s 10.7 million population. “There is great pressure on the national health system in northern Greece,” Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis told cabinet on Thursday. New cases in Greece are now topping 6,000 on a daily basis for the first time since the pandemic began, hitting a new record of more than 6,800 on Thursday. Nationwide, more than 16,000 people have died as a result of the virus. Around the world, the number is more than five million. Ioanna, a high school teacher in the northern prefecture of Pella, said one student’s parent refused to let their child submit to a Covid test “because, as he said, the swab contains carcinogens”.

“He was threatening us with lawsuits for torture against his child and the police had to intervene,” she told AFP. Last month in Thessaloniki, a local prosecutor ordered the transport to hospital of a 14-year-old girl with severe Covid symptoms, overruling her parents’ wishes. “Almost every day we see cases of patients refusing to be intubated,” says Nikos Kapravelos, director of one the intensive care units at Papanikolaou Hospital in Thessaloniki. “They accuse us of deliberately putting them at risk of hospital infections because we want them dead,” adds Kapravelos. The Orthodox Church of Greece, whose influence is particularly strong in rural areas, officially encourages worshippers to get vaccinated and heed government safeguards, but bishops are divided and parish clerics mostly act at their discretion. Under new rules announced this week, the unvaccinated are not required to produce a negative test to enter a place of worship. At a religious ceremony last month, the bishop of the northern city of Grevena was caught on camera lowering the masks of dignitaries before allowing them to kiss a cross. “What should I be afraid of here

in church? God protects us”, 60-year-old Chryssa Karypidou said at a recent religious festival to honour Thessaloniki’s patron Saint Demetrius. Communication specialists say contradictory messages allow anti-vax sentiment to flourish. “In the first quarantine the message was more coherent, but fear was also a driving force for observance,” says Antonis Gardikiotis, associate professor of social psychology and media at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. “Then there were contradictory messages, resulting in a gap that sowed confusion,” he adds. An “overload” of information about the pandemic can also create negativity, and frequent media references to fake news may also have the opposite effect, Gardikiotis warns. Recent protests against Covid restrictions in Thessaloniki as well as the capital Athens have degenerated into clashes with riot police. “It’s all lies,” says ‘ostas, a retired police officer who along with his wife have taken part in protests in Thessaloniki. “All the evidence is posted on the internet. If you drink herbal tea and pay attention to your diet, you have no reason to be afraid, or get vaccinated,” he adds.

## Biden seeks right balance on Iran pressure as talks resume

AFP, Washington

With nuclear talks set to resume this month with Iran, an increasingly skeptical US President Joe Biden is seeking the right balance between threats and incentives to bring Tehran back into compliance with a 2015 deal. Iran has agreed to resume talks on November 29 with world powers after a five-month gap to salvage the agreement in which it promised to scale back nuclear work drastically in return for economic relief. Much has changed since the talks broke off in June, notably Iran’s election of an ultraconservative president, Ebrahim Raisi. During the break, Iran has kept pursuing its nuclear work, leading even Western supporters of the 2015 accord to warn that the deal could become

useless due to Tehran’s advances. “The Biden administration has to walk a fine line between demonstrating to Iran that Tehran will benefit from sanctions relief if the deal is restored, while not giving in to Iranian leverage,” said Kelsey Davenport, director for nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association. “The United States cannot reward Iran for continuing to violate the nuclear deal,” she said, while adding that the Biden administration also needs to show “concrete and immediate benefits.” Biden entered the talks in Vienna -- held indirectly, with Iran refusing direct meetings with US envoy Rob Malley -- in hopes of a quick revival of the agreement from which former president Donald Trump withdrew the United States.

Trump slapped sweeping sanctions on Iran, including a unilateral ban on its oil exports, leading Iran to move away from its commitments. In one key point of friction, Iran is seeking a lifting of all sanctions while the Biden administration says the only measures on the table are those imposed by Trump over the nuclear program when exiting the deal. But the task is not simple as the Trump administration in its final months duplicated many sanctions on Iran, so measures taken over nuclear work are also in force over other concerns. Iran, for its part, wants a guarantee that the United States will maintain its commitments -- an unlikely promise for Biden, whose rivals in Trump’s Republican Party have made no secret that they would shift course if they

win back the White House in 2024. Biden, nonetheless, appeared to hint at such a promise in a joint statement Saturday on the sidelines of a Group of 20 summit in Rome with the leaders of Britain, France and Germany -- nations that, along with Russia and China, remain part of the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The three European leaders said they “welcome President Biden’s clearly demonstrated commitment to return the US to full compliance with the JCPOA and to stay in full compliance, so long as Iran does the same.” Russia’s ambassador to international organizations in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, called Biden’s pledge “a significant step towards assurances and guarantees Iran is looking for.”

## Fear never leaves

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establish the EPZ on 1,832.27 acres of land at a governor board meeting of the Bepza. It was decided that the Ministry of Industries, which claims ownership of the land, would hand over the land to Bepza. Last year, the local administration set the estimated price of the land at Tk 213.39 crore. “The ministry of industries is in the final stage to hand over the land to Bepza,” said Ashraful Kabir, project director of the EPZ. Nazma Binte Alamgir, general manager (public relations) at Bepza, said construction work would begin soon at the site. Backed by local influential people, police on November 6, 2016, opened fire on the Santals, leaving three people dead and many others injured. Their huts and shacks were torn down and eventually 2,500 Santal families got evicted. Contacted, Philimon Baske, president of the Sahebganj-Bagda Farm Bhumu-Uddhar Sangram Committee, said, “The Santal people have no experience of other jobs. They don’t have education or property. If the government evicts them again, they will have no place to live. We can’t let the EPZ be built here. “The land is ours, but the ministry of industries is selling it to Bepza. We will stop this by any means.”

## India, NZ stay

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Kohli’s men snapped their losing streak against Afghanistan but must handsomely win Monday’s final group match against Namibia and hope Afghanistan beat New Zealand to have any hope of reaching the last four. Earlier in the day, New Zealand batsmen Glenn Phillips and Jimmy Neesham launched a late assault on Namibia that secured an important 52-run win in Sharjah on Friday and boosted their hopes of reaching the semifinals. The middle-order duo blasted 67 runs in the last four overs to take New Zealand to 163-4 after the team appeared to be in a touch of trouble at 96-4 at the end of the 16th over. Phillips made an unbeaten 39 off 21 balls, a knock under pressure that included a boundary and three sixes, while Neesham stayed with him to the end on 35 from 23 balls with two huge hits over the ropes. Namibia managed only 111-7 from 20 overs as Tim Southee (2-15) and Trent Boult (2-20) ensured there would be no upset.

## Global food

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especially Canada, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, continued to put upward pressure on prices,” FAO said of wheat. Wheat futures started November at new peaks, with U.S. prices at fresh highs since 2012 and Paris front-month futures at a record high as import demand remained brisk. World vegetable oil prices jumped 9.6 percent on the month to set a record high, supported by further strength in palm oil prices as labour shortages in Malaysia continued to hamper production, FAO said. In contrast, global sugar prices eased 1.8 percent in October, ending a run of six straight monthly rises, according to FAO. Rome-based FAO cut its projection of global cereal production in 2021, to 2.793 billion tonnes from 2.800 billion estimated a month ago, according to its cereal supply and demand outlook.

## Bodies

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in the head and another in the forehead. Both the bodies were sent to Sylhet MAG Medical College Hospital for autopsies. “Those youths might have crossed the border and were shot in the no man’s land for this reason,” he added. Locals claimed that BSF shot them dead, he said. Regarding the incident, the Indian High Commission in Dhaka yesterday provided a statement from BSF, saying that “no such incident had taken place on the Indian side”. The bodies were found inside the Bangladesh territory, it added. “A company commander-level flag meeting was held yesterday and BCB’s claim of BSF shooting down the two men was refuted,” read the statement. Contacted, the commanding officer of 19th BGB Battalion and BGB headquarters denied commenting on the issue.

## Hungary used Pegasus phone spyware: ruling party official

AFP, Budapest

Hungary used the invasive Pegasus spy software, a senior ruling party official said Thursday, but insisted the government had not spied on citizens illegally. In July Hungary was the only EU country listed by an investigative journalism consortium as a potential user of the spyware, with hundreds of targets including journalists, lawyers and other public figures.