

How to clean your ears

FROM PAGE 16

trapping them so they can't go deep inside.

When we move our jaws while chewing, old earwax comes out of the ear canal to the ear opening. Eventually it dries up and falls out.

So the cleaning mechanism of the ear is self-sufficient. Problem occurs when one tries to insert anything like a cotton bud and actually pushes the wax in deeper.

Swabbing or sticking pointy objects inside the ear can cause serious problems like infection, rupture of the eardrum and significant loss of hearing.

However, if too much earwax builds up and starts to cause feelings of fullness inside the ear or hearing loss, you might have something called

cerumen impaction.

The risk of developing impacted earwax is generally low, but increases with age as the inner ear becomes drier. People who use hearing aids are also more likely to develop impaction.

If you have symptoms of wax impaction, you need to check with your doctor instead of trying to do something about it yourself.

If your problem isn't serious, the best way to clean your ears is to gently clean the outside of your ears with a wet washcloth using your index finger.

You can also try putting a few drops of baby oil, mineral oil, or glycerin in your ear to soften the wax so it can come out naturally.

But inserting anything, even cotton buds, inside your ears is a big no.

Pakistan general sends SOS

FROM PAGE 16

Pakistani tanks and infantry launched a massive attack last night across the shallow, sandy Munnawar Tawi river, leaving behind 600 of their own dead and about 300 Indian dead, claimed Indian field commanders.

KISSINGER'S MESSAGE TO FARLAND

In a backchannel message, US President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger provides US Ambassador to Pakistan Farland an update today on his meeting with Pakistani delegates, including Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Agha Shahi in New York in the morning. It was concluded from the meeting that the proposal for ceasefire had been overtaken by events and was too complicated to succeed here, informed Kissinger.

Therefore, they agreed to following scenario: 1) Government of Pakistan will obtain third-country support to introduce resolution in Security Council which will include provision for both ceasefire and withdrawal. 2) It is likely that such a resolution would be vetoed. They would then move to accept simple ceasefire without any linkage to the Soviet formulation which would seek political negotiation. 3) While remaining adamant in step (2) that ceasefire alone is an essential first step, they would express willingness to include political negotiation following establishment of ceasefire.

Explaining the course of action Kissinger said, "Were we to follow any other course, it would look like complete collapse. Furthermore, should we start Security Council action with step (2) above, there is strong possibility that step (2), itself, might be vetoed if it were presented as initial position. Its chances of

succeeding on second round are greatly enhanced by moving with step (1) first, recognizing that step (1) will probably not succeed."

Kissinger asked Farland to meet with Pakistan President Yahya Khan urgently and urge upon him the essentiality of sticking with the procedure and of avoiding initially any indication that proposals short of step (2) might be acceptable.

The Pakistan delegation at the UN was prepared to do same, concluded Kissinger.

TELEGRAM FROM US CONSUL GENERAL, DHAKA

The US Consul General in Dhaka in a telegram dated December 11, 1971, informed the state department, "We note with interest that British are moving smartly ahead to establish some basis for early dealing with Bangla Desh, which now appears to be as certain as anything normally is in international affairs."

It further said, "While we appreciate difficult and complicated questions involved in working out conditions in which we would recognize new sovereignty, such as Bangla Desh it seems to us that at this stage of the game, some little preparation such as the British have obviously been doing could make things, much easier... I therefore again strongly urge that we make preliminary soundings with reliable Bangla Desh reps in Washington or elsewhere which would, at very least, prevent them from assuming that we are inalterably opposed to idea of independent Bangla Desh or that we would take inordinately long to recognize a BDG [Bangladesh Government] substantially established in East Bengal."

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Women gesture during a rally in the Jabalia camp for Palestinian refugees in the north of the Gaza Strip, marking the 34th anniversary of the founding of the Islamist Hamas movement which rules the Palestinian strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

The regrets after 50 years

FROM PAGE 16

In addition, Prof Rounaq Jahan, distinguished fellow of CPD, said, "Democracy cannot be restored unless we can stop money-making being the objectives of politics."

She also said that vested quarters earned huge wealth by abusing power in the last 50 years.

Ensuring accountability, good governance and public trust are must for a flourishing democracy but that has not been possible over the years, she said.

There is a global movement of young people, including in Bangladesh, who are calling for justice, and universal demand that captures the vision of Bangabandhu. This generates some promise, Prof Jahan said.

Prof Naila Kabeer of the London School of Economics said education is something that creates the citizens,

but the quality of education that is in high demand is under serious question in Bangladesh.

"Education should be more enlightening and promising so that it helps achieve the goals of becoming a developed as well as democratic country," she said.

Education should make people humane, develop the capacity to argue and accommodate others' opinions, Prof Kabeer said.

"Bangladesh has become a middle-income country, but I don't know how meaningful it is if the inequality is rising and the environment is degrading," Naila Kabeer said.

A lot of the people, especially the indigenous and other marginal people, still are excluded in terms of receiving health and education.

Dr Saleemul Huq, professor of environmental science at

the Independent University of Bangladesh, said, "We are proud of Bangladesh's achievements but not the way we have destroyed our forest, wetlands, coastal zones and rivers."

"Vested groups use their powers to make wealth out of destroying these. We need to work together to combat them at a very local level."

Prof S Nazrul Islam, chief of Development Research Branch at the UN Development of Economic and Social Affairs, said the fourth industrialisation is posing various challenges, and Bangladesh needs to prepare the youths with modern technological know-how and communication skills.

Prof Ifikhar Dadi, director of the South Asia Program at Cornell University and CPD Executive Director Dr Fahmida Khatun also spoke at the event.

NBR awards

FROM PAGE 16

collector is working to widen the tax net.

Jashim Uddin, president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said income tax and VAT offices should be set up at upazila level to increase revenue.

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Multiple cases have been filed against Abdullah Al Mahmud and Touhidul Islam with various police stations.

Legal action is being taken against those arrested, added the release.

Engineers develop

FROM PAGE 16

'metasurface' technology which is produced like a computer chip. The metasurface of this particular camera has 1.6 million cylindrical posts – each approximately the size of a virus – to make up a system just half a millimetre wide.

Each of those posts has its own unique geometry, working like an optical antenna, and machine-learning algorithms can use the posts' combined interactions with light to create high-quality images. Compared to older versions of these cameras, this camera works better in natural light conditions, has fewer distortions, and larger fields of view too.

"It's been a challenge to design and configure these little nano-structures to do what you want," said Ethan Tseng, a computer science PhD student at Princeton who co-led the study.

"For this specific task of capturing large field of view RGB images, it was previously unclear how to co-design the millions of nano-structures together with post-processing algorithms."

The next step for the researchers will be to add greater computational abilities to the camera – such as object detection and other modalities that would make it more useful in medicine or robotics.

Felix Heide, the study's senior author and an assistant professor of computer science at Princeton, predicts that ultracompact imagers will be used to create "surfaces as sensors."

Individual surfaces could be turned into cameras with ultra-high resolution, "so you wouldn't need three cameras on the back of your phone anymore, but the whole back of your phone would become one giant camera. We can think of completely different ways to build devices in the future," he said.

Hungary court strikes down Orban over EU asylum ruling

AFP, Budapest

Hungary's constitutional court yesterday struck down a bid by Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government to challenge a ruling by the EU's top court against Budapest's harsh asylum policy.

Budapest had asked the court earlier this year to review a ruling from the European Court of Justice ordering it to suspend a law that allows police to deport or physically "push back" asylum-seekers across the Serbian border.

Aide to Rubel, Barkat held

FROM PAGE 16

note, a team of Faridpur Kotwali Police Station arrested Siddiqur Rahman from Dhanmondi area with the help of Dhaka Metropolitan Police around 1:15am. He was then taken to Faridpur.

Siddiqur is also reportedly the aide to former general secretary of Faridpur town Awami League unit Sajjad Hossain and former president of Faridpur Press Club Imtiaz Hossain. Sajjad and Imtiaz were arrested on June 7 last year in a case filed over attacking the house of the president of Faridpur district AL unit.

Charge sheets have been submitted against him in three cases related to extortion and criminal activities. The murder case is under investigation.

At the press conference, Sumon Ranjan Sarkar, additional superintendent of police (Sadar circle), said Siddiqur has been leading armed gangs in Faridpur town for a long time. He has amassed huge money illegally through the gangs.

MA Jalil, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, said, "We produced Siddiqur Rahman before a court seeking a seven-day remand and the court granted three days' remand."

Md Jalil, elder brother of Siddiqur, said the High Court had directed that Siddiqur could not be arrested or harassed in any case without a court warrant.

Police arrested Siddiqur in a new case ignoring the HC directives and without any court warrant, he alleged.

Macron hails Scholz as Europe's new power couple meets

AFP, Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron hailed a "convergence of views" with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz yesterday as the two men met for their first talks as leaders.

Macron and Scholz, both pro-EU centrists, are the new tandem in charge of Europe's biggest economies that have the greatest influence inside the 27-member European Union.

Scholz, a Social Democrat, heads a new coalition whose commitment to strengthening Europe's "strategic sovereignty" has raised hopes of progress in the fervently pro-EU French government.

Addressing Scholz as "dear Olaf" and using the informal "tu" pronoun in French, Macron said he had seen "a convergence of views, a desire to have our countries work together, and a firm and determined belief in Europe, which I knew already, which we will need in the months and years ahead."

The visit was "a very important moment to build solid foundations for cooperation between our countries," he added at a news conference.

Scholz made Paris his first overseas stop after taking over on Wednesday from Angela Merkel at the end of her 16 years in power.

He said the talks focused on

"making Europe strong and European sovereignty."

"What is important there is that we work together," he said.

Scholz was set to continue on to Brussels for talks with Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and EU chief Ursula von der Leyen yesterday, as well as European Council president Charles Michel ahead of a bloc summit next week.

Macron laid out an ambitious agenda Thursday for a "Europe that is powerful in the world" during France's time as the rotating president of the 27-member Council of the European Union in the first half of next year.

The 43-year-old wants to make further progress towards building up European defence capabilities and border forces, as well as devising ways of financing huge public investments in strategic industries considered vital for EU sovereignty.

Analysts say Macron's desire for more flexible budget rules in the EU, enabling governments to run larger deficits, could run into opposition from a Germany that has historically insisted on financial rigour.

Scholz said there was "not a contradiction" between wanting to finance ambitious investments to ensure growth, and solid public finances.

Onion prices shoot up

FROM PAGE 16

"But if the prices of essentials increase further, we will not be able to survive," said Shaiful, who draws a monthly salary of Tk 30,000.

Speaking to The Daily Star, several traders and farmers said the harvest of new onion, locally known as "Murikata Peyaj", has been delayed due to recent rains.

Taking this as an opportunity, a syndicate of large traders has increased the prices of the cooking ingredient by creating an artificial crisis in the market, they alleged.

According to them, there is no

shortage in supply of onion at this moment and prices are expected to fall soon.

Md Kamruzzaman, a farmer from Pabna, said new onion will hit the market within a week.

The two-day incessant rain from Sunday lashed different parts of the country, causing extensive damages to crops, especially winter vegetables and seedbeds.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension, a total of 33.62 lakh tonnes of onion was produced in the country in 2020-21 fiscal year.

However, the yearly demand for onion in the country is about 25 lakh tonnes. About 29.55 lakh tonnes of onion was produced locally while another six to seven lakh tonnes was imported, according to data presented at a workshop of the commerce ministry in October.

Since onion is perishable, some 25 percent of the produce gets damaged, as per the data.

Ghulam Rahman, president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh, said some opportunists among the traders raised the prices of onion mainly to make hefty profits.

Facebook opens virtual world app to public

AFP, Washington

Facebook's parent firm opened its Horizon Worlds virtual reality platform on Thursday to the public in North America, in a step toward building its metaverse vision for the future.

Horizon Worlds is far from a fully realized metaverse, a future internet where online experiences like chatting to a friend would eventually feel face-to-face thanks to virtual reality (VR) headsets.

But headset-wearing users in the United States and Canada can now

gather with friends or others, play games and build their own virtual worlds on Horizon as long as they are 18 years old and have the proper equipment.

Since last year a testing version of the platform has been available to a limited number of users.

Facebook renamed its parent company to Meta in October to emphasize its aim to shift from scandal-prone social media platform to its virtual reality vision for its future.

"We want Horizon Worlds to be a safe and respectful environment, so

everyone must follow our Conduct in VR Policy," Meta said in announcing the opening.

"You have several safety options... which lets you take a break and then block, mute or report people," it added.

Meta-owned platforms Facebook and Instagram have been fighting to put behind them a crisis unleashed in September by reams of internal studies leaked to journalists and US authorities by whistleblower Frances Haugen.



Rescuers dig a damaged building during an operation at an area yesterday which was affected by the Mount Semeru volcano eruption that killed at least 43 people last Saturday in Sumberwuluh, Candipuro district, Lumajang, East Java province, Indonesia.

PHOTO: REUTERS