

EVERYONE CAN MAKE ROADS, BUT **THERE'S ONLY 1 EXPERT** SO CHOOSE BSRM TO BUILD SAFER HOMES

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'I'll do what can be done'

Govt to address expats' problems in Maldives, PM says at reception by Bangladeshis in Male

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government would take steps to address the problems of Bangladeshi expatriates living in the Maldives, particularly air connectivity and money transfer facility to Bangladesh.



"Our Expatriates' Welfare and Foreign Ministers had talks with you and came to know all your problems. They also informed me about these. On my return home, I will do what can be done on many issues," she said while addressing a reception accorded to her by the Bangladeshi community living in the Maldives.

Sheikh Hasina, now in the Maldives on an official visit, joined the event at Iskandhar School Auditorium in Chaandhanee Magu of Male, virtually from her place of residence there.

She said the government would solve the problems Bangladeshis face in sending money from the Maldives by making arrangements for the exchange of currencies between Bangladesh and the Maldives.

Noting that the expatriates in the Maldives have to suffer losses in buying dollars to send money back home, the prime minister said, "I will take steps to make arrangements for the exchange of money [between the two currencies]."

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A young boy, with a whistle clamped between his teeth and a whip poised over his right shoulder, stares intensely forward as he drives his horse to go faster during the traditional horse race to mark Victory Day. The photo was taken yesterday from Khulna's Rupsha upazila.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Read tomorrow's special issue on

BANGLADESH COMMERCIAL VEHICLE INDUSTRY: TREND & OUTLOOK

PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 25

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-25	12-45	3-45	5-24	7-00
JAMAAT 6-00	1-15	4-00	5-27	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

COX'S BAZAR RAPE No one arrested yet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

No one was arrested in connection with the case filed over the rape of a tourist in Cox's Bazar as of yesterday evening although Rab said it identified three accused a day earlier.

On Thursday night, seven people were made accused in the case. Four of the named accused are Ashiqul Islam Ashiq, Israfil Huda Joy, Mehedi Hasan Babu and Riaz Uddin Choton. The rest of the three were kept unnamed.

The accused were involved in raping a tourist at the country's prime tourist destination, made her husband and child hostage by their cohorts on Wednesday evening.

The woman, her husband, and their eight-month-old child went to Cox's Bazar on holiday on Wednesday morning from the capital, according to the case documents.

They checked into a... SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Flying robots to hunt for alien life on Venus



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Engineers are developing software for lighter-than-air spacecraft that might be able to explore the clouds of Venus, an environment that could harbour alien life.

Balloon-based robot vehicles, such as the Venus Atmosphere Maneuverable Platform, work akin to an airship.

These hybrid machines use buoyancy and aerodynamic lift to control their altitude - with the substantial benefit that during the day they can collect energy from the Sun in order to move while conserving power by floating during the night.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Disparity remains despite progress

Rehman Sobhan says this society doesn't match what Bangabandhu dreamt of

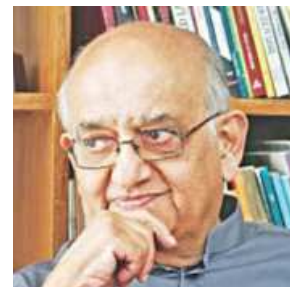
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is lagging in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's idea of a just society in the field of politics, economy, rule of law, education and health sector, said economists yesterday.

The country has made tremendous progress in macroeconomic affairs, human indicators, infrastructure-building and poverty reduction in the last fifty years, all of which have made it proud in the eyes of the world, said Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, at the 21st biennial conference of the Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA).

However, huge disparity and injustice remain in many stages. "As a result, our society does not match with Bangabandhu's idea of exploitation free society."

For instance, the richer section gets high amounts of funds at a lower cost while small entrepreneurs get little funds at a



higher cost. "This is another symbol of fragile justice."

Unjust governance is common: there is law, rules and regulations but those are not equitably practised, according to Sobhan.

The rule of law should be followed the same way for every person. "But that also favours the upper class."

There is an announcement of zero tolerance to corruption but the law is not universally enforced at the highest level.

Sobhan also stressed the importance of having a free and fair electoral process to select the members of the parliament to ensure Bangabandhu's wish for a truly democratic society.

"Because, it ensures their interest to work for the benefits of the people."

At present, more than 70 percent of the MPs are business people and the rest are also engaged in business through the family.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

US SECURITY ASSISTANCE Dhaka requires fresh deal with Washington

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh needs to sign an agreement with the US for getting continuous funding for security cooperation in line with the recent amendments to its Leahy Law that governs the nation's funding to foreign security forces.

As per the Leahy Law, the US needs to sign agreements with the countries it provides security assistance to, said a letter sent earlier this month to the foreign ministry by the US State Department.

And under the agreement, Bangladesh will need to inform the US government of the security forces that receive the assistance.

Bangladesh was asked to respond to the letter by December 15 but Dhaka has now sought until December 31 to give feedback, said a foreign ministry official on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue.

The request for a time extension comes after the US on December 11 imposed sanctions on the Rapid Action Battalion and seven of its current and former top officials concerning human rights violations.

This disqualifies Rab, an elite anti-crime and anti-terrorism agency, from any US assistance.

The Leahy Law prohibits the US government from assisting units of foreign security forces where there is credible information implicating that unit in the commission of gross violations of human rights (GVHR).

The US government considers torture, extrajudicial... SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

COVID UPDATE Country reports 342 new cases, one death

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday reported 342 Covid-19 cases while the Coronavirus claimed overnight one life.

"The country reported 2.02 percent Covid-19 positive cases as 16,913 samples were tested in the past 24 hours," Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said in its routine daily statement.

In the past 24 hours, the combined figure of Coronavirus in Dhaka city and upazilas of the district is 291 while no Covid-19 death was reported during the period.

The official tally showed that the virus killed 28,055 people and infected 15,82,710 so far.

The recovery count rose to 15,46,956 after another 292 patients were discharged from the hospitals during the past one day.

From the beginning... SEE PAGE 5 COL 6



Hundreds gathered at a BNP rally in Gazipur's Shaheed Barkat Stadium yesterday. During the rally, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir asked the government to step down before the formation of an Election Commission.

PHOTO: ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE

Star HEALTHLINE

Goodbye glasses SHOULD YOU CONSIDER LASIK?

STAR HEALTH DESK

LASIK eye surgery, the most commonly performed laser surgery, is usually done for better vision.

The surgery often offers improved vision without the hassle of glasses or contact lenses. More than eight out of 10 people who have undergone LASIK refractive surgery no longer need to use glasses or contact lenses for most of their activities.

LASIK surgery is usually completed in 30 minutes or less.

During LASIK surgery, a special

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

Hyginex Instant hand sanitizer

BEACON Pharmaceuticals Limited