

## Recognise 1971 genocide

### Dhaka calls upon int'l community

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The global community should recognise the genocide committed by the Pakistan occupation army in Bangladesh during the 1971 Liberation War, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen.

Conclusive research by internationally-recognised genocide experts indicate that the nature, scale and organisation of Pakistani military operations demonstrate careful planning and intentionally designed strategies to destroy a substantial part of the Bangladeshi ethnic and national group, he said.

Momen's comment, which was made in a pre-recorded video message, came in a webinar titled "1952-1971 Bangladesh Genocide: A Tale of Gross Human Rights Violation", organised by the Conflict and Resilience Research Institute Canada on Friday to mark the National Genocide Day.

The genocide is yet to be recognised by the global community, he said, adding that Bangladesh has not received any formal apology from the perpetrators.

"This day comes with a mixed feeling for us," said Planning Minister MA Mannan.

"We remember the supreme sacrifice of our early martyrs who were brutally killed by the Pakistani army on this night in 1971. We are also proud of the fact that how Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman valiantly declared independence later in the early hours of March 26 and got arrested by the occupation army," he added.

Cindy Lamoureux, an MLA from Canada's Manitoba province, called for ways to educate people and properly recognise the history and genocide of Bangladesh.

One of the ways to do that is through exhibits in galleries like the human rights museum.

"Often times an exhibit in the museum will create dialogue and a

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Local residents Lyubov Ostranitsa, 76, and Svetlana Mechetnaya, 60, sit on a bench in a destroyed courtyard in the besieged southern port city of Mariupol, Ukraine. The photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Russia signals less ambitious goals

Says war focus may be on eastern Ukraine; Kremlin hints at nuclear 'readiness' as heavy fighting rages across the country

#### AGENCIES

US President Joe Biden met top Ukrainian ministers in an emphatic show of support yesterday, as Russia signalled it may scale down its war aims after failing to break Kyiv's resistance in a month of fighting and deadly attacks on civilians.

Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov made a rare trip out of Ukraine to meet with the US leader, in a possible sign of growing confidence in their fightback against Russian forces.

The talks discussed Washington's "unwavering commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity," State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters.

Biden, who later met Polish President Andrzej Duda, also stressed the "sacred commitment" to Nato's collective defence, in a clear reassurance to Ukraine's neighbours rattled by the conflict.

The US president has been leading efforts among Western allies to press Vladimir Putin to end his invasion of Ukraine, branding the Russian president a "war criminal" over the assaults on civilians.

Putin had sent troops into Ukraine on February 24, vowing to destroy the country's military and topple pro-Western President Volodymyr Zelensky.

But his army has made little progress on capturing key cities, and its attacks on civilians have become more deadly.

In a surprise statement, Sergei Rudskoi, a senior Russian general, suggested the time had come for a considerably reduced "main goal" of controlling Donbas, an eastern region already partly held by Russian proxies.

**"I ask you to increase the output of energy to ensure that everyone in Russia understands that no one can use energy as a weapon to blackmail the world."**

The apparent scaling down of ambitions came as a Western official reported that a seventh Russian general, Lieutenant General Yakov Rezanov, had died in Ukraine and that a colonel had been "deliberately" killed by his own demoralised men.

Complicating Moscow's challenges, invading troops were facing a counteroffensive in Kherson, the only major Ukrainian city under Russian control.

In a video address on Friday night, the Ukrainian president said his country's forces had "dealt powerful blows" to

Russian troops, adding that their success in repelling attacks was leading the Russian leadership "to a simple and logical idea: talk is necessary." He reiterated Ukraine's terms, including sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Zelensky pressed on with his relentless diplomatic efforts to rally world leaders to his side, this time taking his message to the Doha Forum meeting in Qatar's capital.

He accused Russia of fuelling a dangerous arms race by "bragging" about its nuclear stocks, and urged Qatar to help by preventing Moscow from deploying energy as a weapon.

"I ask you to increase the output of energy to ensure that everyone in Russia understands that no one can use energy as a weapon to blackmail the world," Zelensky said.

Earlier, Dmitry Medvedev, a former Russian president who is deputy chairman of the country's security council, said Moscow could strike against an enemy that only used conventional weapons while Putin's defence minister claimed nuclear "readiness" was a priority.

Russia's far-bigger military continued to combat determined Ukrainian defenders who are using Western supplied weapons – from near the capital Kyiv to Kharkiv, the Donbas region and the devastated southern port city of Mariupol.

## 3 children

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The victim families said, on top of hill-cutting, the soil was already soft due to rainfall yesterday morning.

**ILLEGAL HILL CUTTING** Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolan, said as per the Environment Conservation (Amendment) Act 2010, hill cutting is a cognisable offence and no one, even the government, semi-government or autonomous organisations are allowed to cut or raze hills without prior permission from the authorities concerned.

"But unfortunately, 'influential' people have been defying the law and destroying most of the hills in the union to sell soil. These acts often result in such dire accidents."

Locals also alleged that some people, in cooperation with a section of government officials, are involved in hill cutting.

"Many are exposed to landslides as homes and commercial establishments were constructed after cutting hills in unplanned ways," Kim said.

Though the district administration is conducting drives, stricter measures are needed to stop this menace, he added.

According to the environment law, cutting hills without approval is prohibited.

**Mother killed**

**FROM PAGE 1** with a locker inside also open. It appears that someone came to repair the AC and then killed the woman."

Police are investigating whether there was any other motive, he said.

## Germs winning over drugs

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Shocking, not a single bacterium was found that was not resistant to at least one drug, said Prof Abu Saleh.

"The uncontrolled infection due to superbugs is a daily incident inside ICUs. Patients come here, get infected with new superbugs from other patients easily and eventually die," he said.

The surveillance study of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control (IEDCR), which was published in November last year, on the 10 bacteria collected from nine medical colleges across the country between 2017 and 2021 also backs up the BSMU findings.

In both studies, it was found that five of the most critical medicines listed by the WHO are progressively becoming ineffective.

Sadly, a section of

doctors, pharmacies and patients are to blame for the failing of drugs.

Throughout the pandemic, doctors prescribed unnecessary antibiotics for Covid-19 patients in the hospitals in 83 percent of cases, according to a 2021 IEDCR study.

"The gross misuse was due to misconception by both the physicians and people. We will see its impact once the Covid-19 is over," Prof Zakir Hossain Habib, the lead investigator and head of microbiology at the IEDCR, told The Daily Star.

As many as 60 percent of the patients take medicines without consulting doctors or take medicines on advice from informal providers like drug sellers and quacks;

25 percent of the patients suffer due to costly non-listed drugs prescribed by doctors, according to a

November report last year by the Health Economics Unit of the health ministry.

Saleh said drugs without prescription is prohibited but not punishable under the Drug Policy of 2016, and it is helping the malpractice to go on.

Unfortunately, bacteria resistant to each of these new drugs have already been detected, according to an article published in harvard.edu in 2018.

"There should be a separate list of antibiotics for the registered doctors, consultants and the doctors at the hospitals. Most probably, this is the only way we can save the remaining few drugs in our hands, until a new drug is there," he said.

It takes years of painstaking research and billions of dollars in investment to invent an antibiotic, develop a drug and market it for people's

use.

Only four new classes of antibiotics, in terms of novel mechanism to target the bacteria, were invented since 2000, compared to the 63 put to clinical use between 1980 and 2000.

Unfortunately, bacteria resistant to each of these new drugs have already been detected, according to an article published in harvard.edu in 2018.

"Currently, many drugmakers are producing cocktail antibiotics (a combination of multiple antibiotics). It may work for the next 2-5 years, but then there will be no option left as no new antibiotics will be available in the next 10 years," Prof Mohammad Riazul Islam of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Dhaka University told The Daily Star.

## No one can play

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we are building a nuclear power plant, we are doing infrastructural development, we are creating employment opportunities, we are setting up hundred economic zones."

The country needs to be advanced in all sectors, particularly education, knowledge, technology and science, Hasina said.

AKM Mozammel Haque, chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Golden Jubilee of Independence and also the Liberation War Affairs minister, chaired the event, while Khaja Miah, secretary of the ministry, delivered the welcome address.

Tapan Kanti Ghosh, member secretary of the committee and also a senior secretary to the commerce ministry, spoke at the event.

At the onset of the ceremony, the theme song of the 50-year celebration of independence was played, while an audio-visual was screened.

## Thousands flee after

## Philippine volcano erupts

#### AFP, Laurel

Thousands of people fled their homes near a Philippine volcano Saturday after an eruption sent ash and steam hundreds of metres into the sky.

Taal volcano, which sits in a picturesque lake south of Manila, exploded with a "short-lived" burst at 7:22 am (2322 GMT), the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said in a statement.

It warned further eruptions were possible, which it said could trigger dangerous, fast-moving volcanic flows of gas, ash and debris, as well as a tsunami.

Residents in five fishing and farming settlements around the lake were ordered to leave their homes, in the third mass evacuation in as many years around one of the country's most active volcanoes.