

PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN
Vehicles parked in the space where the historic Neelam Ghar once stood. The century-old establishment on Old Dhaka's Court Street was recognised by conservationists as a rare feat of masonry. However, after the heritage site was leased out to the Dhaka Bar Association by the Deputy Commissioner's Office, the two-storey building was demolished to make room for a 20-storey one. The photo was taken yesterday. *Inset*, what the Neelam Ghar, literally meaning auction house, used to look like.



COVID VACCINATION Special drive today to jab 75 lakh people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special nationwide campaign to inoculate 75 lakh people with the second and booster doses of the Covid-19 vaccine will take place today, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

The day-long campaign is being launched to help constrict the recent spike in infection rates, he added.

He made the announcement at the health directorate headquarters at noon.

Those who received their second jabs at least four months ago can now get their booster dose. While those who took the first dose at least 28 days ago can get their second jab.

The jabs will be provided to those aged 18 and above.

For the campaign, 16,181 centres will be operational in all public hospitals, wards in city corporations and municipality areas, the minister said, adding that 33,246 health workers and 49,869 volunteers will be working across the country.

"The country currently has a stock of around 2.78 crore shots of five types of Covid-19 vaccines."

Meanwhile, the government is preparing for a vaccination campaign for children aged 5-11, the minister also said.

"The primary action plan already has been framed. Now, [other] necessary preparations are underway."

Meanwhile, seven more Covid-19 patients died
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Sri Lanka renews state of emergency

Police, military step up security ahead of parliament's vote for new president tomorrow



Ghazal legend Bhopinder Singh no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted playback singer, ghazal maestro and musician Bhopinder Singh passed away yesterday at 7:45pm in Mumbai's Criticare hospital.

The 82-year-old was known to be the voice of many a memorable Bollywood songs.

"He was suffering from several health complications, including bladder issues, for some time," his wife and popular singer Mitali Mukherjee, now known as Mitali Singh, told Indian media.

Bhopinder, born
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AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's acting president renewed the country's state of emergency yesterday ahead of a parliamentary vote to pick a new head of state -- a poll in which he is a leading candidate.

Ranil Wickremesinghe automatically became acting president when Gotabaya Rajapaksa resigned last week after fleeing to Singapore.

A state of emergency allows troops to arrest and detain suspects, and the president to make regulations overriding existing laws to deal with any unrest.

One was already in place but parliament had not met to ratify the declaration as required, and Wickremesinghe extended it from yesterday "in the interests of public security", he said.

Police and the military, armed with emergency powers, stepped up security in the capital ahead of tomorrow's election of a new president.

Wickremesinghe, a six-time former prime minister, is being backed for the position by

Rajapaksa's party, which remains the largest in the legislature.

In what was seen as a possible appeal to 14 Catholic legislators for their support, Wickremesinghe said he had asked Britain's help to complete investigations into the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings that killed 279 people.

Sri Lanka's small but influential Catholic minority believes the coordinated suicide attack against three churches and three hotels was a "political plot" to bring Rajapaksa to power, and has long sought an independent investigation.

Wickremesinghe was "requesting the assistance of the UK government and their intelligence services", his office said.

There was no immediate comment from the British High Commission.

The bombings were blamed on local jihadists and 25 men were indicted in October over alleged involvement.

But the Church and opposition parties claim
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Man arrested for 'hurting religious sentiment'

A CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

A Narsingdi court sent a man to jail last night after police arrested him in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Earlier on Sunday night, a mob surrounded the house of Prashanta Kaur Shrabon in Jinardi area of Palash upazila, saying that his posts and comments on Facebook had hurt their religious feelings.

Kamrul Islam, chairman of Jinardi Union Parishad, said, "When local mobs gathered, we calmed them down and called the police."

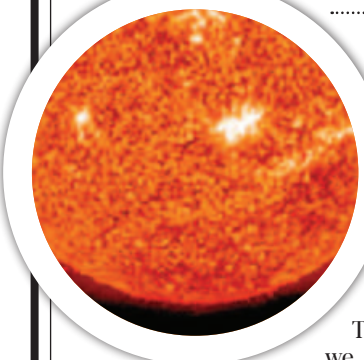
Police then detained Prashanta, 23, from his house around 10:00pm on Sunday.

A Narsingdi court sent him to jail last night after Palash police accused him in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Prashanta used to work at a garment factory in Gazipur. He is a resident of Rabon village in the upazila's Jinardi Union Parishad.

Solar storm about to strike Earth in a 'direct hit'

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



A solar storm is predicted to hit the Earth today that could disrupt GPS and radio signals.

The impact of a "snake-like filament" from the Sun, which Nasa predicts will happen on July 19, will be a "direct hit" according to Dr Tamitha Skov, adding that we should "expect signal disruptions on Earth's nightside".

It is also possible that aurora might be visible in some regions of the Earth.

However, it is possible that the storm could also come later this week. The G1-class storm -- which is "minor" but could impact satellite operations -- could strike the Earth on 20 or 21 July, according to SpaceWeather.

The origins of the storm come from a coronal mass ejection, a release of plasma and magnetic energy, which leapt from the Sun on 15 July by an unstable filament of magnetism. These eruptions are capable of releasing 100,000 times more energy than all the power plants on Earth generate throughout a year.

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CASE UNDER ICT ACT

Three officials of Deepto TV land in jail Its MD secures bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chattogram Cyber Tribunal yesterday sent two directors of Deepto TV and its chief operating officer to jail in three cases filed under the controversial section 57 of the ICT act.

The court also ordered sending Deepto TV's Managing Director Kazi Jahedul Islam to jail, but granted him bail after a couple of hours because of his ailing health.

Those who landed in jail are Kazi Jahin Hasan, Kazi Rabet Hasan, and Kazi Urfi Ahmed, officials said.

They are accused of defaming the former overseas employment minister Nurul Islam and his son Mujibur Rahman with fake news.

The accused are also the top officials of Kazi Farms Group.

Judge Jahirul Kabir passed the order.

The cases were filed in 2016 against three journalists and the four officials of Deepto TV.

Sheikh Ahmad, manager of Sanowara Group, and Jahangir Alam, manager of Sanowara Poultry and Hatchery, filed the cases.



The seventh and last span of the Rupsha railway bridge has been installed recently. With all spans in place over the Rupsha river, the Khulna-Mongla Rail Link project inches towards completion. This 5.13km-long railway bridge will be the country's longest one. The photo was taken near Lobon Chora Road in Khulna's Rupsha upazila recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

TEACHER'S ASSAULT

HC orders judicial probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered a judicial enquiry into the allegation of humiliation of a college teacher in Narail on June 17.

The Narail chief judicial magistrate has been asked to conduct the probe and submit the findings to the HC in six weeks.

In a video clip that went viral last month, some students and locals were seen forcing Swapan Kumar Biswas, acting principal of Mirzapur United Degree College in Narail, to wear a garland made of shoes.

Yesterday, the HC also directed the government authorities concerned to provide security and medical support to Swapan and his family members.

The court also issued a rule asking the respondents to explain why their failure to prevent such occurrences in presence of local administration

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