

THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON 18 trees lost per second in 2021

AFP, Rio de Janeiro The Brazilian Amazon lost about 18 trees per second in 2021 as deforestation in the country increased by more than 20 percent, according to a satellite data-based report released Monday. The Mappiomas report said the country lost some 16,557 square kilometres (1.65 million hectares) of indigenous vegetation in 2021 - an area bigger than Northern Ireland. In 2020, the area lost was 13,789 square kilometres. Nearly 60 percent of land deforested in 2021 was in the Amazon, the world's largest tropical rainforest, the report said. "In the Amazon alone, 111.6 hectares per hour or 1.9 hectares per minute were deforested, which is equivalent to about 18 trees per second," according to Mappiomas, a network of NGOs, universities and technology companies. Clearing land for farming was the main driver, accounting for almost 97 percent, it said, with illegal mining also a major factor. In the last three years, coinciding with the presidency of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, the tree cover lost in Brazil was about 42,000 square kilometres - "almost the area of the state of Rio de Janeiro," said the report.



Protestors shout slogans as they carry an effigy of Sri Lanka's acting President Ranil Wickremesinghe during a protest in Colombo yesterday. The 225-seat parliament of Sri Lanka votes today to choose the new president, who will lead efforts to address the country's economic and political collapse. The House finalised three candidates yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Cop held after gold

FROM PAGE 12 Zahidul after arrest. During interrogation, Zahidul, however, denied his involvement. Police produced him before a Dhaka court yesterday with a seven-day remand prayer. The court granted four days. "We have found involvement of at least four others. We are trying to arrest them," Inspector Jamal told The Daily Star. Asked whether the rest were policemen, he replied in the negative. Police quoting the case statement said Titu, who works at Dhanshiri Chain and Ball House in the city's Tantibazar area, was carrying the ornaments in a schoolbag to deliver those to various gold shops in Tangail's Mirzapur and Sakhipur. As he was waiting at Gabtoli to catch a bus, a person identifying himself as a DB policeman asked for his name, address and occupation. After Titu gave his identity and said he was carrying ornaments, the man asked him to provide documents. During this conversation, four to five others appeared there and took the bag. They forced him to get on a motorcycle and took him to Mirpur Beribandh area, saying he would be taken to Teigaon Police Station. There, some from the group along with Titu boarded a CNG-run three wheeler. The others got down with the bag in Bijoy Sarani area, leaving Titu in the vehicle.

Bangladesh stays put

FROM PAGE 1 The country was in Tier-2 Watch List for three years - 2018, 2019, 2020. The 2022 TIP report is the 22nd instalment and covers 188 countries, including the US. Trafficking means coercing, defrauding and falsifying people for employing or transferring them from one place to another for exploitation. This can happen within a country or from one country to another. The TIP report launched by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken last night says Bangladesh government does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. "The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared with the previous reporting period, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Bangladesh remained in Tier-2," it said. These efforts included increasing investigations, prosecutions, and convictions against human traffickers, including upholding the dismissal of a member of parliament involved in a labour trafficking case, said the report. In August 2021, the seven anti-trafficking tribunals resumed operations and the Rangpur and Rajshahi tribunals became the third and fourth courts to record trafficking convictions.

European bison

FROM PAGE 12 The female bison - one matriarch and two younger cows - will now graze, eat bark, fell trees and take so-called dust baths, churning up the ground in the woods.

Peace in Ukraine will be on Moscow's terms: Medvedev

Russian troops strike multiple targets; Putin, Erdogan visit Iran

REUTERS, Kyiv

A senior Russian security official said yesterday that peace in Ukraine when it came would be on Moscow's terms as Russian forces struck targets across the country with missiles even as their ground offensive stuttered.

More than two weeks have passed since Russia's last major territorial gain - capturing the eastern Ukrainian city of Lysychansk - and Ukraine's General Army Staff said yesterday that Moscow's forces were busy shoring up their positions in recently seized territory and mounting limited but unsuccessful ground assaults, albeit in numerous different locations.

Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's former president who is now deputy head of its Security Council, struck a defiant tone though, signalling that Moscow was ready to do whatever it took in order to prevail.



"Russia will achieve all its goals. There will be peace - on our terms," Medvedev said.

He has become increasingly hawkish in his criticism of the West since Russia sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine on February 24 in what it calls a "special military operation" to ensure its own security.

The Kremlin has said there is no time limit to a conflict which Ukraine and the West have called an unprovoked war of aggression

designed to grab territory and erase Ukrainian identity.

In a familiar pattern, Russian missiles yesterday slammed into targets across Ukraine. At least one person was killed in a missile strike on the centre of the eastern Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk.

Buildings in a town in the Kharkiv region were also hit with footage showing piles of rubble being cleared by excavators.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Tehran yesterday for talks with Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Kremlin leader's first trip outside the former Soviet Union since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

In Tehran, Putin will also hold his first face-to-face meeting since the invasion with a Nato leader, Turkey's Tayyip Erdogan, to discuss a deal aimed at allowing the resumption of Ukraine's Black Sea grain exports as well as peace in Syria.

Act now or risk tougher Covid measures later

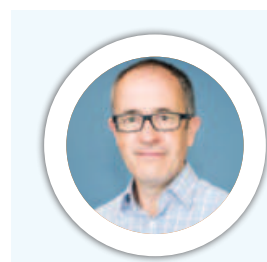
WHO warns Europe

REUTERS, London

European nations must accelerate vaccine uptake and bring back mask wearing to tackle a surge in Covid 19 cases driven by an Omicron offshoot and avoid stricter measures later in the year, a senior World Health Organization official said yesterday.

In an interview with Reuters, WHO Regional Director for Europe Hans Kluge urged countries to take action now to avoid overwhelming health systems in the autumn and winter as the Omicron subvariant, BA.5, continues to spread rapidly.

Close to 3 million new cases were reported in Europe last week, which accounted for nearly half of all new cases globally. Hospitalisation rates doubled over the same period, and close to 3,000 people die of the disease every week, Kluge said.



"Let record-breaking UK temperatures and tragic deaths in Europe be the wake-up call the world needs to stop climate change from claiming any more lives."

Tim Wainwright, chief executive of the charity WaterAid, says as a fierce heatwave left much of western Europe sweltering yesterday, fuelling ferocious wildfires and stretching emergency services. Experts blame climate change for the latest heatwave and note the more frequent extreme weather will only worsen in years to come.

Eid rush casualties highest in 7 years

FROM PAGE 12 crore people travelled from one district to another during this time. The government's decision to ban bikes on highways during Eid rush caused scarcity of vehicles, creating an anarchy over fares while many unfit vehicles hit the streets to cope with the demand, Mozammel said. A range of mismanagements caused traffic congestion on highways, leaving people to suffer for up to 20 hours, he added. He said at least 398 people were killed in 319 road crashes 15 days from July 3 to 17, which is nearly 27 deaths a day. During the same period last year, 273 people died in 240 accidents. Twenty-five people were killed in 25 train-related accidents, and 17 people were killed in 10 waterways accidents, he said. At least 131 people died and 68 others were injured in 113 accidents involving bikes, which is 35.42 percent of the total accidents and 32.91 percent of the total deaths, he said.

Among the victims, 157 were drivers, 106 pedestrians, 62 women and 51 children. Of the accidents, 23.19 percent were head-on collisions while pedestrians were crushed to death in 50.78 percent cases. Vehicles fell into ditches in 18.49 percent of cases after losing control, he said. WHY SO MANY CRASHES Kazi Md Shifun Newaz, an assistant professor at Accident Research Institute of Buet, said many of the accidents took place on the roads that have no dividers. The government should build dividers on every road to avoid head-on collisions, he added. Drivers usually drive vehicles for eight to 10 days before Eid without any rest. This leads to reckless driving, resulting in crashes, he said, adding that the authorities should develop a roaster system for drivers to avoid the situation. Referring to the large number of deaths of pedestrians, he said a lack of safe crossings

as well as markets, schools and colleges along roads are major reasons. Hossain Zillur, also former adviser to a caretaker government, blamed nonchalance of authorities for the situation. The authorities are taking what he called some "partial steps" to reduce road crashes which are often limited to taking initiatives. "But we want to see results." Road transport sector is a very important sector, which is seeing an imbalanced expansion, he noted. He said bikes and easy-bikes, considered major contributors of accidents, are increasing due to a lack of public transport, he added. The economist said "vested interests" get priority in the transport sector with political blessings with little regard for public interest. He recommended taking steps against political favouritism to change the situation. According to him, road accidents cannot be reduced without solving the overall problems that the transport sector faces.

JKG's Sabrina, 7 others given

FROM PAGE 12 separate charges. Three years' imprisonment and a Tk 3,000 fine each, in default of which they would serve three more months in jail, were on charges of cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property. Another four years' imprisonment and a Tk 4,000 fine were on charges of forgery of public documents. If they fail to pay the fine, they have to serve four months more in jail. Another four-year imprisonment and fine of Tk 4,000 were on charges of using forged documents. The punishments will be given consecutively, said the magistrate. However, the judgment said the time the convicts have already spent in jail would be deducted from their sentences. According to the verdict, JKG Health Care was set up two months before the Directorate General of Health Services gave it the approval of collecting samples to test for Covid-19 even though the organisation had no prior experience in this regard. Violating all rules and regulations, it collected samples from people and supplied Covid-19 certificates without running tests. The court, in its observations, said the accused do not deserve mercy as they "played with peoples' lives" for illegal gains. Upon hearing the verdict in court, Sabrina expressed shock at the sentence's length. "I wasn't the chairman so how could I get such a punishment?... I knew what was going to happen but I didn't anticipate the extent [of the

punishment]." While she has been denying her chairmanship since her arrest two years ago, all documents submitted to the court say otherwise, sources said. Abdullah Abu, public prosecutor of Dhaka Metropolitan area, was satisfied with the verdict and hoped the higher court will uphold it. On June 23, 2020, Kamal Hossain, who was given a fake Covid-19 certificate from JKG Health Care, filed a case against Humayun, his wife Tanzina and several unknown people with Teigaon Police Station. Md Liakot Ali, an inspector of Detective Branch of police, on August 5 submitted a charge sheet in this regard to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court. On August 20, another Dhaka court framed charges against Sabrina and seven others in the case. Later, the health ministry suspended Sabrina from the post of registrar at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases for violating service rules.

Assange committed no serious crime

Mexico president tells Biden AFP, Mexico City Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said Monday he had interceded with US President Joe Biden on behalf of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, insisting that he had committed no serious crime.

Ensure austerity

FROM PAGE 1 Commission and secretaries concerned attended the meeting at the NEC Conference Room in the city's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area. Later, Planning Minister MA Mannan told reporters that the PM urged everyone to maintain austerity in all spheres. "... The prime minister has asked the government machinery as well as the common people to maintain austerity." Mannan further said Bangladesh is feeling the pinch of the fuel price hike and the current global volatility. State Minister for Planning Shamsul Alam said the PM reiterated her call for all to maintain austerity and avoid wasting resources. She gave a directive for limiting the use of air conditioners in public offices and also asked government employees not to wear suits in summer. Alam mentioned that the PM gave approval to a project for supplying gas to Mymensingh Combined Cycle Power Plant. Mannan said prices of some items such as rice and edible oil are seeing a downtrend which indicates that inflation will decline in the coming days. He also said the Ecne meeting discussed the distribution of seeds, fertiliser and pesticides among marginal farmers free of cost.

Three-way fight

FROM PAGE 12 "We have a common minimum program that we agreed on," the SJB MP said. "We had only one sticking point about who will be the president and that was sorted out last night."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Local Government Engineering Department Coastal Towns Climate Resilience Project Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh Memo No. 46.02.0000.809.99.022.22-576 Date: 19-07-22 Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Recruitment of Detailed Design Consultants (DDC) (Package No. DDC/CTCRP/LGED/S-01) Deadline for Submission of EOI: 31-08-2022 (as per ADB CMS time) CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) 1. The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the Coastal Towns Climate Resilience Project (CTCRP) to improve climate and disaster resiliency of coastal towns strengthened including benefitting the poor and women in selected 22 Paurashavas in coastal areas of Bangladesh and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this loan to eligible payments under the consultancy services for which this invitation for Expression of Interest (EOI) is issued. 2. The overall objective of the assignment is to support the Project Management Unit (PMU) in the LGED for the implementation of the proposed ADB-funded Coastal Towns Climate Resilience Project (CTCRP). It includes (i) conduct relevant survey and investigations to prepare comprehensive design; (ii) preparation of detail design, working drawings, specification, bill of quantities and cost estimation of works; (iii) preparation of tender document and assist in contract administration; (iv) undertaking social and environmental safeguards analysis based on detailed designs and preparation of safeguard documentation; and (v) prepare & submit the completion report along with of whole project areas of 22 Paurashavas considering green building design concept all documents including review & approving as-built drawing to be submitted by the Contractor. LGED invites eligible consulting firm(s) with adequate experience in project management and administration; comprehensive design and cost estimation of works. The assignment location will be in selected 22 Paurashavas in coastal areas along with 2 (Khulna & Barishal) regions and project HQ of LGED, Bangladesh. 3. It is estimated that the DDC will require about 7 person-months international as well as 964 person-months national (376 person months of key and 588 person months of Non key) support staff of national consultant) rendered over 84 calendar months from commencement date. The estimated cost is about 22.43 crore BDT (Equivalent \$ 2.81 million USD) excluding VAT and IT. A detailed description of the requirements is provided in the Terms of Reference (TOR) available on the ADB website (http://csm.adb.org). 4. The Executing Agency (EA) for the project is LGED under the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives. Eligible consulting firms are invited to express their interest in the assignment. The Expression of Interest (EOI) must be submitted online through the ADB's website following the procedures described below. 5. To submit an EOI: (1) register with ADB's Consultant Management System at ADB website (http://www.adb.org); click "About ADB"; "Consulting Services"; and "Consultant Management System"; (2) go to http://csm.adb.org; (3) click on "Bangladesh"; (4) find the name of the captioned project; and click on "View CSRN"; (5) click on "Express Interest"; and (6) follow the instructions. All requested information must be provided in the respective EOI fields completely. 6. The EOI must be submitted online using ADB portal before or on 31-08-2022 (as per ADB CMS time). A consulting firm will be selected in accordance with ADB's Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) set out in the ADB Procurement Policy: Goods, Works, Non-consulting and Consulting Services (2017, as amended from time to time) and Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers: Goods, Works, Non-consulting and Consulting Services (2017, as amended from time to time). 7. Further information including scope of work and Terms of Reference are available at CMS on the ADB website (www.adb.org) and at the office of the undersigned during regular office hours. S. M. Nazrul Islam Focal Person Coastal Towns Climate Resilience Project (CTCRP) Level-13, RDEC Bhaban, LGED Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh Phone: +88-02-44826352 E-mail: pdt@lged.gov.bd, pdt.ctcrp@lged.gov.bd GD-1400