



India logs Asia's first death from Monkeypox

REUTERS, Kochi

India yesterday confirmed its first monkeypox death, a young man in the southern state of Kerala, in what is only the fourth known fatality from the disease in the current outbreak.

Last week, Spain reported two monkeypox-related deaths and Brazil its first. The death in India is also the first in Asia. The World Health Organization declared the outbreak a global health emergency on July 23.

The 22-year-old Indian man died on Saturday, Kerala's revenue minister told reporters, adding that the government had isolated 21 people who had come in contact with him.

"The person reached Kerala on July 21 but visited a hospital only on July 26 when he displayed fatigue and fever," Minister K. Rajan said, adding that there was no reason to panic as none of the primary contacts were showing symptoms.

Kerala's Health Minister Veena George told reporters on Sunday that the man's family told authorities

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Strips of colourful lights adorn the lamp posts on the central reservation of Kamal Ataturk Avenue in the capital last night. This goes on when the country is enduring blackouts and the government has asked all to turn off all unnecessary lighting.

Tigers eye series win

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahmudullah Riyad's inclusion in the T20I squad dominated headlines on the eve of Bangladesh's series-deciding game against Zimbabwe today as the 36-year-old came in as replacement for injured skipper Nurul Hasan Sohan but was not handed the captaincy, with the BCB instead opting to entrust Mosaddek Hossain with the duty.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board rested Mahmudullah, the T20I captain, for the three-match series against Zimbabwe and handed Sohan the responsibility with the aim to provide freedom and exposure to a relatively new-look Bangladesh side.

Following a 17-run defeat in the first game, Bangladesh bounced back courtesy of Mosaddek's maiden five-wicket haul in T20Is, which was also the fourth five-wicket haul by a Bangladeshi bowler in T20Is. The visitors restricted Zimbabwe to 135 for eight and, in reply, Liton Das struck a fifty as the Tigers won by seven wickets.

With Nurul ruled out of the series, Mahmudullah could well replace him in the playing eleven in a familiar role of finisher. The Tigers team management may also tinker with the top order for the series deciding-encounter in Harare.

Young left-handed opener Parvez Hossain Emon is likely to make his T20I debut in place of opener Munim Shahriar, who failed to have an impact in the first two games against

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NATIONAL POLLS

Almost half the parties oppose EVM

Election Commission to decide within a month

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Differences of opinion on the use of electronic voting machines (EVMs) in the next national polls are widening among political parties with almost half of the registered ones opposed to electronic voting.

Nineteen out of 39 registered political parties are directly opposed to use of EVMs. Among them are the main opposition in parliament, Jatiya Party, and the BNP.

The ruling Awami League, however, is in favour of EVM use.

The nine parties, including BNP and Communist Party of Bangladesh, who skipped the recent talks with the Election Commission do not want EVMs in the next Jatiya Sangsad polls, scheduled to be held in late December 2023 or early January 2024.

Ten political parties out of the 28 who took part in the talks said they were against the use of EVMs. Among them were Jatiya Party and Gono Forum.

Only three political parties, the AL and its allies Samyabadi Dal and Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, said they want the machines in the next general election.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Election Commissioner Md Alamgir yesterday said they were yet to make any decision on EVM use.

"We will assess if any modifications to the EVMs are needed before making a final decision in about a month on whether the machines would be used," he said.

During the talks with the EC, Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, another member of the AL-led 14-party alliance, suggested that the commission use EVMs



in 150 constituencies.

Twelve political parties, including alliance components Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) and Workers Party, gave conditions for using EVMs. Workers Party recommended adding voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) to the machines while JSD (Inu) suggested making the machines technically flawless.

Two political parties did not clear their stance on this issue.

The EVM issue came to the fore after

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 7 said voting machines would be used in all 300 constituencies in the next national election.

Hasina, also the AL president, made the comment at a meeting of the party's Central Working Committee, its highest decision-making body.

Opposition to the EVM use grew louder after a chaotic scene unfolded shortly before the announcement of the unofficial results of the Cumilla City Corporation polls on June 16.

The BNP and its allies have long been opposing the use of EVMs in polls, saying that the devices would allow the ruling party to "steal votes".

BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan on Sunday alleged that the AL was plotting to rig votes in the next general election using the EVMs to cling on to power.

During the AL's dialogue with the EC on Sunday, party General Secretary Obaidul Quader said they want EVMs be used in all 300 parliamentary constituencies as they thought there was no alternative to it to prevent vote rigging.

The same day, Jatiya Party Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnun told the EC during the talks that they did not want EVMs in the next national election as

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AGED 5-11

Dhaka kids to get Covid jabs first

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Around 7.5 lakh schoolchildren, aged 5-11, in Dhaka city will get Covid-19 vaccine shots first, said Prof Abul Bashir Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of the health directorate.

After that, the campaign will be expanded across the country based on the availability of the vaccines, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

"There are around 3-3.5 crore schoolchildren countrywide. The education ministry will give us the exact number soon. But we have not enough vaccine jabs at this time. So, we will start this vaccination at schools in Dhaka city first."

Health Minister Zahid Maleque will announce the date of administering the vaccine and the detailed plan for the vaccination campaign soon, added Prof Khurshid.

On Saturday, 15,02,400 doses of specially prepared Pfizer vaccine for children aged 5-11 arrived in Dhaka in the first consignment under the global vaccine distribution arrangement called COVAX.

The health DG said the COVAX authorities have assured them that they will supply vaccine shots within the stipulated time.

Earlier, health officials said this vaccination campaign would begin this month.

DSA CASES AGAINST KAJOL

SC asks HC to dispose of his appeals by Oct 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court's Appellate Division yesterday asked the High Court to hear and dispose of by October 31 the appeals filed by photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol challenging charge framing against him in three Digital Security Act (DSA) cases.

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Justice Md Nuruzzaman, passed the orders after disposing of three petitions filed by the state challenging the June 1 HC orders that stayed the trial proceedings in the cases.

The HC stay orders would remain in force till the disposal of the photojournalist's appeals, Kajol's lawyer Mohammad Elias Bhuiyan Kachee told The Daily Star.

On June 1, the HC bench of Justice ASM Abdul Mobin and Justice Md Atoar Rahman accepted for hearing the appeals of Kajol and stayed the trial proceedings in the cases.

Later on, the state filed three petitions with the Appellate Division challenging the HC orders.

Lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua also appeared for Kajol while deputy attorney generals Jahangir Alam and Amit Das Gupta represented the state during the hearing on the petitions yesterday.

A Dhaka tribunal on November 8 last year framed charges against Kajol in the three cases.

Awami League lawmaker from Magura-1 Saifuzzaman Shikhor, Jubo Mahila League's central committee members Usmin Ara Belly and Sumaiya Chowdhury Bonya filed the three

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Japan's cats, dogs get wearable fans to beat heat



REUTERS, Tokyo

A Tokyo clothing maker has teamed up with veterinarians to create a wearable fan for pets, hoping to attract the anxious owners of dogs - or cats - that can't shed their fur coats in Japan's blistering summer weather.

The device consists of a battery-operated, 80-gramme (3-ounce) fan that is attached to a mesh outfit and blows air around an animal's body.

Rei Uzawa, president of maternity clothing maker Sweet Mommy, says she was motivated to create it after seeing her own pet chihuahua exhausted every time it was taken out for a walk in the scorching summer heat.

"There was almost no rainy season this year, so the hot

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

The water of the Buriganga near the capital's Shyampur area has turned a fluorescent green as dyeing factories there have been dumping waste into the river through underwater pipes. Such mindless acts have long been destroying the biodiversity, causing the slow death of the river. The authorities concerned, such as the environment department, seem to be the least bothered, while residents in nearby areas are having to endure toxic water and bad odour for years on end. The photo was taken yesterday.

ILLEGAL LOGGING

Youth killed in 'gunfight' with forest guards

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A youth was killed in a "gunfight" between forest guards and illegal loggers in Cox's Bazar's Chakaria upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Shahidul Islam, 25, of Fakirakhola village of the upazila, confirmed Chandan Kuman Chakrabarty, officer-in-charge of Chakaria Police Station.

Around 10-12 armed loggers entered the Kutakhali forest to plunder trees around 1:00am yesterday, said Anwar Hossain, forest officer of the Cox's Bazar forest department (north).

Sensing the presence of forest guards, the criminals opened fire, Anwar said, adding that the forest guards then returned fire.

The official said they later learnt that police recovered a bullet-hit body.

The body was sent to Cox's Bazar General Hospital morgue for an autopsy.