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Allegations surface against lawmaker Pankaj after his removal from AL posts

SUSANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Allegations against Awami League lawmaker Pankaj Nath are being raised again after his removal from party posts for "breaching discipline".

Locals alleged that Pankaj became involved in many controversial activities after being elected lawmaker in 2014 from Barishal-4 (Hijla-Mehendiganj).

Two factions developed in Mehendiganj upazila AL due to the MP's controversial activities, said party activists.

The ruling party on Sunday conveyed the decision of his removal to the lawmaker through a letter issued by AL Office Secretary Biplab Barua. The MP was an advisory council member of the party's Barishal district unit.

AL sources said Pankaj backed several independent union parishad chairman candidates in his constituency and many of them won the UP elections beating AL nominees.

In an audio clip leaked in July, the twice MP was heard talking to then officer in charge (investigation) of Mehendiganj Police Station Tauhiduzzaman. During the conversation, the lawmaker threatened that he would hack Mehendiganj municipality Mayor Kamal Khan. The clip went viral on social media, drawing huge criticism.

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Vehicles caught up in snarl-ups in the capital's Satrasta intersection around 1:30pm yesterday. Incessant rains almost throughout the day aggravated the sufferings of the commuters who had to spend hours on gridlocked roads. Story on page 3

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DEPRESSION IN BAY Rains flood low-lying areas of Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The low-lying areas of Patuakhali have been submerged as water entered by breaking embankments at different places due to heavy rain and tidal surges.

Depression formed in the Bay of Bengal caused the heavy rain.

Over 50 villages that have been flooded include Chailabunia, Charmontaj, Kawkhali of Rangabali upazila, Charborhan, Bashbaria of Dashmina upazila and Lalua and Champapur of Kalapara upazila, Arif Hossain, executive engineer of Patuakhali Water Development Board, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Fish farms and crop fields in the areas are also under threat of being inundated, he added.

Meanwhile, local Met office has asked all the sea ports, including Payra,

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Iconic French filmmaker Godard dies



AGENCIES

Jean-Luc Godard, one of the most influential filmmakers of the 20th century and the father of the French New Wave cinema, died "peacefully at home" yesterday aged 91, his family said.

His legal counsel later confirmed he died by assisted suicide.

The legendary maverick blew up the conventions of cinema in the 1960s, shooting his gangster romance "Breathless" on the streets of Paris with a hand-held camera, using a shopping trolley for panning shots.

He continued to thumb his nose at Hollywood and an older generation of French

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GAZIPUR ROAD WIDENING

Compensation unpaid, yet work resumes

SHARIFUL ISLAM and ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE AKAND

The Gazipur City Corporation has resumed widening streets and construction of drains and footpaths without compensating those who lost land for the development work.

The work remained stalled after GCC mayor Mohammad Jahangir Alam was suspended over various allegations including land grabbing on November 25.

Before his suspension, the city corporation "encroached" on private properties and demolished buildings without compensating the affected landowners.

The city, however, is mulling a project to compensate the affected and a list of them is being made.

"We are now carrying out a digital survey in different areas to make a list of the affected people and determine what amount of land each of them lost due to the development work," GCC acting mayor Asadur Rahman Kiron told The Daily Star recently.

He said they expect this work would be completed soon. After that, they will prepare a Development Project Proposal and send it to the ministry concerned for fund allocation.

"The city corporation is not capable of paying the huge amount. So, we are seeking funds from the government," Asadur said in response to a query.

Asked whether the LGRD ministry assured them of funds, he replied in the negative.

He, however, said they have taken the move with the consent from two ministers of Gazipur.

"People have been affected as 20-foot roads were widened to 60-foot ones without following any rules. It cannot happen," added Asadur, also the panel mayor.

Aggrieved landowners earlier told this newspaper that the employees of the GCC early last year either demolished their structures or forced owners to knock down parts of their homes and factories, shops and walls without acquiring the land.

The GCC undertook two projects at a cost of Tk 2,200 crore to widen almost 800km of roads and construct drains and footpaths.

The move devoid of any rules resulted in several thousand Gazipur city dwellers losing their valuable properties.

The GCC continued its work ignoring two High Court orders to maintain status quo.

Amid such developments, the LGRD ministry on November 25 suspended mayor Jahangir on allegations that include land grabbing, not compensating people after taking over their land for development work, and working against public interest.

His suspension came after he was expelled from the Awami League on November 19 for his controversial comments on Bangabandhu and Liberation War martyrs.

Visiting different areas of Gazipur city recently, one of these correspondents found the development work has already been completed in some areas.

Residents along the street from Dhirashram to Samantapur Purba Para said expect for 300

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Kuet student arrested in DSA case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A student of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology has been arrested in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Arrestee Zahidul Rahman, 22, of Bhola's Tajmuddin, is a second-year student of Kuet's Electronics and Communication Engineering department.

Kuet's Security Officer Sadeque Hossain Pramanik lodged the case with Khan Jahan Ali Police Station on Monday night, accusing two people, including Zahidul, of "spreading anti-state propaganda" via Telegram messenger app.

The other accused is Rezwan Sam, 21, of Bhola.

Kamal Hossain Khan, officer-in-charge of the police station, told The Daily Star that security guards of the university and students caught Zahidul and handed him over to the university authorities on Sunday night.

Talking to this correspondent, Sadeque said Zahidul and two other students of a private university and a public university used to spread the "anti-state propaganda" through

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EMMY AWARDS 'Successiwwon', 'Ted Lasso' claim top trophies



REUTERS, Los Angeles

Media dynasty drama "Succession" and feel-good comedy "Ted Lasso" took the top trophies at the Emmy awards on Monday, and a "Squid Game" actor landed a major acting prize as Hollywood handed out the highest honours in television.

"Succession" was named best drama series, an award the HBO WBD.BLUE show had won in 2020 before the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted its production schedule. The show, which secured four trophies overall, tells the story of the wealthy and back-stabbing Roy family as members jockey for power.

Apple TV+ AAPLO series "Ted Lasso" also was a repeat winner, claiming best comedy for the second straight year for its tale of an American football coach leading a British soccer team. Its stars Jason Sudeikis and Brett Goldstein were second-time winners of best comedy actor and supporting actor.

Likewise, voters honoured "Euphoria" star Zendaya as best drama actress and Jean Smart of "Hacks" as best comedy actress. It was the second win for each in those categories.

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COVID-19 Positivity rate reaches eight-week high

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Covid-19 positivity rate reached an eight-week high of 10.55 percent in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to the health directorate.

The last time the daily positivity rate was higher than yesterday's was on July 20, with 12.2 percent after 9,047 samples tested across the country were positive.

Yesterday, 435 people were positive after 4,122 samples were tested, according to a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services.

The positivity rate was 9.23 percent the previous day.

One male aged between 41 and 50 years died with Covid-19 at a Chattogram hospital yesterday, taking the total Covid-19 deaths in the country to 29,335.

Meanwhile, 230 patients have recovered.

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PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

A truck overloaded with used cartons plying the Baizid-Faujdarhat link road in Chattogram, posing a danger to others on the road as well as to the truck's occupants. A portion of the loosely-tied-together cargo is hanging over the side of the truck, which is tilted to one side as it is bearing much more than the weight it was designed to carry. The photo was taken recently.

Webb telescope captures images of Orion Nebula

AFP, Washington



The wall of dense gas and dust resembles a massive winged creature, its glowing maw lit by a bright star as it soars through cosmic filaments.

An international research team on Monday revealed the first images of the Orion Nebula captured with the James Webb Space Telescope, leaving astronomers "blown away."

The stellar nursery is situated in the constellation Orion, 1,350 light-years away from Earth, in a similar setting in which our own solar system was birthed more than 4.5 billion years ago.

Astronomers are interested in the region to better understand what happened during the first million years of our planetary evolution.

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