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SECOND EDITION

THE DAILY

Star

ON FRIDAY

"We are hopeful that at some point next year, we will be able to say that Covid-19 is no longer a global health emergency."

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus



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Plus 8-Page Victory Day Special

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Break web of conspiracies

Says PM on Victory Day speech, urges efforts for continued development

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday alerted the people about anti-state plots being hatched by local and foreign conspirators, urging the countrymen to help her government overcome the current global crisis steamed from the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war.

"On this Victory Day, being energised by the spirit of the Liberation War, let's take a vow collectively that we will take the development journey of Bangladesh forward by breaking the web of all conspiracies," she said.

The premier made the call in an address to the nation through Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar at 7:30pm yesterday on the eve of Victory Day.

She also called on the nation to fulfil the dream of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by establishing a happy, prosperous non-communal Bangladesh.

Asking people not to pay heed to rumours, she

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VICTORY DAY TODAY

Freedom dawns



MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

It was like a radiant dawn shining after a long and dreadful night. The cool wind of freedom was blowing in mid-December 1971.

The fear and anxiety that had gripped the nation over the previous nine months were fading away as the hope of victory and freedom steadily took hold.

The guerrillas of Mukti Bahini entered Dhaka city and took position in various spots. At the same time the Indian forces reached the outskirts of the city with their armour, all but

bringing the occupying Pakistan army to their knees.

Since the joint forces started a fast and decisive attack in early December 1971, fighter planes kept circling overhead for bombardment and there were mandatory blackouts at night.

Leaflets with calls to "lay down arms before the time runs out" were dropped from planes of the joint forces and such calls were also reiterated through radios, while Pakistani forces were losing all hope of foreign help and their morale dropped to zero.

Around 1:00pm on December 16,

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FARDIN'S DEATH Father bins cops' claim of suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rejecting the investigators' claim that Fardin Noor Parash died by suicide, the father of the deceased Buet student yesterday expressed sheer disbelief.

"I will file a no-confidence petition. My son didn't die by suicide," Kazi Nooruddin told reporters in front of the DB office in Dhaka.

"My son cannot kill himself. He was murdered in a planned way and all this drama was staged afterwards."

Showing two photos of Fardin's body from after it was recovered, he said they suggest there was no water in his stomach.

"If anyone drowns, there is water in their stomach. This suggests Fardin was murdered," he said.

Mashiur Rahman, Narayanganj civil surgeon, also said there was not as much water in the lungs as is supposed to be in those of a person who drowned.

"Primarily, it appeared to be a death caused by injury that he may have sustained from falling from a high place or other causes," he said, declining to elaborate.

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Metro rail opens on Dec 28

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People's wait for the country's first-ever metro rail is going to end when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opens the new mode of public transport on December 28.

She would have the first official ride from Agargaon to Uttara after inaugurating the Mass Rapid Transit Line-6 (MRT Line-6) at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

The city dwellers can avail the service from the following day.



ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of road transport and highways division, and MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), the project implementing agency, confirmed the development.

Siddique said they would hold a meeting on December 18 to set the date for starting ticket sales for the service.

He added that they, following the international practice, would start the service on a limited scale in the beginning and go for the fully-fledged operation within three months.

Siddique said they are likely to operate trains for two hours in the morning for first few days. The interval between trains will be 10 minutes. Then they will run trains for two more hours in the evening and increase the time considering public demand and how they get habituated, he added.

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DESERT FEST

Acid test awaits Lionel Scaloni

SABBIR HOSSAIN

Lionel Messi has been the driving force behind Argentina's march to the World Cup final in Qatar, putting in one eye-catching performance after another. However, off the field, coach Lionel Scaloni has been orchestrating the Albiceleste's hunt for the trophy after 36 years as defending champion France stand in their way.

Scaloni does not subscribe to the conventional wisdom that a winning team should never be changed. After a sensational loss to Saudi Arabia in the first game of the tournament, putting themselves in a do-or-die situation, Argentina beat Mexico, but he shockingly made four changes to the starting XI in the very next match against Poland. Since then, this trend has been going on, and it has been paying off.

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Five Islami banks put on tight leash

SIBL, Global Islami Bank asked to pause large loan disbursement

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

Bangladesh Bank has instructed five shariah-based banks to send a daily log of sanctioned credit of Tk 10 crore and above as it looks to restore calm and order at the lenders that have recently faced withdrawal pressure.

The five banks are: Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank (SIBL), First Security Islami Bank (FSIBL), Global Islami Bank and Union Bank, according to documents seen by The Daily Star. The instruction came on Wednesday.

Furthermore, SIBL and Global Islami Bank have been asked not to disburse large loans of Tk 50 crore and above, according to the two banks' managing directors.

With this, the central bank has brought the five banks under its extensive monitoring, said BB Spokesman Md Mezbaul Haque.

"BB has asked the bank not to disburse any loan amounting to Tk 50 crore and above. But I do not know why the central bank has given the instruction," said Syed Habib Hasnat, Global Islami Bank's MD, adding that the bank would follow the central bank instructions properly.

Zafar Alam, the MD of SIBL, said the lender would be able to give out more SME loans after the central bank has put a hold on its large loan disbursement.

ABM Mokammel Hoque Chowdhury, managing director of Union Bank, said that the lender would abide by the central bank instructions properly.

Mohammed Monirul Moula, managing director of Islami Bank, denied receiving central bank instruction.

Syed Waseque Md Ali, managing director of FSIBL, did not respond to The Daily Star's request for comment.

The tightened leash on the five lenders, where Chattogram-based business giant S Alam Group has substantial stakes, comes after they

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