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OMS PROGRAMME

Govt moves to introduce cards to ease hassles

Bangladeshis can have dual citizenship in 44 more countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked the authorities to introduce cards for distribution of essentials under the Open Market Sale programme to ease hassles faced by the beneficiaries.

"The government has noticed lack in the OMS management. The issue was discussed today [yesterday]. The prime minister has instructed the authorities to improve the management," Cabinet Secretary Mahub Hossain said yesterday.

He was briefing reporters at the secretariat after a cabinet meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) sells essentials to one crore poor families at fair prices against family cards issued by the TCB.

The cabinet secretary said the PM has directed the authorities to introduce cards for OMS also. This would help ensure discipline as people won't have to wait for hours in queues, he added.

Mahub said that the Cabinet Division was working on this. The OMS programme is run by the Directorate General of Food under the food ministry.

Earlier this month, Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder said the government was planning to provide

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People queue up in front of an OMS truck to buy rice and flour at subsidised prices in the capital's Zigatola Bus Stop area yesterday. Each of them was allowed to buy five kgs of rice at Tk 30 per kg and five kgs of unpackaged flour at Tk 24 per kg. The buyers had to wait for about two hours.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Argentina reopens embassy after 45yrs

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Overwhelmed by Bangladesh's support for the Argentine football team that went on to win the FIFA World Cup 2022, Argentina reopened its embassy in Dhaka yesterday, 45 years after it had closed it.

"The people of Bangladesh never forgot to show love for Argentina. So, we today humbly came here and reopened the embassy in Bangladesh as a new channel to cement our relations," Argentine Foreign Minister Santiago Cafiero said, inaugurating the embassy in the city's Banani in the afternoon.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam and Cafiero raised the flags of Bangladesh and Argentina and sang the national anthems before cutting a ribbon to inaugurate the embassy building.

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CRACKDOWN ON BNP PROTESTS

Use of lethal force deeply troubling

UN rapporteurs wrote govt in Dec

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, as well as four other special rapporteurs and working groups, had written to the government expressing deep concern following the crackdown on BNP rallies and protests across the country.

The letter, issued on December 27, 2022, was made public by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights yesterday.

"We are deeply concerned by the apparent use of excessive and lethal force by security forces against peaceful protesters across various districts in Bangladesh, including the use of teargas, live ammunition and birdshot, resulting in injuries of several protesters and the death of at least five individuals," read the letter.

"We are also deeply concerned at the allegations that live ammunition may have been used against protesters," it added.

"Firearms or lethal force may only be used in self-defence or in defence of others against imminent threat of death or serious injury and there must be no other feasible option. Based on the information received, it does not appear that the circumstances of these protests reached this threshold to make the use of force necessary and proportional," read the letter.

They listed the actions of law enforcers during the BNP rallies held nationwide, including in Bhola, Narayanganj, Dhaka, Munshiganj, and elsewhere, between July and December last year.

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US warns China against arming Russia

Beijing urges dialogue, peace for Ukraine; Moscow escalates shelling, infantry assaults in Luhansk

AGENCIES

The United States has warned China of serious consequences if it provided arms to support Russia's invasion, as Beijing sought dialogue and peace for Ukraine.

Air raid sirens blared in the capital Kyiv and other cities overnight and a Russian missile killed one person in the western town of Khmelnytskyi, Mayor Oleksandr Symshyshyn said on the Telegram messaging app yesterday. The all clear sounded after daybreak.

On Friday, the first anniversary of the war, China published a 12-point plan calling for a ceasefire and gradual de-escalation by both sides, warning against the use of nuclear weapons and saying conflict benefited no one.

Kyiv struck a receptive tone while reiterating there can be no peace without a total Russian withdrawal - a non-starter for Moscow - but

Beijing's proposals cut little ice among Ukraine's Nato military alliance supporters.

Yesterday, China said it had kept contact with all sides in the crisis including Kyiv and its position was clear.

"The core is to call for peace and promote dialogue and a political solution to the crisis," foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a news briefing in Beijing.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said yesterday the Chinese plan should be analysed in detail and account for the interests of all sides, but for now Moscow saw no signs suggesting a peaceful resolution was feasible.

Nato allies say they are trying to dissuade China from supplying lethal aid to Russia, possibly including drones. Moscow's forces are struggling to make gains in east Ukraine while

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CPJ urges govt to 'stop harassment' of Rozina

STAR REPORT

Thee Committee to Protect Journalists and rights groups have called upon the Bangladesh authorities to "stop harassing" Prothom Alo journalist Rozina Islam.

They made the call in a letter published on the CPJ website on Sunday.

The letter was also sent to Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, Health Minister Zahid Maleque, Law Minister Anisul Haq and Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, reports UNB.

The letter reads, "We, the undersigned press freedom and human rights groups, write to seek your leadership in ensuring an immediate end to the harassment of Bangladeshi journalist and human rights defender Rozina Islam."



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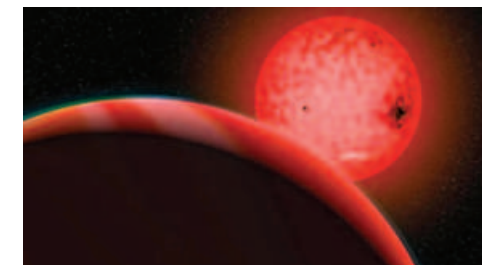
'Forbidden planet' discovered outside our solar system

CNN ONLINE

Astronomers have found an unusually large planet orbiting a small star, located about 280 light-years from Earth.

The unexpected size of the newly discovered world, called TOI 5205b, has led researchers to call it the "forbidden planet."

About the size of Jupiter, it was spotted by researchers using Nasa's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite, or TESS. Jupiter is the largest planet in our solar system.



The planet-hunting mission, launched in 2018, surveys the light of the nearest and brightest stars to spot dips in starlight, which suggests those stars have planets orbiting them. The TESS mission has found thousands of potential planets.

The exoplanet orbits a red dwarf star called TOI-5205, which is about 40 percent the size and mass of our sun, and about 5,660 degrees Fahrenheit

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AL MP GOLAP

HC orders the ACC to probe graft allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the Anti-Corruption Commission to conduct an inquiry into allegations that Awami League lawmaker Abdus Sobhan Miah Golap bought multiple homes in New York and amassed illegal wealth by abusing his power and position.

The court also asked the ACC to submit the probe report on the allegations against the Madaripur-3 MP to this court through the Supreme Court registrar general in four months.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu passed the order following a writ petition filed by SC lawyer Syed Sayedul Haque Suman seeking necessary directives on this issue.

On Sunday, Suman

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BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia leaves her Gulshan home for Evercare Hospital in the city yesterday. The former prime minister underwent health check-ups at the medical facility as per the advice of the medical board constituted for her treatment.

PHOTO: BNP

TORTURE AT IU

5 BCL leaders, activists asked to leave hall

BCL probe body finds 'some allegations' true

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Five BCL leaders and activists, including Sanjida Chowdhury, the prime accused in the torture of a female student in Kushtia's Islamic University, have been asked to leave the dormitory by tomorrow.

The authorities of the university's Deshratna Sheikh Hasina Hall yesterday took the decision after a probe body found the allegations of torture to be true.

The decision came at a meeting in the presence of hall provost Professor Shamsul Haque and other house tutors. According to the meeting minutes, the five BCL leaders and activists are directed to leave the hall by 12:00pm on March 1.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the minutes signed by Professor Shamsul Haque.

"The probe committee formed by the hall provost has found proof of the allegation filed by Pulpori Khatun [Finance and Banking Department, Session: 2021-2022] of being mentally and physically tortured in the name of ragging," said the minutes.

The four-member probe body, which was headed by Prof Dr Ahsanul Haq, a teacher of the information and communication technology department, submitted its report to the university's acting registrar on Sunday.

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