



## Port city suffers on 2nd day of inundation

### Landslide warning issued

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

The low-lying areas of the port city were inundated yesterday for the second consecutive day as heavy rain continued to fall accompanied by strong winds in the region.

"77 mm rain was recorded in the city in the last 24 hours till 3:00pm on Saturday," said Shrikanta Kumar Basak, the Chattogram Met officer, adding that the monsoon wind is likely to cause the rain to continue for the next two days.

A warning has been issued for heavy rainfall and landslide for the next 48 hours, he stressed.

The Chattogram district administration on Friday started to evacuate people from risky hill slopes to safer places in the city.

Chattogram Deputy Commissioner Abul Basar Mohammad Fakhruzzaman said people living on hill slopes in Motijharna, Batali Hill, Firoj Shah and Akbar Shah areas were being relocated.

Asked whether they were taken to any shelter centre, he said, "We asked

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Due to yet another round of intense rain on Friday night, the port city's low-lying areas remained submerged for the second day in a row yesterday. Dwellers of Chawkbazar and Badurtola in the port city were the worst affected. Many had to wade through ankle- to knee-deep water on major streets.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## UKRAINIAN GRAIN

# Global food prices rise after Russia pullout from deal: FAO

UNB, Dhaka

After the collapse of the landmark agreement to ship grain from war-torn Ukraine to other countries, global food prices rose for the first time in months, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has said.

The UN agency has issued its latest Food Price Index (FPI), which tracks the monthly international prices of cereals, vegetable oil, dairy, meat and sugar.

The FPI averaged 123.9 points in July, up 1.3 percent from June, driven by an increase in vegetable oil and rice prices.

FAO's Vegetable Oil Price Index registered a 12.1 percent jump in July after seven months of consecutive declines.

Sunflower oil prices rebounded by 15 percent due to uncertainties sparked by Russia's decision to pull out of the Black Sea Initiative on grain and fertiliser exports.

The UN brokered deal, together with a parallel accord between the UN and Russia, provided a lifeline for hundreds of millions worldwide facing hunger and spiralling food costs.

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## SPORT



## PM hands over Sheikh Kamal NSC Award

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday handed over the Sheikh Kamal National Sports Council Award-2023 to 10 sports personalities and two organisations in eight categories in recognition of their outstanding contribution to sports. She distributed the awards among the winners on the occasion of the 74th birth anniversary of Sheikh Kamal.

Ministry of Youth and Sports and NSC organised the programme at the city's Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

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# Govt gives in to transport associations' clout

## Old, rundown commercial vehicles will stay on roads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid pressure from transport associations, the government has put on hold an order that set a limit to the economic life of buses and trucks.

The original order issued on May 17 was aimed at reducing crashes and pollution through setting the economic life of buses at 20 years and trucks and lorries at 25.

The Road Transport and Highways Division on Thursday issued a circular staying the order. The fresh order was put in effect immediately, officials said.

After first order, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority asked all of its offices to dump the outdated vehicles until a guideline on scrapping was not in place.

But, following the latest order, BRTA asked its offices to ignore the previous one, sources said.

The decisions are made at a time when thousands of people get killed and suffer life-changing injuries in crashes every year.

Many road safety experts have pointed out that old and unfit vehicles are a major reason behind the crashes.

As of April this year, over 74,000 registered buses, trucks and other commercial vehicles are past their economic lifespan set by the government in May. At least 576 people were killed in 505 road accidents in July, Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity said yesterday.

Transport expert Prof Hadiuzzaman termed

the latest decision "very unfortunate", saying it would further reduce road safety.

Asked if the government backtracked from the original decision because of lobbying and pressure by transport associations, RTHD Secretary ABM Amin Ullah Nuri said that that was not the case.

The original decision came more than four years after a special committee formed by the National Road Safety Council recommended setting an usable life of commercial vehicles to reduce crashes.

On May 17, the RTHD published on its website a draft guideline for scrapping old vehicles. The draft mentioned that no vehicle owner would be able to register a new vehicle if they owned a vehicle that had exceeded the "service life" set by the government.

The draft Motor Vehicle Scrapping Guideline-2023 also said

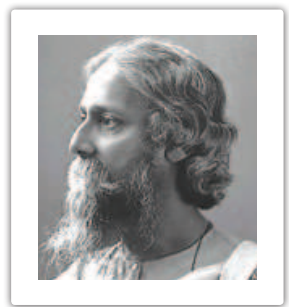
the government would outsource the vehicle scrapping job to private firms enlisted with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) which would supervise the job.

The draft guideline was never finalised.

In the months following May, different transport associations expressed discontent over the decision. The Greater Chattogram Public and Goods Transport Owners' Federation last month demanded that the authority set the economic life of commercial vehicles at 30 years.

The economic life of a vehicle should begin

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## Tagore's 82nd death anniv today

BSS, Dhaka

The 82nd death anniversary of Biswakabi Rabindranath Tagore is being observed in the country today.

Different government, non-government and socio-cultural organisations have drawn up programmes to observe the day.

According to the Gregorian calendar, Rabindranath died at the age of 80 on August 7 in 1941. But his death anniversary is observed in Bangladesh on Sraban 22 of Bengali calendar.

The youngest of 13 surviving children of Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi, Rabindranath was born on 25th of Bengali month of Baishakh 1268 (May 7, 1861) at the

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## MANIPUR ETHNIC VIOLENCE

# Father, son among 3 killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Three people, including a father and his son, were gunned down in their sleep by suspected militants in the ethnic strife-hit northeastern Indian state of Manipur, the Indian media reported yesterday citing police.

The three were gunned down and later slashed with swords at Kwakta in the Bishnupur district, police said, adding the assailants came from Churachandpur.

The three used to stay in a relief camp but had moved to their residences in Kwakta on late Thursday, PTI said quoting police.

Soon after the incident, a mob gathered at Kwakta and wanted to head towards Churachandpur but was stopped by security personnel, reports our New Delhi correspondent quoting police.

On August 4, Manipur police said a joint security force conducted an operation in the Koutruk hill range and destroyed seven illegal bunkers.

Meanwhile, a 24-hour strike called by the coordinating committee of 27 assembly constituencies in Manipur went into force yesterday in Manipur capital Imhal, crippling day-to-day life.

Business establishments remained shut in almost all localities and public transport stayed off the road. Only a few private vehicles were seen plying the streets.

Schools also remained closed due to the strike from midnight.

The months-long outbreak of violence began on May 3 after a court ordered the state to consider extending to the majority Meitei population special economic benefits and quotas in government jobs and education that up to now have been reserved for the tribal Kuki people.

Over 180 people have been killed and thousands have fled their homes, since the violence started in Manipur, a state of 3.2 million that borders Myanmar. It has also rendered 50,000 people homeless.

## POWER AND ENERGY

# Next two years crucial

## Nasrul Hamid tells discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid yesterday said the next two years would be critical for the energy and power sectors.

He said the country needs to move forward faster during this period to meet the increasing demand and ensure energy security as different projects slowed down due to the coronavirus pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war.

"We need to increase our local gas production by 600 mmcfd... We will start building a gas pipeline from Bhola to Khulna, and replace all old ones in Dhaka and Narayanganj to bring those under an automated system... Achieving these goals will be a huge challenge."

The state minister was addressing a seminar titled "Highest Utilisation of Natural Resources of Bangladesh: Philosophy of Bangabandhu". Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) organised the event at its Motijheel office in the capital, with FBCCI President Jashim Uddin in the chair.

"We have built 260km pipeline under the ocean from Moheshkhali to Patenga, which will save us about Tk

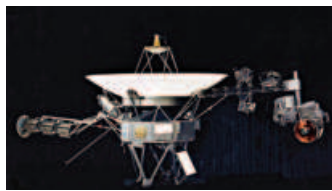
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Trucks park in the service lane of Gazipur-Tangail highway clogging the lane emergency vehicles often have to use when crashes or breakdowns block the highway. The photo was taken in Gazipur's Bhogra area recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## 'Interstellar shout' brings back Voyager 2



AFP, Washington

Nasa has succeeded in re-establishing full contact with Voyager 2 by using its highest-power transmitter to send an "interstellar shout" that righted the distant probe's antenna orientation, the space agency said.

Launched in 1977 to explore the outer planets and serve as a beacon of humanity to the wider universe, it is currently more than 12.3 billion miles (19.9 billion kilometers) from our planet -- well beyond the solar system.

A series of planned commands sent to the spaceship on July 21 mistakenly caused the antenna to point two degrees away from Earth, compromising its ability to send and receive signals and endangering its mission.