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"Are you the prime minister of India or the ambassador of Pakistan?"
MAMATA HITS OUT AT MODI ASKING WHY HE FREQUENTLY COMPARES INDIA WITH PAKISTAN PAGE 8



"Extremism can't be curbed by hanging or imprisoning extremists; extremism generates in the brain."
CTTC CHIEF MONIRUL ISLAM PAGE 3



"Police started arresting our popular candidates to keep them away from campaigns."
BNP SENIOR JOINT SECRETARY GENERAL RUHUL KABIR RIZVI ON ARREST OF A COUNCILLOR CANDIDATE IN DSSC



KILLING OF TOP IRANIAN GEN BY US

Furious Iran for 'harsh revenge'

Trump ordered the strike at Baghdad airport 'to thwart an imminent attack'



Qasem Soleimani

- US to send up to 3,500 additional troops to the Middle East
- European allies concerned over escalation of tension
- Tens of thousands rally in Tehran against US 'crimes'
- Global oil prices surge over war fears
- State Dept tells US citizens to leave Iraq immediately

AGENCIES

Iran promised vengeance after a US air strike in Baghdad yesterday killed Qasem Soleimani, Tehran's most prominent military commander and the architect of its growing influence in the Middle East. Soleimani, a 62-year-old general who headed the elite Quds Force, was regarded as the second most powerful figure in Iran after Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The overnight attack, authorised by President Donald Trump, was a dramatic escalation in a "shadow war" in the Middle East between Iran and the United States and its allies, principally Israel and Saudi Arabia.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the strike aimed to disrupt an "imminent attack" that would have endangered Americans in the Middle East. Democratic critics said the Republican president MORE ON PAGE 8 SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



A model of a vegetable garden is on display at the National Vegetable Fair at the capital's Krishibid Institution Bangladesh yesterday. The agriculture ministry has organised the three-day fair with an aim to motivate people to consume vegetables and ensure safe vegetable production. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Watson keeps Rangpur alive

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

Rangpur Rangers skipper Shane Watson's first half-century of the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League set up a 38-run win over a beleaguered Sylhet Thunder at the Sylhet International Stadium yesterday.

Rangpur's fourth win from 10 games kept the side just about alive in the race to the play-offs, but for Sylhet, their ninth loss in 10 matches continued a nightmare season.

Watson's 36-ball 68, which included six fours and five sixes, had taken Rangpur to an above-par 199 for five. For 15 overs SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Onion prices soar, veg too dearer

Consumers feel the pinch a day after commerce minister sat with businesses to keep essentials prices stable in Ramadan

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Onion prices shot up by Tk 40-50 a kg yesterday, a day after Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi in a meeting requested retailers and wholesalers to help the government prevent any price spiral ahead of Ramadan in April.

Prices of other cooking essentials, vegetables and fish also remain high, hitting consumers, especially those with limited income, hard at the beginning of the year.

Per kg of onion was sold for Tk 160 to Tk 180 in the capital's kitchen markets yesterday. Asked, wholesalers claimed the prices went up as rain affected the supply. Consumers, however, blamed the government for the price hike, saying it lacks control over the market.

"The government imported onion. Some local varieties are also available. Then why are the prices still high?" asked Nurjahan Begum, a housewife from Mirpur, at the Karwan Bazar kitchen market.

Talking to The Daily Star at Karwan Bazar, Shantinagar, Jatrabari, and Mirpur kitchen markets yesterday, many other city dwellers expressed anger at the high prices of essentials.

They also wondered why vegetables prices were out of their reach even though it was winter.

"It's winter. Vegetables are supposed to be cheap now. But there is no sign the prices will go down," said Akib Javed, who works at a private farm SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Onion (local) prices shoot up by Tk 40-50 a kg in 24 hours

Vegetable prices rise by Tk 10-20 a kg

Ginger, garlic, lentil, sugar prices much higher than last year's prices in January

UNDOCUMENTED BANGLADESHIS

Saudi to issue exit permits

They must return home within 15 days after receiving documents

JAMIL MAHMUD

Bangladeshi migrants without residence permit who are employed by Saudi Arabian companies will get an opportunity to return under an initiative taken by the Gulf country recently.

Those who have been flagged as absconding or employed as house-keeper or chauffeur are not eligible for the opportunity, officials said.

As per the initiative, a migrant, who doesn't have work permit or whose document had expired over a month ago, will have to apply to Saudi labour court for an exit visa.

The application will have to be submitted through Bangladesh mission in Riyadh, according to officials.

Similar opportunities are being given to workers by Bangladesh Consulate General's labour welfare wing in Jeddah, said an expatriates' welfare ministry official.

The workers will have to return home within 15 days of obtaining the visa, according to a notice issued by the mission.

Meanwhile, another notice addressed to Bangladeshis living in Riyadh said on Tuesday that they can avail the opportunity without having to pay any fees.

The mission issued the notices after receiving a directive from the Saudi SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

'GUNFIGHTS' WITH COPS

Two killed in Ctg, Satkhira

STAR REPORT

Two suspected criminals were killed in "gunfights" with police in Chattogram and Satkhira early yesterday.

In Chattogram city, the dead Emdad, 38, of Sher Shah area, was an accused in hawkers' leader Ripon murder case, said police.

Officer-in-Charge Priton Sarker of Bayejid Bostami Police Station said the law enforcers conducted a drive at Majhir Ghona area around 2:30am to arrest Emdad.

As soon as had the police reached there, Emdad's cohorts opened fire on the team forcing them to retaliate, said the OC, adding that the miscreants fled at one point.

After the "gunfight", police found the bullet-hit body of Emdad on the ground.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

RAPE OF WOMAN Mirpur SI sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent a police official to jail on charges of rape.

The accused is Abdur Rakib Khan Bappi, sub-inspector (SI) of Mirpur Police Station.

On Thursday night, a woman filed a case with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station alleging that SI Bappi raped her by making fake promises of marriage, said police.

Metropolitan Magistrate Sdbir Yasir Ahsan Chowdhury passed the order yesterday after Rezaul Karim, investigation officer of the case, prayed for passing an order to imprison SI Bappi until the investigation ends.

The court also fixed Tuesday for hearing a petition filed by SI Bappi's lawyer seeking his client's bail.

Jane Alam Munshi, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, said they immediately sent the victim to One-Stop Crisis Centre of Dhaka Medical SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



The Suvaddya canal is in its death throes as dumping of waste and rubbish into the canal goes on unabated. The photo was taken in Alam Market area of Dhaka's Keraniganj upazila recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Organised party gives strength to government

Hasina tells first meet of newly formed ALCWC, Advisory Council

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said a government having a well-organised party behind it could develop a country fast.

"A government can work successfully when there'll be a well-organised party behind it ... a well-organised party is a great strength for a government ... this strength works most in developing a country, and I feel that," she said.

Hasina, also president of the ruling Awami League, was addressing the first joint meeting of the newly formed AL Central Working Committee and the Advisory Council at the party's Bangabandhu Avenue central office.

In her introductory speech, Hasina said she dedicated this first meeting to late AL general secretary Syed Ashraf Islam as yesterday was his first death anniversary.

On January 3, 2019, Syed Ashraf, also the then public administration minister, died at the age of 68 while undergoing treatment at a Bangkok hospital. He had been suffering from lung cancer.

Hasina said she always attached the highest importance to her party and instructed different district, upazila, union SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

