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Strengthen ties with Muslim countries

PM directs nine envoys in Middle Eastern countries

UNB, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed the Bangladeshi envoys to strengthen the country's relations with the Muslim countries.

She has asked the diplomats to expand export to import-dependent Middle Eastern countries and attract investment to Bangladesh.

The PM was speaking at the Envoys' Conference at Shangri-la Hotel in Abu Dhabi on Monday.

"In case of investment and export, you will have to assess which country has what kind of demand. You will have to decide and proceed accordingly," she told the envoys deployed in nine Middle Eastern countries.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting. Noting that Bangladesh receives the largest share of remittance from the Middle Eastern countries, Hasina asked the diplomats to work in a way so that Bangladeshi workers do not get into trouble abroad.

She stressed the need for carrying out campaigns in villages so that overseas jobseekers do not fall victims to deception of middlemen and no



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Workers cutting a hill and loading soil onto a tractor trailer at Cumilla University. The Department of Environment says the university is implementing a project in the area to expand its central playground without environmental clearance. The photo was taken last week.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Hillocks razed at Cumilla University

DoE says authorities do not have its clearance

KHALID BIN NAZRUL

The Mainamati-Lalmaj hillocks on the campus premises of Cumilla University are at risk.

Some parts of the hillocks, as vast as a standard-size swimming pool, were unlawfully cut in the last month without even informing the Department of Environment (DoE).

According to Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995 (amended in 2000), cutting hills without having approval from the environment authorities is prohibited.

Multiple students at the university, seeking anonymity, alleged that the university authorities started cutting the hillocks around a month ago to establish a students' dormitory and manage space for the institution's first ever convocation.

Around a hundred tractors were seen carrying soils of the hillocks out of the campus, they said, adding that they fear landslides on the campus for this action.

Contacted, Dr Emran Kabir Chowdhury, vice-chancellor of Cumilla University, refuted the allegations.

He said construction of the dormitory was

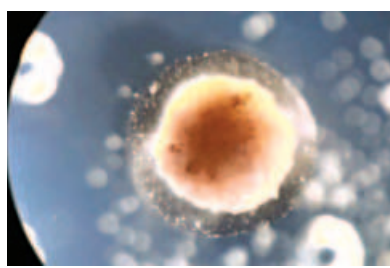
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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 15

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:36 7:00
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:40 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



'Living robots' built using frog cells

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have created what they claim are the first "living robots": entirely new life-forms created out of living cells.

A team of researchers have taken cells from frog embryos and turned them into a machine that can be programmed to work as they wish.

It is the first time that humanity

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AVALANCHES IN PAKISTANI, INDIAN KASHMIR

69 killed, many missing

Rescuers pull out 50; 53 houses destroyed

REUTERS, Islamabad

At least 59 people were killed and many more were missing after avalanches in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir over the last 24 hours, senior government officials said yesterday.

In neighbouring India, at least 10 people were killed after several avalanches hit the northern-part of Indian-administered Kashmir.

Two Pakistani officials said many villagers were still stranded by the avalanches in the Neelum Valley area following heavy rain that also triggered landslides. Many people were reported missing and feared dead as rescue efforts got under way, one of the officials said.

Rescuers had managed to extract more than 50 people from the snow and airlifted them out of the area for treatment. Authorities also scrambled to provide relief to local people with another spell of heavy snow expected on Friday.

At least 53 houses had been completely destroyed by avalanches in the Pakistani administered region known as Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), officials said.

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BNP MPs walk out of JS over DCC polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP lawmakers walked out of parliament last night following an argument with two senior Awami League MPs over holding the upcoming Dhaka city polls in a free and fair manner.

This is the first time the BNP staged such a protest in the 11th parliament.

Speaking on a point of order, BNP lawmaker Harunur Rashid said the chief election commissioner has ruled out the involvement of legislators in any local government elections.

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Unusual circular amended

Govt removes controversial clause banning taking pictures, footage inside hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid huge criticism, the government yesterday withdrew the circular banning publication of any public hospital's information without the consent from the authorities concerned.

In a new circular, issued to replace the previous one with the same reference number and date, the authorities have excluded the clause no.6, which said taking pictures and videos of patients and health services inside hospitals without permission was not allowed.

The move by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare sparked criticisms with media professionals and experts considering it as a blow to press freedom.

In the new circular, the ministry also directed the officials concerned to implement an eight-point directive, as mentioned in the previous circular and replaced the

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