



Muslim protesters hold placards as they shout slogans demanding the hanging of Hafiz Saeed, head of Pakistani militant organisation Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), in Mumbai, yesterday. The alleged mastermind of a deadly attack on India's financial capital over a decade ago has been jailed in Pakistan for nearly six years on separate terror charges, his lawyer said.

PHOTO: AFP

## No breakthrough yet on Nile dam talks: Ethiopia

AFP, Addis Ababa

Ethiopian officials yesterday said that negotiations this week in Washington failed to resolve a long-running dispute with Egypt over a massive dam on the Nile. The two-day meeting was the latest round of talks facilitated by the US Treasury Department, which stepped in after Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi reached out to US President Donald Trump, a close ally.

Ethiopia says the dam -- which will be the largest hydropower plant in Africa -- is crucial for its growing economy. But Egypt fears the project will disrupt the river that provides 90 percent of its drinking water. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visits Ethiopia next week, and a senior US official said Monday that Washington hoped the talks were "close to resolution." Fitsum Arega, Ethiopia's ambassador to the US, said on Twitter Friday that this week's talks "ended without a final agreement". Seleshi Bekele, Ethiopia's water minister, said in his own Twitter post that progress was made this week, but "more work" was required to reach a deal by the end of the month, the current deadline. Seleshi said Ethiopia's water and foreign ministries "will make national consultation... in the coming week and build consensus on results and way forward." Ethiopia's state-affiliated Fana Broadcasting Corporate reported Friday that the latest talks concerned sticking points, including the filling of the dam's reservoir, which can hold 74 billion cubic metres of water.

## Mother, 2 kids

FROM PAGE 16 Police said a brother of Munni went to the house yesterday afternoon after failing to contact the victims and Raquib for a couple of days. As he found the front door of the flat locked from outside and smelt foul odour coming out of the flat, he along with some neighbours of the victims broke the lock and saw the bodies of Munni and her daughter lying on a bed and that of her son on the floor. The family had been living in the flat since 2011. Raquib was recently transferred to the BTCL's Uttara office from Gulshan. Locals said they last saw Raquib in the locality on Tuesday. The bodies were sent to the morgue of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College for autopsies.

## Man lands in jail

FROM PAGE 16 her to his house and raped her. The victim's grandfather filed a case with the police station on Wednesday night accusing Sultan. The following day, the victim was taken to Sirajganj General Hospital for medical examinations. Police on Thursday night picked up the accused from Saydabad area of Sirajganj. He was produced before a local court yesterday and the court sent him to jail. The OC said they would produce the victim before the court tomorrow for recording her statement.

## Condemned

FROM PAGE 16 anti-liberation elements in Pabna, filed an appeal with the SC challenging his death penalty on March 18 that year. Arrested on September 20, 2012, the Jamaat leader was indicted on nine charges in December 2013.

# Yemen's Huthis drop 'tax' threat that jeopardised aid

AFP, Dubai

Yemen's Huthi rebels yesterday said they have dropped a threat to impose a tax on aid, in a significant step towards resolving a crisis that has jeopardised the world's biggest humanitarian operation. United Nations leaders and aid groups held crunch talks in Brussels on Thursday to consider scaling back or suspending the delivery of vital supplies to million of people at risk of starvation.

Humanitarian agencies have complained of a deteriorating situation in the Huthi-controlled north, with aid workers facing arrest and intimidation, as well as obstruction and bureaucracy that hampered their work. In a letter seen by AFP and confirmed by the Huthis, the head of their aid body SCMCHA wrote to the UN's undersecretary general for humanitarian affairs Mark Lowcock informing him of a decision to "suspend the 2% and not apply it for this year 2020". Abdul Mohsen al-Tawoos said the levy "was only to cover basic expenses so we can deliver all the assistance to our humanitarian partners" and that they hoped to find "alternative solutions that will enable everyone to fulfil their obligations". A UN official in Sanaa confirmed the rebels had backed away from the levy. "The cancellation of the tax is a positive development for sure," he told AFP, noting however that other issues that still need to be dealt with relate to "access and bureaucratic impediments". Yemen has been driven to the brink of famine during five years

of fighting between the Huthis and the internationally recognised government which is backed by a Saudi-led military coalition. The Brussels meeting heard that, while both sides have made trouble for humanitarian and UN agencies, the Huthi attempts to tax shipments triggered the latest crisis. "It cannot continue, the biggest lifeline on earth is at stake. There are 20 million people in need in Yemen," Jan Egeland, head of the Norwegian Refugee Council, told AFP on Thursday. "We cannot pay donated aid money to one of the parties to the conflict. So that is one of the many red lines that we are fearful of having to cross. We cannot do it," he said. The European Commission and the government of Sweden who called the Brussels meeting said Friday that the dire situation may still require aid to be scaled back. "We are deeply alarmed at the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian space all over the country. It has reached a breaking point where delivery of life-saving assistance is at risk," they said in a statement. The humanitarian groups' talks produced an agreement that if it became impossible to deliver aid without breaking their principles, responses could include "recalibrating humanitarian assistance, including a downscaling, or even interruption, of certain operations". In an apparent reference to the dropping of the tax, they said that "the recent indication of willingness to remove constraints for aid delivery on the ground needs to be followed up." The Yemen government has also sounded the alarm at reports

the United States was considering suspending much of its humanitarian assistance in response to the pressures including the rebel tax. "Scaling back on aid in governorates under Huthi control will affect citizens, not the armed Huthi militias," Abdul Raqib Fateh, a minister and the head of Yemen's relief committee, told AFP last week. Allegations of aid being diverted and obstructed are not new in Yemen, where 80 percent of the population needs some form of assistance. One battleground has been expired food, with the Huthis accusing the UN of distributing maggot-ridden rice and flour, and aid workers saying that supplies had been needlessly held for months until they spoiled. The UN World Food Programme, which feeds 12 million Yemenis a month, halted deliveries in Huthi-controlled areas for two months last year as it pushed for a biometric registration scheme to avoid the diversion of supplies meant for civilians. Another SCMCHA official Mane al-Assal on Friday hit out at the latest warnings as "inhumane and immoral" and accused aid agencies of "looking for empty excuses to suspend aid".

## Russian soldier

FROM PAGE 16 "I still don't understand what's going on," Kopytova told a television reporter at the scene. "It's very unexpected." The tanks used for the romantic manoeuvre also take part in the annual Victory Parade on Red Square, Zvezda reported. "No one has ever seen such a large-scale proposal," its reporter said.

## Pharmacist

FROM PAGE 16 legs and the neck, the OC added. However, family members alleged that Mobarak was murdered over money-related issue with the director. Mobarak of Bhola's Lalmohan upazila used to live in the capital's Kadamtali area with his wife. Talking to this newspaper, Mainul Islam, brother-in-law of the victim, said the director called Mobarak to Friendship Specialised Hospital and Digital Diagnostic Centre over phone on Thursday afternoon. "After he went there, his wife called him several times. He received the call once and hung up the call, saying that he was busy. He did not receive any more phone calls," he said, adding that they got the death news from police in the morning. He said the family would file a case in this connection. The Daily Star preferred not to mention the hospital director's name as it could not contact the person for comments. Dr MG Ferdous, managing director of Friendship Specialised Hospital and Digital Diagnostic Centre, said they heard about the incident and that the hospital authorities would help the police investigate the incident. The MD said he learnt that there was a dispute between Mobarak and another director of the hospital over money-related issue. Police were also looking into the matter. Family members demanded police check Mobarak's phone call records and CCTV footage of the hospital. Mobarak's body was sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

# Build a society

FROM PAGE 16 independence if we fail to establish a society free from exploitation. Our vow of today should be that the freedom which we have earned will be protected by shedding blood, if necessary. We shall give more blood to build up the country." INDIAN TROOPS WITHDRAWN FROM KHULNA The people of Jessore accord a heroic reception to the Fourth Mountain Division of Allied Forces on the eve of their departure from Khulna Division. Speaking on the occasion, Major General MS Barar, commander of Fourth Mountain Division, pays glowing tributes to the Mukti Bahini for their gallantry and says that the liberation of Bangladesh would have been impossible had they not shown the highest sense of dedication. KENNEDY PAYS TRIBUTE TO BANGLADESH Edward Kennedy, who leaves Dhaka today, says that he will work for diplomatic recognition of Bangladesh by America. "I return to tell my colleagues in the Senate and the people of America of the bravery with which the people of Bangladesh fought for freedom and democracy," he adds. The Senator tells newsmen at the Tejgaon Airport he will tell the American people that the people of Bangladesh have extended their hand

of friendship to them. The freedom struggle of Bangladesh, he says, has imparted one of the most important lessons of modern times to the world. Earlier, in the morning, Senator Kennedy planted a banyan sapling at the Dhaka University campus where an old banyan tree symbolising students' movement against the Yahya regime was felled by the Pakistan army in March last year. CANADA ACCORDS RECOGNITION Canada today officially recognises Bangladesh. In a message to Bangabandhu, the Canadian PM Pierre Trudeau expresses the hope that the relations between the two countries would prove harmonious and mutually advantageous. Canada will also support Bangladesh's application for Commonwealth membership, the Canadian External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp informs. 73,88,045 REFUGEES RETURN A total of 73,88,045 Bangladeshi refugees have so far been repatriated to their homeland, reports Press Trust of India. A spokesman of the Union Rehabilitation Ministry of India tells the press that 15,11,200 more refugees are awaiting repatriation. SOURCES: February 16, 1972 issues of Ittefaq, The Bangladesh Observer, Azad, Morning News, Dainik Bangla and Purbodesh.

# A man steps forward

FROM PAGE 16 Assistant Professor Kamrul Hasan of the department will coordinate the project as an advisor. Each pad will cost Tk five -- two times cheaper than the market price. Recalling the beginning of the initiative, Tausif said the idea came to him after he watched a Facebook video of these vending machines being installed in an Indian school.



Tausif Ahmed Rabby

In October, Tausif submitted his idea to LG's Ambassador Programme 2019, a competition aimed at implementing solutions for different community issues. He won Tk 4.5 lakh as one of the best ideas. The money is now being used to set up the machines, which are being imported from India. "Any student can now get pads by inserting a Tk five coin in the machines," Tausif said, adding that students will get free pads for the first two weeks. He plans to supply free coins after the launch to know which brand of sanitary napkins is preferred by the female students. The installation of the vending machines will begin on February 18 and will be installed in the faculties of BBA, Arts and Humanities, Social Science, Science, Biological Science and Law. Apart from those faculties, a machine will be installed at the Institute of Forestry and Environmental Science and another at the dormitory of Sheikh Hasina. About the taboos surrounding menstruation, Tausif said, "Period related myths are still prevalent in our society. I believe the initiative will help to bust this taboo." Appreciating the initiative, Hasina Islam, a third-year student of the

mathematics department, said girls still feel shy and embarrassed when they go to pharmacies to purchase pads. "After buying them [pads], we literally keep a lookout and hide the pads as if we are purchasing something illegal," she said. Besides, due to high prices, most of the students cannot afford to buy pads and it would be much easier to purchase at Tk five, she added. "Despite menstruation being a phenomenon unique to girls, it has always been surrounded by taboos and myths that exclude women from many aspects of socio-cultural life. In our country, the topic has been taboo till date," said Ashrafi Nitu, general secretary of CU Unit Chhatra Union. She urged the university authorities to clean the female toilets on a regular basis as hygiene is of utmost concern when a girl is on her period. Commending the initiative, Assistant Professor Saima Alam, of the communication and journalism department, said the initiative will help ensuring menstrual hygiene, adding that the authorities must also take necessary measure of proper disposal of the napkins. CU Vice-Chancellor Professor Shireen Akhter said female students would be highly benefitted from the project. "Pharmacies and shops are not available on our campus. When students need pads, they do not get it on time," she said, hoping that this much needed initiative will bring a light of hope for women all over the country. VC Shireen and Bangladesh LG's Managing Director DK Son are scheduled to inaugurate the project on February 18.

# German police officer among arrests in far-right terror swoop

AFP, Berlin

Police in Germany arrested twelve men, including one of its own officers, in a nationwide probe into an extreme-right group suspected of planning attacks on politicians, asylum-seekers and Muslims, state interior ministry sources and prosecutors said yesterday. The arrests followed raids, some by heavily-armed special units, which hit 13 locations in six German states. The four prime suspects planned to spark "a civil-war-like situation... via as yet undefined attacks on politicians, asylum seekers and people of Muslim faith," federal prosecutors said in a statement. A further eight suspects were alleged to have agreed to "financially support the group, provide it with weapons or take part in future attacks". The twelve included a police officer previously suspended over suspicions he had links to the far-right, a source at the interior ministry in North-Rhine Westphalia state told AFP, though it was not immediately clear if he was one of the prime suspects. From its founding in September 2019, the group's ultimate aim was "to shake the state and social order in Germany and in the end to overturn it," investigators believe. In order to plan their attacks, the group allegedly held regular meetings which were coordinated and organised by two of the main suspects,

named only as Werner S. and Tony E. The suspects, all of whom are German citizens, also communicated using messenger apps. Investigators launched Friday's raids to determine whether the suspects already had weapons or other supplies that could be used in an attack. The twelve men are set to appear before a court on Friday or Saturday to hear whether they will be imprisoned on remand. German authorities have turned increased attention to the country's underground extreme right scene since the murder of conservative local politician Walter Luebeck last June and an October attack on a synagogue in eastern city Halle. Suspects arrested in both cases have ties to the extreme right. According to Spiegel magazine, police discovered several weapons in Friday's raids, including one self-made "slam gun" similar to the one used in the Halle attack. Interior minister Horst Seehofer announced in December 600 new posts across the federal police and domestic security services to track far-right extremist threats, citing a growing danger. At the time, federal police said they had identified 48 people on the extreme right as "dangerous" individuals who could carry out an attack.