

## Malaysia

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South Asia Datuk Seri Samy Vellu said Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) and Bangladesh Power Development Board had declared interest to jointly develop the project and a decision on the matter was imminent.

"There will be investments from both the sides," Bernama said quoting Samy.

According to a source close to the deal, the Bangladeshi government has already engaged TNB and proceeded with a letter of intent indicating its interest to establish a joint venture for the purpose.

"Currently both the sides are deliberating to reach an understanding on the equity sharing and electricity production cost for the import-based coal-fired mega power plant," said the source, who wished to be anonymous.

Samy said, "The TNB is a company which possesses years of experience in power generation and Bangladesh needs lot of power. This is why they (Bangladeshi government) want to work together with us."

"The TNB had gone and seen the place and now they are in the midst of performing their own due diligence," he told Bernama in an interview.

Samy said given Malaysia's expertise in the power and energy sector, Dhaka had expressed their intention to sign a power cooperation pact with Malaysia.

He said the Bangladeshi prime minister had expressed her seriousness on the power cooperation deal. "From what I saw from my recent visit there (Bangladesh), discussions are going on," he said.

A Memorandum of Understanding between Kuala Lumpur and Dhaka pertaining to the power cooperation pact is expected to be signed when the Bangladeshi State Minister of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources, Muhammad Enamul Huq visits Malaysia in the near future.

## BCL expels

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It also issued notices to its two central leaders—organising secretary Ahsan Uddin Rasel and international affairs secretary Shahidul Islam—to explain as to why they should not be expelled for being involved in the clash.

At least 10 leaders and activists of the organisation were injured on Thursday night in the clash over occupying illegal stalls of the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, the month-long book fair, being held on the Bangla Academy premises in Dhaka a University, sources said.

They said former and current leaders of the pro-Awami League student body were involved in grabbing of as many as 45 illegal stalls at the fair and were renting them out to businesses. They claimed that each stall was being rented out for Tk 30,000 to 50,000.

They claimed that the leaders are doing this with the help of police. Police evicted all illegal stalls near the venue but left alone the ones controlled by the Chhatra League leaders.

Sources said Chhatra League leader Shahidul Islam with the help of one Tokai Mamun set up several stalls on the side of the street near Bangla Academy.

They said Chhatra League activists of Shaheedullah and Ekushey dormitories went to occupy those stalls but they failed and were beaten up by Shahidul and his men.

Later, Chhatra League activists of the two dorms attacked which led to the clash.

Asked about the illegal stalls and Chhatra League, Bangla Academy Deputy Director Mursid Anwar told The Daily Star the Chhatra League leaders have been warned. "The authority will take legal actions against the illegal stalls unless they quit soon," he said.

Officer-in-Charge of Shahbagh Police Station Sirajul Islam said they have no formal complaint from Bangla Academy authorities. "If the academy files a complaint, the police will take necessary steps against illegal stalls."

Talking to The Daily Star the central Chhatra League president HM Badiuzzaman Sohag claimed that he was not involved in this.

## EC seeks to curb

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filing such complaint. They may submit it during the election or even during the tenure of parliament constituted through the election.

The EC will investigate the complaint. If the allegations are proven, the candidate's election results will be cancelled. His or her seat in parliament will be declared vacant and fresh polls will be held to the vacant seat, say the EC proposals.

The EC favours this stringent provision as it has failed to take action against two lawmakers in the current parliament for either concealing facts or giving false information in their affidavits during the last parliamentary polls.

In the run-up to the last parliamentary polls, a provision was introduced asking candidates to provide eight-point information in affidavits that include their educational and police records. The EC publicises the information to help voters know about the candidates.

The proposals leave scope for political parties to prevent dissidents from "revolting" against party nominated candidates in the polls. They suggest allowing a party to initially nominate more than one candidate in each constituency and pick one on or before the day of withdrawal of candidacy.

If a nomination aspirant finally fails to get party ticket, he or she will not have

## AL to take to streets

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in Dhaka city and no programme of BNP would be successful that day.

In response to Quamrul's announcement, BNP yesterday alleged that the ruling party is trying to go for confrontation through counter political programmes to bring back the state of emergency and remain in power.

Terming the situation alarming, former adviser to a caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan yesterday told The Daily Star that if the two major political parties fail to reach a consensus, the political atmosphere of the country will grossly deteriorate.

On January 9, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at a rally in Chittagong declared the March 12 Dhaka rally to mount pressure on the government for the reinstatement of caretaker government system.

On the other hand, in November last year, AL had announced a programme till May this year to press home their demand for immediate trial of war criminals and "resist the opposition from creating chaos in the country".

"We will observe our programmes peacefully and hence are urging the opposition to refrain from the politics of violence," said Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, general secretary of AL Dhaka city unit, yesterday. He said they would continue with the programmes until their demand is met.

Meanwhile, BNP

## Over 100 missing feared trapped in PNG ferry

AFP, Port Moresby

More than 100 missing passengers were feared trapped inside an overloaded ferry when it sank off Papua New Guinea, a maritime official said yesterday as rescuers scoured the ocean for more survivors.

So far, 246 people have been plucked to safety in a joint rescue operation conducted by PNG and neighbouring Australia after the MV Rabaul Queen sank on Thursday morning.

Australia's Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) said the ship went down about nine nautical miles off the coast and the survivors reached the eastern town of Lai in the early hours of yesterday morning.

Updated reports from the five rescue vessels indicate there were approximately 246 survivors recovered on Thursday, AMSA said.

## Israeli air-strikes in Gaza leave two wounded

AFP, Gaza City, Palestinian Territories

Two Palestinians in the Gaza Strip were injured by Israeli air-strikes yesterday morning, Palestinians said, only hours a visit of the UN chief to the Hamas-controlled territory.

We will observe our programmes peacefully and hence are urging the opposition to refrain from the politics of violence," said Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, general secretary of AL Dhaka city unit, yesterday. He said they would continue with the programmes until their demand is met.

He warned that AL men responsible for the killings will be brought to book.

On Thursday, Hasina blamed the opposition leader for the deaths of the five.

## Israeli air-strikes in Gaza leave two wounded

AFP, Gaza City, Palestinian Territories

Two Palestinians in the Gaza Strip were injured by Israeli air-strikes yesterday morning, Palestinians said, only hours a visit of the UN chief to the Hamas-controlled territory.

According to a spokesman for Gaza emergency services, a three-and-a-half-year-old girl was seriously wounded by an air strike at a home in the northern Gaza Strip town Beit Lahiya, which also left a man moderately wounded.

Five other attacks in the central and southern Gaza Strip targeted tunnels and fields, as well as another house in Jablais in the northern Strip.

The Israeli military confirmed the attacks, which targeted two weapon storing facilities in the northern Gaza Strip, three terror tunnels in the southern Gaza Strip and a weapon manufacturing facility in the central Gaza Strip, a statement read.

"Direct hits were confirmed as well as secondary explosions at several targets."

Earlier reports from the five rescue vessels indicate there were approximately 246 survivors recovered on Thursday morning.

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Meanwhile, party sources said Khaleda will visit Laxmipur on February 18 to see the families of the opposition activists killed during the mass procession.

She will also address a public meeting in the district town during the visit.

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