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## TO BAN JAMAAT OR...

It is better to fight the party politically, make it redundant

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## BANGLADESH STUN CHINA

The hockey team pull off a sensational 3-2 win in New Delhi

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## COLONIAL MASSACRE

The British PM terms it shameful, stops short of public apology

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## Target Friday

Govt takes steps to thwart Jamaat's bid for anarchy

STAR REPORT

Driven up the wall by mass protests over its war crimes, Jamaat-e-Islami sets its eyes on Friday's Jumma prayers to turn the tide by tweaking religious sentiment of Muslims against the Shahbagh youths.

According to law enforcement agencies, Jamaat, under the banner of a few radical Islamist groups both in and outside the BNP-led 18-party alliance, has planned to bring out demonstrations from around four lakh mosques, including Baitul Mukarram, and madrasas all over the country.

It has set the stage for anarchy across the country tomorrow by carrying out a smear campaign in a few like-minded newspapers, and branding the organisers of the youth movement as atheists, anti-Islamic and anti-social elements for the last few days.

Jamaat also got a big shot in the arm from its main ally BNP, which denounced the Shahbagh youths for their "anti-Islamic" activities yesterday, just a few days after hailing them for their patriotism.

The government is learnt to be on top of these developments, and it has taken steps to crush any plot to destabilise the country and thwart war crimes trial. The information minister yesterday threatened to sue "some newspapers" for running motivated stories.

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Along with men, a large number of women are seen at the forefront of the demonstrations in Shahbagh in the capital Tuesday night. Some say that such extraordinary participation of women in a demonstration is first in Bangladesh.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

## WAR CRIMINALS Protectors won't be spared: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP and others, who want to protect war criminals and Jamaat-e-Islami that opposed Bangladesh's birth, would also be brought to book, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday.

Saying the trial of crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation War would be done on this soil, she sought cooperation from people of all walks of life in accomplishing the task as pledged by the ruling Awami

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## Media cautioned

Info minister warns 'some newspapers' against religious instigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday asked all the print and electronic media to refrain from running any motivated story that may exploit people's religious sentiments.

If any media outlet performs such practices, legal action will be taken against them, Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu told



Hasanul Haq Inu

newsmen at a press conference at the Press Information Department (PID).

The press meeting was organised against the backdrop of some newspaper's recent "motivated" campaign against the Shahbagh movement by publishing advertisements to "exploit people's religious sentiments."

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## Women in forefront

SUSHMITA S PREETHA

Go to the protest venue, and they are everywhere.

Not to be outdone by the generations of women before them who have been at the forefront of the anti-British movement, Liberation War and the anti-autocratic movement, the young women of today have refused to take a backseat in the country's renewed struggle to redefine itself.

Perhaps it is only fitting that the movement has, at its inspiration, the great Bangalee writer and political

activist, Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam. Her larger-than-life portrait stands tall, as if presiding over the Shahbagh movement and inspiring the young generation to carry the torch she lit in her lifetime.

From day one of the mass movement, women have made their presence felt at Shahbagh -- as organisers, planners, volunteers, cultural activists, journalists and participants. Their strong, determined voice and spirited attendance have indeed invigorated the demonstrators at Projonmo Square and else-

where in the country.

The fiery slogans of Lucky Akhtar have stirred hundreds of thousands of souls in chanting slogans in unison, day and night.

Already an icon of the protest, Lucky is a final-year student of English at Jagannath University and social welfare secretary of the leftist student group, Chhatra Union. Her active involvement has made her a target of Jamaat-Shibir and their allies, who have threatened her and her family repeatedly, opened

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## Homage to language martyrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With renewed spirit for trial of Liberation War criminals, the nation at 12:01am today paid ardent tribute to the martyrs of glorious Language Movement, who laid down their lives for the mother language in 1952.

Millions of barefooted people from all walks of life converged at shaheed minars across the country to pay homage to the martyrs.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was the first to pay homage to the language martyrs placing floral wreath ceremonially at the Central Shaheed Minar as the song "Amar Bhayer Rakte Rangano

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Crowds converge at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital early today to pay homage to the martyrs of the Language Movement. More photos on page 2.



## Ekushey -- and the struggle today

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

A new phase in history was inaugurated through the tragedy of February 21, 1952.

In one of those rare moments in time when a people rise, to demand that they be allowed to speak, read and write in the language of their ancestors, that no one tamper with that right, several young Bangalees sacrificed their lives in defence of national self-esteem.

These men, and all those other men who had put up resistance against the efforts of the Pakistani state to undermine their cultural ethos, called forth the courage to defy the state because the state had lost touch with reason.

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## Metro rail loan deal signed

Japan provides \$116m for design this fiscal year; deal for rest of the fund later

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Japan yesterday signed separate deals under which Tokyo will provide \$792.82 million to implement four projects, including the long-cherished metro rail system.

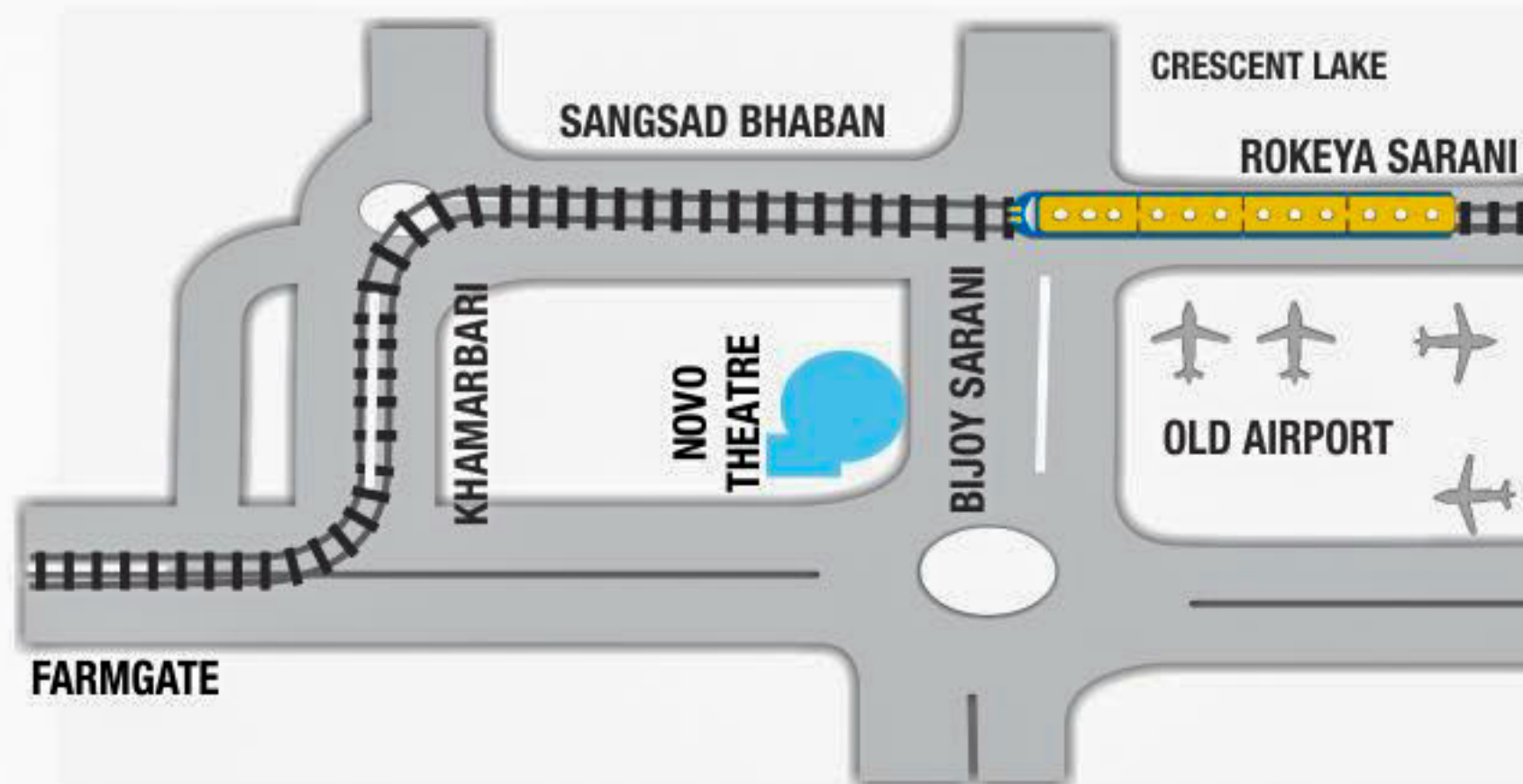
Of the amount, \$784.82 million is soft loan while the rest \$8 million is grant. With an interest rate of 0.01 percent, the loan is payable in 40 years including 10 years of grace period.

For the metro rail project, Japan is initially providing \$116.32 million.

Japan had earlier agreed to provide 85 percent of the total metro rail cost of \$2.7 billion, while the rest of the money will be borne by the government.

Yesterday's deal was for a pre-construction phase. A separate

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## Promise to the martyrs

Shahbagh youths release balloons with letters pledging to protect hard-earned independence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inbued with the spirit of the Liberation War, thousands of protesters yesterday vowed to safeguard the nation's hard-earned independence and build a prosperous Bangladesh at any cost, even by sacrificing their lives.

They made the pledge in their letters to the martyred freedom fighters from Shahbagh. In a symbolic gesture, the protesters tied the letters to balloons, which were then released in the air.

As part of the ongoing movement demanding capital punishment to all the

war criminals of 1971, letters were also released in different districts across the country.

To press home their demands, protesters will hold a grand rally at the Shahbagh intersection at 3:00pm today.

"You [freedom fighters] sacrificed your blood to liberate the country. It is now my turn to give my blood to eliminate the anti-liberation force from the country. I have come to the battlefield having bade farewell to my mother as you had done in 1971," reads a letter written by Bappy, a

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