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Venezuela accuses Washington of plotting with anti-govt protesters

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47TH BAFTA AWARDS

"Gravity" wins the best director; "12 Years a Slave" bags the best film prize

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ABDUCTED CTG GOLDSMITH FOUND IN COMILLA

Kidnappers, reason remain unknown

STAR REPORT

Mridul Kumar Chowdhury, the goldsmith abducted in Chittagong six days ago, was rescued in Comilla early yesterday.

It is still a mystery who kidnapped Mridul and why. Family members claimed a gang of six, introducing themselves as DB and Rab personnel, had picked him up at gunpoint in front of his house on Hazari Lane in the port city on February 11.

Talking to reporters around 10:30am yesterday at Devpur Police Outpost in Comilla, the jeweller said the kidnapping might have a link to a case over snatching of 80-tola gold from his driver in October last year.

Mridul filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka accusing three persons including an officer of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-2 of Dhaka.

Also yesterday, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Mizanur Rahman said the allegations of kidnapping against law enforcers are on the rise.

"If any derailed law enforcer misuses his power or the law he must face the consequences and undergo trial," he told a private TV channel.

Sub-Inspector Md Qamruzzaman, who went from Chittagong Kotwali Police Station to bring back the businessman, said Mridul was left unconscious in a paddy field at Kangshanagar Bazar in Burichang upazila around 1:00am yesterday.

Regaining consciousness, Mridul found himself on the field in the rain with his hands tied with cloths, the officer quoted the family members as saying.

He stayed under a tree for two hours until night guard Harunur Rashid noticed him and took him to his house.

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Mridul Kumar Chowdhury breaks down in tears as he is brought to a Chittagong private hospital after his rescue yesterday, six days after his abduction.

PHOTO: STAR

Take steps in a month

HC asks govt to ensure TV ad, car registration plate, billboard in Bangla

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to take necessary steps to ensure in one month the use of Bangla in all advertisements of electronic media and on vehicles' registration plates, signboards and billboards across the country.

In response to a writ petition, it also ordered the government to submit a report by April 1 on complying with the directive.

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Hurdles in business with the world goes

Steps against terror funding, money-laundering get Bangladesh out of grey list

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has come out of the grey list of Financial Action Task Force, a global watchdog on money laundering, meaning it will reduce the costs and timeline of the country's financial transactions with the rest of the world.

"We were trying to get out of the list for five years, and finally we have suc-

ceeded," Finance Minister AMA Muhiith said at a press conference in the capital yesterday.

The grey list is an index of countries identified by the FATF as having strategic deficiencies in systems in fighting money laundering and terrorist financing.

Financial transactions involving Bangladeshi businessmen and institu-

tions were complicated and cumbersome for the country's being on the list.

Foreign banks usually charge from 0.25 to 0.5 percent for facilitating payments for international trade, but the charge went upwards of 1 percent for Bangladeshi businessmen, according to Abu Hena Mohammed Raji Hasan, deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank.

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OIL, GAS EXPLORATION

Indian company gets contract

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday awarded two shallow water blocks in the Bay of Bengal to Indian state-run oil company ONGC Videsh to explore gas and oil, in efforts to overcome energy shortages.

This is the first time that an Indian company has got any sea block in Bangladesh for exploring hydrocarbon resources.

Under the deal signed yesterday, the Indian company will explore the offshore blocks -- SS-04 and SS-09 -- with an investment of \$144.8 million in partnership with Bapex and Oil India.

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A brilliantly painted Tigers fan lifts a Sri Lankan supporter up at Mirpur yesterday. Ironically, the Tigers on the field also helped out the Lankans to an improbable victory in the 1st ODI with their poor batting performance.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Tigers let Lions win

BISHWAJIT ROY

The Tigers gave a gift to Sri Lanka last night.

When Sri Lanka had slipped to 67 for eight, everybody was eagerly anticipating a humiliating defeat for the visitors. But when the two Lankan tail-enders Thisara Perera and Sachithra Senanayake, who rode their luck, fought back to put up a decent total of 180 on the board, it set the

cat amongst the pigeons.

And finally the home batters, despite a brilliant start, dug their own graves with an inexplicable display of batting. It also shattered the dream born under brilliant sunshine after the umpires announced the game a 43-over-a-side affair.

A very popular saying in cricket is that anything can happen in this game of

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Tender on for 'last' gas-fired plant

PDB seeks 'one-stage' bid for Bibiyana project to save time; bidders disagree

SHARIER KHAN

The government has floated the tender for its apparently last gas-based large power project in Bibiyana with a term that many say would either bog down the bidding process or create controversies.

For the first time the Power Development Board (PDB) is going to use its own fund to finance this 400 megawatt South Bibiyana power project, which would be built in place of the cancelled Bibiyana-1 project with local company Summit.

This might be the last gas-based power project

considering perennial gas supply shortfall. Unless a remarkable new gas reserve is found, the government would not go for any such power schemes.

While floating the tender on Sunday, the PDB asked bidders to drop their technical and financial proposals in two separate envelopes. This means the technical proposal would be opened first and if the bidder is found to be technically qualified, its financial proposal will be opened next. This is considered as a standard practice in case of such tenders.

But the PDB on Monday amended the term asking the bidders to drop both technical and

financial proposals in the same envelope. This means the PDB would open both the proposals together and would declare lowest "read out" prices of all bidders even if they are later found out to be technically disqualified.

"We have done it to save time," said PDB Director of Design and Inspection Khaled Mahmud, adding, "Usually the two-envelope tendering process claims five to six months to complete evaluation. But in one-stage two-envelope tender would help us quickly select our best bidder."

He added the pre-bid meeting would be held

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