

THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY

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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

A Weekly Publication of The Daily Star
theSTAR
 stories behind the news

WHEN ALI CAME EAST

Today's Wide Angle marks the 38th anniversary of his visit to Bangladesh

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INDICTED OVER SUBSIDY

Thai ex-PM faces criminal charges for negligence over rice subsidy scheme

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Stop violence, resolve crisis

European Parliament delegation concerned over human rights situation, freedom of speech

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Urging an immediate end to the growing violence in Bangladesh, the visiting European Parliament (EP) delegation yesterday echoed the calls from the international community and Bangladesh civil society for solving the political crisis.

The three-member delegation of the Sub-committee on Human Rights of the EP made the call in a statement, warping up its five-day visit during which the team spoke with government and opposition representatives and multiple interlocutors.

At the talks, the team paid special attention to civil and political rights against the backdrop of the "violence generated by the current political impasse".

At least 71 people have been killed in violence since January 5.

Highlighting the issue of freedom of expression, the statement said, "Peace and stability should not be restored at the expense of civil and political rights. Freedom of

RELATED STORIES ON PAGE 2

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After finishing a training session at the Gabba yesterday, Australia batsman Aaron Finch participated in a programme for budding cricketers. It will though be no child's play when the World Cup co-hosts meet Bangladesh here on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Tigers want rain to stay away

BISHWAJIT ROY from Brisbane

With a morale-boosting win against Afghanistan in the bag and brilliant sunshine at the backdrop, Bangladesh team left Canberra early yesterday morning. But after only an hour-and-forty-minute's flight to Brisbane, where they are scheduled to take on co-hosts Australia in

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PM'S THREAT OF ACTION AGAINST The Daily Star

Free media not the enemy

MAHFUZ ANAM

Threat to Bangladesh's prosperity and democracy does not come from the free and independent media. It comes from terrorism. And you can only fight terrorism by taking the people with you, and that you can only do if you allow the free media to play its role.

Hence, we must express our astonishment and complete shock at the PM's declaration on the floor of the parliament on Wednesday -- accompanied by table thumping of many MPs present -- that action will be taken against The Daily Star. Why? Because



COMMENTARY

we reproduced, on February 11, a poster of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, a banned organisation. We published a photograph of the poster with a big heading "Fanatics raise their ugly heads again". The caption said, "Taking advantage of the current political crisis in the country accompanied by wanton violence, banned extremist Islamist organisation Hizb-ut-Tahrir published and pasted posters in the capital in an attempt to foment unrest within the

armed forces. This poster was found pasted on a wall in an alleyway near the Bangla Motor intersection yesterday."

Can there be any doubt as to the purpose behind our publication? The photograph, with its condemning heading and caption, makes it clear that our purpose was to warn the public and inform the government about how taking advantage of the present violence the banned outfit is trying to raise its "ugly head" with the dangerous propaganda.

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West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is greeted by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam after the former reached Dhaka last night. Mamata is on a three-day visit to Bangladesh.

PHOTO: STAR

"This is very special"

Tweets an emotional Mamata

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

"Some journeys are more emotional. This is very special."

This is what West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had tweeted before she got on a plane for Dhaka yesterday.

And when she reached Dhaka last night, there was another tweet; a line from a Bangla song describing how famous poets saw this beautiful country.

"Bishwa Kabir Sonar Bangla, Nazrul er Bangladesh, Jibanand er Ruposhi Bangla, Ruper Je Tar Neiko Shesh", she recited.

She said she was looking forward to meeting Hasina and that she had not been to Bangladesh in 17 years.

Mamata is on a three-day visit to Dhaka which raised hope that the Teesta water sharing deal and the Land Boundary Agreement would be settled.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam and Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Pankaj Saran received Mamata at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 8:50pm.

Mamata greeted all at the airport saying "Joy Bangla" and mentioned that she felt like she was in her own home. She loves Bangladesh, the chief minister said.

Bangladesh invited Mamata to attend the International Mother Language Day programmes, which commemorate the

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Another arson victim dies

Youth killed while making bomb; 20-party threatens fresh hartal from Sunday

STAR REPORT

A labourer lost his battle for life yesterday, four days after he was burnt in an arson attack in Feni.

Hossain Mia, 50, who suffered 60 percent burns on February 15, died at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning, said Samanta Lal Sen, adviser to the unit.

Meanwhile, a youth died and another suffered injuries in an explosion while they were making a bomb in the city's Hazaribagh yesterday. In another incident, two people were burnt in a firebomb attack in Tangail.

With this, the death toll has risen to 73 in the ongoing countrywide blockade enforced by the BNP-led alliance since January 6. Most of the deceased were victims of mindless arson attacks.

In Dhaka, the youth, who died in an explosion while making a bomb, was identified as Jasim Uddin, 28, a resident of Kamrangirchar.

Police said he along with his friend Raju Hossain, a Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal leader, were making crude bombs at Raju's house in Hazaribagh around 4:30pm. Raju was taken to the DMCH.

Jasim died on the way to the hospital, hospital sources said.

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Govt to tackle terror strictly

Anti-terrorism tribunal in all districts by this month to deal with cases linked to violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will form separate "anti-terrorism special tribunals" in all districts within 10 days to deal with cases filed against acts of violence and terrorism committed during hartals and blockade, Law Minister Anisul Huq said yesterday.

The tribunals will be formed under the Anti Terrorism Act 2009, under which the highest punishment is death penalty, and they will deal with cases which have been filed only under this act, said the minister.

The minister said this while talking to The Daily Star after holding a meeting with a 12-member delegation of the European Parliament led by Christian Dan Preda, vice-president of its human rights sub-committee, at his office yesterday afternoon.

He said an additional district and session judge would hold the trial of such cases on priority basis until the tribunals were established.

"I have already sent a letter to all the district judges across the country to assign an additional district and session judge to deal with the cases relating to violence and terrorism until the anti-terrorism special tribunals are established," the law minister said.

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TOP QUOTE

"I saw in The Daily Star the declaration of [State] Minister Shahriar Alam saying I quote 'EU team not concerned about human rights situation' and my declaration is very simple: We are here because we are very concerned about human rights situation."

VICE-CHAIR OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
CHRISTIAN DAN PREDa