

# US intel chief

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The claims of responsibility from the Islamic State group for 11 high-profile attacks on foreigners and religious minorities, and claims from the Ansarullah Bangla Team and al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) for killing at least 11 progressive writers and bloggers in Bangladesh since 2013, according to the AP.  
Prime Minister's Political Adviser HT Imam, however, has dismissed the observation as "fabricated".  
"The Bangladesh prime minister is in no way suppressing the oppositions," he told the BBC Bangla Service yesterday.  
"If she [Hasina] had done so, the BNP or other opposition parties would not have been able to hold public rallies, nor could they have participated in elections."  
Imam also described the US intelligence chief's statement as unexpected and biased.

# Party forms

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BNP Nayapaltan head office.  
The two-and-a-half-hour meeting, presided over by BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, started around 9:00pm at her Gulshan office.  
The meeting decided to hold the BNP Council at Bashundhara International Convention Centre on March 19.  
"We have already received permission for three venues including Suhrawardy Udyan and its adjoining Institute of Engineers. But without permission of the police we cannot use the venues.  
Besides, if police gives permission for one place, it will create problem for us; for that reason we decided to hold the council at Bashundhara International Convention Centre," said a BNP standing committee member who was present at the meeting.  
Problems with the venue could delay the holding of the council, sources said.

# Indian police

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guns, in trouble-hit areas such as disputed Kashmir has resulted in serious injuries to protesters and bystanders.  
Correspondents say there are concerns marbles and other objects fired from police catapults could also badly injure civilians.

# Biopsy samples

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The American microbiologist Prof W Martin Cast has been researching on the syndrome for over 20 years, and he has asked for samples, Sen added.  
"We strongly suspect that Abdul is suffering from epidermodysplasia verruciformis or tree man syndrome, but we will not conduct any surgeries until we hear Cast's opinion," Sen said.  
The aim of the surgeries would be to regain the use of his hands and some fingers but chances of a complete cure are low, he added.

# Bangladesh,

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services.  
Biman Kumar Saha, additional secretary to the ministry of health and family welfare, will lead the Bangladesh delegation.  
The meeting comes as preparatory to the proposed 4th meeting of the Bangladesh-Thailand Joint Trade Committee to be held in Dhaka in the second half of this year.  
The delegation is also scheduled to visit hospitals and pharmaceutical industries in Dhaka and Tongi to inspect the services and production process.

# HC enquires

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city areas.  
It fixed February 19 for further order on this issue, Deputy Attorney General Motaher Hossain Sazu told The Daily Star.  
The HC bench of Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Md Iqbal Kabir came up with the order and the rule following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Syed Mohidul Kabir.

# Iraq enters last IS stronghold in Ramadi

AL JAZEERA ONLINE  
Iraqi security forces have entered the last remaining IS stronghold in the east of the central city of Ramadi, security sources said.  
Security forces are now in the centre of Hussaibah village and moving to other parts of the strategic settlement, which links a major army base to other villages recently captured from the armed group, security sources told Al Jazeera on Tuesday.  
The Iraqi flag was raised in the centre of the village on Tuesday, the sources added.  
IS fighters still have pockets of fighters to the north of the city and Iraqi officials are wary that they will continue to launch deadly counter attacks.

# Bangladesh to import 120 railway coaches from India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi  
Bangladesh Railway is going to import 120 modern carriages from India at an estimated cost of over Tk 425 crore, with the first consignment of 40 to arrive in Bangladesh in March.  
This is the biggest-ever consignment of Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches to be exported by the railways, said a senior official of Indian railway ministry.  
The export order of 120 LHB coaches include 17 air conditioned first class, 17 AC chair cars, 34 non-AC chair cars with pantry, 33 non-AC chair cars with prayer room and 19 power car coaches.  
The manufacturing of stainless steel LHB broad gauge coaches for Bangladesh Railway is in progress at the Rail Coach Factory (RCF) in Kapurthala in northern Indian state of Punjab.  
"We will be sending the first consignment of 40 coaches by the end of next month and the remaining coaches will be delivered by March 2017," said the official.  
Export contracts are executed through Indian RITES Ltd, a multi-disciplinary consultancy organisation in the fields of transport, infrastructure and related technologies.  
The contract agreement between RITES Ltd and Bangladesh Railway was executed on January 21, 2015, and subsequently between RITES Ltd and RCF on September 30, 2015 for supply of these coaches.  
A high-level delegation from the Bangladesh Railway, comprising Feroz Salah Uddin, secretary of Bangladesh railways ministry, and other top RCF officials visited Kapurthala factory last month for inspection of the coaches prior to the dispatch.

# Surviving, not thriving

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gold medals. We are actually in a better state financially. I don't know what is going on. I can't say anything about any report until I talk to my parents."  
She admitted however that her family was in some strife not so long ago in 2008, when she was a student of the Bangladesh Kriya Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP). Her father fell sick and it almost brought a stop to her education, but help from village residents had averted that eventuality. Selling her medals, however, never occurred to her.  
"When I was winning a lot of medals my mother once jokingly said 'what will you do with all these medals, why not sell them?', but I never thought of selling my medals," Shila said.  
"We have our own farm land now and we also work on others' land, so we are doing better," said Shila. She also made a house for her father in their homestead in Abhaynagar in Jessore with her income from winning at swimming events.  
Having completed her graduation and post-graduation in Communication and Journalism from Chittagong University, she held a temporary job as part of the Bangladesh Navy's quota for athletes, where she is soon to become a permanent employee. The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) has promised Tk 5 lakh for every gold medal won during the SA Games, while the Bangladesh Amateur Athletic Federation (BAAF) announced a Tk 3 lakh reward.  
Despite this picture of relative financial stability, Shila was of the opinion that the Tk 5 lakh reward was not sufficient in the current economic climate, and raised concerns about the result-oriented nature. "Sri Lanka and India pay their athletes more. Also, it is not often that someone from Bangladesh wins gold at the SA Games, so the rewards should be more. And what of those who do not win gold?"  
"Apart from the cash award it will be good if corporate houses sponsor the gold-medal winner like they sponsor shooters," Shila opined.  
Shila's insistence on financial security probably has more to do with her and her family being better off than they were before, judging by her discontent about the current state of affairs. The call for sponsors has as much to do with immediate financial benefits as it does with the longer term effects of promoting a lesser known sport, which is increased popularity and therefore better rewards. Yesterday's news brings into stark relief the plight of a majority of Bangladesh's athletes.  
That an athlete of Shila's stature, undoubtedly an elite in the country's sports landscape, has to work on farms for subsistence tells its own story.

# Punish culpable BCL men

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yesterday refused to let it go as an ordinary death. They, along with others on social media, termed it a "murder" and a result of a trend of "harassment at guestrooms".  
Samrajjobad Birodhi Chhatra Oikky, at a rally in front of the proctor's office, demanded that the BCL leaders and DU administration take responsibility for the "murder".  
Carrying a banner reading, "Stop student's harassments at guestrooms and ensure their security", Progotishil Chhatra Jote later brought out a procession along with unaffiliated students and organised a rally demanding a proper investigation and trial of the accused.  
The alliance leaders alleged that BCL leaders force first year students against their will to attend political programmes, irrespective of what they were going through physically or mentally.  
Hafijur was forced to do the same despite being ill and later died from pneumonia, they claimed.  
"Hafijur's death was in no way a natural one...it was clearly a murder," said Saifuzzaman Sakon, president of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front.  
Bangladesh Chhatra Union President Lucky Akter said, "The student wing of the ruling party compels students to attend their political programmes and threaten to evict them from the dormitory otherwise. Hafijur was a victim of such a brutality."

# Villagers kill leopard

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At one stage, the leopard swooped on the mayor when he went near the room to get a better view of the animal, leaving him critically injured.  
He lost a chunk of flesh from his right cheek in the attack. Two others -- Nader, 50, and Azizul, 45, -- were injured while trying to rescue the mayor.  
Villagers then caught the leopard and beat it to death with sticks. Later, they hung the carcass on a railing of the Upazila Parishad office.  
Anawar Hossain, civil surgeon of Sherpur Upazila Health Complex, told this correspondent that the mayor was badly injured in the right cheek, head and an ear. Initially, he was taken to Sherpur Sadar Hospital but was shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for better treatment later.  
He hoped that the mayor would recover soon.

# Ruling party

FROM PAGE 1  
Khaleda Zia, its founder Ziaur Rahman and their elder son Tarique Rahman.  
Deputy Speaker Fazle Rabbi Mia, who was presiding over the session, gave her two more minutes to complete the speech.

# DIP sits today to decide on IRIS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
The Department of Immigration and Passport (DIP) sits today with IRIS Corporation Berhad officials to decide what to do with the Malaysian company for failing to return Tk 50 crore of the government it was holding.  
The DIP on January 4 issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the outsourcing company to return Bangladesh the money it had collected as passport fees and kept for more than a year.  
More than one month had gone by and IRIS did not even bother to respond to the deadline.  
"IRIS took about 2,00,000 lakh printed passports from the DIP until December. According to our calculations, they had collected at least Tk 50 to 60 crore. But they had paid only some money," a DIP official told The Daily Star preferring not to be named.  
As per contracts with the DIP, IRIS had collected passport fees from the Bangladeshi expatriates in Saudi Arabia and the UAE to give them machine readable passports.  
The money was supposed to be deposited in the accounts of Bangladesh missions in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.  
IRIS has not deposited the money to the missions' accounts regularly.  
Meanwhile, its contracts with the DIP had ended last month.  
When asked as to why IRIS ignored the ultimatum, DIP DG Brig Gen Masud Rezwan said the company was keeping touch with him regularly.  
"They [IRIS] have at least a Tk-100 crore business with us. Besides, we are not paying their fees. So, they must pay our money," he told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that IRIS would reveal an "accurate calculation" of the money they have in today's meeting.  
The amount IRIS was not paying would be Tk 20 crore tops, he added.  
Asked what the DIP would do to realise the money if the Malaysian company failed to pay again, Brig Gen Masud Rezwan declined to make any comment.

# 16 personalities

FROM PAGE 16  
and Dr Jashimuddin Ahmed will receive the award for their important contributions to the Language Movement.  
Begum Jahanara Ahmed has been named for the award in the field of arts (television and film). Pandit Amaresh Roy Chowdhury in arts (classical music), Begum Shaheen Samad in arts (music), Amanul Haque in arts (dance), and Kazi Anwar Hossain (posthumous) in arts (painting).  
Mafidul Haque has been awarded for his role in the Liberation War and Toab Khan in journalism.  
Prof Dr ABM Abdullah and Mongseng Ching Monsin get the award in the field of research.  
Joityprakash Dutt, Prof Dr Hayat Mahmud and Habibullah Siraji are the recipients of the award for their valuable contributions to language and literature.

# Biographies

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"They were two great leaders of two different times. I hope their philosophies will enlighten me."  
One of the books, "Indira: The Life of Indira Nehru Gandhi", is by acclaimed biographer Katherine Frank who drew on unpublished sources and over 100 interviews to create a rich, balanced portrait.  
The other is "Long Walk To Freedom", a moving and exhilarating autobiography of Nelson, an international hero dedicating his life to fight racial oppression in South Africa.  
Another autobiography "A Doctor in the House: The Memoirs of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad" depicts how the former prime minister in his 22 years in office transformed Malaysia from an agricultural backwater into an industrial powerhouse.  
"He was a great leader. I hope I will get some inspiration from his autobiography," said Sajib, a student of Dhaka University who bought the book.  
Anyodhara also published a translated version of "The Diaries of Che Guevara" which contains his daily accounts. Razia said they sell over 20 pieces of biographies each day.  
Meanwhile, 105 new books were published at the fair. In the last 10 days, 982 books were published.

# President directs

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according to the polls schedule.  
The municipalities are Haragach of Rangpur, Kaliganj of Jhenaidah, Jhalakathi sadar, Bhanga of Faridpur, Nangolkot of Comilla, Brahmanbaria sadar, Kabirhat of Noakhali, Sonagazi of Feni, Chhakaria, and Moheshkhal of Cox's Bazar.

# Trump, Sanders win

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sizable share of American voters upset at US economic conditions and willing to send a shockwave to Washington in the Nov 8 presidential election.  
Trump has said he would easily beat Democratic rival Hillary Clinton in a presidential contest for the White House. The businessman with no political experience convincingly won the New Hampshire primary and has now laid out his strategy to go all the way, reports the BBC.  
New Hampshire's verdict sets up a tough fight for Republicans in South Carolina's Feb 20 primary and for Democrats there on Feb 27. Some of the most monumental campaign battles in elections past have been fought in the state that holds the first primary election of the American South.  
Ohio Governor John Kasich won a spirited fight for second in the Republican field in New Hampshire, with US Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, former Florida Governor Jeb Bush and US Senator Marco Rubio of Florida fighting for third place. All four are now headed to South Carolina.  
For Trump, New Hampshire showed he has staying power and can take a punch after losing on Feb 1 to Cruz in the first nominating contest, the Iowa caucuses. His win showed pundits were wrong to think he would quickly self-destruct based on his penchant for insults and imprecise plans for the presidency.  
Democrat Hillary Clinton, the former US secretary of state and former US senator, now looks wounded, trailing Sanders by 60 percent to 39 percent based on 86 percent of the returns.  
The wife of former President Bill Clinton, Clinton barely won Iowa and now has been trounced in New Hampshire, where young voters liked Sanders' populist proposals to break up big banks and have the government pay for free college tuition.  
"People have every right to be angry but they're also hungry, they're hungry for solutions," Clinton, 68, said after congratulating the 74-year-old Sanders. "I will work harder than anyone to actually make the changes that make your lives better."  
Clinton was headed to New York, headquarters for her campaign, to regroup with top aides and prepare for a Democratic debate today. Her campaign has denied reports it is considering a shakeup but acknowledged it would be natural to add members to their team as the campaign progresses.  
Sanders said his victory showed "we have sent the message that will echo from Wall Street to Washington, from Maine to California, and that is that the government of our great country belongs to all of the people and not just a handful of wealthy campaign contributors."  
Some 73 percent of voters say they think the United States is on the wrong track and these disaffected people make up a majority of the support bases for Trump and Sanders, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll.  
They are worried about the economy and distrust establishment politicians they perceive as being part of the problem.

# Two factory inspectors

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the incident as their task was only to inspect the factories, not the entire building.  
Moreover, the two government officials had reached the last stage of their service and showed respect to the court by voluntarily surrendering before it, so they should be granted bail, argued Baharul.  
Prosecutor Mannan said the same court had earlier included three government officials, including Shahidul and Yusuf, in the list of the accused even though the labour ministry had not given the required permission.  
Also, they might hamper the trial proceedings if they got bail, he said while opposing the bail prayer.  
The court, however, ruled in favour of the defence and granted them bail, which Additional Public Prosecutor Anwarul Kabir Babul thinks might stir a negative reaction among the people.  
"Especially so since two more government officials accused of the same offences were denied bail earlier," he told The Daily Star.  
In one of the worst industrial disasters of the century, at least 1,136 people died when Rana Plaza, housing mostly garment factories, collapsed in Savar's Ashulia on April 24, 2013.  
Apart from the murder case, another case was filed against Sohel Rana, owner of Rana Plaza, for violating the National Building Code and using substandard materials in constructing the building.  
On December 21, 2015, a Dhaka court took cognisance of the charge sheet in the murder case.

# Padma bridge conspirators

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CHT peace accord, the PM said her government was sincerely working to fully implement the CHT treaty soon.  
She said the CHT treaty "is divided into four chapters and has 72 clauses".  
Of them, 48 clauses were fully implemented, 15 partially implemented and nine were under implementation, she informed parliament.  
Hasina, also leader of the House, said after returning to power in 2009, the government started working towards implementing the clauses and taking various development programmes in the region.  
About withdrawal of military camps from the CHT, she said, "119 camps out of 232 have been withdrawn so far and the rest will be withdrawn in phases."  
As per the treaty, she said, there was a clause to move all temporary camps to six garrisons -- Dighinala, Khagrachhari, Rangamati, Bandarban, Ruma and Alikadam.  
"Infrastructure development is going on to that end," the PM said.  
She mentioned that the acquisition process of 997 acres of land for Ruma garrison "is underway".  
As for the land dispute in the CHT, she said five land commissions had been formed until 1999 and a law titled "Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act-2001" was enacted.  
She also said a survey would be conducted and the land commission would be able to play effective role in protecting the land of people in the area.  
**EARTHQUAKE VOLUNTEERS**  
In a scripted reply, the PM informed the House that the government would create 60,000 volunteers to carry out rescue operations in the event of an earthquake.  
She said 30,000 of them "have already been given training".  
About her government's plan to tackle post-earthquake situations, Hasina said a process was underway to purchase different equipment including rescue vehicle pick-up vans, rechargeable searchlights, foldable stretchers, body bags, face/gas masks and rescue equipment for volunteers worth Tk 158 crore.

# Young Tigers'

FROM PAGE 1  
may be a long way to go before any of these cricketers represent the national team. However, for a country that has witnessed its national team suffer losses for the longest of periods, a win today would mark a small step in a long-cherished dream: to be one of the top cricketing nations in the world.  
But before all that can happen, Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Co will have to battle a resilient West Indian line-up at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today. This may be the same West Indies team that the junior Tigers beat convincingly prior to the start of the Under-19 World Cup, but a lot has changed since then.  
The boys from the Caribbean have seemingly found their vigour throughout the course of the competition. They dominated a spin-heavy Pakistan in the quarterfinal and stunned them with their ferocious pacers. They have with them one of the finest pacers of the tournament, Alzarri Joseph. With the Mirpur wicket expected to do quite a bit with the new ball, Joseph's pace will be key in the semifinal.  
Along with his pace bowling partner Chemar Keron Holder, the duo can be quite troublesome, as witnessed during the Pakistan game.  
Having played three games against them, Bangladesh will be aware of West Indies' strengths. They had a few nervous moments against Nepal in their last game, but were able to climb out of the hole that they had created and that's an experience that may help them in today's game as well.  
While the West Indies will depend on pace, the hosts will look to strangle the visitors with their spin options.  
There have been several players who have raised their hands in the time of need for the hosts. Nazmul Hossain Shanto has been their most consistent batsman, Mehedi has dealt with pressure well both with the bat and ball and then there's the wicketkeeper-batsman Zakir Hasan who loves to stay on the wicket and cuts the ball like his idol, Mominul Haque.  
Bangladesh have beaten the West Indies 12 times at this level, while the West Indians have won five. However, when the two teams take the field today, all those statistics will be forgotten, because all that matters is the team that best handles the pressure in the most popular cricket stadium in the country.

# Tawfiq Aziz

FROM PAGE 5  
A permanent member of Jatiya Press Club, he was elected president of Bangladesh Sports Writers' Association six times and was also a national committee member of Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA).  
He was a founder member and president of the country's first group theatre "Drama Circle" and a president of Rotary Club of Dhaka North-West.