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Pressure on free speech increased

Says UK human rights report, 2015 on Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Britain yesterday said there was no improvement in the overall human rights situation in Bangladesh last year.

In its annual human rights report for 2015, the UK expressed dismay at the rise of attacks on secularist writers and religious minorities, and increased pressure on freedom of speech.

"A rise in the number of extremist attacks against secularist writers and religious minorities during 2015 increased pressure on free speech, while the draft Foreign Donations Act risks becoming a missed opportunity to improve the

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RELATED STORY ON PAGE 17

LOW QUALITY GRAIN Govt rejects 1 lakh tonnes of wheat

REAZ AHMAD

The government has rejected two shipments of Russian wheat, weighing 1,00,000 tonnes in total, on the grounds of quality issues.

This prompted Moscow to send a team to Dhaka to discuss the matter, officials concerned told The Daily Star.

The three-member expert team, led by Andrey Yukob, deputy head of the International Relations Department of the Russia's Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance, reached Dhaka yesterday and started work straight away.

They would visit Chittagong, discuss the tests carried out on the grains and collect samples from one of the two ships which is anchored near Kutubdia.

Officials of food ministry and food directorate in Dhaka said Dubai-based Phoenix Commodities Ltd brought in 50,000 tonnes of Russian wheat to sell to Bangladesh for \$233.96 per tonne.

Bangladesh accepts wheat with a maximum of .7 percent foreign materials (non-grain particles) but the shipment had 1.08 percent of foreign materials. "We rejected the

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British national with Bangladeshi origin Nadiya Hussain watches as Queen Elizabeth cuts the cake Nadiya made for her on her 90th birthday yesterday.

PHOTO: DAILY MAIL

UK Queen's 90th birthday celebrated with Nadiya's cake

AGENCIES

Queen Elizabeth II celebrates her 90th birthday yesterday with a family gathering and a cake baked by a Bangladeshi-born reality television star.

The longest-serving British Monarch greeted thousands of well-wishers from across Britain and beyond as she celebrated her the special occasion, demonstrating the world's oldest monarch's intent to keep doing the job she has performed for more than six decades.

The sovereign, who has been on the throne since 1953, emerged from Windsor Castle dressed in a lime green outfit and matching hat to accept presents and flowers from hundreds

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A Great Hornbill in flight.

PHOTO: SAYAM U CHOWDHURY



Our last Great Hornbills

SAYAM U CHOWDHURY

If you have been to Bandarban town, you have probably seen a sculpture of a massive

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20 rogue drug companies to lose licences

STAFF CORRESPONDENTS

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare yesterday decided to revoke licences of 20 drug companies for failing to manufacture quality medicines.

The decision was made based on recommendations of an expert committee.

Prof ABM Faruque who led the experts presented a report on manufacturing practices of 84 drug makers at a meeting on Wednesday of the parliamentary standing committee on the ministry. The report was submitted earlier in February.

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Obama reassures Gulf allies on Iran

REUTERS, Riyadh

The United States will deter and confront aggression against Gulf Arab monarchies, who continue to have concerns about threats from Iran, President Barack Obama said yesterday after meeting their leaders to iron out strains in their alliance.

Obama came to Saudi Arabia hoping to allay Gulf states' fears over Iranian influence and encourage them to douse sectarian tensions in an effort to confront the threat posed by jihadist militants like Islamic State.

"I reaffirmed the policy of the United States to use all elements of our power to secure our core interests in the Gulf region and to deter and confront external aggression against our allies and our partners," he said in Riyadh after

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PRAYER TIMING
APRIL 22

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-25 12-30 4-45 6-27 8-00
JAMAAT 5-00 1-15 5-00 6-31 8-30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

EARLY-SUMMER HEAT WAVE More than 100 die in India

REUTERS, Bhubaneswar

More than 100 people are feared dead in India in an early-summer heat wave which forced schools to close and halted outdoor work like construction, government officials said yesterday.

Neighboring Pakistan, which suffered its hottest spell in decades last year, plans to open 500 response centers to provide shelter and cold water to people if a heat-wave warning is issued, a government official said. No heat deaths have yet been reported.

India's hottest months are May and June, but some states have already registered temperatures in excess of 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit), forcing authorities to take emergency steps.

In the southern Indian state of Telangana, 45 people have died from heat exposure, and another 17 in Andhra

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The Daily Star

WHAT'S EID WITHOUT COLOURS?



It may seem far off, but Eid is coming sooner than you expected. How you look plays an integral role in defining and celebrating Eid, and to make sure you do not miss out on making the most of this celebratory season, look out for your copy of Star Eid Fashion Magazine - the most comprehensive guide to all things fashionable. Also, do not miss this opportunity to show how your brand celebrates the occasion in style by showcasing your products in the

Star EID FASHION MAGAZINE

Participants nationwide are requested to send their selected outfits and accessories for the album.

Attention: Designers & Boutiques

Criteria for Participation:

1. Materials used should be produced locally.
2. All submissions must be accompanied by name of designer, address, contact number, price and a short description of the product (either in English or Bangla).
3. Designs should be original and suitable for the weather conditions.
4. The attires and accessories sent for the album will be returned.
5. Entry fee per submission is Tk. 500 (minimum 6 entries for each participating house)

Last date of submission: 19 May, 2016

For submission of products and advertisement, please contact
Syed Ahmed Chowdhury (01711 623 905),
Kamal Hossain (01716 232 534).

