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FIFA unanimously approves expansion to 48 teams from 2026 World Cup
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Aamir Khan's latest release becomes the highest-grossing film of Bollywood
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New Thai king orders amendment to the country's draft constitution
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Fight terror, build nation

Prime minister tells rally marking the Homecoming Day of Bangabandhu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday vowed to build a Bangladesh where there would be no room for militancy and terrorism, and people irrespective of caste and creed would practise their religions peacefully.

She called upon all, including imams, teachers and parents, to put up strong resistance against militancy and terrorism.

Hasina, also the ruling Awami League president, was addressing a mammoth rally at the historic Suhrawardy Udyan, marking the Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

On January 10, 1972, Bangabandhu returned to an independent Bangladesh via London and New Delhi after 290 days in captivity in Pakistan jail.

Hundreds of thousands of activists and leaders of the party and its front and like-minded organisations joined the rally. They started to gather at the venue since morning although the programme started at 2:30pm.

The participants, who came from different parts of Dhaka and its adjacent districts, swarmed the Suhrawardy Udyan after parading through different city streets in small processions.

Security was tight in and around the venue.

"We will turn Bangladesh into a country free of hunger and poverty as dreamt by Bangabandhu. It's our pledge on

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a huge public rally at the city's Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday marking the historic Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Govt to ask Myanmar to take back Rohingyas

Suu Kyi's envoy in Dhaka; talks today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will ask Myanmar today to immediately take back its Rohingya population living in Bangladesh and to ensure a sustainable solution to the problem facing the Muslim minority in the Buddhist-majority country's Rakhine state.

Dhaka's "deep concern" over the issue would be conveyed to U Kyaw Tin, the visiting special envoy of Aung San Suu Kyi and also Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, diplomatic and secretariat sources said.

The envoy, who is leading a diplomatic delegation, reached Dhaka last evening to discuss various bilateral issues with special focus on the Rohingya crisis.

Kyaw Tin is expected to meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at 6:00pm at the Gono Bhaban.

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Withdraw error-ridden textbooks

85 noted citizens ask government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eighty-five eminent citizens of the country have strongly condemned the anomalies in this year's school textbooks and demanded withdrawal of the "error-ridden textbooks" immediately.

In a joint statement issued yesterday, they urged the authorities concerned to stop imparting lessons through these textbooks to protect the young learners from becoming "communal and conservative".

The citizens also demanded an investigation into the matter and punishment to the people responsible.

The demands came hard
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3 YEARS OF AL GOVT: INFRASTRUCTURE

Delay, cost rise still major concern

Some of the projects completed, improved road, rail links; things may get much better as mega projects like Padma Bridge likely to be finished in next 2 years

M ABUL KALAM AZAD and HASAN JAHD TUSHER

The Awami League government had taken up a good number of infrastructure development projects since assuming office eight years ago but only a handful of those could be implemented.

In the first three years of its current tenure, the government inaugurated a few of these projects which improved road and rail communications to some extent.

Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga dual carriageway expressway, Dhaka-Sylhet, Joydevpur-Elena, and Elena-Rangpur dual carriageways are a few of the major road expansion projects the government took up since the AL returned to power in 2014.

The Dhaka-Bhanga and Joydevpur-Elena projects seem to have good pace but ground work for the other two is yet to begin.

However, things could become a lot better in the last two years of this government's term as some major projects, like the Padma Bridge, are expected to be completed.

The perennial problem remains, failure to implement projects in time and within budget. Hardly any major project was completed without time extensions or increased cost.

Inefficiency, corruption, infighting of bureaucrats, and lack of funds were primarily blamed for the delays and cost escalations.

The government's policy of prioritising a few mega projects and injecting money for
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Tigers look to show character on green top

First Test against New Zealand from tomorrow

AL-AMIN from Wellington

When Bangladesh Test captain Mushfiqur Rahim was responding to what was the last question of a long press briefing from a New Zealand journalist at the Basin Reserve on Tuesday, he briefly got up from his chair to have a look at the wicket through the glass window.

"Where is the wicket? I can't see it; it's all green," the Bangladesh captain said with a smile on his face. Ross Taylor, the New Zealand batsman who attended the briefing at the same place before Mushfiqur, looked through the window to have a clue of the green top as well.
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES

Honorarium, benefits for most reps doubled

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The monthly honorarium and other benefits for over 65,000 elected representatives of the local government bodies have almost been doubled.

The pay hike took retrospective effect from July 1 last year, said a government circular issued yesterday.

The elected representatives include mayors and councillors of the city corporations and municipalities, chairmen and members of the Zila Parishads, chairmen and vice-chairmen of the Upazila Parishads and chairmen and members of the Union Parishads.

Most of them belong to the ruling Awami League.

The representatives would be paid from the revenue earned by their offices, Abdul Malek, secretary of the Local Government Division, said, adding that their honorarium was raised after four years.
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"The hike was the demand of the time," he told The Daily Star.

Talking to this newspaper, experts have hailed the decision to increase the honorarium and other benefits for the elected representatives.

They, however, stressed the need for monitoring the dedication and activities of the representatives to stop the misuse of money.

Local government expert Tofail Ahmed said hiking the honorarium is a good initiative as their previous honorarium was not enough as compared to their contribution to the society.

"But there are many elected representatives who mainly aim to do business. Serving people is their second priority," he said, adding that the government should make a policy to ensure that they stay at their office for a particular period of time every day to serve the public.

AL may not want law on EC formation

In talks with the president, 22 parties earlier called for legislation; Sheikh Hasina to lead her party delegation to Bangabhaban today

RASHIDUL HASAN

Although all the 22 political parties during their talks with President Abdul Hamid proposed enacting a law on formation of the Election Commission, the ruling Awami League might not agree to the proposal.

Instead, it might suggest that the president form a search committee to constitute the next EC, said AL sources.

The president is scheduled to wrap up the dialogue on the EC formation through holding talks with the AL today.

A 19-member AL delegation, led by party chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, is expected to join the meeting at the Bangabhaban at 4:00pm.

The dialogue process began on December 18. The political parties suggested the president should form a search committee to appoint the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners.

The tenure of Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad-led EC expires next month.

The 22 political parties, including the BNP,
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Jatiya Party and Workers Party, placed around 174 proposals before Hamid.

The party chiefs recommended that the president should take measures to make sure that the new EC can work independently from a separate secretariat and hold the next elections without any influence and control from the state's executive branch.

Most of the political parties also proposed appointing a competent woman as an election commissioner. All of them urged the president to take measures to stop the use of black money and muscle power in elections.

Several political parties, including Workers Party, BNP and Jatiya Party (Manju), proposed forming of the EC in phases, meaning to retain some of the election commissioners and replace the others with new ones.

They observed that making a law was necessary to work out a permanent solution in this regard. The parties said they had full confidence in the president as he had acceptability and credibility.

বিস্মিল্লাহির রাহমানির রাহিম

অভিনন্দন

রঞ্জানীমুখী সকল প্রকার সুতা উৎপাদনে সর্বোচ্চ রঞ্জানীকারক হিসাবে স্বর্ণ এবং রৌপ্য ক্যাটাগরীতে ২০১৩-২০১৪ অর্থ বছরে জাতীয় রঞ্জানী ট্রফি অর্জন করে -

কামাল ইয়ার্ণ লিমিটেড - স্বর্ণপদক
এবং
বাদশা টেক্সটাইলস্ লিঃ - রৌপ্যপদক

বাদশা গ্রুপ অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ এর সকল কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারী এবং শ্রমিকবৃন্দের পক্ষ থেকে ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক মোঃ বাদশা মিয়া এবং পরিচালক কামাল উদ্দিন আহমেদ কে আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন।