

PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

16 more in the offing

WASIM BIN HABIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The country is likely to have 16 more private universities, as the process of government approval is underway.

The opposition leader in parliament, chief whip of the ruling Awami League, two AL lawmakers and a former whip of the Jatiya Party are among the patrons of the proposed universities, show documents of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

Of the 16, four will be set up in the capital, two each in Rangpur and Gazipur, and one each in Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur, Patuakhali and Munshiganj.

They now await approval from the education ministry. Once approved, they will join the list of 95 private universities, more than half of which are in the capital.

Of the 95, seven are yet to start operation, while the authorities shut academic activities of two.

Private Universities **95**

Functional **86**

42 don't have VC

72 have no pro-VC

52 have no treasurer

Total students

4.63 lakh

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Hundreds of tents pitched on the bank of the Turag to house pilgrims as the first phase of Biswa Ijtema, the second largest congregation of Muslims after Hajj, begins today. Inset, devotees head for the Ijtema ground in Tongi.

Biswa Ijtema first phase begins

HELEMUL ALAM and ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE AKAND

Devotees from different districts have gathered at the Biswa Ijtema ground on the Turag bank at Tongi of Gazipur as the first phase of the three-day congregation begins today.

This year, the devotees of 32 districts are going to take part in Ijtema in two phases. Of which, devotees of 17 districts, including a part of Dhaka, will participate in the first phase, which will conclude on January 15 with the Akheri Munajat (concluding prayer).

The second phase of Ijtema will start on January 20 and end on January 22 with the Akheri Munajat.

As the Ijtema committee last year decided to hold the

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'All parties will trust new EC, join next polls'

PM hopes

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday hoped that all the political parties would have trust in the new Election Commission to be constituted by the president and join the next general election.

"The president has already taken an

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AL mulls same formula

BNP likely to accept all-party polls-time govt this time

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina might form an all-party interim cabinet to supervise the next parliamentary election as she did earlier, said some leaders of the ruling Awami League yesterday.

And AL's archrival BNP, which rejected the all-party polls-time government in 2013, may not do the same this time, according to some BNP leaders and pro-BNP intellectuals.

In 2013, Hasina urged the BNP, then main

opposition in parliament, to nominate its MPs for inclusion in the interim cabinet.

Refusing to budge on its demand for restoration of non-partisan caretaker government, the BNP turned down the offer and boycotted the last parliamentary polls in 2014.

To oversee that election, Hasina finally formed a 29-member polls-time council of ministers comprising MPs of AL, Jatiya Party, Workers Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal.

Ahead of the next parliamentary election

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EC LAW CANNOT BE HURRIED: ANISUL -- PAGE 3

ZIA CHARITABLE TRUST HC rejects stay plea of Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday rejected a petition filed by BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia seeking stay on the trial proceedings against her in Zia Charitable Trust graft case.

The court, however, ordered the Supreme Court registrar general and the law secretary to take steps

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ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

Myanmar wants to start the process

Says Bangladesh foreign minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Myanmar has expressed its interest in repatriating 65,000 Rohingya Muslims who entered Bangladesh in the last two months, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali said yesterday.

"Primarily, Myanmar has expressed its interest in starting the process of verifying their [the Muslims of Myanmar who intruded into Bangladesh] claim regarding their citizenship and permanent residence to repatriate them," he said.

Mahmood Ali was speaking at a press conference at the foreign ministry following Myanmar's special envoy U Kyaw Tin's meetings with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and foreign ministry officials led by the minister on Wednesday.

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Bangladesh's Test specialist Mominul Haque was a picture of concentration and sound judgement during his unbeaten innings of 64 on the rain-shortened first day of the first Test against New Zealand at the Basin Reserve in Wellington yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

3 YEARS OF GOVT: FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Big powers wooed, balance maintained

REZAUL KARIM

Since sweeping into office through the general election of 2014, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the last three years has succeeded in winning over her government's international detractors and raising Bangladesh's profile as a country committed to fighting terrorism.

Through successful diplomatic maneuvering, she has charmed the US and European nations into accepting the outcome of the largely one-sided election besides consolidating the friendly relations with India, the only country that openly backed her in going ahead with the controversial polls.

China and Japan, vying to increase their influence in the region, came rushing with offers of billions of dollars in investment for Bangladesh's economic development.

At a time when rivalry between China and India causes regional tension, Bangladesh has proved to be a sought-after destination for economic cooperation and investment by the two emerging superpowers.

Bangladesh has deftly used its geo-strategic and geopolitical advantage and maintained a delicate balance with the region's big powers gathering boons for its security and economic advancement.

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Assured Tamim, Mominul give Tigers the edge

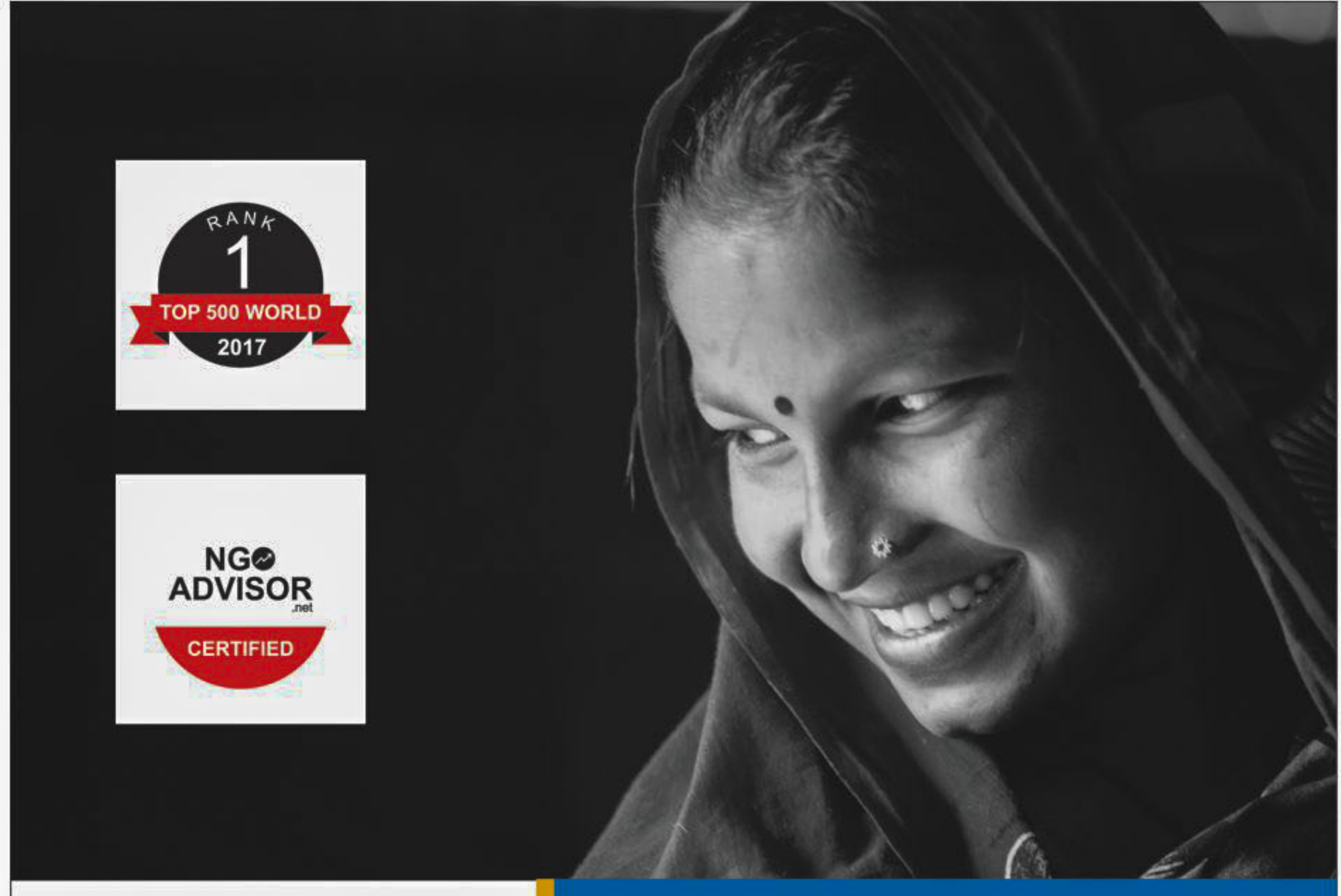
Bangladesh 154 for three in rain-shortened first day

AL-AMIN from Wellington

Bangladesh posted 154 for three at stumps on the opening day of the first Test against New Zealand at the Basin Reserve in Wellington yesterday.

This is a kind of score even the home team would have gleefully accepted on a green top, where even the bests in the world have struggled to survive in the first innings. For Bangladesh it was like a

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MAKING THE NATION PROUD

Congratulations to BRAC on becoming the Best NGO in the world for the second consecutive year!

The BRAC Bank family takes great pride at this extraordinary achievement and we hope BRAC continues to break new grounds with its social endeavours in Bangladesh and beyond.

We also believe that this achievement will spur BRAC Bank further towards its goal of becoming the 'Best Bank in Bangladesh'.



TOP QUOTE

"There is an article in law [on which the NHRC was formed] that says if human rights are violated by any member of the law enforcement agencies, we will have to seek reports from the government, which means we cannot go for direct investigation."

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CHAIRMAN
KAZI REAZUL HOQUE
TOLD REPORTERS IN THE CAPITAL