

Last hurdle for Brexit cleared

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the United Kingdom.
The prospect had been mooted since the June referendum vote for Brexit, in which a majority of Scots had wanted to stay in the bloc, but the announcement had not been expected so soon.
May immediately condemned the plan, less than three years after Scots voted by 55 percent to reject independence, saying it would be "divisive".
"This is not a moment to play politics or create uncertainty," she repeated on Tuesday, saying it was time to "bring our country together".
Facing nationalist movements across the continent, the EU is determined that no other countries follow Britain out the door, and big battles await over budget contributions, immigration and trade ties.
Manfred Weber, a German lawmaker who leads the European People's Party, the biggest grouping in the European

Parliament, said Scotland's breakaway bid signalled "a deepening of the splits in British society".
"People all over Europe can see how risky it is to take the EU into question," he said.
There is speculation that May could wait to trigger Article 50 until after a March 25 summit in Rome to mark the EU's 60th birthday, a moment it hopes will emphasise the bloc's unity.
The prime minister will not be attending, her spokesman confirmed yesterday, adding that it was a decision agreed with EU leaders and "she wishes them well".
The Scottish National Party (SNP) government in Edinburgh is hoping that with independence, Scotland could maintain its close ties with the EU.
First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said her concerns about May's plan to pull Britain out of Europe's single market,

in order to cut immigration, had been met with a "brick wall of intransigence".
But the European Commission was quick to warn that Scotland would have to reapply as a new nation.
May has the power to block a second independence vote, but this would risk energising the Scottish nationalist cause at a time when polls indicate a narrow majority in favour of staying in Britain.
The approval of the Brexit bill was a victory for the prime minister, and she yesterday said it gave "a very clear message to everybody in Europe that we mean business".
But further battles await in parliament, where a majority of lawmakers did not want to leave the EU -- and certainly not Europe's single market, which they fear could hit economic growth.

FB refuses to sign

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IT expert, Sumon Ahmed Sabir told The Daily Star the police's demand, if met by Facebook, would put Bangladesh in negative light.
"I doubt if any other country had ever done this. We were negatively portrayed when we blocked Facebook and some other social media sites in 2015."
Sumon also pointed out Facebook's privacy agreement with its users, which cannot be breached.
The police chief spoke of the proposal and Facebook's response when he was briefing reporters after the closing of a three-day international conference organised by Interpol and Bangladesh Police at Hotel Sonargaon in the capital. Vikram Langeh, Facebook's manager of trust and safety, participated in the conference.
"We said [to Langeh] there must be some restrictions for opening a Facebook account. A person's ID card or passport should be there to identify him," the IGP said.
Police also expressed concerns to Langeh over propaganda by militants on Facebook.
"They spread militancy there... They influence our youths. They spread rumors, incite communalism. Also our religious

sentiments are hurt sometimes."
In response, the Facebook representative said his organisation had hardly ever received complaints related to religious issues from other countries.
"Nevertheless, they [Facebook authorities] asked us to appoint a focal point who has direct communication [with them].... They will assist police in whatever we want in our people's interests," IGP Shahidul said.
Assistant Inspector General of Police (confidential) Moniruzzaman has been appointed to communicate with Facebook.
"Our demands included immediate removal of any content raising a law and order issue and blocking defaming contents that create communal and religious tension," he said.
The police officer also said the response of the Facebook official was "positive".
"It is a business organisation. It wants to expand and reach more people and it has its own policies."
However, the Facebook representative told Bangladesh Police that he would bring up the issues in meetings with his top-level executives since he was not in a position to make decisions on such matters, Moniruzzaman said.

Reached for comments, noted security analyst Brig Gen (ret'd) M Shakhawat Hossain said, "Requiring passport or NID for a Facebook account doesn't go with the vision of Digital Bangladesh."
Besides, communications among militants and radicalisation of people don't take place on Facebook only. Security hazards, especially ones involving the flow of information, are there in every country.
"Misuse of technologies are present everywhere. Are they restricting the flow of information?"
Another security expert Brig Gen Shahedul Anam Khan said it was unlikely that an international business would make an exception for Bangladesh only.
Earlier in 2014, the parliamentary standing committee on posts and telecommunications ministry recommended that the government should find out a way to ensure that national ID card number or passport number is given to open a Facebook account, said an official of the parliament.
State Minister for Information and Communication Technology Zunaid Ahmed Palak at an event in November 2015 reportedly said the government was planning to write to Facebook on the matter.

Tigers in flux for 100th Test

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match there in March 2013, things appear particularly bleak, not unlike the weather in Colombo yesterday.
"We had drawn a Test in Galle too, so records can go either way," said Bangladesh skipper Mushfiqur Rahim during the pre-match conference yesterday. "But we didn't think we would lose badly, as we did in Galle. We now have some idea about the Sri Lanka bowling attack, so we just have to improve our basics."
Even without the unfavourable P Sara record, the turmoil in the dressing room with Mahmudullah Riyad's axing and the subsequent indecision surrounding whether to send the veteran of 33 Tests home is not a promising sign of things to come. What appeared to be a settled team when the Tigers arrived in Sri Lanka is now one in flux ahead of a momentous Test match.
Judging by the practice sessions yesterday and the day before, there will be other changes to the team. Mominul Haque, who last hit a Test fifty in Wellington five innings ago, is also likely to sit out as he has not batted in the nets on Monday and was seen taking throwdowns on the sidelines yesterday while Mosaddek Hossain, yet to

play a Test, headed to the nets with the first batch of batsmen, which included Imrul Kayes.
Imrul, who recently proved his fitness after a muscle tear sustained in New Zealand, is expected to come in in place of Mominul at number three and Mosaddek seems in line for a debut as Riyad's replacement. On top of that, Liton Das, who took over the gloves from Mushfiqur in the first Test, was ruled out of the Test late yesterday with a small fracture on his left ribcage sustained while batting against a net bowler on Monday. That means that Mushfiqur will be back with the keeping gloves and Sabbir Rahman will be back in the Test squad, if the aforementioned changes are made.
There is also likely to be a change in the bowling department. Bangladesh played the first Test with three seamers, resting left-arm spinner Taijul Islam. Going by the coach's words when he said on Sunday that Taijul's performance with the Kookaburra ball used in Sri Lanka was 'different' from the SG ball with which he took three wickets in an innings in India, the spinner may remain on the bench. The P Sara pitch, according to Sri Lanka skipper Rangana

Herath and Mushfiqur, will have bounce on the first two or three days for pacers and will turn thereafter for the spinners. If Bangladesh do decide to go with three seamers, Kamrul Islam Rabbi -- who was being put through his paces by fast bowling coach Courtney Walsh over the last two days -- may replace Subashis Roy.
Then there is the weather. Showers are forecast for the morning and afternoon today and also on Day Two. If that is the case, then playing the extra pacer again will make sense as the wicket will break down less in the absence of continued sunshine, as had happened in Galle.
"There are expectations about every Test. But Bangladesh cricket is in such a stage that they are expected to win a Test, ODI or T20I. This itself is a big achievement, which inspires the players to give their best on the field. We didn't fulfil our expectations in the last game but we will give our best in the next game. Our main target will be to play consistently," said Mushfiqur yesterday.
With so many moving parts, it will indeed be a special effort if Bangladesh are to pull off something special in this landmark Test.

4 'criminals' killed

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Ramesh, 24, Sohag, 27, and Kanon, 25, of Sonapur village in the upazila. Of them, Saddam and Sohag were accused in a double murder case.
Police claimed that six of their men were also hurt in the incident.
Anisul, who led a high level delegation to the dialogue, promised that the government will continue promoting human rights education and awareness to foster a culture where these rights are respected everywhere.
However, the incidents of "shoot-out" or "gun-battle" or "crossfire" continue to take place in the country.
According to ASK, 18 people were killed in "shoot-out" in January, 17 in February and 16 in the first 14 days of March this year.
Thirty-eight of the incidents had the involvement of police, seven of Rab and the rest of some other law enforcement agencies.
Until yesterday, 11 people have become victims of enforced disappearance across the country this year. Of them, eight were released later, said ASK.
Terming such killings gross violations of human rights, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and different other rights organisations at home and abroad have long been demanding an end to them.
Talking to The Daily Star, Nur Khan Liton, acting executive director of ASK, said they have been demanding that the government forms a judicial inquiry commission to investigate the incidents of extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances.
"But the government hasn't taken any visible step. A culture of impunity has been created in the society and members of the law enforcement agencies are taking its benefits."
The recurrence of such incidents would come down if the culprits are

brought to book, he said, calling for ensuring discipline and transparency in the law enforcement agencies.
NHRC Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque said, "The state must stop these types of extrajudicial killings. The state has to deal with the issue with an iron hand."
"We expressed our concern over the matter in the past. And we are still very much worried," he told The Daily Star yesterday.
The government must stop this extrajudicial killing or shootout and ensure that people's human rights are not violated, he added.
Asked why such killings continue unabated, Kazi Reazul said, "There are several reasons. But whatever the reasons are, this is not at all expected. We are extremely concerned over the matter as anyone can be the victim."
The US State Department, in its 2016 human rights report, said the most significant human rights problems in Bangladesh were extrajudicial killings, arbitrary or unlawful detentions, and forced disappearances by government security forces.
"The government took limited measures to investigate and prosecute cases of abuse and killing by security forces..." said the report, which was released on March 3.
On several occasions, Human Rights Watch urged the government to take immediate steps to disband Rapid Action Battalion for the force's alleged involvement in extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances.
The government, however, denies the existence of extrajudicial killing in the country.
Reiterating the claim on February 28, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan told parliament, "Our government does not support or encourage extrajudicial killing anyway."
MEHERPUR 'SHOOTOUT'

Abdullah Al Mahmud, additional superintendent of police in Meherpur, said a team of Meherpur police was patrolling an area near Nurpur intersection around 2:30am yesterday. Suddenly, they saw a group of seven to eight people fleeing from there.
The law enforcers chased them. At one point, the criminals fired twice at the law enforcers, prompting police to fire back that triggered the "gunfight", said Mahmud.
Later, four bodies were found lying at the spot. The others escaped.
The four were brought dead to Meherpur General Hospital around 4:00am, said Abu Ehsan, a physician at the hospital. Their bodies were riddled with bullets.
Six policemen, including Assistant Superintendent of Police Ahsan Habib, were hurt in the incident. They also took treatment at the hospital, said police.
Anisur Rahman, superintendent of police in Meherpur, said the four "criminals" were former cadres of Lal Pataka and were involved in various criminal activities.
Two of the criminals -- Saddam and Sohag -- had been absconding in cases filed in connection with the killings of two Awami League activists and businessmen Abdul Mazid and Asadul of Sonapur village in Meherpur, the district police boss told a press briefing.
Mazid and Asadul were killed on March 6, he added.
Meanwhile, Saddam's mother Aklima Khatun told local reporters that her son was working as a construction labourer and had been missing for last four days.
The family members of other deceased could not be reached for comments.
[Our Kushtia correspondent Amanur Aman contributed to the report]

Strange tomb

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about 3,300 feet (1,000 metres) west of the Siniang Grove by the Yellow River, according to Huanqiu.com, an affiliation to People's Daily Online.
The area used to be a village, but its residents have apparently moved away to make way for a new residential compound.
The pyramid-shaped tomb is one of the two tombs found inside a coffin chamber by staff from the Zhengzhou Cultural Relics Bureau. The other tomb is shaped like a half cylinder.
The chamber, which is 98 feet (30 metres) long and 26 feet (eight metres) wide, was built in a west-east position with the entrance facing the east. It features a narrow aisle leading to a main dome next to the pyramid-shaped tomb.
A resident was apparently impressed by the findings.
He told a local reporter: "This is truly magical. I've never seen anything like this. It looks like an Egyptian pyramid."
A worker who guards the excavation site told the same reporter that the tomb could be more than 2,000 years old and that the dig had been going on for more than a month.
While the public are stunned by China's very own "mini pyramid", experts said it's not uncommon to see circular-shaped tombs with a pointed roof in the region.
According to Henan Cultural Relics Bureau, such tombs appeared after the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) and were often built with bricks.

Explain failure

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and against public interest.
The HC asked the respondents to explain why they should not be ordered to restore the agricultural land of the three villages.
The order directed the deputy commissioner of Gazipur and assistant commissioner of land of Sreepur to submit separate reports before this court in eight weeks on how much land of three villages are being used for different purposes other than farming, ownership of 203.06 acre land which was mutated in the name of M/s Total Care Platinum Limited and grabbing of local people's land.
Secretaries to the land, law, environment and forest and agriculture ministries, director general of the Department of Environment, deputy commissioner and superintendent of police of Gazipur, chairman and UNO and AC (land) of Sreepur upazila, officer-in-charge of Sreepur Police Station, land officer of Maona union, land office of Sreepur and M/s Total Care Platinum Limited have been made respondents to the rule.
The HC bench of Justice Syed Rezaat Ahmed and Justice Md Salim came up with the rule and order after hearing a writ petition filed jointly by rights organisations Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA) and Nijera Kori seeking necessary orders to protect the agricultural land.
Petitioners' lawyer Syed Rizwana Hasan told The Daily Star that the government has prepared a draft law to protect agricultural land saying the country's food security will be threatened as one percent of agricultural land in the country is being reduced every year.
But the government has not formulated the law and has not taken any effective steps to protect agricultural land, she said, adding that at least 10 private business organisations have set up signboards on the land of the three villages of Gazipur union, although there are allegations against them of land grabbing.
The situation in the three villages is similar to that of the whole country, the lawyer said.

Jessore journos

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Jessore police claimed Binoy was arrested in connection with fraudulent activities, for which a case was filed with Narsingdi police.
A Narsingdi court has meanwhile released Binoy on bail, said Sarwar Hossain, programme officer of Rights Jessore.
The Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Chandan Kumar Nath granted him bail yesterday evening following a plea by Shirin Akhter, panel lawyer of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA), he added.
The journalists of Jessore yesterday also held a protest rally and brought out a procession demanding immediate release of Binoy.
They have also decided to show black flags to the home minister and not to publish positive news on local police.
They further held a sit-in programme in front of the deputy commissioner's office and chanted slogans for Binoy's release.
Rights body Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) has also expressed deep concerns over the arrest of Binoy.
The ASK in a statement yesterday demanded justice for Binoy after conducting a fair probe on allegations brought against him.
"Harassment of a rights activist for his work is not acceptable in any circumstance," reads the statement.
Earlier on Monday, Binoy held a press conference at Jessore Press Club where he demanded suspension of the district police boss.
About eight hours after the press conference, police picked him up from his Ghop Nawapara Road home in the evening.

Stalker attacks teacher

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her, she tried to resist him, raising her hands. By the time, other school teachers and people from nearby houses rushed there to rescue her, she was severely injured.
Tutul immediately fled the scene, said Misfa's father Nur Mohammad, quoting witnesses.
Local people later held Tutul from his house near the school and handed him over to Patiya police.
Nur was by the side of his daughter, Misfa at Chittagong Medical College Hospital when the correspondent visited her yesterday. She lay there with both her hands and left leg broken.
The leg suffered fractures from the knee down, said Dr Kamruzzaman, but her hands were badly wounded and so would be operated on.
The injured assistant teacher was at first taken to Patiya Health Complex. As her condition deteriorated, she was transferred to CMCH.

She has been undergoing treatment at the orthopedics department.
Police, meanwhile, learnt that the stalker had proposed to Misfa. Having been rejected, Tutul made the attack, said Sheikh Niyyam Ullah, officer-in-charge of Patiya Police Station.
Tutul had followed Misfa for a couple of days on her way to school, 8 Km from her house at Naikhain village.
The teacher on March 8 lodged a complaint against him to the school committee. He was then warned not to stalk her again, said Kamal Uddin, president of the school committee.
Even mother and elder brother of Tutul apologised to Misfa on his behalf after the matter was conveyed to them.
"Perhaps, that enraged the stalker and he made the attack," Kamal said.
A Muktiyoddha commander of Patiya upazila, Nur said, "The miscreant crippled my daughter. I want his exemplary punishment."



Hasan Ullah Tutul

BCL men go rowdy

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beaten up with cricket stumps by Nayan and some 12-15 BCL activists, alleged witnesses.
Imran's roommate MH Farid said the reporter had an altercation with BCL men over allowing a Chhatra League activist to stay in his room.
Opened in 2013, the hall now houses around 1,400 students against its capacity of 1,000 students.
The common room was being used as an indoor games room until recently, when the BCL leaders brought along their activists attached to the hall.
A similar situation prevails in nearly all the 22 DU halls due to lack of space, said DU students.
About forcing resident students to let BCL men stay in, Nayan said, "Our Dhaka University unit leaders often criticise us for the poor number of Chhatra League activists at the hall. Why would the activists attend our programmes if we cannot secure seats [rooms] for them?"
On the vandalism, he said it was in

retaliation against confining four or five activists in the room by teachers. The provost, however, said none was confined.
Nayan claimed that BCL men assaulted Imran over misbehaving with them. "But I can't take responsibility as they did it without my permission."
DU BCL President Abid Al Hasan said they would take action against those responsible for the trouble.
The hall administration formed a three-member committee to probe the incident. The proctor said exemplary punishment will be given to those found guilty on the basis of the findings of the probe.
BCL EXPELS FIVE
The BCL last night expelled five of its activists from the organisation for their involvement in the vandalism of Bijoy Ekattor Hall, SM Jakir Hossain, general secretary of the student front, told The Daily Star.
The five are Tunal Shiekh and Sajib of physiology department, Salauddin and Mahfuz Anam of Urdu department and Sakib of marketing department.

Minister bins TIB report

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against us. TIB published the report to tarnish the image of the ministry," the minister said during a views-exchange meeting with reporters at Probashi Kalyan Bhaban in the capital.
In its report titled "Good Governance in Labour Migration Process: Problem and Way Out" released on March 9, TIB said around 90 percent of five lakh Bangladeshi male workers had to pay two to three times the usual migration cost last year to obtain work visas for seven countries, including five in the Middle East.
The migrants also paid bribes at different stages at the ministry and the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) for visa approval to go to the destination countries, it said.
Besides, at least Tk 5,234 crore was laundered from Bangladesh last year for getting visas for these countries, the report found.
Referring to TIB's findings, Expatriates' Welfare Secretary Begum Shamsun Nahar, however, said the migrants have to pay a lot due to visa trade, where brokers are involved.
They also face harassment in order to get passports and at immigrations, she said. "But they [workers] do not become victims of corruption or harassment at our ministry," the secretary claimed.
Contacted, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman yesterday defended their findings.
"We hope that the ministry will consider our findings sincerely for the sake of this [migration] sector and the country," he told The Daily Star.
Their report was prepared totally

based on information, and the findings were verified before being revealed, Iftekharuzzaman added.
Apart from this, TIB sat with the secretary and other officials of the ministry and the BMET to share the draft of the findings before disclosing the report, he said.
AGENTS' SYNDICATE FOR MALAYSIAN JOBS
On the allegation of a syndicate of 10 private recruiting agencies active in sending workers to Malaysia, Nurul Islam said they did not allow agencies to form any syndicate in Bangladesh.
"Recruiting agents, who didn't get any favour from me, formed a syndicate in Malaysia," he said.
But the expatriates' welfare secretary said the number of agencies working for a labour market depended on job demands in foreign countries.
Mentioning that there are 1,081 licenced recruiting agencies at present, she said the Malaysian government had chosen 10 agencies to work for their country.
In 2012, the governments of Bangladesh and Malaysia introduced a government to government (G2G) system to exclude middlemen and reduce costs for exporting manpower to Malaysia.
Around 10,000 workers were also sent to Malaysia under this process at low cost. Besides, there are no allegations of involvement of brokers, visa trade and other harassment, including that in issuance of passports, the secretary claimed.
But the two countries' agents had made the system ineffective, she alleged. So, both the governments had to introduce a G2G Plus system which allows the participation of recruiting agencies.

A bumpy yet joyous ride

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the following day as it was a national holiday. In those days the internet was a relatively unknown quantity and the print media ruled the roost. But unbridled passion for cricket has now reached a level that missing a small development of a national cricketer would constitute as a failure.
Our cricketers are now millionaires in BDT and the Bangladesh Cricket Board a millionaire in USD. The Test status brought a financial windfall for Bangladesh cricket on which the game is not only growing but also attracting that untapped bundle of youthful energy dreaming to be cricketers.
When those wise gentlemen in the ICC, the game's governing body, awarded Bangladesh the Test status, one thing they were convinced of was that this nation has got the soul -- the tremendous fan following -- and the potential to grow. And after 16 odd years Bangladesh has certainly repaid that faith by becoming one of the most passionate cricket nations. They however might not have grown in every count -- Bangladesh's first-class structure has not developed that much, they are not as competitive in Test as they are in the shorter version of the game.
But if we look at the broader perspective, Bangladesh is not supposed to be blamed alone for failing to excel in the demanding five-day contest. Kenya is perhaps a classic case of how an emerging cricketing nation is now literally dying. There was a time when Bangladesh's rivalry with Kenya was

the most fascinating battle among the associate-member nations of the ICC. But a short-sighted vision from the game's governing body and years of neglect from its elite members towards the associates is perhaps the prime reason for the demise of that Eastern African nation.
Bangladesh did get elevated to the Test family but there was hardly any concerted effort from the ICC or from the top teams to accommodate the newest member. It took India 16 years to accommodate Bangladesh on their home soil for a Test match. And after the first FTP (Future Tours Programme) teams like Australia, South Africa and England were actually very reluctant to host Bangladesh in the pretext that those tours would not be competitive and economically viable.
And this notion which is still deeply rooted among the top cricketing nations is the biggest obstacle for the light-weights like Bangladesh to grow. Besides, the whole thinking is against the spirit of globalisation of cricket. The ICC has recently agreed in principle to award Afghanistan and Ireland Test status. This is certainly a bold move towards the direction of globalising cricket in its true sense. But it will mean little if they fail to get enough exposure.
Bangladesh certainly have not got enough of that exposure in Test. It took Bangladesh almost 17 years to reach that 100th Test milestone. And by the time they reach the 200th Test, hopefully in fewer years, the Tigers definitely will present a more positive graph.