



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

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## ENERGY CRISIS

Power shortage affects output in half of Bangladeshi firms: Unctad

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## HARIRI RETURNS HOME

The Lebanon PM shelves resignation, easing political crisis in the country

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# No permit? No problem!

*Syndicate making money by allowing 10,000 autorickshaws registered outside Dhaka to run in the capital illegally*

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Over 10,000 CNG-run autorickshaws ply the Dhaka city streets illegally by bribing a syndicate of traffic policemen and middlemen.

Autorickshaws require a route permit for operating in the metropolitan area. Around 23,000 autorickshaws run in the capital and almost half of them do not have this permission.

The Daily Star has learnt this by talking to 20 drivers, and leaders of autorickshaw owners, drivers and workers associations.

These vehicles, usually registered in districts close to Dhaka, get into the capital in exchange for bribes. They add to traffic congestion and also hurt

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13,000 autorickshaws have route permit for operating in Dhaka city

Syndicate involving a section of cops, middlemen realise Tk 6cr toll a month

Drivers of the vehicles pay Tk 5,000 to 7,000 a month to the syndicate

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Sand and soil traders taking away the top soil from the bank of the Surma river in Tultikor area of Sylhet. In monsoon when the water flow increases, the gaping holes on the banks exacerbate the erosion. Arable land and sometimes even homesteads are lost to erosion. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Popularity, not name, will count

Says Hasina about AL nomination for next polls

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and RASHIDUL HASAN

Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday categorically told her party lawmakers that nominations for the next national polls would be given based on popularity of the prospective candidates.

Hasina also said she would not give anyone party ticket, considering his or her identity. Those who don't have acceptability in their constituencies would not get party nominations, no matter how big leaders they are, according to sources.

She sounded the note of caution at an AL Parliamentary Party meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban last night.

The AL chief also asked the MPs to resolve intra-party feuds, saying mud-slinging over party nomination has already begun in different constituencies, said meeting sources.

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# BCL now moves to have school units

Asks its organisational chapters to form committees at secondary schools

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and WASIM BIN HABIB

Apparently not content with being confined to public universities and colleges, Bangladesh Chhatra League now moves to form committees at schools.

The pro-Awami League student body has asked all its organisational units to set up committees at secondary schools in their respective areas.

The main objective behind the move is to spread the ideologies of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman among the students and strengthen the organisation further, a number of BCL leaders told this newspaper yesterday.

The decision, made at an emergency meeting of the BCL central executive body on Tuesday, comes amid incidents of violence and intra-organisation conflicts among student groups at different universities and colleges.

Such incidents have resulted in at least 125 deaths in the last eight years, according to media reports.

The victims include 71 BCL leaders and activists, of whom 60 were killed in internal feuds and 11 in clashes with rival organisations. The rest were general people, including children.

According to rights organisation Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), two persons were killed and 156 others injured in 20 incidents of BCL infighting from January to September this year.

Contacted, BCL President Saifur Rahman Sohag claimed the decision

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## US condemns ethnic cleansing in Myanmar

AFP, Washington



Rex Tillerson

The United States yesterday toughened its stance on Myanmar, accusing the country's security forces of perpetrating "horrendous atrocities" against the Rohingya that amount to "ethnic cleansing" of the Muslim minority.

The statement from Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who visited Myanmar last week, are the strongest US condemnation yet of the military's crackdown against the Rohingya, which has triggered a major refugee crisis and escalating global outrage.

"After a careful and thorough analysis of available facts, it is clear that the situation in northern Rakhine state constitutes ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya," Tillerson said in a statement.

"No provocation can justify the horrendous atrocities that have ensued."

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## Deal on Rohingya return likely today

FM holds talks with Myanmar minister, 2 sides to 'bridge gap' before signing MoU

STAR REPORT

Although some contentious issues remain unresolved, Bangladesh and Myanmar are likely to sign an agreement today on the return of Rohingyas to Rakhine.

"We had a good discussion today [Wednesday]. We hope to sign the deal tomorrow. It's now at the final stage," Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali said yesterday.

He made the comment after a meeting with Myanmar Minister for State Counsellor's Office Kyaw Tint Swe at a hotel in Naypyitaw.

Issues like setting a timeframe for completion of repatriation and UN involvement in the process still remain unresolved, diplomatic sources told The Daily Star.

Myanmar didn't agree to full involvement of the UN and other international



organisations in safe and sustainable return and rehabilitation of Rohingyas in their place of origin.

It, however, agreed to involve the UNHCR in the process (if and when required).

Naypyitaw was yet to agree on repatriating all the Rohingyas from Bangladesh. It said the focus should rather be on those

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Boris Michel

Violence still forcing them to flee home

ICRC official says on Rohingyas in Rakhine

PORIMOL PALMA

Armed conflicts in Myanmar's Rakhine state have deescalated, but communal violence continues to force the Rohingyas to flee to Bangladesh, an official of Red Cross said.

"For some minority communities, it is difficult to make a living and lead a daily life without fear of or pressure from other communities," said Boris Michel, regional director for Asia and the Pacific of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Naypyitaw was yet to agree on repatriating all the Rohingyas from Bangladesh. It said the focus should rather be on those

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## Govt to buy rice from pvt importers

Okays open tender for 1 lakh tonnes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Desperate to boost the stock, the government is going to import rice through local traders after an initiative to bring in the staple from Cambodia through state-to-state arrangement has failed recently.

The cabinet committee on purchase yesterday approved a proposal for importing 1 lakh tonnes of rice through open tender for Tk 42,250 to Tk 43,725 per tonne.

According to food ministry documents, local traders will import the rice from India, Thailand, Pakistan and Vietnam and deliver it to 46 government silos across the country in several lots.

There would be 1,000 to 3,000 tonnes of rice in each lot.

Last month, the same committee had approved another proposal for

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People wait outside the main gate of Chittagong Medical College Hospital yesterday. An altercation between the hospital interns and a doctor of a nearby hospital led to a clash. The interns then went on a 48-hour strike and locked the hospital gate for six hours.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Patients suffer as CMCH gate shut for 6 hrs

Interns go on strike over 'attack' on them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The interns of Chittagong Medical College Hospital and the students of Chittagong Medical College kept the hospital's main gate closed for over six hours from 6:00am yesterday, causing suffering to patients.

The interns were observing a 48-hour strike in the hospital since Tuesday, protesting the "attack" on some interns and students by locals near Chittagong city's GEC intersection on Monday night.

The CMCH students also boycotted their classes for the last two days.

Many patients were seen waiting in front of the hospital's main gate. The indoor patients also had to suffer due to the strike as there were fewer doctors.

Preferring anonymity, a professor of a department at CMCH said providing proper treatment to patients became difficult in the absence of the interns.

Mohammad Hossain was taking his wife to CMCH from Banshkhali upazila in Chittagong. But his vehicle got stuck in a long tailback around half a kilometre off the hospital. The tailback was created as the hospital's main gate was closed and all the vehicles were trying to enter the hospital through another gate.

"I started the journey towards the hospital at dawn with my wife, who is seriously ill, but have been stuck here for

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