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GAZIPUR CITY POLLS

BNP to keep close watch

Party men to stay vigilant at polling centres the night before voting day

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The BNP will keep a close eye on the Gazipur city polling stations the night before the voting day and try to assemble party men outside to guard the centres during polling as part of its new strategy for the June 26 mayoral polls.

The party adopted the strategy after taking lessons from the Khulna city polls in which the BNP mayoral candidate lost to the ruling Awami League candidate. The BNP fears the AL might employ the same “tactic of intimidation” to win the polls in Gazipur.

The BNP is also trying to boost the morale of the party men so that they do not give in to intimidation from the ruling party men or law enforcers and leave the polling stations, party insiders said.

“We are working on the new strategy after having the experience of the Khulna city polls. We are analysing the vote-rigging strategy of Awami League and hope to deal with it with our new plans,” BNP standing committee member Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain told The Daily Star.

Wishing anonymity, a senior BNP leader said if the new strategy brought a good outcome, the party would follow it in the polls to Sylhet, Rajshahi and Barisal city corporations.

For picking the polling agents of the Gazipur mayor candidate, the BNP is giving preference to party leaders and activists who are not accused in any cases, the leader told this correspondent.

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Pedestrians holding umbrellas over their heads to protect themselves from the scorching sun in the capital's Banani area yesterday. *Inset*, some commuters waiting for transport stand under a footbridge in the same area to get a respite from the heat. The mercury, according to the Met office, rose to 36.6 degrees Celsius in the country yesterday, making it difficult for people to do outdoor activities.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



AFGHANISTAN SERIES

Tigers lose the Fizz

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh pace sensation Mustafizur Rahman has been ruled out of the Afghanistan series in Dehradun, India and will not travel with the team today as he is yet to fully recover from a toe injury he sustained while representing Mumbai Indians in the recently concluded Indian Premier League.

“After reviewing his scans today (Monday) we found a slight tear on his toe ligament, so it is better for him to take rest and that is why he will not travel with the team to India for the Afghanistan series,” said Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chief physician Debashish Chowdhury yesterday.

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Cabinet okays draft BSTI act with harsher punishment

UNB, Dhaka

The cabinet yesterday approved the draft of “The Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Act, 2018”, incorporating provisions of harsher punishment under the existing law.

The approval was given at the weekly meeting of the cabinet held at the Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiul Alam briefed reporters after the meeting.

He said the proposed law had been formulated making the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Ordinance, 1985 a more time-befitting one.

He said according to the draft law, the use of trademark without having a licence would be considered an offence.

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TEESTA DEAL

India holds out hope

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India yesterday held out hopes of the Teesta river water-sharing deal with Bangladesh and said not being able to reach the agreement cannot yet be termed a “failure” of Prime Minister Narendra Modi government’s four-year rule as it still had one more year in office.

Asked by reporters if the inability to sign the Teesta deal could not be considered a failure of the Modi government since the Indian PM had insisted in April last year that it would happen during his tenure, Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said, “Our government has completed four years in office and still has one year to left. So, not reaching the Teesta treaty cannot yet be called a failure of this government.”

Swaraj made the remarks while addressing a press conference here, listing the achievements of the Modi government in

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ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

Myanmar's claim raises eyebrows

Naypyidaw says it 'received' 62 refugees; Dhaka terms it fake, eyewash to mislead int'l community

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka again refuted the Myanmar government's claim of “receiving” 62 Rohingya refugees, among the 700,000 who fled to Bangladesh due to a brutal military crackdown in Rakhine State.

Dhaka termed it as being fake, an eyewash and a publicity stunt to mislead the international community.

The “returnees” include 58 persons pardoned by the Myanmar's president and four others whose cases were withdrawn, according to a statement released by the State Counsellor's Office on Sunday.

They (62 people) had tried to return on their own, ignoring official procedure, and they had been arrested by the Myanmar authorities for illegally crossing the border.

However, they were pardoned by the president and released from prison before being sent to the Nga Khu Ya Reception Camp on May 26.

The state counsellor's statement did not specify when or how many had returned to the strife-torn northern Rakhine State's Maungdaw Township from refugee camps in Bangladesh. It also failed to mention the names of the villages of the returnees or even the total number of Rohingyas imprisoned.

Dhaka, however, was unaware of the developments and had no knowledge of anyone's attempt to leave the makeshift camps in Cox's Bazaar.

Officials at the foreign ministry said they had not heard of any incidents of Rohingya refugees going back to Myanmar.

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Three UPDF men killed in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Three activists of United People Democratic Front (UPDF) were shot dead by unidentified criminals in Korollya Charri village in the district's Baghaichari upazila yesterday morning.

The dead are UPDF members Smriti Chakma, 50, and Atol Chakma, 30, and Democratic Youth Forum member Sanjib Chakma, 30. Democratic Youth Forum is the youth platform of UPDF.

Quoting witnesses, police said the UPDF members were holding a meeting at a house in the village around 7:00am. All of a sudden, a group of 10-12 armed men open fired on the house, leaving the three dead on the spot.

Muhammad Anowar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sajek Police Station, said police recovered the bodies from the spot and sent those to Khagrachhari District Hospital for autopsies.

In a statement, Sochoi Chakma, organiser of Rangamati UPDF, blamed the PCJSS (MN Larma) for the triple murder. He demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

Prashanto Chakma, assistant information

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Migrant 'Spiderman' hero saves toddler



AFP, Paris

A Malian migrant who scaled a four-storey Paris apartment bloc with his bare hands to save a child was honoured by French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday and offered citizenship.

Two days after his daring Spiderman-style rescue -- viewed millions of times online -- Mamoudou Gassama was received by Macron at the presidential palace.

“You have become an example because millions of people have seen you. It is only right that the nation be grateful,” Macron told the 22-year-old, adding that his immigration status would be “put in order.”

During the meeting, Macron also proposed that Gassama, who received a medal and certificate for bravery, join the French fire service.

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Two girls cross the barbed fencing of a median strip to go to the other side of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue with a footbridge [not in the picture] only yards away in the capital's Farmgate yesterday. There are four such bridges in the area but many cross the busy street this way every day, putting their lives in danger.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DRUGS FROM MYANMAR

Malaysia seizes 1.2 tonnes of crystal meth

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian authorities yesterday said they have seized a record of crystal methamphetamine that was shipped from Myanmar hidden in tea packets, the latest huge drugs haul in Southeast Asia.

Six people were arrested after the drugs were found during an operation by customs officers on May 22 at Port Klang on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur.

The stash was worth 71 million ringgit (\$18 million) and had been shipped in a container from Yangon in Myanmar, said Customs director-general Subromaniam Tholasy.

It was the latest massive crystal meth seizure in Southeast Asia, as the notorious “Golden Triangle” -- an ungovernable border zone that crosses Myanmar, Laos, Thailand and China -- experiences a boom in production.

Subromaniam told reporters the crystal meth haul was the biggest ever in Malaysia in terms of value and weight.

“We believe the drugs were for the local market and it is the work of a local criminal syndicate working with a Myanmar criminal gang,” he said.

Three Malaysians and three Myanmar nationals aged between 22 and 48 years had been arrested, said the customs chief.

Under Malaysia's tough anti-narcotics laws, they could face the death penalty if found guilty of trafficking.

Customs officers also found heroin weighing 750 grams and about one million contraband cigarettes.

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