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# BNP, other parties resume unity bid

Start meeting today as Dr Kamal returns

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

After a brief pause in the efforts towards "greater unity", the BNP and other political parties involved will begin to sit from today to give it a concrete shape.

The BNP has already assigned its Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and standing committee members Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain and Moudud Ahmed to negotiate with the other political parties over forging unity.

The process came to an apparent halt as Dr Kamal Hossain, convenor of Jatiya Oikya Prokriya and a key figure in the process, went abroad for treatment last month.

Back in town yesterday, he told this newspaper that from today, they will sit everyday to finalise the unity process and he is hopeful that the "final shape" will be visible within seven days.

As more or less all the issues are settled, it would not take time, he added.

In another development, Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury-led Juktofront has assigned Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna to negotiate with the BNP.

Juktofront, an alliance comprising Badruddoza's Bikalpadhara Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Rob) and Nagorik Oikya, recently allied itself with Dr Kamal's Jatiya Oikya Prokriya.

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Fishermen sort hilsa after arriving with a boat-load of the coveted fish at a market on Court Road of Barishal yesterday, the last day before a 22-day ban on hilsa begins.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

# 22-day hilsa ban gets underway

STAR REPORT

A 22-day government ban on netting, selling, and transporting hilsa started at yesterday midnight.

A circular to this end has been issued recently.

The government has been imposing such bans every year since 2003-04 to protect mother hilsas. Fishermen and traders say the production of the mouth-watering fish increases every time the ban is properly implemented.

Md Abu Bakar Siddique, joint secretary at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, said they hope to implement this year's ban in all the 177 upazilas of 37 districts where the fish is found.

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# 4,100 cases filed to keep BNP off polls

Alleges Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday alleged that over 4,100 cases were lodged against around 8.6 lakh named and 2.76 lakh unnamed party men since September 1 to keep it away from the upcoming general elections.

The opposition party

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# QUOTA FOR FF FAMILIES

## Protesters go for indefinite blockade

DU CORRESPONDENT

Protesters demanding reinstatement of the 30 percent quota for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren in class-I and class-II government jobs yesterday called an indefinite countrywide blockade.

From now on, highways, railways, and waterways would be blocked, said Prof AKM Jamal Uddin, spokesperson for the platform

Muktijuddho Moncho.

Making the call during a rally at Shahbagh intersection, Prof Jamal said, "We do not want to live as third-class citizens of the country and we did not come here to beg. We took to the streets to realise our logical demands."

The blockade would continue until the quota was reinstated in all government

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# Prove they're Bangladeshis, we'll take them

Gowher Rizvi tells India over 'illegal immigrants'

INDIA TODAY, Kolkata

Bangladesh Prime Minister's Adviser Gowher Rizvi has said his country will take back all Bangladeshi nationals living illegally in India. However, this will happen only if India successfully

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# Era of Swiss bank secrecy ends

REUTERS, Zurich

The era of mystery-cloaked numbered Swiss bank accounts has officially come to a close as Switzerland, the world's biggest centre for managing offshore wealth, began automatically sharing client data with tax authorities in dozens of other countries.

The Federal Tax Administration (FTA) said on Friday it had for the first time exchanged financial account data at the end of September under global standards that aim to crack down on tax cheats.

Bank secrecy still exists in some areas -- Swiss authorities

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SIBL Social Islami Bank Limited

PRAYER TIMING

OCTOBER 7

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-45 12-45 4-15 5-53 7-30

JAMAAT 5-20 1-15 4-30 5-56 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A motorcyclist with three pillion passengers and a boy on the fuel tank chanced upon road safety campaigners led by Ilias Kanchan at Bangla Motor intersection yesterday morning. The campaigners talked to road users at several major intersections in the capital to raise awareness throughout the day.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

# 'Repackaging of section 57'

Expatriate academics concerned over Digital Security Bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-four professionals and academics from Bangladesh diaspora have expressed grave concern over the passage of the Digital Security Bill, saying the new law is detrimental to the evolution of Bangladesh as a free, matured and modern democratic society.

"This act will further stifle any remaining scope for free speech that Bangladesh had left since we view this act as a mere repackaging of the notorious section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2013 with additional draconian

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# 'Going, going, gone'

Banksy destroys his £1m art work live at auction

AFP, London

British street artist Banksy has stunned the art world with arguably his most audacious prank yet, self-destructing one of his best-known works moments after it fetched more than a million pounds at auction in London.

"Girl with Balloon" had just sold at Sotheby's Friday for £1,042,000 (\$1.4 million, 1.2 million

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# FERRY DISRUPTION People suffer on both sides of the Padma

STAR REPORT

Passengers and businesses continued to suffer for a third consecutive day as Shimulia-Kathalbari ferry services across the Padma remained suspended due to poor navigability.

Authorities are hoping to improve navigability through dredging the river and resume the services from today.

The suspension of services since Thursday resulted in more than usual rush on Paturia-Daulatdia ferry service, which has already been suffering frequent disruptions for almost two weeks due to strong currents and poor navigability, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport

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