



Hundreds of federal workers and contractors rally against the partial federal government shutdown outside the headquarters of the AFL-CIO in Washington, DC, on Thursday. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: AFP

# Trump renews threat

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miss their paychecks.  
The partial federal government shutdown entered its 21st day yesterday. It will become the longest shutdown ever today.  
With no Capitol Hill compromise in sight, Trump publicly ruminated on Thursday during a trip to the Texas border about declaring an emergency.  
A close Trump confidant judged the time for such a step had come. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham said in a statement: "It is time for President Trump to use emergency powers to fund the construction of a border wall/barrier. I hope it works."  
The Wall Street Journal, NBC and the Washington Post, citing unnamed sources, reported that the White House had asked the US Army Corps of Engineers to look into diverting money from its budget toward the wall and to explore how fast construction could begin under an emergency declaration. Reuters could not immediately verify the accuracy of the reports.  
**BOXED IN**  
Critics of the national emergency strategy have said it may be illegal. In any case, it was almost certain to trigger an immediate court challenge from Democrats, including an accusation of trying to circumvent Congress' power over the national purse strings.  
That would push the wall impasse into the courts, allowing the government to be fully reopened while the judges weigh the case, which could take months.  
"After the emergency announcement, the path toward construction via executive order may be as unclear as a storm at midnight. But it will at least allow the president to move out of the corner he's boxed himself into," said Charles Gabriel, analyst at strategy firm Capital Alpha Partners.  
Partial government funding expired on December 22, leaving departments ranging from Justice, Agriculture and Treasury to Commerce and Homeland Security without money to operate programs and pay their workers.  
An emergency declaration would come with risks. Even some of Trump's fellow Republicans in Congress have signalled worries about such an action. Given that the Constitution gives Congress the power to set spending priorities and appropriate money, they worry about a tough legal fight and an unwelcome precedent.  
**'CROSSING THE RUBICON'**  
"If Trump crosses this Rubicon, what would prevent a Democratic president from declaring a 'national emergency' on Day 1 of their administration on climate change and/or healthcare?" Chris Krueger, an analyst at strategy firm Cowen Washington Research Group, asked in a commentary note.  
Senator Joe Manchin, a moderate

Democrat who has had good relations with Trump, said declaring a national emergency would be "wrong, but I think that's his only way out."  
Manchin predicted that if Trump made the declaration, Congress would immediately move to pass bills funding the various agencies, knowing that the president would then be able to sign them into law.  
While some Republican senators have begun clamouring for an end to the shutdown, party leaders toeing Trump's line this week have ignored passage in the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives of funding bills for government agencies. The House was expected to pass more such bills yesterday.

# Don't send girls

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"Raise your hands and promise that you won't allow them to study more," he said, adding that that the girls would not "belong" to their parents if they were allowed to study. "Men will fight over them."  
The people in the crowd then raised their hands and promised to obey his instructions.  
The 99-year-old Hefajat leader is no stranger to making outright vulgar remarks about women and has said similar things before, drawing criticism from rights activists and even the prime minister.  
In a viral video clip in 2013, the chairman of Qawmi Madrasa Education Board was seen making suggestive remarks as he compared women with tamarind, a fruit that, according to him, would make any man salivate.  
Women should take care of furniture, raise children and stay within the confines of their homes, he said at the time.  
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was quick to blast Shafi, saying, "I'm totally confused how a religious leader could utter such indecent words...."  
Notwithstanding this, the prime minister shared a stage at a rally in the capital in November, last year. The event was organised to applaud the passing of a bill recognising the Dawra-e-Hadith degree as an equivalent of master's in Islamic studies and Arabic.  
At the rally, Hasina was reportedly dubbed "Qawmi Mother" by Islamic leaders, who also demanded that Hefajat chief Shafi be given the Swadhinata Padak.  
In 2017, major changes in school textbooks were brought reportedly in line with Hefajat's recommendations.

# Oceans heat up at faster rate: study

REUTERS, Oslo  
The oceans are warming faster than previously estimated, setting a new temperature record in 2018 in a trend that is damaging marine life, scientists said on Thursday.  
New measurements, aided by an international network of 3,900 floats deployed in the oceans since 2000, showed more warming since 1971 than calculated by the latest UN assessment of climate change in 2013, they said.  
And "observational records of ocean heat content show that ocean warming is accelerating," the authors in China and the United States wrote in the journal Science of ocean waters down to 2,000 metres (6,600 ft).  
Man-made greenhouse gas emissions are warming the atmosphere, according to the overwhelming majority of climate scientists, and a large part of the heat gets absorbed by the oceans. That in turn is forcing fish to flee to cooler waters.  
"Global warming is here, and has major consequences already. There is no doubt, none!" the authors wrote in a statement.  
Almost 200 nations plan to phase out fossil fuels this century under the 2015 Paris climate agreement to limit warming. US President Donald Trump, who wants to promote US fossil fuels, plans to pull out of the pact in 2020.

Data due for publication next week will show "2018 was the warmest year on record for the global ocean, surpassing 2017," said lead author Lijing Cheng, of the Institute of Atmospheric Physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.  
He told Reuters that records for ocean warming had been broken almost yearly since 2000.  
Overall, temperatures in the ocean down to 2,000 metres rose about 0.1 degree Celsius (0.18F) from 1971-2010, he said. The 2013 UN assessment estimated slower rates of heat uptake but did not give a single comparable number.  
A separate study on Monday, by the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service, said 2018 was the fourth warmest year for global surface temperatures in records dating back to the 19th century.

# #MeToo likely to have palpable effect on 2020 race

AFP, Washington  
The #MeToo movement helped sweep Democrats to victory in November's midterms, but some of the party's leading lights, including potential 2020 candidates, face scrutiny from the women's anti-harassment drive that brought men to account for sexist behaviour.  
A diverse field of Democrats, potentially including senators Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders and Cory Booker, and the notoriously tactile former vice president Joe Biden, will likely enter the race to determine who squares off next year against President Donald Trump.  
Their campaigns, and those of others, could either be boosted or tainted by the fight for gender equality in the run up to 2020.  
"Clearly, it's going to play a role," David Redlawsk, chairman of the political science department at the University of Delaware, told AFP.  
"It potentially complicates the primaries to some degree, but we don't know how much in the end."

# Bangladesh moves

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and showed improvement in security alongside Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.  
The GTI is a report published annually by the Institute for the IEP, and was developed by IT entrepreneur and IEP's founder Steve Killelea.  
In Southeast Asia, the Philippines and Myanmar recorded the highest number of deaths from terrorism in 2017 since 2002, it observed.  
Myanmar positioned 24th declining 13 notches than last year with a score of 5.916 out of 10.  
The three deadliest terror organisations in the Asia-Pacific in 2017 were the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), New People's Army and Abu Sayyaf Group. ARSA is active in Myanmar and formed following the Myanmar government's crackdown on the Rohingya population.  
Afghanistan, Pakistan and India are amongst the 10 countries most impacted by terrorism, and these were causing deterioration to South Asia's GTI score.  
In Bangladesh, the largest recent terrorist attack took place in 2016, when an armed assault in Dhaka left a number of people dead, the report said, adding that IS later claimed the responsibility for the attack.  
The report by the Australian think-tank emphasised the need for global

investment to ensure national security, citing as example measures to prevent violent extremism in Bangladesh.  
"In Bangladesh, for example, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund is supporting training in digital literacy among madrasa students, helping promote critical thinking, and limit the traction and dissemination of online fake news and messages," the report observed.  
It highlights that threats to cyber security is the new form of terror adopted by extremist organisations, no one of which can exist without funds.  
"Terrorism has emerged in cyberspace as a natural response to kinetic security responses and traditional military measures," the reportsays.  
"Financial institutions have long been targets of terrorism, and this is true online as well. In the case of the 2016 Bangladesh Bank heist, malicious programme, likely malware sent through an email, was installed on the bank's computer system.  
"The malware then collected passwords and usernames, and deleted evidence of its own presence, rendering it virtually invisible. These stolen credentials were then used to access SWIFT, the most secure global money transfer system. 81 million USD were lost in four transactions," the think-tank said in the report.

# Reuters journos

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had cited evidence of a police set-up and lack of proof of a crime. They asserted the lower court that tried the case had wrongly placed the burden of proof on the defendants.  
The defence also said prosecutors had failed to prove the reporters gathered and collected secret information, sent information to an enemy of Myanmar or that they had an intention to harm national security.  
Explaining his verdict, Judge Aung Naing said the reporters had behaved in a way that showed they intended to harm the country.  
The judge cited meetings between reporter Wa Lone and members of the security forces as well as a notebook found at the journalist's house that contained the phone number of a member of the Arakan Army, an armed ethnic rebel group he had reported on while covering peace negotiations several years ago.  
Wa Lone had testified during the trial that the phone number did not work and he did not have contact with the rebel group.  
"Action can be taken against them if, judging by their behaviour and characteristics, it appears they will harm the national security and interests of the country," said Aung Naing.  
He said the defence had failed to prove the arrests were a set-up by authorities.  
"I lost all my hope," said a weeping Chit Su Win, the wife of reporter Kyaw Soe Oo, after the verdict.

**Rice prices**  
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than last year's. So, there's nothing to be worried about."  
Turning to the country's trade deficit, the minister said there was much progress in trade in the last 10 years. "Now, we're trying to venture into the markets of China and India with 250 crore people."  
He added that they had a plan to set the RMG export target of 60 billion by 2021. "We hope the export target will be achieved if we can capture the markets of the two countries."  
Tipu said steps had been taken to explore export market in Indonesia, a country of 25 crore people. "Our export deficit will come down if our efforts see a success."

**PERSONAL INTEREST**  
Britain called on Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi to look at whether due process was followed.  
Asked about the case by BBC radio, British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt urged the Nobel laureate to "recognise that, as someone who fought for democracy in Burma, she should be taking a personal interest in the future of these two brave journalists."  
Myanmar government spokesman Zaw Htay was not available for comment.  
Standing outside the court building in Yangon where the judgment was pronounced, Kristian Schmidt, the European Union ambassador to Myanmar, said the ruling was a "miscarriage of justice and it gives us great concern for the independence of the justice system of Myanmar".  
Defence lawyer Than Zaw Aung, speaking after the ruling, said his team would discuss the option of a supreme court appeal with the two reporters. "We are very disappointed with the judgment," he said.  
Before their arrest, the reporters had been working on a Reuters investigation into the killing of 10 Rohingya Muslim men and boys by security forces and Buddhist civilians in western Myanmar's Rakhine State during an army crackdown that began in August 2017.  
The operation sent more than 730,000 Rohingya fleeing to Bangladesh, according to United Nations' estimates.

# Aliss wins

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five wickets with eight balls to spare.  
Comilla's Shahid Afridi took three wickets for 10 runs to help bundle out Rajshahi for just 124 in 18.5 overs. Comilla then rode on contributions from Anamul Haque (40), Liam Dawson (28) and Tamim Iqbal (21) to reach home comfortably, despite a flurry of wickets in the middle.  
Yesterday's story was about the first game, however, as Aliss became the first bowler to take a hat-trick -- with the wickets of Mohammad Mithun, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Forhad Reza -- on BPL debut. He is also the second bowler -- after Mohammad Sami in the inaugural edition in 2012 -- to take a hat-trick in the tournament.

# RMG worker

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General Hospital for tests and were trying to arrest the accused.  
Earlier on Wednesday evening, police arrested a man for allegedly raping a six-year-old indigenous girl at Mithapukur upazila in Rangpur.  
The arrestee is Rubel Tirki, 30, of Parbati-Krishnapur village in the upazila.  
Rubel allegedly took the girl, a grade one student, to a sugarcane field offering her sugarcane and raped her, said police.  
Hearing her scream, locals rescued the victim and took her to Pirganj Upazila Health Complex. Rubel escape, police added.  
Later in the day, locals held the accused and handed him over to the police.  
A case was filed in this connection with Mithapukur Police Station on Thursday afternoon. Police sent him to jail on the same day after placing him before court, said Zafar Ullah, officer-in-charge of the police station.  
Meanwhile, detectives in Noakhali yesterday arrested a man in connection with a case filed over the gang-rape of a woman in Subarnachar upazila on December 31.  
The arrestee is Henju Majhi, 29, said Zakir Hossain, inspector of Detective Branch in the district.  
On information, a team of DB police conducted a drive in Cumilla's Daudkandi upazila and arrested Henju in the morning, said Zakir, also the investigation officer of the case.  
He had been hiding since the incident, he said.  
With Henju, 11 people have been arrested over the gang-rape.

# China moon

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picture of the front side of the lander and exploration missions.  
The Chang'e-4 mission -- named after a moon goddess -- made the world's first soft landing on the moon's far side on January 3.  
The rover, named after the moon goddess's pet rabbit, successfully separated from the lander and drove onto the moon's surface last Thursday.  
Beijing is pouring billions into its military-run space programme, with hopes of having a crewed space station by 2022, and of eventually sending humans on a lunar mission.  
This is the second Chinese probe to land on the moon, following the Yutu (Jade Rabbit) rover mission in 2013.  
China's space agency has said the mission "lifted the mysterious veil" from the far side of the moon, which is never seen from Earth, and "opened a new chapter in human lunar exploration".  
Unlike the near side of the moon that offers many flat areas to touch down on, the far side is mountainous and rugged.  
The moon is "tidally locked" to Earth in its rotation so the same side is always facing Earth.  
The Chang'e-4 probe is equipped with instruments developed by scientists from Sweden, Germany and China to study the lunar environment, cosmic radiation and the interaction between solar wind and the moon's surface, the official Xinhua news agency reported.  
Chang'e-4 landed within the South Pole-Aitken (SPA) Basin, the largest and deepest impact crater in the solar system.  
Scientists have said it is a key area for solving several unknowns about the moon, including its internal structure and thermal evolution.

asked during an interaction with a group of foreign policy experts and reporters.  
It is Pakistan's turn to host the summit. However, India, citing continued support to cross-border terrorism by Pakistan, has been maintaining that it is difficult to proceed with the summit.  
The 2016 Saarc (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation) summit was to be held in Islamabad. But, after a deadly terrorist attack on an Indian Army camp in Jammu and Kashmir that year, India expressed its inability to participate in it.  
The summit was called off after Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan also declined to participate in the meet. Maldives and Sri Lanka are the seventh and eighth members of the grouping.  
"There is no alternative to sitting together and mitigating differences. The problems we (the region) are facing cannot be resolved alone. We need to put collective efforts to deal with various key challenges like climate change and terrorism," Gyawali said.  
The Nepalese foreign minister, who held bilateral talks with external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj on Thursday, said his country has been raising the issue of the Saarc summit with India.  
"I am hopeful the summit will be held soon," Gyawali said.  
Saarc summits are usually held biennially, hosted by a member state in alphabetical order. The member state hosting the summit assumes the chair of the association. The last Saarc summit in 2014 was held in Kathmandu, which was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.  
The Nepalese foreign minister also said he has requested the Indian government to replace Rs 7 crore worth of old Indian currency notes with new ones.  
Following the demonetisation exercise in India, people in Nepal deposited the old notes in banks in Nepal. Indian currency is extensively used by Nepalese people and businesses.  
The Nepalese government last month asked its citizens to refrain from keeping or carrying Indian bank notes higher than Rs 100 denomination.

# Nepal pitches

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Barishal's Hizla upazila. She came to Mirpur on December 26, the day when Abdullah was born. She said she took the baby out in the sun as he was showing symptoms of jaundice.  
The OC said the baby was rushed to Dhaka Shishu Hospital at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and was later referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died around 1:30pm.  
Abdullah's uncle Rashed Sardar said Kabir, a driver by profession, and Laizu were devastated after the death of their fourth grader daughter who had been suffering from kidney diseases for around nine years.  
"They had just started to recover after the birth of Abdullah. But then, this happened," he said, adding that the couple has only a daughter, Lamia, 5, left.  
Laizu faced complications when Abdullah was born. The baby was kept at Dhaka Shishu Hospital and taken home on Monday.  
Visiting the spot yesterday, this correspondent learnt that some children play on the roof of the three-storey building every day.  
Locals said the parents should be careful while their children stay on the roof over safety reasons.  
Contacted over phone, the grieving father said, "Locals are trying to compensate me for the incident. But what would I do with the money? Can money compensate my loss?"  
An unnatural death case was filed with Mirpur Police Station.

# Russia accuses BBC of spreading terror ideologies

AFP, Moscow  
Russia's media watchdog accused the BBC Thursday of spreading the ideologies of "terrorist groups" via online publications of its Russian service, the latest in a tit-for-tat row over media impartiality.  
Roskomnadzor, the state communications and media watchdog, said it would investigate whether the BBC was breaking the law.  
This was the latest volley in a wave of rhetoric against the BBC, after Britain's broadcasting regulator Ofcom last year said the Moscow-funded RT channel had broken broadcasting standards.