

NEWS IN brief

FB bans 4 Myanmar ethnic rebel groups

Facebook has blacklisted four more of Myanmar's ethnic rebel groups, the platform announced yesterday. The rebel organisations to have been banned are Arakan Army, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, Kachin Independence Army and Taung National Liberation Army.

Israeli troops kill Palestinian in WB

Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian and wounded another in the occupied West Bank on Monday, medical officials said. The army said the two had been carrying out a bomb attack. There were no military casualties in the incident near the Palestinian city of Jenin.

Pak re-launches health scheme under new title

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday re-launched the health insurance scheme, which had been introduced by the previous Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government as Prime Minister National Health Programme (PMNHP) in 2015, under the new title of Sehat Insaf Card after making some changes to it.

BITS OF HISTORY (FEBRUARY 5)

1979: Mehdi Bazargan, an opposition leader during the reign of the Shah, was appointed the first prime minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He resigned later in the year.
1994: A mortar bomb hit a street market in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo, besieged by Serbs during the Bosnian war, killing 68 people.
1999: South African President Nelson Mandela made his last State of the Nation speech to parliament before retiring.



Pakistani women supporters of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) party hold placards as they march during a protest rally to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day in Lahore yesterday. Inset, people burn an effigy of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the protest. Kashmir Solidarity Day is observed in Pakistan on February 5 as a way of showing support for those living in Indian-administered Kashmir.



'Lord' Modi just like the British: Rahul

AFP, New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is lording it over India just like the British, opposition leader Rahul Gandhi said in a blistering pre-election broadside published yesterday. Gandhi, great-grandson of India's first prime minister after independence from Britain in 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru, hopes to unseat Modi in the vote due by May. "Every institution in India is facing Mr Modi's autocratic backlash," Gandhi, head of the Congress party that has dominated Indian politics for decades, said in a newspaper interview. "Mr Modi believes that he is the Lord of India, just like the British believed," the 48-year-old told the Hindustan Times daily. Modi, 68, swept to power in a landslide in 2014 but with voters unhappy about unemployment and the dire state of Indian agriculture, winning again may not be so easy. Congress have been emboldened by state election victories in late 2018. Gandhi said in the interview that this was "just the tip of the backlash" against Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "What Mr Modi doesn't accept is that India today is in a crisis. India has a massive job crisis, a humongous agriculture crisis, and Indian youngsters are deeply distressed about their future," he said. "This is generating a huge amount of anger." Gandhi's comments about Modi's "autocratic backlash" referred to a massive row raging since Sunday between the central government and the premier of the eastern state of West Bengal, which has made waves nationally.



Opposition plans common blueprint to unseat Modi

REUTERS, New Delhi

An alliance of regional parties in India is working on a combined economic plan, one of its leaders said, in the latest sign that Prime Minister Narendra Modi faces an increasingly united opposition in the upcoming general election. That plan is likely to include a landmark policy floated by India's main opposition Congress party to provide the poor with a minimum income if it wins polls due by May. N Chandrababu Naidu, the politician who helped forge the common front, told Reuters in an interview. The alliance - consisting of 23 parties that came together in a giant rally in Kolkata last month - would focus on poverty eradication, agriculture, employment and a "minimum income for every family", he added.

"So many political parties are working (on a) consensus. The farmers' crisis is the biggest issue, unemployment is the biggest issue," Naidu said. "The economy (is where)

you have to concentrate". Modi's ratings have dropped to their lowest-ever level amid discontent over a lack of jobs for young people and a weak farm economy, according to an India Today poll last month. Polls have also forecast his ruling alliance will fall short of a majority in the election, which could potentially allow a coalition of regional parties to take a shot at coming to power. However, there are questions over who could lead the opposition alliance, or whether regional parties would be open to supporting Congress chief Rahul Gandhi should his party emerge with a significant number of seats. "A prime minister will be decided afterwards with consensus," Naidu said, ruling out selecting a figurehead before the polls. "First of all we have to win the elections."

As chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, Naidu has been credited with implementing business-friendly policies that attracted firms like Microsoft to the southern state.

INDIA GENERAL ELECTION

The alliance would focus on poverty eradication, agriculture, employment and minimum income for every family: Naidu

ASSAM CITIZEN'S LIST

Centre trying to destroy process: SC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Indian Supreme Court yesterday came down heavily on the federal government over the Assam National Register of Citizens (NRC) process and said it is hell bent on not allowing the work to continue. The court rapped the Home Ministry for its plea seeking to stall the NRC work for two weeks keeping in mind the role of Central Armed Police Forces in parliamentary election duty. Reiterating that the July 31 deadline for the completion of NRC exercise will not be extended, a bench, headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, said it seems the entire effort of the Home Ministry was to destroy the NRC process.

N Korea protecting nuke missiles: UN monitors

REUTERS, United Nations

North Korea is working to ensure its nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities cannot be destroyed by military strikes, UN monitors said ahead of a meeting between US and North Korean officials to prepare a second denuclearisation summit. The US special envoy for North Korea, Stephen Biegun, will meet his North Korean counterpart today in Pyongyang to prepare for a summit later this month between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, the US State Department said on Monday.

Biegun has said he hoped the meeting with new North Korean counterpart Kim Hyok Chol would map out "a set of concrete deliverables" for the summit between Trump and Kim Jong Un. Biegun, who held talks with South Korean officials in Seoul on Sunday and Monday, said he would be aiming for "a roadmap of negotiations and declarations going forward, and a shared understanding of the desired outcomes of our joint efforts".

South Korean officials said they and the United States could be looking at a compromise that could expedite North Korea's denuclearisation - the dismantling of the North's main Yongbyon nuclear complex, which could be reciprocated by US measures including formally ending the 1950-53 Korean War and setting up a liaison office. But UN sanctions monitors said in a confidential report, submitted to a 15-member UN Security Council sanctions committee and seen by Reuters on Monday, that they had "found evidence of a consistent trend on the part of the DPRK to disperse its assembly, storage and testing locations", using the abbreviation for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It has also repeatedly urged a lifting of punishing US-led sanctions, a formal end to the war, and security guarantees. The UN report said sanctions were proving ineffective.

US special envoy going to Pyongyang to prepare for Trump-Kim summit

US sanctions proving ineffective: UN report

FALLING POPULATION

Japan's deputy PM blames women

CNN ONLINE

Japan's deputy prime minister has come under fire after apparently blaming childless women for Japan's demographic woes. Taro Aso, 78, denied that the elderly were the cause of the country's declining population and increasing social security costs during a speech in Fukuoka prefecture in southern Japan on Sunday. "There are lots of strange people who say the elderly are to blame, but that is wrong," said Aso, who also holds the role of finance minister. "The problem is with those who didn't give birth."



Children play traditional games on Kim Il Sung square during celebrations marking the Lunar New Year of the Pig on Mansu Hill in Pyongyang yesterday. The Year of the Pig is believed to be a symbol of optimism and wealth.

We are not a 'political tool'

Afghan women on peace talks with Taliban

AFP, Kabul

Women who lived under the harsh rule of the Taliban urged senior Afghan politicians to ensure their hard-won freedoms are not bargained away when they talk peace with the insurgents yesterday. The Afghan Women's Network said their rights should not be used as a "political tool" in dealings with the Taliban, who barred women from schools and jobs and drastically curtailed their personal liberties when they ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. Their appeal comes as the Taliban meets with a high-ranking Afghan delegation in Moscow, and a week after the insurgents held unprecedented talks with United States negotiators.

The Taliban said the Moscow meeting - their most significant with Afghan politicians in recent memory - would discuss the withdrawal of foreign troops, peace terms and its vision for governance. "We are not a political tool by these politicians. If they (Taliban) return and impose restrictions on women, we will not accept that," Mashal Roshan, a coordinator from the Kabul-based women's network, told AFP. "In the past 17 years Afghan women have gained some hard-won achievements. We don't want to lose that. It's our right to go to school and to work, and everyone should respect that."



DRUG CONVICTS

Sri Lanka ready for landmark hanging

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka is ready to execute five drug convicts and end its 42-year capital punishment moratorium once President Maithripala Sirisena signs the death warrants and a hangman is appointed, officials said yesterday. Sirisena announced last year a tougher line on spiralling narcotics-related crime including executions for repeat drug offenders, inspired by a similar crackdown in the Philippines. The country's justice minister told parliament yesterday that legal and administrative procedures for the five condemned Sri Lankans were completed last month, paving the way for the first hangings since 1976. "We have already complied with the president's request to restart capital punishment," Thalatha Athukorale said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concerned that the following tender have been published through e-GP Portal.

Sl No.	Tender ID & Package No.	Name of works	Last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time
1	Tender ID: 276490; & Package No: 01/WD-01-Lot-2/Con/2018-19	Construction of 3 Nos. UT-1 Ferry, 3 Nos. Pontoon Improve and 3 Nos. Gangway of Ferry and Pontoon Construction/Rehabilitation Project Phase-II under Ferry Construction Division Dhaka.	19-Feb-2019 17:00	20-Feb-2019 14:00
2	Tender ID: 276491; & Package No: 01/WD-01-Lot-3/Con/2018-19	Construction of 2 Nos. UT-1 Ferry, 1 No. UT-II-Imp-Ferry, 3 Nos. Pontoon improve and 2 Nos. Gangway of Ferry and Pontoon Construction/Rehabilitation Project Phase-II under Ferry Construction Division Dhaka.	19-Feb-2019 17:00	20-Feb-2019 14:00
3	Tender ID: 276492; & Package No: 02/WD-02-Lot-1/Con/2018-19	Construction of 3 Nos. UT-1 Ferry, 3 Nos. Pontoon Improve and 3 Nos. Gangway of Ferry and Pontoon Construction/Rehabilitation Project Phase-II under Ferry Construction Division Dhaka.	19-Feb-2019 17:00	20-Feb-2019 14:00
4	Tender ID: 276493; & Package No: 03/WD-03-Lot-1/Con/2018-19	Construction of 3 Nos. UT-1 Ferry, 3 Nos. Pontoon Improve and 3 Nos. Gangway of Ferry and Pontoon Construction/Rehabilitation Project Phase-II under Ferry Construction Division Dhaka.	19-Feb-2019 17:00	20-Feb-2019 14:00
5	Tender ID: 276494; & Package No: 03/WD-03-Lot-2/Con/2018-19	Construction of 3 Nos. UT-1 Ferry, 4 Nos. Pontoon Improve and 3 Nos. Gangway of Ferry and Pontoon Construction/Rehabilitation Project Phase-II under Ferry Construction Division Dhaka.	19-Feb-2019 17:00	20-Feb-2019 14:00
6	Tender ID: 276495; & Package No: 03/WD-03-Lot-3/Con/2018-19	Construction of 3 Nos. UT-1 Ferry, 4 Nos. Pontoon Improve and 3 Nos. Gangway of Ferry and Pontoon Construction/Rehabilitation Project Phase-II under Ferry Construction Division Dhaka.	19-Feb-2019 17:00	20-Feb-2019 14:00

The interested persons/firms may visit the website (www.eprocure.gov.bd) to get the details of the tender.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

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