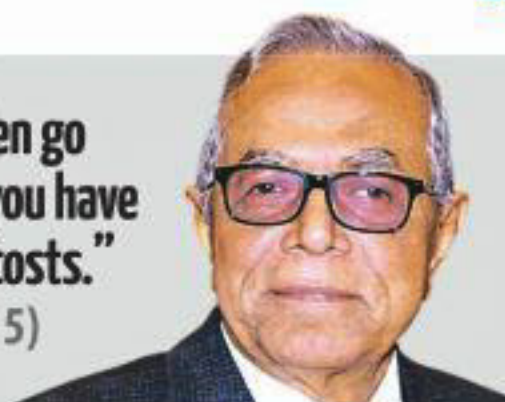




"The future has won and the past has lost."
SPAIN'S SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER PEDRO SANCHEZ SAYS AFTER ELECTION VICTORY (PAGE 8)



"Specialist physicians' consultation fees often go beyond the capacity of common people. So, you have to take an initiative to lower the treatment costs."
PRESIDENT ABDUL HAMID URGES DOCTORS (PAGE 5)



"If minimum trust or faith does work in the financial sector, it cannot work."
NOTED ECONOMIST PROF WAHIDUDDIN MAMMUD, AT A LECTURE ON 'ECONOMICS, ETHICS AND LITERATURE' (PAGE B1)



It was Tarique's decision

Fakhrul says after 4 BNP MPs take oath; party shifts stance to 'speak out on democracy, Khaleda's release'

"Wait and you will come to know in time."

MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ABOUT WRITING TO THE SPEAKER SEEKING TIME FOR HIS OATH TAKING.



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ending weeks of speculations, four BNP MPs yesterday took oath in line with the party decision, although party Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, who has also been elected, did not do so.

With them, five of the six BNP MPs have now joined parliament.

The four are Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan (Brahmanbaria-2), Harunur Rashid (Chapainawabganj-3), Mosharraf Hossain (Bogura-4) and Aminul Islam (Chapainawabganj-2).

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury administered the oath at her parliament office at 5:00pm.

Earlier on Thursday, Zahidur Rahman (Thakurgaon-3) took oath, becoming the first BNP MP to do so. However, he was expelled from the party only two days later

for violating the party decision.

The BNP and its Jatiya Oikyafront ally Gonoforum rejected the December 30 election results, citing irregularities and vote rigging. The BNP Standing Committee, the party's highest policymaking body, had also decided not to join parliament.

Under constitutional provisions, yesterday was the last day for taking oath. However, the 90-day deadline may be extended with the Speaker's approval. **'NO RULE OF LAW'**

Soon after taking oath, the BNP MPs said they joined parliament on instructions from Tarique Rahman, who is acting as the party chairman in his mother's absence.

"We have come to parliament to take oath in line with the party decision, especially on instructions from Tarique Rahman," Harunur Rashid, also a joint secretary general of the party, said.



Overturned tank wagons of a furnace oil-carrying train that derailed over a canal, connected to the Halda river, in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila yesterday. Inset, labourers collect spilled oil from the spot.

Story on page 2.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN



No Shakib; red missing too

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers wrapped up their home preparation yesterday before their departure for Ireland tomorrow for a triangular series that will lead into the ICC World Cup starting on May 30 in England and Wales.

Bangladesh ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza spoke to the media after a gruelling training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur under scorching heat.

The Tigers' inspirational leader showed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

2 killed in raid on militant hideout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two militant suspects were killed after they allegedly detonated improvised explosive devices in a house in the city's Bosila area during a Rab raid early yesterday.

"The bodies were beyond recognition due to the blasts ... We found three legs so at least two people were killed," Rab Director General Benazir Ahmed told reporters after visiting the spot yesterday afternoon.

The Rab could not identify the bodies. They were of men aged between 20 and 25.

Rab cordoned off the corrugated-iron-sheet structure around 3:00am following a tip off that members of Jama'at ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) were holed up there with explosives, said Mufti Mahmud Khan, Rab's legal and media wing director.

The raid was carried out when the country is on high alert following deadly attacks in Sri Lanka, allegedly by Islamic State, just over a week ago.

Mufti said the suspects responded with gunfire when Rab asked them to surrender. There was a small explosion around 3:00am. Things went quiet following a huge explosion around 4:45am, he said.

The second explosion was so strong that a part of the tin roof blew away and caused a fire.

Later, on inspection, body parts were found scattered. There was hardly any furniture in the house. A refrigerator was damaged and the ceiling fan blades were bent in explosion.

The house, on the eastern end of Metro Housing area, is around half a kilometre away from Rab-2 headquarters. It is surrounded by a canal, a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Cops among 3 hurt in crude bomb blast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two traffic constables and a community policeman were injured in a crude bomb blast in the capital's Gulistan area yesterday evening.

The crude bomb went off near Gulistan Cinema Hall around 7:35pm during load-shedding, said Shiblee Noman, additional deputy commissioner (Motijheel division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

The injured -- traffic constables Nazrul, 45, and Liton, 42, and community policeman Ashik, 28 -- were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Explosive experts visited the spot to know more about the incident, Noman added.

Injured Ashik said the crude bomb exploded

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

No mercy for sexual abusers

If necessary tougher laws to be enacted, PM tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday in parliament said the government will ensure the highest punishment to culprits, if necessary by enacting tougher laws, to prevent sexual harassment in the country.

"There'll be no mercy for those who will be involved in [incidents of] sexual harassment. If necessary, we must enact tougher laws and ensure that maximum punishment is given to those who commit sexual harassment," she said, referring to the brutal killing of madrasa student Nusrat Jahan.

Hasina made the remarks while participating in a discussion on a resolution urging the parliaments, governments and citizens of all countries to forge resistance against terror and sexual harassment incidents.

Mentioning that the militancy and terrorism was not only a problem in Bangladesh but in the whole world, the PM said her government will do whatever necessary to combat these issues.

Treasury Bench lawmaker Tofail Ahmed placed the proposal in the House, which was passed by voice votes



SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Regulator moves to stop slide in stocks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The stock market regulator yesterday came up with a raft of decisions to halt the fall in share prices for over a month.

The move came a day after its meeting with the prime minister at her office over the matter.

The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) revealed the decisions after a meeting with the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE), and merchant banks and brokerage associations at the capital's BSEC.

As per the decisions, the general investors' quota for initial public offering (IPO) shares has been increased by 10 percentage points and the lock-in period for

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

STOCKS SINK TO 27-MONTH LOW B1

Clarification

GPH Ispat Ltd has given a clarification in response to a report published in The Daily Star on Sunday with the headline "Dam makeshift, damage extensive".

Following is the full text of the clarification.

GPH becomes the pioneer in the country's steel sector to install the world standard Quantum Electric Arc Furnace technology. The plant will generate several thousand employments, save electricity and natural gas, a huge foreign currency, produce import alternatives of Bangladesh's steel demand and contribute a lot to the government exchequer.

In compliance with the honorable prime minister's instruction to use surface water instead of ground water, the GPH management started works accordingly to fulfill its water demand for the upcoming plant that needs almost 6 million litres of water per day in its production process.

According to suggestion of the water resource ministry, GPH has already completed the feasibility

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



Crime Scene Unit officials inspect the charred remains of two suspected militants who allegedly detonated an improvised explosive device during an anti-militancy drive by Rab in the capital's Bosila yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Violence mars phase-4 voting in West Bengal

BJP, TMC workers clash; security forces disperse protesters in Kashmir

AGENCIES

India's battleground state of West Bengal took the centre stage in the fourth phase of a staggered general election yesterday after clashes broke out between supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party and a regional bloc in Asansol.

In West Bengal, a populous eastern state where Modi is trying to gain seats to offset likely losses in northern India, security forces chased away people wielding sticks after workers from Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) took on those from regional Trinamool Congress, police said.

An official with the Election Commission of India said paramilitary forces fired a blank round inside a polling station in another constituency in the state after a scuffle between voters and troops, who were demanding that mobile phones be kept aside while voting, as rules state.

There were no immediate reports of any poll-related injuries in West Bengal, where at least one person was killed and three injured during the third phase of voting last week.

The election, the world's biggest democratic exercise with about 900 million voters, started on April 11 with Modi in the lead amid heightened tension with long-time rival Pakistan.

The last phase of voting is on May 19. There are a total of 545 seats in parliament's lower house.

SEE PAGE 10 COL