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Revive Saarc to take up challenges

Experts say at BIPSS, Star roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International relations analysts want the revival of Saarc to establish South Asia as a strong regional platform that can help address challenges, including conflict, terrorism, poverty, joblessness, and climate change.

The role of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) now is more important than ever as it faces additional challenges of trade war between China and the US, while Indo-Pakistan tension over Kashmir gets a new turn after India scrapped Kashmir's autonomy, they said.

India, the biggest power of South Asia, too is moving to establish itself as a global power -- leaving the region exposed to fragmentation, the analysts said, suggesting that the small countries, including Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, launch a strong diplomatic move towards making Saarc functional.

The observations came at a roundtable titled "South Asia in a Changing World" jointly organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) and The Daily Star at the latter's conference hall yesterday.

South Asia is home to 1.8 billion people or one-fourth of the global population, and 40 percent of them live below the poverty line. Saarc, which was established in 1985 for promoting regional cooperation, however, has only 5 percent of intra-regional trade.

The platform now is almost non-functional. No Saarc summit was held after 2014 as India cancelled its participation in the 19th Saarc summit, alleging Pakistan's involvement in the 2016 Uri terror attack in Kashmir.

"South Asia is one of the least integrated regions. It is mostly because of trust deficit," said former ambassador

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Relatives cry near the body of Mong Khisa Thanchangya who was killed in a firing during yesterday's union parishad election in Bandarban's Naikhyangchhari upazila. Inset, a man casting vote on an EVM at Nabinagar municipal polls in Brahmanbaria.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

UPAZILA POLLS
Violence claims two lives in Bandarban

STAR REPORT

Two people were killed and several others, including two law enforcers, were injured as violence erupted at a union parishad election in Bandarban yesterday.

The dead were identified as Mong Khisa Thanchangya, 55, and Aung Chai Mong Thanchangya, 45, from Naikhyangchhari upazila. They were the followers of Awami League candidate Babul Thanchangya.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Sadia Afrin said a clash took place between the followers of Babul and his rival Ahmad Ali, the BNP candidate, at Patrajhiri Government Primary School centre around 2:45pm.

To bring the situation under control, BGB men opened fire to disperse the crowd, she said.

Du Mong Thanchangya, a witness, told The Daily Star that during the firing, Mong Khisa tried to flee the spot but the BGB men went after him and shot him. Mong died on the spot.

Another victim, Aung Chai, got hit by a bullet during the clash. He was rushed to Ukhia upazila

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Russia to take Rooppur nuke plant waste

Cabinet okays policy for all radioactive waste

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Russia will take back the nuclear wastes of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant and dispose those in their country, a top government official said after the cabinet meeting yesterday.

"Russia will take back wastes of the Rooppur nuclear power plant in line with an agreement signed with them," cabinet secretary Mohammad Shaful Alam said while briefing reporters after weekly cabinet meeting.

The agreement was signed in March 2017.

A company would be formed to oversee disposal of all other radioactive wastes.

At the meeting, the cabinet approved the draft of "Radioactive Waste and Used Nuclear Energy Management National Policy" with a provision that different nuclear waste-producing institutions, including hospitals, will have to pay for the disposal of their radioactive wastes.

The meeting was held at the Prime Minister's Office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

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TURKEY OFFENSIVE AGAINST SYRIAN KURDS Syria steps in to contain assault

Kurds say Russia-backed deal reached with Assad; Erdogan defiant as US readies 'big sanctions'

AFP, Tall Tamr

The Syrian regime sent troops towards the Turkish border yesterday to contain Ankara's deadly offensive against the Kurds, stepping in for US forces due to begin a controversial withdrawal.

Meanwhile, Turkey President Tayyip Erdogan reiterated his commitment to continue the offensive against Kurdish fighters in face of tough US sanctions.

"We are determined to continue the operation until the end, without paying attention to threats. We will absolutely finish the job we started. Our battle will continue until ultimate victory is achieved," Erdogan said during a speech in Baku.

US President Donald Trump yesterday warned that Turkey faces imminent sanctions over its incursion into northeastern Syria, but also signalled that Washington would avoid armed conflict with Ankara.

"Big sanctions on Turkey coming!" Trump announced on Twitter. US congress has bipartisan support for the 'Iran-like' sanctions, said US Republican Senator Lindsey Graham.

Outgunned and without US protection, the autonomous Kurds in northeastern Syria had few other options to stop the rapid advance of Turkish troops and their Syrian proxies.

Turkey wants to create a roughly 30-kilometre (20-mile) buffer zone along its border to keep Kurdish forces at bay and also to send back some of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees it hosts.

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If ACC chief can't work, he should quit

Says MP Taposh

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission chairman should resign if he fails to discharge his responsibilities, said lawmaker Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday.

He made the comment in front of the Supreme Court to express his resentment for the ACC not filing any case against former BASIC Bank Ltd chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bachchu.

The ACC filed at least 56 cases in connection with the loan scam incidents in BASIC Bank. Initially, the managing director was removed and later Bachchu tendered his resignation before the finance minister.

"Even before investigation, we had seen at different meetings of the parliamentary standing committee that the main culprit behind the

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Eight-yr-old reels in 692-pound shark



CNN ONLINE

An eight-year-old boy reeled in a 314-kilogramme (692-pound) tiger shark on a fishing trip with his dad in Australia -- possibly setting a new world record.

Jonathan Millauro and his son Jayden came across the shark last week in waters about 160 kilometres (100 miles) south of Sydney, off the coast of New South Wales, according to CNN affiliate Nine News.

"The adrenaline was pumping from the moment we all spotted the shark at the boat," Millauro told Nine News.

Jayden, who only weighs about 40 kilogrammes (about 88 pounds), managed to reel in the shark with a 15-kilogramme (33 pound) fishing line, while one of the other men on board held onto his harness.

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Rohingya man killed in Ukhia camp

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Cox's Bazar

A young Rohingya man was hacked to death at Ukhia's Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The dead is identified as Md Yunus, 25, of Lombashia-1 camp.

The incident took place at the camp around 10:30am.

Police detained Md Faisal, 28, in connection with the killing, said Abul Mansur, officer-in-charge of Ukhia police station.



PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 15

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

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