

Security forces spray water as people take part in the so-called 'Mourning March' in Santiago on Friday, to protest against the death of 23 people after more than ten days of civil unrest. The unrest started with protests against a rise in transport tickets and other austerity measures and descended into vandalism, looting, and clashes between demonstrators and police.

#### Malaysia rejects 'less than \$2bn' Goldman offer over 1MDB

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia rejected a compensation offer of "less than \$2 billion" from Goldman Sachs for the role of its subsidiaries in the multi-billiondollar 1MDB scandal, an aide to the country's prime minister said

Huge sums were stolen from Malaysian state fund 1MDB in a fraud allegedly involving former prime minister Najib Razak and his cronies, and spent on everything from high-end real estate to a luxury

Goldman's role has been under scrutiny as it helped arrange bond issues worth billions for 1MDB, with Malaysia claiming large amounts were misappropriated in the process and seeking \$7.5 billion in redress.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who reopened an investigation into the scandal after seizing power last year, told the Financial Times his government spurned a much smaller offer by the Wall Street titan.

"Goldman Sachs has offered something like less than \$2 billion,' he said in a Friday interview with the newspaper.

"We are not satisfied with that amount so we are still talking to them... If they respond reasonably we might not insist on getting that \$7.5 billion," he added, without providing further details.

A staff member travelling with Mahathir, who is currently in Bangkok, confirmed the premier's remarks to AFP on Saturday.

Last year, Malaysia filed charges against three units of the bank and two ex-employees over the scandal. Additional charges were filed in

August against 17 current and former executives of the three Goldman subsidiaries, which the Wall Street titan later said were "misdirected".

The news comes days after US officials said that Low Taek Jho, a central figure in the scandal, agreed to forfeit \$700 million in assets as part of efforts to recover the stolen

#### **BCL** activists

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attendance was poor. Saurav had been asking Farid to change the decision, which he did not agree to.

Golam Mostafa, OC of Chandrima police station in the city, said the principal was targeted as he did not listen to the BCL men.

He said the teacher filed a case against 57 people, including seven Chhatra League men, with the police station over the incident.

"We have identified the students who attacked the principal. We're trying to arrest them," he said.

Last night, police raided several student accommodations near the campus and took at least 25 students to the police station for interrogation.

Contacted, Mehedi Hasan, president of the BCL unit, said one of those who dragged the teachers was a Chhatra League man.

Asked about Saurav, he admitted Saurav was present when the incident happened. ÎI don't know about the

"We will take organisational actions against Saurav. If any other Chhatra League man is found involved, the person will also face action," he added.

## Trump predicts

Trump becoming only the third American president to be impeached. He is accused of abusing his office by withholding military aid to pressure Ukraine into opening a

corruption probe against one of his

2020 election rivals, Joe Biden. But while Democrats advance against the president, Trump is focusing on a strategy that relies on party loyalty and flat out denial that his pressure on Ukraine was illegal.

As long as the Republican majority in the Senate sticks by him, the lower house impeachment will fail to remove him from office. And Trump thinks he has that support locked up.

"The Republicans have been amazing," he said earlier in Washington.

Trump is also putting more effort into highlighting the economy, a point that Republicans might wish he stuck to more often, rather than his frequent diversions into controversial

Trump got a boost on that score with figures Friday that showed employment growing at a steady

fully as humans," said Abrar, also

president of rights organisation

report published this year, he said

Bangladesh stands 150th out of 180

countries in the World Press Freedom

He added, "Last year, the position

was 146th. Freedom of speech is not

charitable; it is a right and not an issue

DU teacher Robaet Ferdous said

the space for freedom of speech was

shrinking. "We are living in a state of

fear. In such a situation, no creativity or

Asif Nazrul, another DU professor,

innovation can take place," he observed.

said no rights exist in the absence of

freedom of expression. "Freedom of

speech is a fundamental component

of the spirit of the liberation war ....

Considering the terms of the right, we

are passing the worst time. We all need

Lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua said that

after the introduction of the Digital

Security Act (DSA), imposition of self-

censorship has increased alarmingly.

"It is so grave that journalists, activists

to strongly raise our voices.

Quoting a Reporters without Border

Odhikar.

for journalists only.

pace. The 128,000 new jobs reported by the Labor Department exceeded

Unemployment rose slightly to 3.6 percent but is still near the lowest rate

If a Democrat wins the presidency, Trump told the rally, prosperity will "That stock market would crash

like you've never seen before," he said. The picture looks less rosy for Trump on impeachment, which he describes as a "sham."

Trump says he did nothing wrong when he called the new Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, and sked him for a "favor."

Trump told the Washington

Examiner newspaper that he might

even "sit down, perhaps as a fireside chat on live television, and I will read the transcript of the call" to the But House committees have heard from a stream of witnesses saying they

were concerned by the way Trump dealt with Ukraine, bolstering the Democrats' case that he abused his

when Tim Morrison, the National Security Council's just-resigned top advisor for Russian affairs, said he "was not concerned that anything illegal was discussed.'

At the same time, Morrison confirmed that he had seen a link between the request for a probe against Biden's family and the granting of badly needed military aid.

A new Washington Post/ABC poll found that Americans remain almost evenly split on the crisis, with 49 percent saying he should be impeached and removed from office while 47 percent say he should

Even more telling, Democrats are 82 percent in favor of Trump's removal and Republicans 82 percent opposed.

The key for Trump is whether he can keep Republicans in lockstep -a big reason why he will maintain a steady pace of rallies like the one in Tupelo over the coming weeks.

According to the poll, the long skyhigh approval within the Republican electorate for Trump's performance has slipped to 74 percent. This is down eight percent from September's Trump did get some help Thursday findings by the same pollsters.

#### Speak up for right to speak and other professionals are imposing

self-censorship" He added, "The situation has taken us to a position where there is no place for dissenting voices. There is only one

opinion and ideology. Meanwhile, discussants at another roundtable said that the culture of impunity opposes freedom of expression, adding that the state must ensure a faster judicial procedure against all crimes committed against

urnalists. UK based human rights organisation ARTICLE 19 organised the roundtable discussion to observe the International Day of Impunity for Crimes against Journalists at The Daily Star Centre in

the capital yesterday. There, journalists and university teachers also said that violence against practitioners of freedom of expression was increasing due to the culture of impunity and the slow judicial process.

The United Nations recognised November 2 as the "International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists" and the day is observed annually worldwide.

Saleem Samad, the Bangladesh representative of Reporters without

Borders, while presenting the keynote paper, said that 35 journalists were killed in Bangladesh between 1996 to

"The judicial process has been complete in only eight cases, and in five of those, the families [of the victims] rejected the verdicts," he said.

He recommended special laws for the safety of journalists and removal some of sections from DSA 2018, which may allow harassment of journalists.

Nowsher Roman, brother and the complainant of the killing of journalist Runi, said that it has been eight years since journalists Sagor and Runi were killed. "The date of submitting the investigation report before court has been extended 68 times, which is frustrating."

The roundtable discussion was chaired by Golam Rahman, the former chief information commissioner.

Faruq Faisel, regional director of ARTICLE 19 in Bangladesh and South Asia, lawyer Tania Amir, professor Shamim Reza, Dhaka Journalists' Union General Secretary Shohel Haider Chowdhury, and Women Journalists' Forum President Nasimun Ara Huq Minu, also spoke at the programme.

# Kuet shut

institution would hamper their

The closure would also create a session jam, they said.

Kuet sources said the injured students left the campus after primary treatment. Ibrahim Khalil, a Kuet student, told The Daily Star that the clash broke out over a referee's decision while an inter-hall football tournament match was going on between Amar Ekushey and Fazlul Haque halls on Friday

Some students of Amar Ekushey

Hall then attacked the referee. A group of students of Fazlul Haque Hall were videoing the incident, leading to the clash between students of two dormitories, he added.

Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Khanjahan Ali Police Station, said additional policemen were deployed on the campus to fend off further untoward incident.

Meanwhile, yesterdays' admission tests of Khulna University were held on the Kuet campus, said Manoj Kumar Majumdar, public relations officer of the engineering university.

### Pretty Italian town offers

Desperate to save his hometown from depopulation, mayor Vincenzo Giambrone has spent the last three years convincing owners who've long abandoned their family homes to hand over the empty, crumbling buildings to newcomers

"I can't stand to see this gorgeous, old historical center empty and turn into a ruin. It hurts me, Giambrone tells CNN Travel.

The owners are oblivious to the damage they cause when they ditch their homes and refuse to restyle their ancient dwellings. It leaves a deep scar on the townscape with the risk of dangerous collapses."

According to Giambrone, there are roughly a dozen empty stone buildings available at present and "more to come shortly."

And with at least 100 other abandoned homes, all located in Cammarata's most ancient part, with the potential for rescuing, Giambrone has high hopes for the scheme.

"Now new buyers can finally step in to secure these crumbly walls and revive the historical area," he adds.

Understandably, there are a few conditions to Cammarata's "free" homes scheme.

Buyers must commit to renovating the property within three years of the purchase and pay a 5,000 euro (\$4,300) deposit, which will be returned once the work is

They will also need to present a clear refurbishment proposal for the property in question.

## Fiddling with disaster

The mixture produces hydrogen which is trapped inside the cylinder.

When they inflate the balloon, they use a valve on the cylinder to let gas

But they cannot control the production of hydrogen inside the cylinder, he said. As hydrogen continues to be produced, the cylinder gets hot due to the pressure and at one point, the cylinder explodes, he said.

Experts said hydrogen is an unstable and inflammable gas and there is great danger associated with hydrogen balloons.

Alam said public awareness and police action could change the situation.

'Hydrogen is not the problem; the problem is the way the balloons are inflated," he said. It is not possible to formulate law

for everything, he said. "We have to be aware and if we see vendors use such things, we should inform police," he

Alam also said this method of have brought the issue to the attention

of the administration several times We published advertisements in newspapers, making people aware."

Experts, however, called on the government to ban hydrogen balloons. "Helium does not explode. Even

if it comes into contact with fire, it just pops. But hydrogen is highly inflammable," Mohidus Samad Khan, associate professor of the Department of Chemical Engineering of BUET, said.

"There are many incidents where people got injured in other parts of the world due to hydrogen-filled balloons," he said.

It should be brought under a legal frame, Brig Gen Sazzad Hussain, director general of Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star.

On January 25, a balloon vendor was killed and two others were injured when their cylinder exploded on Dhaka Shikkha Board Laboratory School and College campus in the capital's Mirpur.

Two balloon vendors died and two others were wounded in a cylinder inflating balloons is not safe. "We explosion in Jatrabari on February 5,

### Tigers set to battle

Tigers' mind as numerous issues have ripped into Bangladesh cricket in recent times. First came the players' strike, a big talking point in the country's cricket. Once that came to a conclusion following an agreement between the Bangladesh Cricket Board and players, news arrived that the BCB was looking to take action against Shakib Al Hasan for breaking the terms of his contract and signing for a telecom company.

Something bigger was yet to arrive and it came in the form of Test and AFP, Baghdad T20I skipper Shakib's two-year ban from all cricket, handed down by the ICC on October 29, a day before the team was to depart for Delhi.

If the India series was a huge challenge, it became an ominous backs-to-the-wall task from there on, compounded by the fact that Tamim Iqbal was also set to miss the series due to personal issues.

The Tigers revised their T20I lineup following the ban and sent in Mahmudullah as the T20I captain and Mominul Haque to take charge of the Test side. Backs to the wall, on Monday, a day ahead of the first T20I, Riyad said they "have nothing to lose but a lot to gain".

"We are very positive about the result. We all know that India are very strong in their own conditions and their recent performances show that. We have nothing to lose so we are focusing on what we can gain. We want to play positive cricket," he said.

Riyad's counterpart Rohit Sharma, standing in for Virat Kohli, was unwilling to take the Tigers lightly.

"Bangladesh are a very, very good team. Over the years, we have seen how they have performed not just at home but also away whenever they have gone out. Especially against us... they have always put us under pressure. There is no way we look at this team differently," Sharma began.

"I understand there are two key players missing [in their side] but they still have quality players that can upset any team. I wouldn't say 'upset'. I would say 'beat' since that's a good word to use. They are very mature cricketers now.

Riyad will be hoping that the rest of the experienced players can turn up and be counted on with the help of the youngsters like Afif Hossain and Aminul Islam today.

#### Iraqi protesters, security forces clash overnight in capital

Iraqi security forces clashed with anti-government protesters in the early hours of yesterday near the capital's Tahrir Square, leaving one demonstrator dead and dozens more wounded, medical sources said.

Baghdad's overnight violence was centred on two bridges linking Tahrir to the western bank of the Tigris, where most government buildings and foreign embassies including the US and Iranian missions are located.

Riot police deployed along the bridges fired tear gas to keep back protesters, who have dug in to their positions with their own barricade.

The protests have evolved since October 1 from rage over corruption and unemployment into a wholesale condemnation of political and religious class and demands for "the downfall of the regime".

Protesters have occupied Tahrir square for more than a week, apparently unimpressed by the government's proposals, including of early elections and a new premier.

"We've been having elections for 16 years, and we've gotten nothing," said Haydar, 30, a protester in Tahrir.

Another activist, Mohammad, 22, said the demonstrators should not accept such "fake reforms". "People are very aware of what's

happening: we've gotten to an important phase and can't lose it all now," he added. Since October 1, more than 250

people have been killed and thousands more wounded in the rallies. The latest official toll was provided

on Wednesday, but medical and security sources said at least eight demonstrators have been killed

#### No case for next 7 days times was also discussed at the

hailed the new law, but urged the authorities to ensure the law was not misused to harass their workers.

"We give full support [to the law]. We are urging all transport owners and workers to follow the law," said Khandakar Enayetullah, secretary general of the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association, at a press conference in their Paribagh

The owners, however, reiterated some of their demands, including making some non-bailable offences under the law bailable.

"There is a shortage of drivers... If drivers are not given bail, the shortage will deepen. What will happen then?" demanded and Highways Division issued a gazette Enayetullah also

immediate formation of the rules and regulations of the law. The sanction of large fines on

programme.

"If the owners of the vehicles have proper papers and hire drivers having licences, they shouldn't be held responsible [for accidents]. But we still see that large fines are given to owners," said Enayetullah, adding such decisions would harm the sector.

Referring to different sections of the act, the association leader said that the law could not be imposed in a day. "It has to be done gradually," he added.

Lawmaker Mashiur Rahman Ranga, also president of the association, said, 'It will not be right to blame a single sector for the accidents. The actual culprits should be identified through On October 22, the Road Transport

stating that the Road Transport Act (RTA) would be effective from Friday. Parliament had passed the RTA transport owners by courts at different in September last year, replacing

the Motor Vehicle Ordinance, 1983, following mass student movement for safe road last year. According to section 105 of the new

act, if anybody gets seriously injured

or killed in a motor vehicle-related

accident, it would be considered an offence under the relevant sections of the Penal Code-1860. However, no matter what section 304(B) of the Penal Code contains, if anybody causes accident by reckless and negligent driving, and kills or

iniures someone severely, the person

will face a maximum sentence of five

years in jail or fine or both, reads

section 105 of the RTA. The offences that fall under section 105 are not bailable. The maximum punishment under

violation of traffic rules.

section 302 of the Penal Code is death penalty while it is life imprisonment under section 304(B). The law also hands hefty fines for

Without Shakib and Tamim,