

Modi

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Amid ongoing turmoil over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) across India, the statement has created quite a stir.

CAA was passed by the Parliament of India on December 11, 2019. It amended the Citizenship Act of 1955 by providing a path to Indian citizenship for illegal migrants of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian religious minorities, who had fled persecution from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan before December 2014.

Liton

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Mohammad Mithun scored his fifth ODI fifty and Mahmudullah Riyad hit a quick 28-ball 32.

It was then Saifuddin who, making a comeback to the side after recovering from his back injury, struck three sixes in the last over from Chris Mpfu and remained unbeaten on 28 off 15 balls, helping the hosts go past the 300 mark with ease.

Taking first guard, Bangladesh were off to a steady start riding on opens Liton and Tamim Iqbal, who added 60 runs. Tamim took his time to settle but Liton started aggressively and took on the Zimbabwe bowlers.

Tamim was dismissed after scoring 24 runs when the left-hander was caught on the crease and became the first wicket of 19-year-old debutant off spinner Wesley Madhever. Tamim, who was given out leg-before, went for a review but even that could not help him as replays showed the ball was hitting the stumps.

Liton was solid at the other end and reached his fifty off 45 balls with Nazmul Hossain Shanto at the other end. Nazmul, however, departed after scoring 29 while the experienced Mushfiqur Rahim was also dismissed cheaply, for 19.

But Liton kept the scoreboard ticking along at good pace after a watchful period following his fifty, and eventually reached his second hundred off 95 balls and went on to accelerate the innings before he had to leave the field with cramps.

Bangladesh literally toyed with the Zimbabwean batters with Saifuddin making a strong statement as an all-rounder, bagging three wickets for 27 runs from seven overs. Apart from Mashrafe, off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz also picked up two wickets for the Tigers.

Lack of experience at the top has been the biggest concern for the visitors as they kept losing wickets at regular intervals.

Young Madhever's 35 off 44 balls was the highest score for the batting side as Zimbabwe helplessly surrendered to the hosts without putting up a fight at all.

There will be questions over Zimbabwe's strength as an opponent with a lack of bite in the side but this win will surely boost the morale of the Tigers, who had lost their last five games in the format.

SC rejects

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in the Anti-Corruption Commission Act-2004, the HC said.

It is the sole jurisdiction of the OC to investigate a case after it has been filed with a police station, the court added.

The HC ordered the chief judicial magistrate of Rajshahi, who conducted a judicial enquiry into the allegation, to send the probe report along with relevant documents and witnesses' statements to the ACC.

It also directed the graft watchdog to initiate the next course of action based on the judicial enquiry report under the ACC Act-2004 and the ACC rules-2007 after receiving the documents from the chief judicial magistrate.

Rajshahi's CJM Md Mehedi Hasan Talukder submitted the probe report to the HC in November last year, saying that the enquiry has found five police officials, including three additional superintendents of Rajshahi police and OC Shakil, responsible for manipulating the FIR.

Besides Shakil, four other police officials are additional superintendents of police (administration and crimes) Mahmudul Hasan, M Matiuir Rahman (DSB) and Abul Kalam Shahid (Puthia circle), and Inspector (investigation) Mohinul Islam of Puthia Police Station.

In the verdict, the HC directed the investigation officer of the case to immediately transfer it to the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) for investigation. It also expected that PBI chief Banaj Kumar Majumder would play a special role in supervising the probe.

The court also asked the IGP to take departmental action against OC Shakil after conducting an enquiry into the allegation against him.

Yesterday, Nigar's lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua told The Daily Star that the ACC and the PBI were probing the allegation against the suspended OC and others following the HC verdict.

Shakil is reportedly trying to influence the probe, he said, adding that there is no legal bar for the ACC and the police administration to continue the investigation following the apex court order.

Yusuf Hossain Humayun and Abdul Matin Khasru appeared for Shakil, while Fida M Kamal and Jyotirmoy represented Nigar before the court.



FROM LEFT ... development activist and lawmaker Aroma Dutta, Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives Minister Tazul Islam, GAF Coordinator Mohsin Ali, Economist Prof MM Akash and UNDP Bangladesh's Senior Project Manager Sardar M Asaduzzaman speak to the media during a views exchange meeting in the capital's Cirdap auditorium yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Held back by lack of political will

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Talking to this newspaper after the event, Ziaul said officials of these departments bypass upazila parishad in terms of accountability.

For example, he continued, upazila health and family planning officers (UHFPOs) are supposed to report to the upazila parishad, but in reality they are reporting to superior departmental officials, bypassing the upazila parishad.

According to the upazila parishad act, upazila chairmen are assigned to prepare the annual performance report of the officials of the 17 departments while the senior officials of their respective departments are charged with the responsibility of preparing the annual confidential report (ACR).

On the other hand, the parent department does not properly monitor the activities of the UHFPOs as their activities have been transferred by law.

It is a big reason for the healthcare facilities in rural areas being poor, he added.

Referring to Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009, Ziaul said functions of seven government offices were "transferable" to union parishad authorities.

He said for proper implementation of the laws, the government needs to abolish and withdraw some policies, directives, and circulars.

Harunur Rashid, president of Upazila Parishad Foundation, alleged that the ministries do not want local government representatives to take care of the public services.

Providing public services through the local government institutions is the most efficient way as they have better service delivery capacity, said Prof Ferdous Arfina Osman of Dhaka University's public administration department.

GAF Coordinator Mohsin Ali said

although the elected representatives were the heads of local government institutions on paper, they did not actually have such powers.

He said an efficient local government was imperative to reducing the service-delivery discrimination between urban and rural areas.

Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Minister Tazul Islam said public representatives have to be more competent in providing services. They need to press relevant authorities harder for implementing development projects in their areas.

Economist Prof MM Akash, development activist and lawmaker Aroma Dutta, UNDP Bangladesh's Senior Project Manager Sardar M Asaduzzaman, and Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum President Zakaria Alam, among others, spoke at the event.

China sees dramatic drop

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coincided with restrictions imposed on transportation and business activities, as millions of people are being quarantined, the space agency noted.

Nasa and the European Space Agency (ESA) have used pollution monitoring satellites to analyse the changes, reports Yahoo News.

They then released two maps to

show the differences.

"This is the first time I have seen such a dramatic drop-off over such a wide area for a specific event," Fei Liu, an air quality researcher at Nasa's Goddard Space Flight Centre, said in a statement, according to the BBC.

A decline in nitrogen dioxide levels was observed during the economic recession in 2008, but that decrease

was more gradual, she added.

Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations in late January and early February have previously been linked to decreases in pollution levels, but the levels normally went up again once the celebrations were over, Nasa noted.

"This year, the reduction rate is more significant than in past years and it has lasted longer," Liu told BBC.

Death toll now 3 in Meghalaya

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region to curtail rumours that could deteriorate law and order, state officials said.

The tension started on Friday when clashes broke out between Khasi Students' Union (KSU) members and non-tribals during a rally organised against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and demanding implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP), at Ichamati, district Superintendent of Police Claudia Lyngwa said.

Eight people have been arrested in this case and a magisterial inquiry has been instituted to probe into the incident, she said.

One person was stabbed to death at the lewduh market under Cantonment Beat House on Saturday when unidentified persons went on an attacking spree that left seven others

seriously injured, the SP said, adding that no one has been arrested so far in this connection.

Three companies of central forces have been deployed in the sensitive areas of the district, including in the affected areas of the city, the officials said.

Governor Thagata Roy and Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma have appealed to the citizens to maintain peace. Both had taken to social media to issue their appeals even as mobile internet services were suspended in the six districts.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act makes religion the test of citizenship in India for the first time. The government says it will help minorities from three Muslim-dominated countries to get citizenship if they fled to India because of religious persecution.

Critics say it is designed to discriminate against Muslims and violates the secular principles of the constitution.

The indigenous people of the northeastern states are worried that the entry of these people will endanger their identity and livelihood.

Inner Line Permit is an official travel document issued by the concerned state government to allow inward travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period. It is obligatory for Indian citizens from outside those states to obtain a permit for entering into the protected state.

Protesters in Meghalaya have been demanding for ILP to be implemented in their state. ILP is in place in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.

Bangladesh will always

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the government of the newly-independent state' and hopes that under his leadership the new republic would grow from strength to strength.

Bangabandhu expresses his sincere gratitude for the tremendous support given by the Soviet Union to the people of Bangladesh in their struggle for freedom and independence.

Bangabandhu visits the Lenin Museum in Red Square and lays a wreath bearing the inscription "to the immortal Lenin from the Prime Minister of Bangladesh."

Addressing a vast gathering at Moscow University in Bangla, Bangabandhu says that we believe in neutral and non-aligned foreign policy aimed at the establishment of world peace. We believe in co-existence as the Soviet Union does, he adds.

Bangabandhu further says, "Never can we forget the help given by the Soviet Union in the hour of our

nation at peril."

The Soviet Union and Bangladesh today sign a 38-million Ruble agreement to aid the ongoing projects in Bangladesh. The four ongoing projects in Bangladesh that will come under this agreement are Ghorashal Thermal Plant, electric manufacturing plant at Chittagong, radio transmitters and oil and gas exploration.

FIRST EXPORT CONSIGNMENT

A large quantity of carpet backing cloth and frozen shrimp are loaded today on ships for export. This is the first export consignment from the Chittagong Port after the liberation of Bangladesh.

EXODUS FROM RURAL AREAS FOR JOBS

Of late there has been a tremendous exodus from the rural areas to Dhaka. Two reasons have mainly contributed to this exodus: firstly, inadequate job opportunities in the rural areas and secondly, people believe that if they can register their names with the

employment exchange programme of the government they would be assured of a job. Since independence, about 1,75,000 job-seeking people have registered their names with this programme. Of those, 95 percent are seeking jobs in mills, factories and other places where they could be employed as labourers. All of them are unskilled workers.

FOODGRAIN HOARDERS WARNED

Food and Civil Supplies Minister Phani Bhushan Majumder warns against the hoarding of foodgrain. He informs that the food position up to December is 18 lakh tonnes and the government is making arrangements to fill up the gap from local production and import from abroad. The government is distributing 2 lakh tonnes of foodgrain as relief and modified ration each month, he adds.

SOURCES: March 3, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, Azad, Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer and Purbodesh.

Indians can't be split

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a lack of government effort to tackle the violence.

"I am very worried and disturbed that the violence took place in the capital of the country. If minorities are tortured and police failed or could not discharge their duties, then it is a

matter of serious concern," Sen said after attending an event organised by the Pratiche Trust according to the correspondent.

Sen reiterated that he was merely raising a few questions about the Delhi violence out of concern and would not jump to any conclusions

without analysing the entire matter.

He also said the timing of Justice S Muralidhar's transfer, who was hearing the Delhi violence case, raised questions even though the decision for transfer was taken long ago.

Deaths, cases rise

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87,000 infected since the virus was first detected late last year in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

China yesterday reported 573 new infections, the highest figure in a week after a dip. All but three of them were in Hubei province, of which Wuhan is the capital.

Despite the increase, China said its response to the epidemic -- which include temporarily closing factories and quarantining Hubei -- "continues to be good" though risks still remained.

"The next step is to focus on the risks brought by the resumption of work and the increasing number of foreign cases," said Mi Feng, spokesman at the National Health Commission.

While the numbers in China are still far lower than the huge daily increases reported during the first two weeks of February, COVID-19 has spread rapidly across borders, with South Korea, Italy and Iran emerging as hotspots.

South Korea, which has the most infected people outside China, reported 586 new cases yesterday, bringing its total to 3,736.

Australia reported the first death on its soil -- a 78-year-old man who had been evacuated from the coronavirus-stricken Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan.

There are fears the disease could hammer the global economy, and stock markets last week plunged to their lowest levels since the 2008 financial crisis.

Global attention turned to the United States on Saturday after the first fatality on American soil was confirmed.

"We've taken the most aggressive actions to confront the coronavirus," President Donald Trump said at a hastily arranged White House press conference.

"Our country is prepared for any circumstance... There is no reason to panic at all."

The fatality occurred in Washington state's King County, which includes Seattle, a city of more than 700,000

people, health officials said.

The victim was in his 50s and had "underlying health conditions," officials added, as they also announced a possible outbreak in a Washington state nursing home, where a health worker and a resident in her 70s were both confirmed sick with the virus.

Other residents and staff were "ill with respiratory symptoms or hospitalised with pneumonia of unknown cause," the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said.

The death and two confirmed Washington cases all involved patients who had not travelled overseas or come in contact with anyone known to be ill, indicating the virus was spreading in the US.

"We will see more cases," Health Secretary Alex Azar said at the White House.

"But it's important to remember, for the vast majority of individuals who contract the novel coronavirus, they will experience mild to moderate symptoms."

France cancelled gatherings of 5,000 people or more after a surge of new cases were confirmed there on Saturday. The country's total stands at 100, with two deaths logged.

In two regions hard-hit by the virus, Oise and La Balme-de-Sillingy, some schools were closed, while authorities warned against non-essential travel and encouraged people to work from home if possible.

Yesterday's Paris half-marathon and an agricultural symposium were among the events axed.

Italy, the hotspot of the outbreak in Europe, saw a jump in new cases on Saturday, with its number of infections exceeding 1,000 and the death toll rising by eight to 29.

The outbreak forced the postponement of five matches in Italy's top-flight Serie A football league, including the heavyweight clash between champions Juventus and Inter Milan.

New Malaysia PM

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premier but then sought to return.

The king's decision Saturday to pick Muhyiddin Yassin as premier was greeted with shock as Mahathir's allies claimed to have enough support, and it sparked widespread anger that the democratically elected government had been ejected.

Muhyiddin's coalition includes the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the party of disgraced ex-leader Najib Razak, as well as a hardline group that wants tougher Islamic laws.

UMNO was the corruption-riddled lynchpin of a coalition thrown out at the 2018 elections as allegations swirled that Najib and his cronies looted billions of dollars from state fund IMDB. Najib is now on trial for corruption.

Just before Muhyiddin's inauguration, Mahathir accused him of betrayal and said he would seek a parliament vote challenging the new premier's support -- signalling the political crisis is far from over.

"This is a very strange thing ... losers will form the government, the winners will be in the opposition," he said.

"The rule of law no longer applies."

A candidate for prime minister must prove to the king, who appoints the position, that he has the backing of at least 112 MPs. Mahathir claims to have that number and believes Muhyiddin does not.

Mahathir's alliance said parliament should be allowed to re-convene on March 9, as it is scheduled to do, as speculation grows the new government might seek a delay.

Muhyiddin's inauguration went ahead yesterday morning at the national palace, although Mahathir's alliance boycotted it.

Meanwhile public anger is growing at the ejection of the reformist alliance, with the hashtag "NotMyPM" trending on Twitter and more than 130,000 people signing a petition that said the move is a "betrayal" of voters' choice at the 2018 poll.

Mahathir -- who served a first stint as premier from 1981 to 2003 before staging a comeback two years ago -- also raised concerns that ongoing court cases against Najib related to the IMDB scandal could be affected by the change of government.

Abuzz with life

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installed. According to the revised deadline, the country's longest bridge will be open to traffic in June next year. It will connect the capital with 21 southern districts and is expected to boost Bangladesh's gross domestic product by 1.2 percent.

However, there was a palpable fear that the coronavirus outbreak would hamper the progress of the project.

The headquarters of the Chinese company building the bridge, China Major Bridge Engineering Co Ltd, is in Wuhan city, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak.

The outbreak started affecting the project and officials were worried that progress would suffer further if the situation in China did not improve soon.

The construction work and the river training are being carried out by two Chinese firms. Most of the construction materials are being imported from China.

Of the 980 Chinese citizens involved in the project, 332 went home to celebrate the Chinese New Year in mid-January. Most have not been able to return due to the outbreak, according to a government report.

Thirty-nine spans have arrived from China, 25 of which have been installed. But the company in China constructing the remaining two spans is currently closed due to the coronavirus outbreak.

At a press briefing at the Awami League party office in Dhanmondi on Saturday, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said the construction work of the bridge would be slightly affected if the coronavirus

situation did not improve in "two months" and the employees were unable to return.

A senior engineer said the coronavirus "has started affecting our work".

"Most of those stuck in China are workers and that's why it is a problem," he told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

Various construction materials for the project are being imported from China and most of the source factories are based in Hubei Province, according to a finance ministry report on the potential impact of the virus on the economy.

"Regular import of construction materials is being hampered as many factories in China are now closed and the number of ships used for importing has decreased," the report said.

"If the situation lingers, the inventory management of the project could be hampered," it added.

PADMA BRIDGE PROGRESS

Eighty-six percent of the bridge's construction and 70 percent of the river training works have been done, said Quader on February 26.

This correspondent found that construction of the first nine piers from Mawa was done. Two spans have been installed between piers 5, 6, and 7.

At Janjira end, road slabs have been installed between piers 38th and 42nd. On the top level, around 40 workers were busy installing more.

A total of 2,917 slabs will be installed on the bridge, an engineer said. The rail lines will be set under the Padma Rail Link project.