

COVID GRIPS EUROPE
Austria imposes full lockdown, Germany may follow as cases surge
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The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

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RABIUS SANI 14, 1443 HJRI

16 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00



"[Our] Western partners are escalating the situation by supplying Kiev with lethal modern weapons... all our warnings and talk about red lines are treated superficially."
RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN ON UKRAINE CRISIS



"Hamas has significant terrorist capability, including access to... sophisticated weaponry, as well as terrorist training facilities."
UK HOME SECRETARY PATER ON OUTLAWING PALESTINIAN MILITANT GROUP



"We have in our hands the best players in the world, but also their families, their media entourages, their followers. It's not easy."
MAURICIO POCHETTINO ON COACHING PSG

REMARKS ON BANGABANDHU, MARTYRS

Zahangir shown the door

Expelled from AL; top leaders demand his removal as Gazipur mayor; Hasina warns of action against patronisers of rebels

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Gazipur City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Zahangir Alam, also the general secretary of Gazipur city Awami League, has been expelled from the party for his controversial comments on Bangabandhu and Liberation War martyrs.



footage that went viral on social media.

Meeting sources said the party chief expressed annoyance at the violence centring on the second phase of union parishad polls and party dissidents. She asked senior party leaders to prepare a list of rebel candidates and their patronisers.

The issues came up at the meeting when organisational secretaries presented their reports highlighting party infighting over the UP polls.

The PM warned that tough actions would be taken against the patrons of rebel candidates.

"Organisational actions will be taken against the backers of rebel candidates. It does not matter who they are, be they MPs or leaders, they will not get party nominations in future and will not be able to do politics with Awami League," an

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Boatloads of vegetables are being brought to Shyambazar wholesale market in the capital's Sadarghat yesterday. Growers from different upazilas in Dhaka and nearby districts bring their produce to the market to get good prices. Supply of winter vegetables has risen in recent weeks.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ARSA PRESENCE AT ROHINGYA CAMPS

EVERYBODY KNOWS Few dare speak

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

All the 34 Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar have become hubs of organised and cross-border crimes. And it is the Arakan Rohingya Solidarity Army (ARSA) that is behind it all, say Rohingyas and intelligence sources.

Out to make the refugee camps its stronghold, the armed group is cashing in on lax law enforcement and the misery of the refugees.

After the killing of Rohingya leader Mohib Ullah and the six Rohingyas men in October, the ARSA tightened its clutches even further, and the camp dwellers appear to have resigned themselves to fate: Fear and plight are not going to cease stalking them anytime soon.

"ARSA operatives are engaged in a wide array of crimes in the camps. They take absolute control of the camps at nighttime. The Rohingyas



"ARSA operatives are engaged in a wide array of crimes in the camps... The Rohingyas know their faces but they are too afraid to say anything publicly."

HABIB ULLAH
BROTHER OF MOHIB ULLAH

know their faces but they are too afraid to say anything publicly," Habib Ullah, brother of Mohib Ullah, told The Daily Star.

Echoing him, Noor Mohammad, another refugee, said the ARSA controls everything, from drug trafficking to extorting to hoarding relief goods. "There is no one to confront them and now they have established a tight grip on the camps."

However, the government and law enforcers maintain that the Rohingya insurgent group does not exist in Bangladesh and that some criminals might have falsely identified themselves as ARSA operatives to intimidate the general refugees.

"There is no ARSA presence in the camps. Those who say otherwise should be identified. It's a blatant lie. They have an evil agenda to portray the Rohingyas as criminals,"

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Docs closely monitoring Khaleda's condition

BNP to stage hunger strike today



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Doctors are closely monitoring the health of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at the capital's Evercare Hospital. They are monitoring her vital organs round the clock.

"We are closely monitoring her health and making readjustments to her medication," AZM Zahid Hossain, personal

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'I APOLOGISE'

India's PM Modi backs down on farm reforms in surprise victory for protesting farmers

AGENCIES

In a surprise announcement yesterday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he would repeal agriculture laws that farmers have been protesting against for more than a year, sparking celebrations for what farmers called a hard-fought victory.

Modi's decision is a significant climb-down for the combative leader and comes as state elections in politically important grain-belt states loom.

The legislation - three laws introduced in September last year - was aimed at deregulating the sector, allowing farmers to sell produce to buyers beyond government-regulated wholesale markets where growers are assured of a minimum price.

Farmers, fearing the reform would cut the prices they get for their crops, staged nationwide protests that drew in activists and celebrities from India and beyond, including climate activist Greta Thunberg and pop singer Rihanna.

"Today I have come to tell you, the whole country, that we have decided to withdraw all three agricultural laws," Modi said in an address to the nation.

"I apologise to India and with a true and



pure heart that may be... we were not able to convince farmers [about the three farm laws]. I urge farmers to return to their homes, their farms and their families, and I also request them to start afresh."

The government would repeal the laws in the new session of parliament, starting this month, he said.

The concession on laws the government had said were essential to tackle chronic wastage and inefficiencies comes ahead of elections early next year in Uttar Pradesh (UP), India's most populous state and long a key political battleground, and two other northern states with large rural populations.

Modi's capitulation leaves unresolved a

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Tigers lose a close one

STAR SPORT DESK

A revamped Bangladesh side showed a lot of positive intent but execution and decision-making at crucial times left a little to be desired as the hosts suffered a four-wicket defeat against Pakistan in the first T20I series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Opting to bat first on a Mirpur surface that surprisingly offered some bounce and a bit of early movement too, Bangladesh's inexperienced top-order crumbled like nine-pin, but some cool heads and steady hands gave them an outside chance with a 127-run total against an in-form Pakistan side.

But Pakistan, who rested four key members from the XI that lost the World T20 semifinal recently against Australia in UAE, shrugged off some early blows and powered home with four wickets in hand and four balls to spare to draw the first blood in the three-match series.

Playing without Tamim Iqbal, Shakib Al Hasan and

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Shadab Khan (C) and Mohammad Nawaz shake hands after guiding Pakistan to a four-wicket victory against Bangladesh in the first T20I at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

QUESTION LEAK RACKET

A public univ professor 'linked'

Arrested suspect names him in statement under Section 164

MUNTAKIM SAAD

The name of a professor of a renowned public university came up in the confessional statement of a man arrested over leaked question papers of recruitment exams for bankers.

Delowar Hossain, who was arrested on Wednesday in a case filed over the leaking of question papers of recruitment exams at five state-run banks, confessed to his involvement at a Dhaka court on Thursday.

He said the professor helped Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST), where he is an adjunct faculty, get the job of preparing and printing the question papers.

When the questions got printed at a press, the professor, who is the chairman of a department at a public engineering university, used to take two copies of the question papers, added Delowar, a suspended office attendant of AUST.

Delowar said he sometimes put two sets of questions in the professor's bag.

Court sources said Delowar mentioned several other names in his confession.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Shahadat Hossain, additional deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch (Tejgaon), said some individuals named in the confessional statement are not even part of the exam committee.

"We will sit with the Bankers' Selection Committee Secretariat and Ahsanullah university authorities to make a decision about them," he said.

Delowar in his statement further said he and the other suspects used to leak the questions of recruitment

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