



Can Tigers make history?

SPORTS REPORTER

After dismal showings in the longest format of the game over the years, Bangladesh started to show glimpses of heading in the right direction as they maintained an upper hand over New Zealand for the fourth consecutive day in the first Test at Mount Maunganui.

Pacer Ebadot Hossain's late punch put the hosts under pressure and saw them end the fourth day on 147 for five, holding onto a slender 17-run lead going into the final day today.

Earlier, Bangladesh rode on the bowling of Shoriful Islam and Mehedi Hasan Miraz – who scalped three wickets each – to bundle the hosts out for 328 runs in their first essay despite Devon Conway's hundred.

Bangladesh replied brilliantly and posted 458 – riding on fifties from Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Najmul Hossain Shanto, skipper Mominul Haque and Liton Das – to take a first-innings lead of 158, the first instance that Bangladesh have taken the

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Bangladesh pacer Ebadot Hossain, who wrecked New Zealand's top order in the final session of the fourth day of the first Test, pulls out his trademark celebration after casting Will Young at the Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

NBL allowed 11 to spend Tk 91cr via credit cards

9 of them members of Zainul Haque Sikder's family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Bank allowed 11 persons, including its board directors and their family members, to spend a staggering \$10.65 million (about Tk 91.4 crore) through credit cards, in a serious breach of banking rules.

The amount was spent from 2017 to 2021 by nine family members of Zainul Haque Sikder, the bank's former chairman, and two top executives of Sikder Group, according to a probe carried out by the Bangladesh Bank.

They spent the amount violating the central bank policy that allows a Bangladeshi national to spend a maximum of \$12,000 per year outside of the country through credit card or cash.

The bank allowed the 11 credit cardholders to spend beyond their foreign currency quota on the instruction of Sikder, who passed away on February 10 last year. A fortnight later, his widow Monowara Sikder was elected the bank's chairman.

The central bank probe also found the bank had opened a foreign currency account for ZH



Rick Sikder



Ron Sikder

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NARAYANGANJ CITY POLLS

Smear campaign on by rival candidates

Says AL nominee Ivy

Awami League candidate Selina Hayat Ivy said she wants to woo voters with new promises and ward off smear campaigns launched allegedly by her rival candidates.

She also said that, if elected, she will make Narayanganj a "blue city" centring the rivers surrounding the city.

"I term Narayanganj a 'blue city'. Seven rivers encircle us and I am planning to utilise them. I have already started working to turn the city green. And so, Narayanganj will be green and blue."

Former mayor Ivy said when she was in office, she took up a number of mega projects – some already completed and some ongoing. "I would like to complete all those projects."

Regarding the water tariff, she said "it is a propaganda" by the opponents and the issue has been wrongly interpreted. "Wasa's services were not available in

the city before. When they resume their service anywhere, three percent tax is imposed on the city dwellers. So, I

Independent candidate Taimur Alam Khandakar said he wants to make Narayanganj a pro-people city by

contractors control the city corporation. I first took the initiative to turn it into a city corporation but we did not want one that burdens the city dwellers with taxes."

He added the people of the city have also had to suffer for 18 long years due to the bitter rivalry between the mayor and local lawmakers.

"Some problems do not require huge

amounts of money to be solved; they need good intentions," he said, giving the example of the construction of a bridge over the Shitalakhya to connect Bandar with Narayanganj city.

"The Ecne approved the fund for the construction, but it is yet to begin because of the conflict between the mayor and lawmakers. There may be a difference of opinion, but why should they not come together for the good of the people? The conflict is an open

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INTERVIEWS TAKEN BY MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA



Selina Hayat Ivy



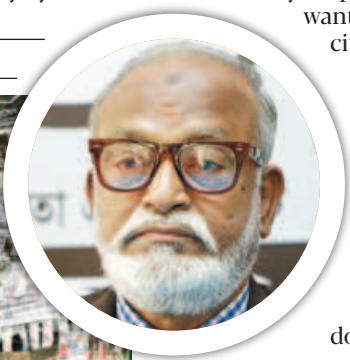
have nothing to do except levying it."

She added, "Taimur Alam Khandakar is a very conscious person. Why did he

reducing the tax burden on residents and freeing the city corporation office from the "grip of contractors".

"The people of Narayanganj say

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Taimur Alam Khandakar

Biman slashes fares for 4 ME destinations

RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday announced to reduce its ticket prices for different destinations in Middle Eastern countries including Saudi Arabia.

The reduced prices would be effective from January 16. The airfares for different routes were reduced from Tk 7,000 to Tk 13,000.

The association of recruiting agencies, however, said that the reduced amount is nominal and the airfare for Biman still remained very high compared to other airlines in the neighbouring countries.

Besides, passengers, especially the expatriate workers, may not be able to avail of the benefit as Biman has no ticket available until March, they added.

According to Biman authorities, the reduced fare would be applicable for tickets for Jeddah, Riyadh, Dammam, Dubai and Abu Dhabi routes, depending on the availability of the tickets.

The reduced airfare will continue as always, they added.

The national airliner said the one-way maximum fare for each economy class ticket on the Dhaka-Jeddah route has been reduced from Tk 72,455 to Tk 64,820 inclusive of tax.

The maximum one-way economy class fare on the Dhaka-Riyadh or Dammam routes have been reduced from Tk 70,758 to Tk 63,123.

For the Dhaka-Dubai route, the maximum one-way economy class fare has been reduced from Tk 75,508 to Tk 62,784 while the maximum one-way economy class fare on the Dhaka-Abu Dhabi route has been reduced from Tk 67,025 to Tk 58,542.

Fakhrul Islam, president of Recruiting Agency Welfare Organization of Bangladesh, yesterday told The Daily Star that in November, airfares for different Middle Eastern countries were between Tk 40,000 and Tk 45,000. Now, the prices are between Tk 70,000 and Tk 90,000, which is totally illogical.

Giving a comparison between

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Illegal stores on the footpath in front of the Emergency Department of Dhaka Medical College Hospital obstruct patients and their attendants. The shops contribute to traffic congestions that delay ambulances reaching the department. The photo was taken around 1:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Experts worry about new Covid variant in France

12 detected so far

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

While the world is grappling with the highly infectious Omicron, strain of Covid, scientists in France have identified a potentially worrying new variant, which has 46 mutations.

Named IHU, the new B.1.640.2 variant has so far infected 12 people living in southeastern France. The first case was linked to a person with a travel history to Cameroon, western Africa, said researchers in a paper published on medRxiv.

However, experts were quick to announce that just because a new variant

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