RAJSHAHI VISIT

PM to open 25 dev projects tomorrow

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate 25 development projects in Rajshahi city and across the district tomorrow. The projects have been completed at a cost of Tk 1,317 crore.

At an event, she will also lay the foundation stones of six more development projects, including the new Tathya Bhaban Complex scheme, to be implemented in the city and other parts of the district. It will require Tk 376 crore to complete the projects.

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An aerial view of Kalshi Flyover in the capital's Pallabi. The flyover project was approved in 2018 and its construction has been completed ahead of the scheduled deadline of June 2023 under the supervision of Bangladesh Army. The two-kilometre flyover, which now awaits inauguration, is expected to ease traffic congestions in parts of the city. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

INDIA'S ADANI GROUP

Fraud claims wipe $45b off stocks

AFP, *Mumbai*

Shares in the business empire of Asia's richest man Gautam Adani nosedived yesterday, extending this week's losses to $45 billion, days after a US investment firm claimed it had committed "brazen" corporate fraud.

Adani, 60, began his week the world's third-richest person but has tumbled down the rankings to seventh on Forbes' billionaires tracker after a $22.6 billion hit to his fortune in yesterday's trade.

His flagship Adani Enterprises plunged nearly 20 percent over the day's trade in Mumbai, briefly triggering an automatic trading halt, before recovering slightly to close 18.52 percent lower.

Trading was also halted in five other group companies, with shares in Adani Total Gas, Adani Green Energy and Adani Transmission falling 20 percent apiece and triggering their own stock exchange circuit breakers.

"Obviously this is panic-selling," JM Financials equity research chief Ashish Chaturmohta told AFP, adding that traders were creating fresh short-sell positions to protect previously made bullish bets on Adani stocks.

Hindenburg Research this week alleged in a report that Adani Group had used undisclosed related-party transactions and earnings manipulation to "maintain the appearance of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Most of errors in textbooks occurred 10 years ago

Says Dipu Moni

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Chandpur*

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said most of the mistakes in textbooks were made 10 years ago.

"At present, if there is any mistake in textbooks, it is inadvertent. And in case anyone makes errors on purpose, we have formed enquiry committees. We are correcting these," she told reporters in Chandpur.

The minister inaugurated three boat schools in the Dakatia river on the occasion of the 50th founding anniversary of Brac.

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AL to hold rallies to counter BNP's march

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League and its associate bodies will hold rallies in the capital today in response to BNP's four-day march.

Dhaka City (north) AL will hold a rally protesting the "terror and anarchy of the BNP" in front of Amin Market in Uttara's Azampur area at 10:30am and later distribute warm clothes among the needy, said a press release.

Around the same time, Jubo League will also organise a "peace rally" in front of the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue, it added.

Meanwhile, as part of the four-day programme, Dhaka North BNP activists will march today from Shahjadpur's Hossain Market to Abul Hotel in Malibagh around 2:00pm.

Leaders of both parties asked the activists to prevent untoward situations.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday refuted BNP's claim that the rallies were announced to counter the opposition's march.

The rallies are part of AL's regular political activities ahead of the next election, he said.

"The Awami League president has instructed us to be vigilant and peaceful," he told party men ahead of a meeting at the AL central office. The meeting was participated by leaders of AL's Dhaka city units, associated bodies and Bangladesh Chhatra League.

However, AL sources said the meeting was held mainly to finalise AL's response to BNP's programme.

Dhaka City (south) AL is likely to hold a rally on January 30 in front of the AL central office, they added.

Meanwhile, BNP leaders said they instructed the activists to ignore provocations by the ruling party activists.

"The ruling party announced programmes soon after we announced ours. It is not a good political practice... We will hold our programme peacefully," Amanullah Aman, convener of Dhaka City (north) BNP, told The Daily Star.

He said the party has already written to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner about the march.

It is not known whether the BNP received permission from the police.

Asked, he claimed that the event won't cause much trouble to the public as it was being held on a weekend and the marchers would not block the entire road.

ICC U19 WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP SOUTH AFRICA 2023

England, India set up final

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

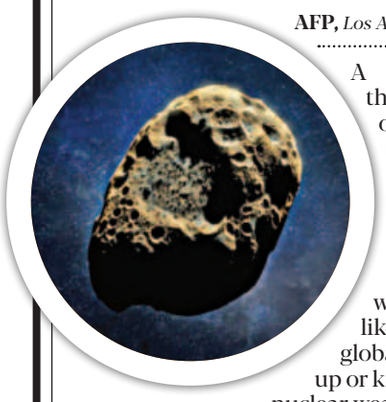
Two cricketing powerhouses India and England set up the final showdown of the inaugural ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup on Sunday after beating New Zealand and Australia in their respective semifinals in Potchefstroom yesterday.

While India batters made easy work of the 108-run target set up by New Zealand in the day's first fixture, England bowlers stepped up to defend a paltry 99-run total.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Truck-sized asteroid sails past Earth

AFP, *Los Angeles*



A truck-sized asteroid that suddenly loomed out of the darkness a few days ago -- with the Earth in its sights -- sailed harmlessly past us on Thursday, space scientists said.

Despite what we've seen in movies like "Armageddon," no global mission to blow it up or knock it off course with nuclear weapons was required.

Instead, Asteroid 2023 BU whizzed past without incident and back out into the blackness of space.

Phew.

The rock, which was spotted for the first time on Saturday by an amateur stargazer in Crimea, came closest to the southern tip of South America at around 0029 GMT Friday, according to scientists who were tracking it.

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Israel hits Gaza as conflict flares

REUTERS, *Jerusalem/Gaza*

Israeli jets struck Gaza overnight on Friday in retaliation for two rockets fired by Palestinian militants, further escalating tensions after one of the worst days of violence in the occupied West Bank in years.

The rockets fired from Gaza overnight set off alarms in Israeli communities near the border with the southern coastal strip controlled by the Islamist movement Hamas but there were no reports of casualties.

The cross-border fire came after an Israeli raid on a refugee camp in the West Bank on Thursday that killed at least nine Palestinians, including militant gunmen and at least two civilians, the highest single-day death toll in years.

Another man died in a separate incident in al-Ramm outside Jerusalem, bringing the Palestinian death toll so far in 2023 to at least 30.

The raid, the latest in a near-daily series of clashes in the West Bank over the past year, came days before US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was due to visit Israel and the West Bank.

Palestinian officials said CIA director William Burns, who was visiting Israel and the West Bank on a trip arranged before the latest violence, would meet Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas today. No comment was immediately available from US officials in Jerusalem.

The US State Department issued a statement on Thursday saying it was "deeply concerned" with the violence in the West Bank and urged both sides to de-escalate the conflict.

The months of violence, which surged after a spate of lethal attacks in Israel last year, have drawn fears the already unpredictable conflict could spiral out of control, triggering a broader confrontation between Palestinians and Israel.

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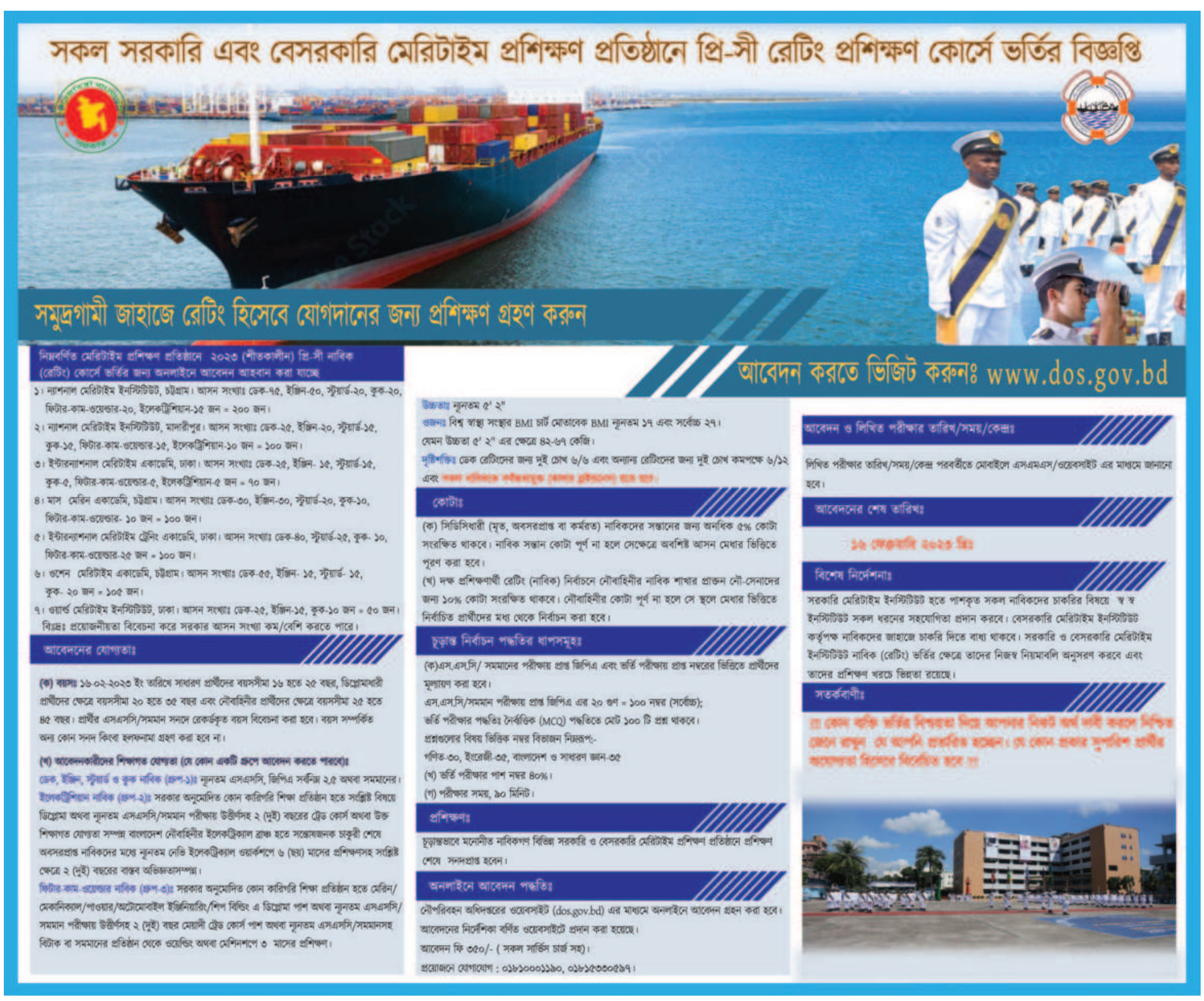
The United Nations, Egypt and Qatar have also urged calm, Palestinian officials said.

In Gaza, large rallies were planned for the afternoon following Friday prayers as residents inured to years of exchanges of rockets and airstrikes between Israel and

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