

## Bangladesh can feel proud for many reasons

World leaders on Independence Day laud the country's achievements

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is quickly becoming a regional leader, with a rapidly growing economy, an increasingly well-educated workforce, and a dynamic youth demographic, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said yesterday.

"As you celebrate your 53rd Independence Day, Bangladesh has many reasons to be proud," he said in a statement, conveying warm congratulations to the people of Bangladesh on the occasion.

Fifty-two years after its independence, Bangladesh today stands strong on the global stage as it has not only made improvements in socio-economic indicators but also contributed to global and regional peacebuilding.

Many of the world's developed countries are increasingly engaging with Bangladesh and cooperating for democratic and economic development.

"By committing to democratic norms, good governance, human rights, and media freedom -- all of which are hallmarks of developing, stable, and prospering societies -- I believe Bangladesh will achieve its great potential," said Blinken.

By generously welcoming Rohingyas fleeing genocide,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Pedestrians struggling to cross a footbridge at the Shishumela intersection in the capital's Shyamoli area. As the footbridge itself and the stairways leading up to it are both very narrow, it becomes rather chaotic when a lot of people, many of whom are patients of nearby hospitals, cross together. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## BNP-COP CLASH 7 BNP men detained in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police yesterday detained seven BNP men for their alleged involvement in hurling brick chips at police during a clash in Netrakona's Durgapur upazila.

The detainees are Imam Hasan Abu Chan, former president of Durgapur upazila BNP; Aatur Rahman Farid, convener of Durgapur municipality BNP; Abu Siddique Rukku, Durgapur municipality Jubo Dal convener; and BNP activists Shah Alam, Mohammad Mahi, Mohammad Arman, and Md Arif Mia, according to BNP leaders and police.

Johirul Alam Bhuiyan, the convener of Durgapur upazila BNP, alleged that when BNP men were on the way to the municipal independence memorial to place floral wreaths, police waylaid them resulting

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## BIMAN SERVER HACKING No ransom demanded Claims state minister for civil aviation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Civil Aviation M Mahub Ali yesterday claimed that hackers didn't demand any ransom for restoring Biman Bangladesh Airline's access to its server.

There was also not much damage caused to the national flag carrier due to the hacking, he said while talking to reporters after launching a memorial book titled "Mujib's Bangladesh" at a city hotel.

Shafiul Azim, managing director and CEO of Biman, who was beside the state minister at the event, claimed that they do not have any information regarding any ransom demand.

Biman and aviation insiders furnished The Daily Star with documents stating that hackers were demanding \$5 million in ransom for restoring Biman's access to its server.

The email server of the airline was hacked on March 18.

According to Biman sources, on March 21, the hackers said they had more than 100GB data of the airline. Apart from this, they have downloaded data from many databases from the internal network of Biman.

If Biman did not accept their demand, they would publish the data on their blog.

On March 22, the hackers sent another message to Biman, saying, "You say in the media that no information has been leaked. But you are wrong."

The hackers also told Biman that flight information, passport information of passengers and employees and several other information have been stolen.

Biman in a press release the next day said their email

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

## Russia 'took Belarus as nuclear hostage'

Says Ukraine as Putin announces deployment of nuke weapons to Minsk; US reacts cautiously

AGENCIES

A top security adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday that Russian plans to station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus would destabilise that country, which he said had been taken "hostage" by Moscow.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the decision on Saturday, sending a warning to Nato over its military support for Ukraine and escalating a standoff with the West.

Although the move was not unexpected and Putin said it would not violate nuclear non-proliferation promises, it is one of Russia's most pronounced nuclear signals since the beginning of its invasion of Ukraine 13 months ago.

Oleksiy Danilov, head of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council, called it "a step towards internal destabilisation of the country" adding it maximizes what he called the level of "negative perception and public rejection" of Russia and Putin in Belarusian society.

"The (K)remlin took Belarus as a nuclear hostage," he wrote

on Twitter. Ukraine called for a meeting of the UN Security Council in response. It asked the international community to "take decisive measures" to prevent Russia's use of nuclear weapons.

Putin likened his plans to the US stationing its weapons in Europe, and said Russia would not be transferring control of the weapons to Belarus. However, this could be the first time since the mid-1990s that Russia has based such weapons outside the country.

**"Russia's nuclear rhetoric is dangerous and irresponsible... and we are closely monitoring the situation."**

Says a Nato spokesperson

Another senior Zelensky adviser yesterday scoffed at Putin's plan, saying the Russian leader is "too predictable".

"Making a statement about tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, he admits that he is afraid of losing & all he can do is scare with tactics," Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted.

Washington, the world's other

nuclear superpower, played down concerns about Putin's announcement and the potential for Moscow to use nuclear weapons in the war in Ukraine, reports Reuters.

"We have not seen any reason to adjust our own strategic nuclear posture nor any indications Russia is preparing to use a nuclear weapon. We remain committed to the collective defence of the Nato alliance," a senior US administration official said.

The official noted that Russia and Belarus had been speaking about the transfer of nuclear weapons for some time.

Nato said the Russian president's non-proliferation pledge and his description of US weapons deployment overseas were way off the mark, reports AFP.

"Russia's nuclear rhetoric is dangerous and irresponsible. Nato is vigilant, and we are closely monitoring the situation," a Nato spokesperson said.

Analysts at the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said in a note late on Saturday that the risk of escalation to nuclear

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## 2,000 mummified ram heads found in Egypt temple

AFP, Cairo

Archaeologists in Egypt have discovered more than 2,000 ancient mummified sheep heads left as offerings in a temple to the pharaoh Ramses II, the tourism and antiquities ministry said yesterday.



Mummies of dogs, goats, cows, gazelles and mongooses were also exhumed by a team of US archaeologists from New York University at Abydos, a site in southern Egypt famous for its temples and tombs.

Sameh Iskandar, head of the American mission, said the ram heads were "offerings" indicating "a cult to Ramses II celebrated 1,000 years after his death".

Ramses II reigned over Egypt for nearly seven decades, from 1304 to 1237 BC.

Mostafa Waziri, head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, said the finds will help people know more about the temple of Ramses II and the activities which took place there from its construction between 2374 and 2140 BC and the Ptolemaic period, from 323 to 30 BC.

As well as the remains of mummified animals, archaeologists discovered the remains of a palace with five-metre-thick (16 foot) walls dating to some 4,000 years ago.

They also found several statues, papyri, remains

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

## Records tumble as SA beat Windies

REUTERS

South Africa pulled off the highest successful run chase in Twenty20 international cricket on Sunday to beat the West Indies by six wickets at Centurion on an afternoon of blistering assault on the ball as well as the record books.

Opener Quinton de Kock hit a first T20 century as South Africa scored 259-4 after being set an imposing target of 13 runs per over to win the match.

Johnson Charles had led the West Indies to 258-5, a new record T20 total at the Pretoria test venue, after they had been put into bat and amassed a formidable total.

The 34-year-old from St Lucia set a West Indies record for the quickest century, achieved off 39 balls, eight fewer than Chris Gayle's previous best mark.

Charles scored 118 off 46 balls before being bowled

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



India's Congress party leaders take part in "Sankalp Satyagraha" at Raj Ghat in New Delhi yesterday to protest against conviction of Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi in a criminal defamation case.

PHOTO: AFP

## RAHUL'S REMOVAL AS MP Congress holds protest rally across India

AGENCIES

Congress leaders, workers across India yesterday held a "Sankalp Satyagraha" in protest against the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha.

Congress leaders Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Mallikarjun Kharge flipped the BJP's pitch against Rahul Gandhi, saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the BJP's caustic attacks against the Gandhi family and insulted his Kashmiri Pandit lineage.

Calling Rahul Gandhi the "son of a martyr", his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the BJP insulted him every day, not even sparing their Nehru-Gandhi family.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the party general secretary, and Kharge, the Congress chief, led a "satyagraha" outside Delhi's Raj Ghat after their protest request at the Mahatma Gandhi memorial was turned down by the police, reports NDTV online.

"You call my brother, the son of a martyr, a traitor and Mir Jafar. You insult his mother. Your Chief Minister says Rahul Gandhi doesn't know who his mother is. You insult my family every day. But no cases are filed," Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said.

"Your Prime Minister, in a parliament full of people, says 'why doesn't this family use the name Nehru name'. He insults the whole family of Kashmiri Pandits, and the custom of a son carrying forward the family's name after the death of his father," she said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6