

## INTERNATIONAL

CHINESE COMBAT  
READINESS PATROLS10 aircraft  
cross Taiwan  
Strait median  
line

## AGENCIES

Ten Chinese aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, normally an unofficial barrier between the two sides, Taiwan's defence ministry said yesterday, as Beijing continues its military activities near the island.

This is the second day in a row that Chinese aircraft crossed the median line carrying out combat readiness patrols.

Nine Chinese fighter jets and one military drone crossed the median line in the 24 hours to 6 am yesterday (2000 GMT on Friday), the ministry said in its daily report on Chinese military activities, reports Reuters.

Taiwan sent aircraft to warn away the Chinese aircraft, while missile systems monitored them, the ministry said, using standard wording for its response.

Separately, nine Chinese aircraft had crossed the median line on Friday carrying out combat readiness patrols, a move that Taiwan's defence ministry said has "deliberately created tension" and undermined peace and stability, Reuters adds.

Meanwhile, Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen arrived in Guatemala Friday on a visit to shore up ties with dwindling allies, reports AFP.

Tsai's visit to Guatemala and its Central American neighbor Belize comes after Honduras became the latest country to cut diplomatic ties with Taipei in favor of Beijing.



Environmental activists of Last Generation (Ultima Generazione) shows the Barcaccia Fountain at Piazza di Spagna in Rome's historic centre, after the activists poured black liquid made out of vegetable-based carbon into the water as part of a campaign to raise awareness about climate change yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

RUSSIA'S ARREST OF US JOURNO  
US threats will 'reap  
whirlwind': Moscow

## Biden asks to let Gershkovich go

## AGENCIES

Russia said on Friday that if the United States threatened Moscow over its arrest of Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reporter Evan Gershkovich, it would reap a "whirlwind", the state-owned news agency RIA reported.

US President Joe Biden urged Moscow on Friday to "let him go", after his administration said on Thursday it was unacceptable for Russia to target US citizens and urged all Americans in Russia to leave at once, reports Reuters.

The WSJ denied that Gershkovich was a spy. The WSJ's board of opinion

editors called in a piece published Thursday afternoon for the expulsion of Russia's ambassador to the United States, as well as "all Russian journalists working here," describing the move as "the minimum to expect."

"The timing of the arrest looks like a calculated provocation to embarrass the US and intimidate the foreign press still working in Russia," it added, according to AFP.

The Journal's editor in chief, Emma Tucker, sent a note to

the newspaper's staff Friday, saying that "we will carry on doing everything in our power to secure Evan's release."

"Your safety and security are what matters most to me, and we will continue to protect that no matter where you may be reporting from," she added, AFP adds.

Speaking to reporters before leaving to view tornado damage in Mississippi, Biden said that expelling Russian journalists was "not the plan right now."

AIR STRIKE  
8 civilians  
killed in  
Myanmar

## REUTERS

Eight civilians including children were killed in an air strike on a village in northwest Myanmar, according to a human rights group, ethnic minority rebels and media, the latest violence as the ruling military battles to consolidate power.

The air strike took place on Thursday, with four bombs dropped on Khaufa, a village in Chin State, bordering India, according to the Chin Human Rights Organisation (CHRO) and the Chin National Front. Two children, ages three and nine, were among the dead.

## Her silence

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quote, it had the photo of an adolescent boy taken from behind.

The mistake was noticed within 17 minutes, and the card was removed. Besides, corrections were made to the report and the news was again published online mentioning the corrections.

Around 4:00am on March 29, Shams was picked up by law enforcers in plainclothes, hours after he was sued under the DSA.

Apart from Shams, Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matiuur Rahman, an unnamed photographer, and unnamed others were accused later in another case filed under the DSA.

In a statement yesterday, Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad urged the government to suspend the application of the DSA, saying that the act was being used to harass the minority communities.

Former students of Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday demonstrated in front of Bangladesh National Museum in the capital's Shabbagh, demanding that the DSA be scrapped immediately.

Kallol Banik, a JU alumni, said Shams reported on the struggle of low-income people amid the rising prices of daily commodities.

"Shams acted responsibly. He was sent to jail for performing his duties as a journalist. Today, we are here to thank him [for the report]."

Demanding the abolition of the DSA, another JU alumni named Nasir Uddin Prince said suppression of freedom of expression, media, and dissent is a threat to democracy.

Friends of Shams, also a JU alumni, said they would launch a tough movement if Shams was not released soon. Activists of Narayanganj Sangskritik Jote

demonstrated in the morning in front of Narayanganj Press Club.

Rafiuur Rabbi, adviser to the organisation, said the DSA is contradictory to the constitution.

"The entire process of Shams' arrest and imprisonment is unlawful," he added.

At a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club, Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolon, said low-income people are being hit hard by the soaring prices of daily essentials. Corrupt people, money launderers and bank robbers are responsible for this. Instead of taking measures against them, the government wants to suppress the voice of the people.

Since the people's sufferings are reported in the media, the government is afraid of possible public anger, he said, adding that the DSA was being used as a tool of repression.

Dhaka University's panel of pro-BNP-Jamaat teachers expressed deep concern over the filing of a case against the Prothom Alo editor and the arrest of Shams.

In a statement, signed by Prof Md Lutfar Rahman, the White Panel teachers demanded abolition of the DSA, saying that the government does not believe in freedom of the press.

Activists of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, members of Prothom Alo Bondhushava, and local journalists formed a human chain in front of Dinajpur Press Club with their faces covered in black cloth.

The filing of cases against the Prothom Alo journalists is politically motivated, said the speakers.

Demonstrations also took place in Patuakhali, Bauphal, Sarishabari, Nilphamari and Tangail.

Shams was moved back to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj from Kashimpur Central Jail 1 yesterday.

## Unskilled

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In September last year, Bangladesh High Commissioner in Maldives Rear Admiral SM Abul Kalam Azad during a courtesy call on Minister Fayyaz Ismail requested the Maldives government to recruit new workers from Bangladesh, according to a Facebook post of the Bangladesh mission.

During the meeting, the envoy also stressed the speedy regularisation of Bangladeshi undocumented workers there.

In response, the Maldivian minister urged undocumented Bangladeshi workers to avail themselves of the opportunity under the regularisation programme.

Once they are documented, the workers get legal and health insurance benefits. Besides, they can remit money home using their own documents through banking channels, helping increase inward remittance.

In a meeting in January this year, Counsellor Sohel Parvez urged Maldives Mariyam Nazima, deputy minister at the Ministry of Economic Development, to recruit new workers from Bangladesh, read another Facebook post of the mission.

However, an email requesting comment on the labour market's reopening was not immediately answered by the Maldives High Commission in Dhaka.

## NSU student

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hours after the crash, said MM Morshed, officer-in-charge of Lalbagh Police Station.

Police have detained the lorry driver named Shamim and motorcycle rider named Mehedi, he added.

Sanjida was about to migrate to Canada soon after the Ramadan, family members said, adding that she was the youngest child of Abu Taher, an expatriate.

Her elder brother Sayem said Sanjida was about to get married after this Eid and the family members were shopping for her wedding.

"My mother fainted after hearing the news and is still unconscious. We do not know what to do now," he said.

## 8 unidentified

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during goods packing and transporting. Include off-docks to Chittagong Port and hold a regular meeting of the monitoring committee. Provide training to the firefighters to follow the IMDG code.

Customs later served a notice to the managing director of BM Depot Container Limited on September 15 asking why its private bonded warehouse license should not be cancelled following the deadly blast.

## Prothom Alo, BNP

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news is false, fabricated, and conspiratorial," said the AL general secretary.

He said having a quote from a seven-year-old child by "bribing him Tk 10" is not journalism.

"Independence Day is a unique day to create a sense of patriotism among the young generation. Isn't publishing a news with an aim to setting a special political agenda not tantamount to denying the independence, the principles and achievements of the Liberation War?"

Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams was arrested in a case filed under the Digital Security Act and was sent to jail on Thursday. The DSA case was also filed against the paper's Editor Matiuur Rahman.

Quader said ridiculing the country's achievements on the Independence Day is not just a mistake.

"This is not only an immoral act, but also a criminal offense. There is a clear provocation [in that report] to divide the nation... Can the Prothom Alo editor and publisher deny the responsibility?"

"Have they regretted or apologised for their grievous crime? They have shown extreme audacity... no one is above the law," the AL leader said.

Regarding the statement of Reporters Without Borders, the road transport and bridges minister said, "This organisation says that the government has filed such a case against the Prothom Alo editor to intimidate journalists. I would like to say that the government didn't file any case in this regard. An ordinary citizen can also file a case."

The AL at yesterday's meeting decided that it won't hold "counter programmes" to that of the BNP's.

The ruling party would rather organise iftar distribution programmes every day, and through

those it would try to hold gatherings to deal with the BNP on the streets, party insiders said.

At the meeting, a central AL leader proposed the party leaders reconsider attending different events of Prothom Alo.

Quader in reply said they would take a decision in this regard very soon.

Responding to a question from another central leader whether socio-cultural organisations should take to the streets to protest against Prothom Alo, the AL general secretary said yes.

**PROTEST AT SHAHBAGH**  
A group of Chhatra League leaders and activists from Dhaka University blocked the Shahbagh intersection in the city for about an hour from 11:00am yesterday, demanding immediate arrest and punishment of the Prothom Alo editor.

They accused Matiuur Rahman of being a conspirator against the state in the guise of journalism, running a media outlet for politically motivated yellow journalism, exploiting children in violation of international law, and continuously spreading false news and rumours about the country's independence.

The protest was organised under the banner of "Dhaka Bissobiddaloyer Shadharan Shikharthibrindo", which caused traffic congestion in the area.

BCL leaders from its various DU hall units led the protest. Among the leaders were Imam Hossain Zihad, joint general secretary of Shahid Sergeant Zahurul Haque Hall BCL, Ainul Islam Mahabub, joint general secretary of Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall BCL, Shakil Reja, joint general secretary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall BCL, and former BCL leader Tania Akhter Taposhi.

They BCL members also burned an effigy of the Prothom Alo editor.

## UNSC concerned

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fighting off a Russian invasion for more than a year.

"Let us be clear: No other country has raised the prospect of nuclear use in this conflict," said Deputy British Ambassador James Kariuki, referring to the Ukraine invasion.

"No one is threatening Russia's sovereignty," he added, condemning Putin's statement as "his latest attempt to intimidate and coerce."

"This has not worked and will not work. We will continue to support Ukraine's efforts to defend itself," he said.

Russia, however, stuck to its position that there was no difference between what it plans to do in Belarus, and NATO's deployment of American nuclear weapons in Europe, AFP adds.

Western allies have called the analogy "misleading."

China and Brazil warned of the dangers of nuclear proliferation.

**Govt planning**  
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As part of the ongoing simultaneous movement, BNP's Dhaka south and north city units jointly staged the sit-in from 2:00pm to 4:00pm in front of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the capital.

The BNP, its associate bodies and like-minded parties observed a two-hour sit-in programme in all divisional cities and district towns yesterday to press home the 10 point demand they unveiled in December — the most important one being elections under a non-party caretaker government.

The programme was also meant for registering the party's protest against the rise in the prices of power, gas and essential items and the AL government's all-pervading corruption.

Apart from BNP, Jatiyatobadi Samamona Jote, Gonoforum and People's Party, Peshajibi Ganatantrik Jote, 12-party alliance, Labour Party, Bam Ganatantrik Oikya and LDP also observed the programme separately in different areas of the capital.

Describing the current government as fascist, Fakhru said it does not believe in democracy nor does it give any importance to people's opinions, as its only goal is to stay in power by force instead of votes if necessary.

He deplored that the administration, police, and other law enforcement agencies are helping the ruling party to cling to power illegally as it has no relations with the people.

The BNP leader warned that the people of the country have never accepted injustice indefinitely. "They have always fought against injustice and they truly fought for democracy."

Trump due in court  
on Tuesday

## Will plead not guilty, lawyer says

## REUTERS, New York

Donald Trump is due to be fingerprinted and photographed in a New York courthouse on Tuesday as he becomes the first former US president to face criminal charges in a case involving a 2016 hush money payment to Stormy Daniels.

Trump plans to fly to New York on Monday from his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida and spend the night at

Trump Tower before appearing in court early on Tuesday, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Trump plans to return to Florida afterward, the source said.

Susan Necheles, a Trump attorney, told Reuters he will plead not guilty. Necheles said she did not expect the charges to be unsealed until Tuesday.

"I am not afraid of what's to come," Trump said in a fundraising email on Friday.

## 27 hurt in clashes

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For about 20 minutes, the two groups engaged in chases and counter-chases, as well as brickbat throwing, said the district's Additional Superintendent of Police ATM Mainul Islam.

Later, police arrived on the scene and brought the situation under control.

"We heard two rounds of gunfire during the clash. We are yet to confirm if anyone was injured. We will take legal action following an investigation into the incident," he said.

Shariful Islam Ramzan, secretary of Natore district unit AL, said, "The BNP men were the first to throw bricks and stones at Awami League leaders and activists. When Awami League men protested, local BNP leader Shahiul Islam Bachchu fired two shots from his revolver, but fortunately, no one was injured."

Contacted, Shahiul Islam Bachchu, convener of the district unit BNP, said, "Three BNP activists were shot, and fifty others were injured after Awami League men launched an attack on the BNP's peaceful program."

Meanwhile, in Khulna, at least 12 party men were injured when police and BNP leaders and activists clashed.

This happened when police tried to stop BNP activists from going to the sit-in and rally at KD Gosh Road.

Witnesses said that when BNP leaders and activists from around the district gathered at the party office area around 3:00pm, police tried to drive them away, resulting in a clash.

Shafiqul Alom Mana, convener of the city unit BNP, said police charged batons to disperse BNP leaders and activists, injuring 12 party men.

Tajul Islam, deputy commissioner (south) of Khulna Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that police fired 35 rounds from a shotgun and 20 rounds of tear shells to control the

situation.

"Police were forced to take action as some BNP men suddenly started throwing bricks at our personnel," he added.

Eight people were arrested at the scene of the incident.

In Pirojpur town, at least five Chhatra Dal activists were injured when they were going to join BNP's sit-in programme in an attack allegedly carried out by Bangladesh Chhatra League men.

Ahmed Sohel Manjur Sumon, convener of Bhandaria upazila unit BNP, said, "Chhatra League men also vandalised his private car at Pirojpur Government High School field around 3:45pm."

Contacted, Aniruzzaman Anik, president of district unit BCL, said, "When BNP members attacked them on their way back to town from a program, Chhatra League members protested."

Superintendent of Police Md Saidur Rahman said a car was vandalised when a clash took place between two groups. "Later, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control," he said.

Meanwhile, in Jamalpur, 20 BNP and Jamaat-Shibir men, arrested Friday afternoon, were sued yesterday on charges of attempting to sabotage government properties.

Jamalpur Police Station Sub-Inspector Debashish filed the case under the Special Powers Act, said Abdul Awal, investigating officer of the case.

The arrestees included Liaquat Ali, president of Jamalpur town unit BNP, Mizanur Rahman, former secretary of district unit Jubo Dal, and Kamrul Islam Kabul, joint general secretary of district unit Chhatra Dal.

(Our correspondents from Natore, Khulna, Pirojpur, and Jamalpur contributed to this report.)