



CORRUPTION CASE

Trial of Tarique, Zubaida begins in absentia



COURT CORRESPONDENT

The trial of a graft case filed against BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman began at a Dhaka court yesterday.

It began with the complainant, ACC Deputy Director Mohammad Huda, testifying in the case filed in 2007 by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Zahirul, for over three hours, narrated how Tarique and Zubaida acquired money illegally.

The couple has been shown fugitives in the charge sheet. No lawyers defended them in court yesterday.

On April 13, the same court framed charges against them. Before that, the court dismissed a lawyer's petition seeking permission to defend them.

Tarique and Zubaida have been in SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



No safety measure has been taken after the authorities dug up huge holes in the pavement to build a footbridge near Graphic Arts Institute on Satmasjid Road. Many students use this pavement. In poor light at night, the holes are hardly visible.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Decision on onion import to come soon

Says agriculture minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The agriculture ministry will observe the market trend and take a final decision on allowing onion import in the next two to three days, Agriculture Minister Muhammad Abdur Razzaque said yesterday.

He shared the information responding to queries from journalists at the ministry, according to a press release.

The popular vegetable prices doubled to as much as Tk 80 per kilogramme in the Dhaka market within a month as some people went for stocking onions.

Amid soaring prices, the commerce ministry requested the agriculture ministry to allow the import of onions, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said yesterday at an event.

Talking to journalists, Razzaque said onion production and the stock were good last year.

Its prices were low too and many farmers stocked the bulb to get higher prices but they suffered losses as onions got rotten, he said.

"This is why we want to see the situation this year. A large number of officials collected information about onions this year and we have come to know that there is ample stock of the bulb. Many people are not selling onions on the expectation of a rise in its prices."

DSA to be amended by September

Law minister says the changes will minimise its misuse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday reiterated that some amendments will be brought to the Digital Security Act by September this year to minimise its misuse and ensure best practices.

"I have personally intervened in cases to ensure the Digital Security Act is not misused. However, I understand that we need a durable solution. Once we complete the review, some amendments will be made to ensure minimisation of the law's misuse."

"Some doubters may think I'm buying time, but that is far from the truth. I have said before and reiterate now that we will make the amendments by September," he said while speaking as the chief guest at a dialogue on "Digital Laws and Freedom of Opinion in Bangladesh" at Brac University.

The law minister said the DSA was not enacted to curb freedom of expression or control the media nor is being used to do so, as its purpose was to combat the cybercrimes.

"We have heard several speakers by now and learnt about different views. Dialogue and discussion are the key to a democratic society, therefore, the government of Bangladesh encourages consultations with a cross-section of society as well as with international organisations. We have had lengthy discussions with the office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and have listened to its views. We received the inputs and these are being reviewed," said Anisul.

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ROHINGYA REFUGEES

China envoy visits Teknaf repatriation centre

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen has visited the Rohingya repatriation centre in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila.

The ambassador, accompanied by two other diplomats of the Chinese embassy, visited the centre at Kerontoli around 1:00pm on Saturday, said local administration sources.

His visit comes at a time when the issue of Rohingya repatriation is being widely discussed.

On April 18, a tripartite meeting among officials of Bangladesh, China and Myanmar was held at Kunming of China. The meeting decided to repatriate 1,176 Rohingya refugees under a pilot project in May this year.

Additional Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Md Khalid Hossain and Teknaf's Nayapara Registered Refugee Camp in Charge Abdul Hannan accompanied the Chinese

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It's time to reform UNSC

UN chief says global financial architecture failed to fulfil its core function

REUTERS, Hiroshima

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said yesterday that it was time to reform both the Security Council and Bretton Woods to align with the "realities of today's world".

Speaking at a press conference in Hiroshima, Japan, where the Group of Seven summit meeting had been held, Guterres said both institutions reflected the power relations of 1945 and needed to be updated.

"The global financial architecture became outdated, dysfunctional and unfair," he said. "In the face of the economic shocks from the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it has failed to fulfil its core function as a global safety net."

Guterres also spoke of how he felt that at the G7 summit there was a growing consciousness among developing countries that not enough was being done to reform outdated institutions or "remove the frustrations" of the Global South.

India's economy will grow over six percent this year and next, the International Monetary Fund said in its World Economic Outlook this January.

China and India together will account for about 50 percent of world growth in 2023, IMF chief economist



"The global financial architecture became outdated, dysfunctional and unfair."

Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General

and director of the research department Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas said at the time.

"We will see now what is the impact of the discussions that were held here in Hiroshima," Guterres said. "The G7 members were able to discuss with some of the most important emerging economies in the world."

G7 host Japan made a point of inviting figures from the so-called Global South to Hiroshima for talks. Invitees included Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Indonesian President Joko Widodo.

Scientists detect radioactive heat source inside Mars

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The main source of heat on Mars is from the decay over time of radioactive elements like Uranium -- deep in the Red Planet's interior, according to a new study.

Scientists, including those from ETH Zurich in Germany, also estimated the thickness of the Martian crust by analysing seismic data obtained by Nasa's InSight lander.

The research, published recently in the journal Geophysical Research Letters, assessed Marsquakes data, including a powerful 4.6-magnitude quake that struck the planet in May 2022, said to be the largest one recorded during the entire InSight mission.

"We were fortunate to observe this quake... This marsquake sent out strong seismic waves that travelled along the surface of Mars," study co-author Doyeon Kim from ETH Zurich said in a statement, adding that the waves "circled Mars up to three times".

By measuring how fast the waves propagated at different frequencies, researchers could gain insights into the interior structure of Mars at different depths.

The new analysis helped scientists determine the thickness of the Martian crust, which they found averages 42-56km (26-35 miles). In comparison, the average thickness of the Earth's crust ranges from 21-27km (13-17 miles).



G7 offers Ukraine long-term support

Zelensky laments Bakhmut 'tragedy', denies loss of the city to Russia

REUTERS, Hiroshima

Leaders of the world's richest democracies said yesterday they would not back down from supporting Ukraine, in a warning to Russian President Vladimir Putin as he claimed to have taken the eastern city of Bakhmut, something Kyiv denied.

The Group of Seven (G7) summit in the Japanese city of Hiroshima was electrified this weekend by the arrival of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who arrived on a French government plane to canvass for greater support against Russia's invasion.

Zelensky told reporters on the sidelines of the summit that the battered eastern city of Bakhmut, the focus of fighting in recent months, was destroyed.

"It is tragedy," Zelensky said. "There is nothing on this place" - what remained was "a lot of dead Russians."

There was confusion over whether he had been asked if the city was still in Kyiv's hands or Russian forces had taken Bakhmut, but a Zelensky spokesperson said the comments were a denial the city had fallen.

Zelensky later made his way to Hiroshima's peace memorial, where he laid flowers at the cenotaph to victims of the world's first nuclear bombing.

During the final day of the three-day G7 summit, US President Joe Biden announced a \$375 million package of military aid, including artillery and armoured vehicles, for Ukraine.



US President Joe Biden, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and other G7 leaders pose for a photo before a working session on Ukraine during the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Indian police return remains of Bangladeshi after 9 months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Indian police handed over the remains of a Bangladeshi man to Bangladesh police at Banglabandha Check Post in Tentulia on Saturday almost nine months after his death.

Abdus Salam, 32, of Satmera Kaharpara in Panchagarh Sadar was beaten to death by a mob at a village in Jalpaiguri of West Bengal on August 24, 2022.

Police said the mob thought he was a cattle thief.

Abdul Latif Mia, officer-in-charge of Panchagarh Sadar Police Station, said after Salam was killed, a case was filed with Rajganj Police Station.

When his family members came to know what had happened from social media, they informed the local administration.

Officials later started corresponding with their counterparts in India about Salam's body.

The victim's elder brother Alam said what remained of the body was almost a skeleton.