



PM to decide when election-time govt will be formed

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would decide when the election-time government would be formed.

The PM does not need to resign for the polls-time government to operate and may constitute a small cabinet if it's felt necessary at that time, he said.

"Our state is run under the constitution based on the Westminster-style parliamentary system of government. As such, when she decides, the prime minister will form an election-time government. There is no ambiguity in this matter.

"The prime minister has already given an outline to this effect and said who might be involved in the polls-time government," he added.

The law minister made the remarks while talking to reporters after attending as the chief guest a meeting organised by the Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) on the occasion of inaugurating a training course for judges involved in trials

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

People trying to help a woman who fell off her wheelchair during a scuffle with policemen who stopped a procession of people with disabilities from heading towards the Prime Minister's Office to press home their demand for a monthly allowance of Tk 5,000.

6 congressmen's letter to Biden 'false projection'

Say community leaders on state of minorities in Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

Several noted minority community leaders yesterday said the picture of Bangladesh's minorities depicted in a letter sent by the six US congressmen to President Biden is "absolutely false".

They termed it a "threat to the existing communal harmony in Bangladesh."

Besides accusing the government of human rights violations, the letter also claimed that under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's watch, religious minorities in the country are also suffering.

In the letter, the US Congressmen called for urgent actions to stop the "human rights abuses" by the Bangladesh government and "give the people of Bangladesh the best possible chance for free and fair parliamentary elections."

Rana Dasgupta, leader of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad, rejected the claim in the letter that the Hindu population has halved since Sheikh Hasina's rise to power.

"I will say this claim is a travesty of truth," he said, adding that a vested group was working behind a cloak ahead of the national election.

Referring to a number of surveys, he added, "Between 1947 and 1971, under Pakistani rule, a whopping 9.7 percent of

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DEADLY TRAIN CRASH IN ODISHA

Indian minister claims 'sabotage'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnav yesterday spoke of "sabotage" as the cause of India's deadliest train disaster in decades was linked to the signal system.

The minister said tampering with the electronic interlocking system was likely the cause behind the incident in Odisha that claimed at least 288 lives.

This comes amidst opposition parties' growing demand for the resignation of Vaishnav for alleged negligence of safety.

Mounds of debris were piled high at the site of Friday night's crash near Balasore, in the eastern state of Odisha, as workers repairing the tracks cleared the debris.

Hospitals have been overwhelmed by the number of casualties.

"We have identified the cause of the accident and the people responsible for it," Vaishnav told news agency ANI. He said it was "not appropriate" to give details before a final investigation report.

Vaishnav, who has been camping at the accident site since Saturday, told reporters there that the "root cause" of the accident and the "criminals" responsible for it have been identified.

"It happened due to a change made in the

electronic interlocking and point machine," he said.

"It could be a case of tampering or sabotage from within or from outside. We have not ruled anything out," the minister said.

"The setting of the point machine was changed. How and why it was done will be revealed in the probe report," he said.

In Delhi, top railway officials explained how the point machine and the interlocking system function and insisted the system is "error proof" and "fail-safe." They did not rule out the possibility of outside intervention.

As the tragedy also triggered a debate over the installation of the anti-collision system in trains, the main opposition Congress yesterday joined other opposition parties in demanding the resignation of the railway minister.

Hospitals have been overwhelmed by the number of casualties.

There was confusion about the exact sequence of events but reports cited railway officials saying a signalling error had sent the Coromandal Express running south from Kolkata to Chennai onto a side track.

It slammed into a freight train and the wreckage derailed an express running north from India's tech hub Bengaluru to Kolkata that was also passing the site.



Fakhrul talks nat'l election with Japanese ambassador

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Iwama Kiminori met BNP's Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday and discussed the country's next general election and the overall political situation.

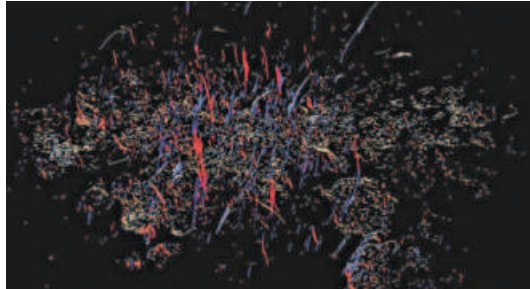
After the meeting at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office, the party's standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury told journalists that Japan, like other democratic countries, wants to see a free, fair, and acceptable election in Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh's relations with Japan expanded significantly since we started the free market economy during the BNP government. That is why they [Japan] want that relation to continue even if the government changes," he said.

Khasru, along with the party's Organising Secretary Shama Obayed, was present at the meeting. They discussed the

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Mysterious cosmic structures found in Milky Way



CNN ONLINE

An international team of astrophysicists has discovered hundreds of mysterious structures in the center of the Milky Way galaxy.

These one-dimensional cosmic threads are hundreds of horizontal or radial filaments—slender, elongated bodies of luminous gas that potentially originated a few million years ago when outflow from Sagittarius A*, the Milky Way's central supermassive black hole, interacted with surrounding materials, according to a study published Friday in The Astrophysical Journal Letters.

The filaments are relatively short in length, each measuring 5 to 10 light-years.

The findings come nearly 40 years after Farhad Yusef-Zadeh, the study's lead author, and other researchers discovered another population of nearly 1,000 one-dimensional filaments, which are vertical and much larger at up to 150 light-years long each, near the galaxy's center.

Yusef-Zadeh and collaborators also found hundreds more paired and clustered vertical filaments in the same area in 2022. The new study both reinforces and builds upon the earlier findings.

Contempt of court petition filed against Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A contempt of court petition has been filed with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh for his comments about a former chief justice and civil society.

Shah Ahmed Badal, member secretary of the Ad hoc Committee of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) submitted the petition on Saturday to the office concerned of the SC, saying that the utterances made by Taposh have constituted contempt of the highest court of the country and the judiciary as a whole.

In the petition, he prayed to the apex court to issue a notice to Taposh

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Emergency workers rescue a man from debris of a residential building heavily damaged by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, on the outskirts of the Dnipro city, Ukraine early yesterday. Story on page 7.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Eight injured in oil tanker explosion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Eight people suffered burn injuries in an oil tanker explosion on the Shitalakkhya in Narayanganj's Rupganj early yesterday.

The injured are Mannan Rahad, 23, Humayun Kabir, 54, Tajul Islam Limon, 24, Imtiaz Ahmed, 42, Rubel, 38, Sohel, 38, Nazmul, 33, and Rakib, 24.

Five of them are undergoing treatment at Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in the capital, said Ataur Rahman, inspector (investigation) of Rupganj Police Station.

Tariqul Islam, doctor of the emergency department of the burn institute, said eight persons were brought for treatment.

"Five of them are undergoing treatment in critical condition while the remaining three have received first aid and left."

The explosion took place at an oil tanker named "OT Shanghai-8" around 1:30am when it anchored at its own jetty at Dorikandi Dockyard near Gazi Bridge in Rupganj, said Inspector Ataur.

"It happened due to accumulated gas," he added.

Alamgir Hossain, deputy assistant director of Narayanganj Fire Service and Civil Defence, said four fire service units rushed to the spot and doused the fire.