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Garment shipment to US declines



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'We were better in terms of chance creation'



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Maldives polls seen as vote on ties with India



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Country records second highest daily Dengue deaths

Will work in unison to stop US 'dictates'

Lavrov says about Indo-Pacific region upon arrival in Dhaka



STAR REPORT

Upon arrival in Dhaka yesterday evening, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Moscow would prevent any attempt to establish dictates and interference by the US and its allies in this region.

"If we look at the situation and analyse it, we can clearly see that the US and its allies are truly trying to promote their interests in the region by using the so-called Indo-Pacific strategy. Their goal is clearly both to counter China and to isolate Russia in this region," he said.

Russia will work with its partners in the region to prevent any attempts to establish dictates and also attempts of those who, driven by their own interests, want to tell others what to do, he told a press briefing at the Hotel InterContinental Dhaka.

The Indo-Pacific strategy of the US and its allies is an "expansionist drive" on the part of NATO, he said.

Moscow appreciates that Bangladesh foreign policy is guided exclusively by its national interests despite pressure from the US and its allies, he added.

The Russian foreign minister arrived in Dhaka around 6:00pm after attending the East Asia Summit in Jakarta and held a bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen. He and Momen then held the press briefing.

This is the first time a Russian foreign minister is visiting Bangladesh. He will be calling on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today before leaving for New Delhi to attend the G20 Summit.

Lavrov's Dhaka visit takes place at a time when the Russia-Ukraine war and subsequent sanctions imposed on Russia by the US and other western nations are disrupting global supply chains, causing price hikes, and putting countries like Bangladesh in a tight spot.

The global powers are also focusing on the Indo-Pacific, and Bangladesh, being at a key location in the region, faces a complex balancing act.

Meanwhile, the US sanctions on Rab and its officials and the visa policy as a tool to pressure Bangladesh for holding free and fair elections have also put the government in a tough situation.

At yesterday's press briefing, Lavrov said, "The intention of the US and its allies in this region is to undermine the security architecture that has existed within the Asian format for decades.

"Those formats were equal... the decisions were made on the basis of the principles of consensus, but Washington and its 'satellites' were unhappy..."

Russia supported Bangladesh during the Liberation War in 1971.

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People onboard a train on a trial run between Dhaka and Bhanga capture the moments of it crossing the Padma Bridge on their phones yesterday. The line is expected to be inaugurated on October 10. Story on page 2. PHOTO: COLLECTED

HASINA-MODI MEETING Economy, stability to get priority

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Regional peace, stability, and economic recovery will be the focus of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the G20 summit and her meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.



"It is essential for the welfare of the people of the whole region. We don't want any proxy war in the Indo-Pacific that we have seen in the Middle East and Europe," Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told journalists at a media briefing at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

Hasina is to leave for New Delhi today to attend the Summit as a guest invited by this year's G20 summit president India. She will have a bilateral meeting with Modi this afternoon.

She will address two sessions of the G20 on September 9 and 10. On the sidelines of the summit, Hasina is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the presidents of the UAE, Argentina, and South Korea, Momen said.

Momen, Prime Minister's Private Sector Industry and Investment Adviser Salman F Rahman, Ambassador at Large Mohammad Ziauddin, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and other senior officials concerned will accompany her.

The meeting of the world's richest countries is taking place at a time when the whole world is going through economic difficulties.

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THE BUSINESS

Private sector credit growth nosedives

Private sector credit growth nosedived to single digit in July as both banks and borrowers face multiple challenges amid lingering economic uncertainty at home and abroad and growing political crisis centring next year's national election.

In the first month of the current financial year of 2023-24, the credit growth fell to 9.82 percent from 10.57 percent a month ago, Bangladesh Bank data showed.

July's credit expansion was the lowest since October 2021 when it stood at 9.44 percent.

STORY ON B1

290 cops in line for promotion as SPs, addl DIGs Govt creates in-situ posts ahead of nat'l polls

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The government has approved promotions for 290 top police officials ahead of the upcoming national election by creating temporary "supernumerary posts" in the force's organisational structure.

Of the posts created, 140 will be for additional deputy inspector generals and 150 for superintendents of police, according to a public administration ministry circular yesterday.

As per the order, approval must be obtained from the Finance Division, and the tenure for these "supernumerary posts" (officials who hold the same position and perform the same duties after their elevation) will be one year from the day of the creation.

Sources said the ministry's decision came in response to a request from the Police Headquarters to promote around 529 top police officials by creating these "supernumerary posts".

According to the request, the PHQ is seeking promotions for 15 additional inspector generals (Grade 1), 34 additional IGs (Grade 2), 140 DIGs, 150 additional DIGs, and 190 SPs.

Promotions of the remaining officials will be done in phases, said a PHQ official requesting anonymity.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Home Minister SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bigger bikes to hit roads from July

Govt finally allows bikes with up to 350cc engines



PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Petrolheads have much to rejoice as the government has finally approved motorbikes with up to 350cc engines for the streets.

Enthusiasts, however, don't need to get their chequebooks out just yet as bikes from brands like Royal Enfield won't be available for purchase until next July.

The approval for manufacturing and distributing the motorbikes came at a

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A rickshaw puller died and a university student was injured after a large Buddha Coconut tree fell on them in Dhaka University's TSC area yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Tk 37 power bills for a minister's home!

Social welfare minister, his family receive abnormally low bills, do not pay for about 4 years

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

People often talk about ghostly electricity bills that are absurdly high. In case of Social Welfare Minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed and his family, the bills are nonsensically low.

In each of the four months from April to July this year, the minister's electricity bill for his Lalmonirhat home was Tk 37, according to documents obtained from Northern Electricity Supply Company (Nesco) that supplies electricity in the area.

This is including the demand charge of Tk 35 plus the VAT that a Nesco consumer must pay even if they do not

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UNPAID BILLS	
Social welfare minister	Tk 72,964
Minister's son	Tk 79,995
Minister's brother	Tk 7,25,144
Minister's late father	Tk 18,577
TOTAL	Tk 8,96,680