

# INTERNATIONAL

## Modi seeks to cement India's global standing

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi used his G20 presidency to burnish his image at home and abroad as a steward of national power and prosperity, asserting India's place in the world ahead of general elections next year.

For months, the 72-year-old leader has been a ubiquitous presence across Delhi, looking down from countless roadside posters and billboards put up across India's capital. Among other slogans, they proclaimed the country the "Voice of the Global South".

India overtook China as the world's most populous country earlier this year, after displacing former coloniser Britain as its fifth-biggest economy in 2022. Now Modi is seeking a place on the global stage to match, using the G20 summit as a catalyst to position India as a representative of many others outside traditional power blocs.

The Declaration avoided any direct criticism of Russia or summit attendee President Vladimir Putin.

"It is a success for India's diplomacy," said Ashok Kantha, former Indian ambassador to China.

"We could persuade our friends in the West, and say they need not insist on an explicit condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine," he added. "It's a good compromise."

And Michael Kugelman, director of the South Asia Institute at the Wilson Center, said the outcome had "vindicated" India's policy of "strategic autonomy".

"It's definitely not a reflection of a 100 percent consensus, or maybe not even an 80 or 90 percent consensus," but it did "suggest a level of convergence on more issues than I had expected. That's bit of a pleasant surprise." A recent poll by Pew showed eight in 10 Indians have a positive view of Modi, and almost as many believe he is leading the country to greater influence on the world stage.



Hiba, 21, looks on, as her daughter Sei eddine, two years old, plays on the mattress, in the aftermath of a deadly earthquake, in Amizmiz, Morocco yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## BLACK SEA GRAIN DEAL

# Moscow will return when conditions met

Says Lavrov; Ukraine blames Russia for Spanish, Canadian aid workers' death near Bakhmut; Kyiv fends off new wave of Russian drone attack

REUTERS, New Delhi/Kyiv

Russia will return to the Black Sea grain deal 'the same day' as Moscow's conditions for export of its own grain and fertilisers to the global markets are met, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told reporters yesterday.

Russia quit the deal in July, a year after it was brokered by the United Nations and Turkey, complaining that its own food and fertiliser exports faced obstacles and that insufficient Ukrainian grain was going to countries in need.

"When all the necessary actions for removing obstacles for our grain and fertiliser exports are implemented, the same day we will return to the collective implementation of the Ukrainian part of the 'Black Sea initiative'", Lavrov told a briefing after attending a two-day G20 summit in New Delhi.

Kyiv yesterday blamed Russian forces

for the killing of two aid workers, one Canadian and one Spanish, in east Ukraine, calling their deaths near the war-battered city of Bakhmut "a painful, irreparable loss".

The defence ministry said Moscow's troops had killed Emma Igual, a Spanish citizen who studied at the University of California at Berkeley, and Anthony Ihnat, a Canadian citizen both working for the NGO Road to Relief.

Meanwhile, Russia launched nearly three dozen drones at Kyiv early yesterday, with blasts ringing out across the Ukrainian capital and the surrounding region for around two hours and debris falling across several city districts, Ukrainian officials said.

Elsewhere, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said Saturday that Russian leader Vladimir Putin would not be arrested in Brazil if he attends the Group of 20 meeting in Rio de Janeiro next year.

Interviewed on the sidelines of the G20 meeting in Delhi by news show Firstpost, Lula said Putin would be invited to next year's event, adding that he himself planned to attend a BRICS bloc of developing nations meeting due in Russia before the Rio meeting.

"I believe that Putin can go easily to Brazil," Lula said. "What I can say to you is that if I'm president of Brazil, and he comes to Brazil, there's no way he will be arrested."

The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Putin in March, accusing him of the war crime of illegally deporting hundreds of children from Ukraine. Russia has denied its forces have engaged in war crimes, or forcibly taken Ukrainian children.

Brazil is a signatory to the Rome Statute which led to the founding of the ICC. Lula's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

## Court rejects Aman's bail plea

FROM PAGE 12  
on the court premises, demanding withdrawal of the "false" case. But police drove them away.

His wife Sabera was sent to prison on September 3 after she surrendered before the same court in the same case. She has been sentenced to three years in jail.

The chamber judge of the Supreme Court on September 5 granted her bail till January 15, 2024.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case against the couple for acquiring illegal wealth on March 6, 2007.

On June 21 that year, Aman was jailed for 13 years and his wife for three years.

## Its profits meant for reaching objectives

FROM PAGE 12  
for profit company that reinvests all profits, they are not legally required to create this fund.

Furthermore, the statement points out that the courts did not even follow the penalties prescribed in the law for not establishing these funds.

"If any company fails to act, then the court may fine the person or persons responsible for management of the company for an amount not exceeding Tk 1 lakh and, in the case of continuous failure, a further amount of Tk 5 thousands for every day from the first day of such failure and direct to pay the total amount of fine within the next 30 days," states the law.

If the amounts that should have been given to the fund remain unpaid, that amount shall be recovered, states the law.

"The four individuals, including Prof Muhammad Yunus, are all non-executive board members and do not have any proprietary interest in the company's affairs. Yet, criminal cases have been filed against them by DIFE. This is extraordinary and demonstrates clear malicious intention to harass them," said the statement.

Starting from 2017, a total of 106 employees of GTC filed 106 cases with the Labour Court. The Grameen Telecom Employee Association also filed an industrial dispute case with the Labour Court, said the statement.

Concealing the information of their industrial dispute case with the Labour Court, the employee association filed a petition with the High Court seeking the winding up

of GTC, it added.

When this case was accepted at the High Court, GTC decided not to aggravate this dispute and settle the matter out of court, they said.

A total of Tk 437 crore was paid out to the employees' accounts and 156 out of 164 employees have already received the money, said GTC.

Law enforcement agencies filed a criminal case against the GTC stating that there is no provision in the labour law for distributing GTC's money directly to the employees.

The statement also addressed the money laundering case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission against Prof Yunus and others.

"A major condition in the settlement agreement was that GTC employees will collectively receive an amount of Tk 437 crore. Later, a mistake in the earlier calculation was detected and the revised estimate stood at BDT 409.7 crore.

Both the GTC authority and the employee association accepted the recalculated amount as appropriate. As per the condition in the settlement agreement, the money was transferred to the bank account determined by both parties," said the statement.

The lawyers were supposed to get paid 6 percent of the settlement, but upon seeing the revised amount, they refused to accept it. "This would put GTC in a new conflict and, instead of keeping the debate alive until a solution was arrived at or having to go to the court again spending precious time and money, GTC agreed to pay the amount determined earlier," said the

statement.

The ACC alleges in the case that the employee association paid a small portion of the money to the lawyers and misappropriated the rest.

The GTC board including its chairman and other members did not have even the remotest connection to this transaction because the money, upon written undertakings from all the employees to pay lawyer fees from their individual dues, was transferred from the settlement account to the Union account and neither GTC nor any of its board members had to do anything with the Union account nor has any authority on it," said GTC.

The ACC also alleges that the agreement between GTC and the employees were signed on April 27, 2022, but the bank account was opened on May 8, 2022, but the settlement agreement mentions a bank account number.

The fact is that the settlement agreement was composed on a computer and signed on April 27, 2022, but room was kept blank in the agreement for putting the bank account number when it was received. Later, after the bank account was opened, the account number was written by hand upon consent from both parties," it said.

"Writing the bank account number by hand in a formal agreement on mutual consensus does not make an agreement illegal or prove that it has been forged."

GTC also pointed out that the High Court had initially settled the matter.

## BNP's associate bodies to go

FROM PAGE 2  
to jail within one or a half month as trial of a case filed against him began ahead of the polls.

"The trial started a few days ago. I think I have to land in prison within one or a half month. They [government] are pushing those who are opposing them into jail," he said at a programme recently.

Party sources said after holding of court-centric programmes and the road marches by the front and associate bodies, the BNP might announce a grand rally in Dhaka.

"We are holding peaceful programmes. Considering the political situation, there might be a change in the protest programmes in the coming days. But as a democratic political party, we will hold peaceful events," Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, BNP standing committee member, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The BNP did not get the expected success from its July 29 sit-ins at Dhaka's entry points and after that the party paused programmes for 11 days.

Sources said the party identified some loopholes and is addressing those so that it can inject pace to the movement in Dhaka.

As part of that, there were some changes in leadership of central committee of Chhater Dal and Dhaka city units of Jubo Dal.

Dhaka north city unit BNP convener Aman Ullah Aman was sent to jail in a corruption case yesterday.

Party leaders believe that he will not get out soon. "So, someone will be given Aman's responsibilities."

Besides, Dhaka south city unit BNP Member Secretary Rafiqul Alam Majnu is in prison and that's why Tanvir Ahmed Robin was given the charge of acting member secretary and he too was arrested.

So, the party is considering giving responsibility to someone else, said a leader.

Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, BNP senior joint secretary general, said changes in the party's leadership position is part of the party's organisational activities and it will continue in the coming days.

## Gauff wins

FROM PAGE 12  
against the hard-hitting second seed Sabalenka, who will become world number one in next week's rankings.

But with both players making a slew of mistakes throughout an error-strewn final watched by a record crowd of 28,143 it was Gauff who held her nerve when it mattered to seal a deserved victory.

The win completed a remarkable turnaround for Gauff, who was left distraught after a first round exit at Wimbledon in July.

However she bounced back to win titles in Washington and Cincinnati and has now landed the biggest win of her career, after a shattering loss at the French Open last year.

"It means so much to me," an elated Gauff said afterwards. "I feel like I'm a little bit in shock in this moment."

"That French Open loss (last year) was a heartbreak for me. That makes this moment even sweeter than I could imagine."

## Paris will be on Dhaka's side

FROM PAGE 1  
The president was given a state salute and guard of honour by a contingent of Bangladesh Armed Forces. He inspected the guard of honour, while the national anthems of the countries were played.

President Macron is in Dhaka on a two-day visit at the invitation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who visited Paris the last time in 2021.

From the airport, President Macron and PM Hasina went to the Hotel InterContinental where they enjoyed a cultural show by performers featured by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and Bangladesh Academy of Fine Arts, and dances by Chakma, Marma and Tripura communities.

Both Macron and Hasina recalled the contribution of French intellectual André Malraux who, during the Liberation War in 1971, was one of the very few public figures to send a wake-up call to the international community about the atrocities perpetrated on Bangladeshi people.

Referring to the French support for Bangladeshi people in 1971, he said the French realised that they belonged to the same family where men and women stand ready to sacrifice their lives for freedom.

"This history binds us together despite adversaries," President Macron said.

He lauded Bangladesh's "tremendous success" over the years

based on democratic principles and rule of law at the core of the country's identity.

President Macron said Bangladesh is progressively gaining its place on the world stage with science, trade and culture.

"You can count our full support in order to convince the countries mainly responsible for the emission of greenhouse gases. But also to help you, France will be again on your side."

"There is no intention to bully our partners or to leave them in an unsustainable scheme. As you did during the Liberation War, all our strategy is focused on strengthening independence and strategic autonomy of our friends, to give them the freedom of sovereignty."

A sustainable approach from a geopolitical point of view in this region is possible because "what you did in the past decade is a unique economic success."

President Macron then raised the toast of ambarella juice to the long friendship between France and Bangladesh.

PM Hasina said it was her great pleasure and honour to host President Macron and recalled the warm hospitality with which he received her during his visit to France in November 2021.

"Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib's call for freedom echoed with global intellectuals like Andre Marlaux who

mobilised a number of young people to fight for our cause," she said.

"France holds a special place in our hearts and imagination."

PM Hasina also expressed her confidence that the Bangladesh-France relations can move to strategic engagements as the two countries are opening up new areas of cooperation in strategic assets and advanced technologies.

"Our partnership can be a meaningful force to address the multiple crises of wars, climate change and cost of living that our world is facing."

The PM then said there was Kachchi Biryani for the president to get a taste of Bangladesh's unique dish.

"Both of our nations are extremely proud of our cuisines, culture and linguistic heritage. It is time to promote further interface and fusion between our two cultures to bring our two peoples closer to each other."

President Macron then went to the Dhanmondi Lake and interacted with popular folk band Joler Gaan.

Today, President Macron will pay homage to Bangabandhu on Dhanmondi 32 and visit the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum. Then PM Hasina and Macron will hold a bilateral meeting at the Prime Minister's Office and address a joint press briefing.

President Macron leaves in the afternoon.