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## PM calls upon global leaders to stop wars



BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called on world leaders to put an end to wars, saying that women and children are the worst victims of any conflict.

"We don't want any war. Not as a politician or a prime minister, but as a mother, I'm calling upon world leaders to stop the arms race," she said.

The prime minister said the world first witnessed the Russia-Ukraine war last year and now the Israeli attack on Palestine this year.

She said this while

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People gather around bodies of Palestinians killed in Israeli air strike on the Ahli Arab Hospital in central Gaza after they were transported to Al-Shifa Hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## IMF to suggest new exchange rate system

### Wants Bangladesh Bank to introduce it in return for lower reserve target

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

The IMF staff mission is willing to set a lower target for foreign currency reserves for this December and June next year provided the Bangladesh Bank adopts the crawling peg method to manage the exchange rate.

The crawling peg is a system of exchange rate adjustments in which a currency with a fixed exchange rate is allowed to fluctuate within a band of rates, and in so doing, the method fully uses the key attributes of the fixed exchange regimes, as well as the flexibility of the floating exchange rate regime.

The system is shaped to peg at a certain value, but at the same time is designed to "glide" to respond to external market uncertainties within a band of rates.

The central bank conveyed to the visiting IMF staff mission that it is open to adopting the crawling peg but sought technical assistance on how to implement it. The Daily Star has learnt from BB and finance ministry officials informed about the discussions held yesterday.

As per the terms and conditions agreed with the Washington-based multilateral lender for the \$4.7 billion

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## 'CONFINING TEACHER TO MP'S HOUSE' It all boils down to rivalry between lawmaker, ex-MP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The picking up of a madrasa principal and taking him to the Rajshahi-5 lawmaker's home is linked to the Awami League MP's rivalry with a former lawmaker, said local AL leaders.

Lawmaker Mansur Rahman and ex-MP Kazi Abdul Wadud Dara, also the general secretary of Rajshahi district AL, have disagreements over the selection of the madrasa governing body president and recruitment of staffers, they added.

The two are aspiring the AL ticket in the constituency for the upcoming general elections and are also trying to establish supremacy in the area, they said.

Mansur wanted Nawshad Ali, principal of Rajshahi Medical College, to be the president of the governing body of Biraldaha Syed Karam Ali Darus Sunnah Fazil Madrasa in Puthia upazila.

But madrasa Principal Habibur Rahman in February played a role in the selection of Md Dewan Abdus Salek, who is loyal to Wadud, as the governing body president, Mansur alleged.

The lawmaker said the principal ignored his demi-official (DO) letter recommending Nawshad for the post.

The principal, however, said as per rules the lawmaker has no role in picking the governing body president and also in the recruitment of staffers. He said the madrasa's 50 percent posts are vacant.



Habibur Rahman

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## ADDRESSING SOCIAL, ECONOMIC INEQUALITY Qualitative changes in politics the way forward

### Debapriya tells discussion; experts stress need for reining in inflation, boosting reserves

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The society in Bangladesh has become economically and politically hostile and unequal, said Debapriya Bhattacharya, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue yesterday.

The economy and society are more discriminatory than ever before, he told a roundtable organised by the Prothom Alo at its office.

The situation will not improve unless there is a democratic development, he added.

"You expect a competitive and accountable economy, which is efficient, capable, not wasteful, free of projects with inflated costs, and not discriminatory. But at the same time, people are not able to vote, there is no competition among the parties, no democracy within the parties, and the local government does not function properly. You cannot have a competitive economy without competitive politics," he said at the discussion on why the economy was in a crisis.

"If you want institutional qualitative

change, the first institution to change qualitatively is politics."

The ruling party is known as a moderate social democratic party, Debapriya said, adding that when the party formed the government in 2009, it made a declaration titled "Vision 2021".

One of the goals mentioned in the declaration was to establish a welfare state, in which there will be equal opportunity for all.

"But the society is discriminatory," he added.

"We have an unfruitful parliamentary system, in which no discussion about the general public takes place."

Entrepreneurs are now linked to politics for their individual interests, he said, adding that entrepreneurs do not consider what is good for the business community.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director at the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, said, "We need short-term measures before the national election to rein in inflation and prevent the foreign currency reserves from falling

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## DURGA PUJA Take steps to ensure security

### Govt directs local admin, police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government on Monday directed deputy commissioners, superintendents of police, upazila nirbahi officers, and other field-level officials to take all measures to ensure security across the country during the upcoming Durga Puja celebrations.

The directive came at a virtual meeting between the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Tofazzel Hossain Miah and the officials concerned at the Prime Minister's Office, according to sources.

Sources said the meeting was held mainly to learn about the field administrations' security preparations for Durga Puja. Some attendees highlighted the importance of this year's puja as it is just ahead of the upcoming national election.

They mentioned how

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## Dutch art sleuth recovers 6 stolen historic paintings

AFP, The Hague



A Dutch art detective dubbed the "Indiana Jones of the Art World" has recovered another six paintings, including a portrait of William of Orange and the first depiction of a seventh-century king.

Art sleuth Arthur Brand made headlines around the world last month when he recovered a stolen Van Gogh

stuffed in an Ikea bag, and he believes that widely publicised success is leading to more discoveries.

Thieves made off with the latest six paintings from the town hall of Medemblik, in the north of the country, last month.

While the monetary value of the haul is not huge -- around 100,000 euros (\$105,000) -- the paintings are considered of great historical significance, including the earliest known portrait of Radbod, king of the Frisians from 680AD.

Brand was sitting at home on Friday night watching football when the doorbell rang and a man in a van asked him for help to unload some merchandise.

"I asked him, 'what are we going to unload?'. He said with a smile, 'well, the paintings of Medemblik,'" Brand recounted.

After the initial burglary in September, Brand had been widely quoted in the Dutch press as saying the thieves should have stolen six bikes, as these would be easier to resell.

## ROHINGYA RETURN Condition in Rakhine not suitable now

### Says US deputy assistant secy after visiting camps in Kutupalong

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US does not want a forced repatriation of the Rohingya as the situation in the Rakhine State is not conducive now, said Afreen Akhter, US deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, yesterday.



Afreen Akhter

"The Burmese government hasn't agreed to allow humanitarian access to the camps [in Rakhine]. They haven't allowed Rohingyas to settle in the villages of their choice or in their homes, and so we really don't think the conditions there are ripe for repatriation," she told reporters after meeting Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Mizanur Rahman in Cox's Bazar.

Earlier, she visited Rohingya camps in Kutupalong.

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The water of the Mayur river has turned pitch-black as sewage from Khulna city is released into the water via 14 sewers. Khulna City Corporation is dredging the river spending about Tk 8.5 crore, but things have not improved much. Also, an iron pillar of a bridge, the construction of which has been abandoned, obstructs the flow of the river. The photo was taken in Khulna city's Gollamari area yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## AL warns of tough action if BNP carries out sabotage

AGENCIES

Awami League leaders yesterday warned of stern action if the BNP tries to carry out any sabotage.

No ultimatum would work as long as the people of Bangladesh stay with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, said AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, reports UNB.

The government will not move even a little from the constitution, he said while speaking as the chief guest during a programme at University Laboratory School and College at the Dhaka University on the occasion of the 60th birth anniversary of Sheikh Russel, younger brother of Hasina.

Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, said, "The BNP is conspiring to carry out sabotage by bringing terrorists from all over the country to Dhaka. The Awami League government is ready to give a befitting reply to this attempt."

To Bangladesh's friendly countries, he said the election will be held as per the constitution, and this election will be free, fair, and acceptable.

AL presidium member Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Joint General Secretary AFM Bahauddin Nasim, Organising

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