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# Stern action if anyone tries to foil polls: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has once again accused the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami of trying to foil the January 7 national election.

"The consequences will not be good if anyone tries to foil the election," she said.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, was speaking at a meeting of the AL Parliamentary Nomination Board at its Dhaka district office in Tejgaon. The meeting was convened to finalise the party nominees for the election.

The premier said the BNP-Jamaat alliance did not participate in the 2014 parliamentary polls as they were not confident of winning the elections.

She said that although the BNP-Jamaat tried to taint the 2018 elections, they failed to produce any specific evidence of irregularities in support of their claims.

The PM said no political party can go to power by killing people and destroying properties.

Hasina admitted that the BNP's acceptance among the people had been on the rise when it was holding peaceful rallies and doing healthy politics.

"But when they resorted to violence like they did in the



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**THE SUPER LIZARD! ...**  
An oriental garden lizard roaming the Lawachhara National Park in Sylhet. These fascinating, yet understudied, lizards can be found in a vast range of habitats in various countries, including Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and India. They mainly feed on insects and small rodents but also occasionally eat vegetable matter. But, what makes the oriental garden lizard truly special are its enhanced vision and ability to change colour. It also has associative learning abilities and can learn colour, taste and space, and can avoid toxic prey and choose them by colour. This remarkable ability to remember and recognise prey by colour is handy in the wild. Meanwhile, it also assists farmers as bioregulators of crop pests with its enhanced colour vision.

PHOTO: MOSABBER HOSSAIN RIBON

## Another bout of 48-hr blockade from Sunday

Bus, 3 other vehicles torched; two cops hurt in crude bomb attack in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP and its allies have called another 48-hour blockade from Sunday morning.

At a virtual press briefing yesterday, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, senior joint secretary general of the party, announced the programme demanding the next national election under a non-partisan administration and cancellation of the election schedule.

The party's ongoing 48-hour blockade ends at 6:00am today.

A bus was torched in the capital and three other vehicles were set alight in Gazipur and Kishoreganj yesterday, while two constables were injured as criminals hurled a crude bomb at a human haulier carrying police personnel in Rajshahi on Wednesday night.

During this blockade, arsonists set fire to six vehicles across the country, with two reported in the capital, according to the fire service.

Traffic across the country increased on the last day of the blockade yesterday. A few inter district buses left the capital, The Daily Star learnt this after talking to transport workers.

With blockade that would begin on Sunday would be BNP's seventh round since October 28, when BNP activists and

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## War rages on in Gaza as truce delayed till today

Israel strikes over 300 Hamas targets

AGENCIES

War raged on in Gaza yesterday, as a proposed truce and release of hostages was delayed for at least another day.

Columns of black smoke could be seen rising above northern Gaza's war zone from across the fence in Israel as daylight broke over the strip. Israel said the release of hostages,



- ➔ Truce delayed over 'hostage list'
- ➔ Qatar said truce to start at 7:00am (local time)
- ➔ Both sides vow to resume fighting once truce ends
- ➔ Palestinian death toll in Gaza tops 14,000

meant to be accompanied by the war's first ceasefire, would be delayed until today.

The Israeli military said it had launched 300 air strikes overnight, and sounded sirens warning of cross-border rocket launches by Palestinian groups. Palestinian media reported Israeli strikes in the northern areas as well as in the southern city of Khan Younis, where Israel has told residents of the north to seek shelter.

A doctor at Gaza's largest hospital Al-Shifa told AFP that the facility's director and several other medical personnel were arrested by Israeli forces yesterday.

"The negotiations on the release of our hostages are advancing and continuing constantly," Israeli National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi said in a statement. "The start

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## US interfered in Bangladesh's internal affairs

Says foreign ministry spokeswoman

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has accused US Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas of grossly interfering in Bangladesh's internal affairs.

"At the end of October, US Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas met a member of the local opposition to discuss plans for organising anti-government rallies. Such actions amount to nothing less than gross interference in internal affairs," she said in a briefing in Moscow.

Russian Embassy in Dhaka posted Zakharova's statement on its verified Facebook page on Wednesday.

"We have repeatedly highlighted the attempts by the US and its allies to influence the internal political processes in Bangladesh under the guise of ensuring that the upcoming parliamentary elections in the country are 'transparent and inclusive'," Zakharova said.

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## Webb captures glimpse of the heart of Milky Way

CNN ONLINE

The James Webb Space Telescope has looked into the heart of the Milky Way galaxy, unveiling new features and mysteries within the chaotic region that could help astronomers unravel more details about the early universe.

The space observatory's ability to view the universe in infrared light, which is invisible to the human eye, captured never-before seen details in the image, released by Nasa.

Astronomers used Webb to glimpse Sagittarius C, or Sgr C, an active region of star formation located about 300 light-years from the galaxy's central supermassive black hole Sagittarius A\*.

"The image from Webb is stunning, and the science we will get from it is even better," said Samuel Crowe, principal investigator of the observations and an undergraduate student at the University of Virginia, in a statement.

"Massive stars are factories that produce heavy elements in their nuclear cores, so understanding them better is like learning the origin story of much of the universe," Crowe said.

Studying the Milky Way's centre with Webb could provide insights into how many stars form there and whether massive stars are more likely to form near the galactic centre rather than the galaxy's spiral arms.



## DUTCH ELECTION Far-right Wilders aims to be PM after shock win

REUTERS, Amsterdam

Far-right populist Geert Wilders wants to be the Netherlands' next prime minister and would focus his efforts on curbing immigration, he said following a landmark election win that will have repercussions in the Netherlands and Europe.

A fan of former US President Donald Trump and Hungary's eurosceptic Prime Minister Viktor Orban, the vocally anti-Islam, anti-EU Wilders has also vowed to slash Dutch payments to the European Union and block the entrance of any new members, including Ukraine.

Though Wilders' most radical ideas will be rejected by other parties he must work with in order to form a coalition government, fellow populists including Italy's Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the hard-right League Matteo Salvini welcomed his win as showing that "a new Europe is possible."

Beating all predictions, Wilders' Freedom Party (PVV) won 37 seats out of 150 on Wednesday, well ahead of 25 for a joint Labour/Green ticket and 24 for the conservative People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) of outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte.

Wilders told Dutch media yesterday he wanted to be prime minister and that he was in favour of a referendum on whether the Netherlands should leave the EU.



Geert Wilders



Arsonists torch a bus in the capital's Bijoynagar area around 1:00pm yesterday, the second day of the BNP's 48-hour nationwide blockade. Passengers managed to get off the bus unhurt.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## PILOT RECRUITMENT CAAB suspends Biman captain Sazid's licence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) has suspended the licence of Biman's Capt Sazid Ahmed for his alleged involvement in irregularities during pilot recruitment for the carrier.

The order, signed by the director of flight safety and regulations at CAAB on Monday, said his licence is put on hold until a probe into his involvement in recruiting unqualified pilots in February last year is complete.

Capt Sazid was the chief of training at Biman and he was removed from the post on March 9.

On March 1, 2023, The Daily Star ran a report titled "Biman paying for hiring unqualified Boeing 777 pilots" pointing out the



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