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China invites Hasina for state visit

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

China has invited Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to visit China at the soonest possible time.

"China earlier extended an invitation to our prime minister. Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh renewed that invitation today," Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud told reporters after a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen at the ministry yesterday.

"We will find a suitable time for the visit," he said.

According to foreign ministry sources, China had wanted the prime minister to visit China in September last year, but that was not possible due to her other engagements and the elections.

Hasina last visited China in 2019, three years after Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit Dhaka.

Soon after the elections on January 7, Chinese President Xi Jinping congratulated the PM and sought to boost the bilateral relationship.

He said China is a major development partner of Bangladesh, especially in terms of infrastructure development.

At the meeting yesterday, Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen congratulated all concerned in Bangladesh for holding a

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Farmers of Bogura's Dhunat upazila using a thresher to separate mustard seeds from the recently harvested plants. Once all the mustard crops are threshed, the field will be prepared for Boro farming as its season nears. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ



Sinner the new champion of Australian Open

REUTERS, Melbourne

Jannik Sinner capped off a fortnight of outstanding tennis with a comeback for the ages to outlast Daniil Medvedev and win his maiden Grand Slam title at the Australian Open on Sunday, becoming the new King of Melbourne Park.

With a 3-6, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 win, Sinner became the first Australian Open champion for a decade not named Novak Djokovic, Rafa Nadal or Roger Federer in the first men's final since 2005 not to feature any of the "Big Three".

Italian Sinner had dominated the tournament en route to the final, with a thumping victory over holder Djokovic in the semifinals, but he had to fight back

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Three US troops killed in Jordan

Biden vows reprisal

REUTERS, Washington

Three US service members were killed and dozens wounded during an unmanned aerial drone attack on U.S. forces stationed in northeastern Jordan near the Syrian border, President Joe Biden and US officials said yesterday.

Biden blamed Iran-backed groups for the attack, the first deadly strike against US forces since the Israel-Hamas war erupted in October, sending shock waves throughout the Middle East.

"While we are still gathering the facts of this attack, we know it was carried out by radical Iran-backed militant groups operating in Syria and Iraq," Biden said in a statement.

At least 34 personnel were being evaluated for possible traumatic brain injury, a US official told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity. Two different officials said some wounded US forces were medically evacuated from the base for further treatment.

A fourth official said the drone struck near the barracks, which, if confirmed, could explain the high number of casualties.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of hardline Iran-backed militant groups, claimed attacks on three bases, including one on the Jordan-Syria border.

The attack is a major escalation of the already tense situation in the Middle East. Israel's assault on Gaza has killed over 26,000 Palestinians, according to the local health ministry.

'Un-pause funding' for Palestinians

UN officials urge donor countries; families bury children in mass grave inside Nasser Hospital

AGENCIES

UN officials implored countries to reconsider a pause in funding for the UN agency for Palestinians yesterday, vowing to punish anyone involved in Hamas' attack on Israel and warning that aid for some two million people in Gaza was at stake.

At least nine countries, including top donors the US and Germany, have paused funding for the UN refugee agency for Palestinians (UNRWA) following allegations by Israel that a dozen of its 13,000 staff in Gaza were involved in the Oct 7 rampage.

"While I understand their concerns - I was myself horrified by these accusations - I strongly appeal to the governments that have suspended their contributions to, at least, guarantee the continuity of UNRWA's operations," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said yesterday, vowing to hold to account "any UN employee involved in acts of terror".

There was no immediate sign of countries' heeding the UN call to reinstate aid. However, Norway and Ireland said they would continue funding the agency, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army yesterday said special forces were continuing to engage in "intensive battles" in Gaza's main southern city of Khan Yunis, where it said troops eliminated "terrorists and located large quantities of weapons".

Strikes were also carried out in central and northern Gaza, it added.

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Bangladeshi man shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A Bangladeshi man was shot dead by India's Border Security Force (BSF) along the Angorpota-Dahagram border in Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila early yesterday, a BGB official said.

The deceased was identified as Rafiqul Islam Tuklu, 33, of the upazila's Dangarpara village.

BSF members have taken the body of Tuklu inside the Indian territory, said Nayek Subedar Golam Mustafa, camp commander of Angorpota Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) camp under BGB Battalion 51.

Quoting locals, the BGB official told The Daily Star that Tuklu entered India through the Angorpota-Dahagram border at Dangarpara point around 4:30am when a team from Arjun Camp under BSF Battalion 6 in West Bengal's Cooch Behar district of India was patrolling the area.

The team opened fire and Tuklu was shot. He died on the spot, the BGB official said.

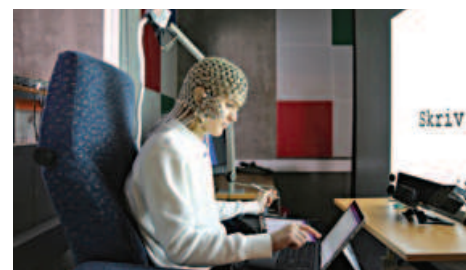
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Writing by hand more stimulating for brain than typing

NBC NEWS ONLINE

Typing may be faster than writing by hand, but it's less stimulating for the brain, according to research published Friday in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology*.

After recording the brain activity of 36 university students, researchers at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology determined that handwriting might improve learning and memory.



At the start of the experiment, the students were told to either write words in cursive using a digital pen on a touchscreen, or to type the same words using a keyboard. When a word such as "forest" or "hedgehog" appeared on a screen in front of them, they had 25 seconds to write or type it over and over.

Meanwhile, a cap of sensors on their head measured their brain waves. The cap's 256 electrodes attached to the scalp and recorded the electrical signals of the students' brains, including where brain cells were active and how parts of the brain communicated with each other.

Form body to probe price hike of agri products

HC asks authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to form a high-powered committee to investigate the unusual hikes in prices of all types of agricultural commodities, identify the persons responsible, and submit a report within a month.

In response to a writ petition, the court also issued a rule asking the respondents to explain why their inaction and failure to prevent the price hikes should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, the HC sought an explanation as to why they should not be directed to establish marketplaces at the field level under government management to keep the price of agricultural commodities at a bearable level.

Secretaries concerned with the ministries of agriculture, commerce, finance, and public administration; the director

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Mercury falls to lowest in five years

Tentulia logs 5 degrees Celsius

STAR REPORT

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department yesterday recorded the country's lowest temperature in five years at five degrees Celsius in Panchagarh's Tentulia upazila.

This marks the lowest dip in mercury since the winter of 2019, when the temperature fell to 4.9 degrees Celsius in the upazila, said Rasel Shah, an official at Tentulia Weather Observation Centre.

"The frosty, cold wind blowing from the north and dense fog are making the nights here exceptionally difficult," he added.

Tentulia is also the upazila where the country's lowest-ever temperature was recorded at 2.6 degrees Celsius in 2018.

Yesterday, the maximum

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Solid waste, mostly bits of scrap leather, being burned right outside the Savar Tannery Industrial Estate. Dumping of chemically treated waste harms the soil and burning the waste pollutes the air. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Jatiyo Party: where drama never stops

Raushan says she's now JP chief; Chunnu brushes aside the move

RASHIDUL HASAN

In a new twist, Jatiyo Party Chief Patron Raushan Ershad yesterday relieved JP Chairman GM Quader and Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnu from their posts and announced that she would take the party's helm.

This announcement came after Raushan, widow of JP founder HM Ershad, held a views exchange meeting with the JP leaders who resigned or were removed from the party.

She in a statement, after the meeting at her Gulshan residence, said the roles of GM Quader and Chunnu before and after the January 7 election seriously affected the party.

Her son and also JP Joint Secretary General Rahgir Almabe Ershad (Saad Ershad) and presidium members, Shunil Suvho Roy, Shafiqul Islam, and Yahiya Chowdhury, among others, who had been expelled from the party, were present.

Raushan, who was the opposition leader of 11th parliament, said even after a consensus with the Awami League over sharing 26 seats, GM Quader and Chunnu denied that they had a deal with the ruling party, creating confusion. For this, the party faced a debacle in the polls, she said.

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