



PTI picks Ayub as Pak PM candidate

Announces countrywide protest against alleged polls rigging

AGENCIES

A key aide of former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan said yesterday that the jailed leader had nominated Omar Ayub Khan as a candidate in a parliamentary vote to elect a new premier following last week's national elections.

Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) also announced countrywide protests against what it called widespread rigging against it in the polls. The election commission has denied such accusations.

The polls did not return a clear majority for anyone, but independent candidates backed by Khan's PTI won 92 out of 264 seats making them the largest group. Khan ruled out alliances with the three largest parties, which means his candidate currently does not have the numbers to form government.

"Omar Ayub will be our candidate for the prime minister election, he has been nominated by Imran Khan," Asad Qaiser, a senior leader of PTI, told journalists after meeting the former premier in prison.

Qaiser said PTI would reach out to other parties to discuss supporting Ayub's candidature. Khan's opponents have already announced an alliance to form a minority government, reports Reuters.

Ayub is currently in hiding, and is wanted in various investigations by law enforcement, including charges of being a part of rioting that followed Khan's arrest.



A honey bee feasting on the nectar of freshly-bloomed Moringa flowers (shojne phul) in Beel Pabla area of Khulna's Dumuria upazila. With spring comes the blossoming of different varieties of flowers. While for us humans, the flowers in full bloom can be a magnificent sight, their importance is far greater for honey bees – who, in turn, are essential to human survival. They are not only the greatest honey-producers in the world, according to bee experts of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, a third of the world's food production depends on bees. Their greatest impact for humans is through the pollination of agricultural crops, while wildlife can benefit from honey bees through the pollination of many wildland plants. However, bee populations have been declining globally over recent decades due to deforestation, excessive use of pesticide and air pollution – negatively affecting many of the Earth's ecosystems and posing a threat to a variety of plants critical to human well-being. To save the planet and humankind, the world must first save the bees.

Bangladesh-Russia ties won't be affected

Hopes Russian ambassador on Hasina-Zelensky meeting tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh, Alexander Mantyskiy, hopes that Bangladesh's balanced foreign policy on Ukraine will continue and not affect Bangladesh-Russia relations.

He made the comment when asked if the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Germany tomorrow would affect Bangladesh-Russia relations.

Zelensky sought Hasina's appointment for the meeting on the sidelines of the three-day Munich Security Conference starting today, and she may call for ending the war and resolving the conflict through dialogue.

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PREETI'S DEATH Case handed over to DB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The case over Preeti Urang's death from a fall from the Mohammadpur flat of The Daily Star Executive Editor Syed Ashfaqul Haque was handed over to the Detective Branch of police yesterday.

"The case has been transferred to us for investigation," Mohammad Ashraful Islam, deputy commissioner of DB's Tejgaon division, told The Daily Star last night.

House help Preeti Urang, 15, from Moulvibazar, died after she fell through an opening on Ashfaqul's eighth-floor flat around 8:00am on February 6.

Shortly afterwards, police took Ashfaqul and his wife Tania Khondoker into custody.

The couple is currently on a four-day remand in a case filed by the victim's father, a tea garden worker, under section 304(a) of the penal code, which deals with death caused by negligence. The remand ends on Saturday.

They were first produced

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Yoghurt-seller by day, literacy champion throughout

ANWAR ALI

It is not often that one gets to associate the Ekushey Padak with the likes of a yoghurt-seller.

One may ask, why a yoghurt-seller?

However, in the case of 90-year-old Ziaul Haque from Chapainawabganj, it was making and selling yoghurts that allowed him to transform the lives of children in and beyond his village – gaining him the recognition of a literacy champion.

Ziaul was forced to give up on his education just after finishing primary school due to his family's financial struggles. At the tender age of 11, he joined his father in selling yoghurt to make ends meet.

However, his desire for knowledge and literacy never left his side. Instead, he used it to dedicate his life to keep others from being deprived of education.

Speaking to this correspondent yesterday, Ziaul, who lives in Mushribhuj village in Chapainawabganj's Bholahat



upazila, expressed his joy at being one of this year's Ekushey Padak awardees.

"My heart is overflowing with a joy so profound that I don't even know how to contain it!"

Ziaul was born on June 6, 1934, to local dairyman Taiyab Ali Mollah and his wife Sharikun Nessa.

"Back in 1955, Tk 1 could fetch

five kilograms of rice.... My father was unable to afford my education while taking care of a six-member family. So, he asked me to leave school and join his work. He gave me milk; I made yoghurt from it and sold it."

Three years later, he got married to his cousin Saraban Tohura, with whom he had two daughters.

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Inflation shoots up to 9.86pc in Jan

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Inflation in Bangladesh climbed 45 basis points to 9.86 percent in January, official figures showed yesterday, defying measures undertaken by the central bank recently to bring consumer prices under control.

The Consumer Price Index rose 9.41 percent in December, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Non-food inflation pushed up inflation last month: it surged 90 basis points to 9.42 percent.

Food inflation fell slightly to 9.56 percent from 9.58 percent.

The higher inflation highlights the continuing cost-of-living crisis facing the poor and low-income groups.

Inflation has stayed over 9 percent since March and at an elevated level since May 2022, owing to the lingering impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

Globally, central banks

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Scientists develop 'meaty rice'

AFP, Seoul



Scientists in South Korea have developed a new type of sustainable hybrid food – a "meaty" rice that they say could help solve food crises and climate change.

The new grain was grown in a lab by researchers at Seoul's Yonsei University and is packed with beef muscle and fat cells.

The result is a pink rice that the team says could offer a cheaper and more environmentally sustainable meat alternative and leave a smaller carbon footprint.

"Imagine obtaining all the nutrients we need from cell-cultured protein rice," said Park So-hyeon, who co-authored the study.

"Rice already has a high nutrient level, but adding cells from livestock can further boost it," she said in a press release on Wednesday, when the study was published in the Matter journal.

The grain was coated in fish gelatine to help beef cells latch onto the rice and then left to culture in a petri dish for up to 11 days.

The final product contained 8 percent more protein and 7 percent more fat than regular rice, the team said, and was more firm and brittle than natural grains.

The latest creation left a significantly smaller carbon footprint since the production method eliminates the need to raise and farm animals which consume "a lot of resources and water and releases a lot of greenhouse gas," Park said.

NHRC calls for justice for Preeti's death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner to provide updates on the case filed over the death of Preeti Urang at The Daily Star Executive Editor Syed Ashfaqul Haque's flat in Mohammadpur on February 6.

In a statement yesterday, the commission called for a proper investigation and punishment to those responsible.

In the statement, NHRC Chairman Dr Kamal Uddin Ahmed said though domestic worker protection policy is in place to protect domestic workers in Bangladesh, their abuse has become a daily occurrence in recent times.

"But as the domestic workers remain vulnerable financially and socially, those involved in the abuse mostly go unpunished. As a

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PHOTO ON PAGE 3



Parents of examinees huddled in front of Motijheel Govt Girls and Boys schools, which are next to each other, in the capital, as their children sit for this year's SSC exams, which began across the country yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Metro to be more frequent in peak hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The metro rail authorities will reduce train intervals during peak hours from tomorrow to provide services to the growing number of passengers.

They will operate trains every eight minutes during peak hours and every 10-12 minutes during off-peak hours, MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), told reporters at his Eskaton office yesterday.

Trains now run every 10 minutes during peak hours and every 12 minutes during off-peak hours, according to the DMTCL.

According to the new timings, metro trains from Uttara to Motijheel would be operated every 10 minutes from 7:10am to 7:30am, every eight minutes from 7:31am to 11:48am, every 12 minutes from 11:49am to 3:12pm, and every eight minutes from 3:13pm to 8:00pm.

Trains from Motijheel to Uttara will be available every 10 minutes from 7:30am to 8:00am, every eight minutes from 8:00am to 12:08pm, every 12 minutes from 12:09pm to 3:50pm, and every eight minutes from 3:51pm to 8:40pm, MAN Siddique said, adding that they would change the timings during Ramadan.

He said the metro makes 152 trips daily and it will be 178 from tomorrow.

The metro now transports around 2.70 lakh passengers daily, he said adding that 1,775 passengers are now being carried by each train during peak hours and the number is around 1,500 during off-peak hours.

MAN Siddique said they operate 10 trains and one is

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