

**FASTBUILD PROVIDES RODS OF ANY SHAPE AND SIZE AS PER DESIGN**

BSRM building a safer nation

**DHAKA METRO RAIL**

Proud Construction Partner

SHAH CEMENT

## Ekushey Boi Mela likely to get new venue

### Govt to start construction work at Suhrawardy Udyan

ARAFAT RAHAMAN and DIPAN NANDY

Uncertainty looms over holding the next edition of Amar Ekushey Boi Mela at Suhrawardy Udyan, as the government has decided to take over the ground for construction of a "cultural zone" called Sonar Bangla Sangskritik Bolo.

"Based on the primary decision, we would not be able to hold the 2025 book fair at that location for sure. The ministry is looking for an alternative venue to hold the much-anticipated yearly event," said cultural affairs Secretary Khalil Ahmed.

However, he added that the final decision will be made by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also minister for cultural affairs.

The works of the cultural zone began in early 2000 to showcase the country's history, including the Liberation War, Pakistan army's surrender, the historic March 7 speech, the 1969 mass uprising and the Language Movement. Areas like Shilpakala Academy, Shaheed Minar, Suhrawardy Udyan, Bangla Academy, TSC, Shabbagh and Ramna Park are all parts of the "cultural zone".

At Suhrawardy Udyan, the government will now build walkways, food courts, water fountains, a mosque and an underground car park (under construction) as part of the third phase of Swadhinata Stambha construction project.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



A relative mourns over the shrouded body of a loved one killed in an Israeli strike at Al-Aqsa hospital in Deir el-Balah in central Gaza yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## US working to ease conflict in Myanmar

### Says US official in TV interview

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his team are working to support dialogue and take other measures to ease the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, said State Department Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Afreen Akhter.

"We're obviously very concerned about the security in the Indo-Pacific region and what is happening on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border."

"The secretary of state and his team are working to support dialogue and take other measures to ease the crisis [in Myanmar]," she said in an exclusive interview with private television channel Jamuna Television during her visit to Dhaka



Afreen Akhter

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## North Korea's first spy satellite 'alive', can manoeuvre

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korea's first spy satellite is "alive", a Netherlands-based space expert said on Tuesday, after detecting changes in its orbit that suggested Pyongyang was successfully controlling the spacecraft - although its capabilities remain unknown.

After two fiery failures, North Korea successfully placed the Malligyong-1 satellite in orbit in November. Pyongyang's state media claimed it has photographed sensitive military and political sites in South Korea, the United States and elsewhere, but has not released any imagery. Independent radio trackers have not detected signals from the satellite.

"But now we can definitely say the satellite is alive," Marco Langbroek, a satellite expert at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, wrote in a blog post.

From February 19-24, the satellite conducted manoeuvres to raise its perigee, or the lowest point in its orbit, from 488 km to 497 km, Langbroek said, citing data from the US-led Combined Space Operations Center.

"The manoeuvre proves that Malligyong-1 is not dead, and that North Korea has control over the satellite - something that was disputed," he said.

South Korea's Defence Ministry said it too had assessed that the satellite was in orbit, but said it would not comment further on individual analyses. On Monday, Defence Minister Shin Won-sik said the satellite was not showing any signs of performing other tasks or engaging in reconnaissance.



## 100 injured as rival groups clash in B'baria

### Police arrest 33

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Over 100 people including three policemen were injured in a clash between two rival groups in Brahmanbaria's Bijoynagar upazila yesterday.

The clash took place at Bulla village under the Harashpur union of the upazila between 7:00am and 10:00am. At least 10 houses were vandalised during the clashes, said Md Asadul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bijoynagar Police Station.

Police had to fire four rounds of rubber bullets to bring the situation under control, he said, adding that 33 people have been arrested so far.

Of the injured, 69 were taken to Brahmanbaria General Hospital.

According to the locals and police, Kawar Mia, the current Union Parishad member and Harashpur Union Juba League president, has been at odds with Joynal Mia, former UP member and BNP president of Bulla ward, since the last Union Parishad election.

They both were candidates in the polls

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## Gaza death toll nears 30,000 as UN warns of 'imminent' famine

### Hamas raises stakes in truce talks with Ramadan call

AGENCIES

Fighting raged yesterday in the besieged Gaza Strip, where the reported death toll neared 30,000 as mediators insisted a truce in the Israel-Hamas conflict could be just days away.

The Hamas ruled territory's health ministry reported another 91 deaths in overnight Israeli bombardment in Gaza, while UN agencies sounded the alarm on dire humanitarian conditions and food shortages.

Mediators from Egypt, Qatar, and the United States have been trying to find a path to a ceasefire amid the bitter fighting, seeking a six-week pause in the nearly five-month war.

After a flurry of diplomacy, mediators said a deal could finally be within reach, reports AFP.

Hamas urged Palestinians yesterday to march to Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque at the start of Ramadan next month, raising the stakes in negotiations for a truce in Gaza, which US President Joe Biden hopes will be in place by then.

The call by Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh followed comments by Biden, broadcast on Tuesday, that there was an agreement in principle for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas during Ramadan, while hostages held by the militants are released.

Biden said he hoped such an agreement, which

a source said would also allow more aid into the stricken Palestinian enclave and bring the release of Palestinian prisoners, could be finalised by March 4. The Muslim holy month of Ramadan is expected to begin on the evening of March 10.

Both Israel and Hamas have played down the prospects for a truce and Qatari mediators have said the most contentious issues are still unresolved.

Israel said on Monday it would allow Ramadan prayers at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque but set limits according to security needs, setting the stage for possible clashes if crowds of Palestinians turn up and Gaza violence is still raging.

"This is a call on our people in Jerusalem and the West Bank to march to Al-Aqsa since the first day of Ramadan," said Haniyeh, according to Reuters.

In a televised speech, he said Hamas was showing flexibility in negotiations with Israel but at the same time was ready to continue fighting. Israel has said any deal with Hamas would require the group to drop "outlandish demands".

Hamas is weighing a proposal, agreed by Israel at talks with mediators in Paris last week, for a 40-day ceasefire, which would be the first extended truce of the five-month-old war. Both sides have delegations in Qatar this week

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

- Hamas urges Palestinians to march to Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque at the start of Ramadan
- Both Israel, Hamas have played down prospects for truce
- Israeli strikes killed 76 Palestinians in 24 hours

## Barishal set up Comilla final

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a highly anticipated clash between two Bangladesh stalwarts - Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal - the latter had the last laugh as his Fortune Barishal side made it into the final of the 10th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) with a six-wicket win over Rangpur Riders in Qualifier 2 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The Tamim-led Barishal will vie for their maiden BPL trophy in the all-important final against defending champions Comilla Victorians, the tournament's most successful side with four titles, on March 1 at the same venue.

Thanks to a late onslaught from Shamim Hossain (59\* off 24), Rangpur were able to post 149 for seven after being

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Mushfiqur Rahim celebrates with David Miller after the latter finished off proceedings with a maximum to help Fortune Barishal cruise to a six-wicket win over Rangpur Riders in Qualifier 2 of the Bangladesh Premier League in Mirpur yesterday. Barishal will face Comilla Victorians in the final at the same venue on March 1.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Harmful waste generation set to jump, UN warns



Cabinet approves draft Offshore Banking Act

## Stock Jeans Sale

Export-oriented garment factory is looking for customers for exporting its stock jeans.

Interested customers are requested to contact at +8801816405386  
Email: excessgarments@gmail.com