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MYANMAR CONFLICT

## Talks on to send back 179 BGP members

Says foreign minster

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud said Dhaka is in talks with Naypyidaw to send back another 179 members of Myanmar's Border Guard Police.

The BGP members will be sent back like the 330 Myanmar nationals repatriated earlier, he said while talking to journalists after a meeting with Malaysian High Commissioner Haznah Md Hashim at the former's office in the capital yesterday.

On Monday, 179 BGP members took shelter in Bangladesh amid the fighting between the junta force and the Arakan Army in Rakhine state.

The BGP members from the Anghthapaya

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The metro station near the capital's Secretariat saw heavy crowds yesterday, as officegoers rushed home for the first iftar of this Ramadan. In most offices, the duty-hours have been cut short for the month of fasting.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## INDOMITABLE MARCH

### Growing support for Mujib's demands from both wings

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

Mujib's demands garnered widespread support in both wings of Pakistan. Even smaller parties from West Pakistan backed the Awami League. Leaders of West Pakistani parties endorsed Mujib's four demands and advocated for interim governments at both central and provincial levels. They criticised Bhutto's insistence on prior agreement on constitutional matters and emphasised Mujib's commitment to considering suggestions from the majority party. Additionally, they urged Yahya to meet with Sheikh Mujib to address misunderstandings, apprehensions, and suspicions. [Srinath Raghavan, 1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh, Permanent Black 2013, pg. 46]

Khan Abdul Wali Khan, the leader of the National Awami Party, arrived in Dhaka. During an interview with journalists at the airport, he voiced his complete support for Sheikh Mujib's demands. He also warned that the current crisis could jeopardise Pakistan's unity. Khan Abdul Wali Khan demanded the immediate withdrawal of military control and the transfer of power to

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## Bumblebees teach each other how to solve puzzles: study

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Bumblebees can teach each other to solve complex puzzles that are too difficult to learn alone, scientists have found. Experiments have shown the insects are able to learn a complicated puzzle box task from their peers to gain access to a sugar reward.

But when there was no help involved, individual bees struggled to complete the puzzle from scratch.

The researchers said their study, published in the journal Nature, shows bees can learn complex tasks through social interaction, challenging the long-held view that this trait is unique to humans.

To carry out the study, the scientists set up a two-step puzzle box task where the bees

first had to learn how to move an obstacle before operating a rotating lid that could be opened to access a sugar solution.

The scientists trained "demonstrator" bees to complete the task, with a temporary reward at the first step.

Untrained bees learned to open the two-step box from the demonstrators without needing a reward after the first step.

However, when there were no demonstrators to show how it was done, the bees failed to solve the puzzle independently through trial and error.



## Sherpur journalist freed on bail

STAR REPORT

The Sherpur journalist, who was jailed for six months by a mobile court for a 11 e g e d misconduct while seeking information from the Nokla UNO's office on March 5, was released on bail yesterday.

Shafiuzzaman Rana, the Nokla correspondent for Bangla daily Desh Rupantor, walked out of Sherpur District Jail in the evening, his wife Bonna Akter told reporters.

Jail Super Mohammad Humayun Kabir Khan also confirmed the development.

Earlier in the day, the court of Sherpur Additional District Magistrate Jebun Nahar granted him bail after hearing the bail prayer, reports our Mymensingh correspondent.

The magistrate fixed April 16 for hearing the



Shafiuzzaman

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## First aid ship sails to Gaza as famine looms

Qatari spokesperson reports no progress in ceasefire talks; overnight Israeli attacks kill 80 more, dozens more missing under rubble

AFP, Palestinian Territories

A Spanish charity ship taking food aid to Gaza left the Mediterranean island of Cyprus yesterday in hopes of opening a maritime corridor to the war-ravaged Palestinian territory.

The Open Arms set sail towing a barge loaded with 200 tonnes of relief goods for the sea journey of about 400 kilometres (250 miles), as Cyprus said it was readying a second ship.

"The departure of the first ship is a sign of hope," European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen wrote on social media platform X. "We will work hard together for many more ships to follow."

Heavy Israeli bombardment again rained down on Gaza, killing at least 80 people overnight, and dozens more were missing under the rubble, said the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

"At least 80 martyrs arrived at hospitals, the majority children, women and the elderly," it said in a statement.

The army said its forces were raiding targets across Gaza and

had found "AK-47 rifles, vests and explosive devices" in a military compound in the main southern city of Khan Yunis.

The Israeli offensive war since October 7 has levelled vast parts of the coastal strip and sparked dire food shortages that have led

inspections of cargo -- Western and Arab governments have stepped up daily airdrops.

However UN and other relief agencies warn that parachuting in aid parcels is less effective and falls far short of the hundreds of truckloads needed every day to sustain the population of 2.4 million people.

The humanitarian crisis has gripped Gaza at a time Muslims have since Monday observed the month of Ramadan, where daytime fasts are traditionally broken with lavish evening iftar meals with family and friends.

In Gaza's southern city of Rafah -- now home to nearly 1.5 million people, many of whom have sought refuge in crowded shelters and makeshift tents -- one woman, Umm Muhammad Abu Matar from Khan Yunis, told AFP that this year, Ramadan has "the taste of blood and misery".

Since October 7, Israel's retaliatory bombardment and ground offensive have killed 31,184 Palestinians in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the territory's health ministry.

- Death toll in Gaza rises to 31,184
- UN says sea, air drops can't replace overland aid delivery
- US hits targets in Yemen as Huthis vow to step up Red Sea attacks

the UN World Food Programme to warn "famine is imminent" in northern Gaza.

As the flow of aid trucks from Egypt has slowed -- a trend variously blamed on the war, the growing insecurity on the ground, and cumbersome Israeli

## EXPLOITATION OF WORKERS

### Manpower recruiting syndicates to blame

Says Malaysian high commissioner

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Haznah Md Hashim has blamed manpower recruiting syndicates in both Bangladesh and Malaysia for the labour exploitation in the Southeast Asian country.

"One of the reasons we are facing these issues is because of the syndicates, which means it operates perhaps here [Bangladesh] and in Malaysia also. It requires cooperation from both countries to tackle the issues," she told reporters after a meeting with Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud at the foreign ministry yesterday.



Haznah Md Hashim

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## Indian troops begin Maldives pullout

Development comes after the island nation signed 'military assistance' deal with China last week

AFP, Malé

India has begun withdrawing military personnel operating surveillance aircraft in the Maldives after the new pro-China president ordered them to leave, defence authorities said Tuesday.

An official of the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) said 25 Indian troops deployed in the southernmost atoll of Addu had left the archipelago ahead of March 10, the official start of the withdrawal agreed by both sides.

"We can confirm that the Indian troop withdrawal is underway," the MNDF said in a statement to AFP.

President Mohamed Muizzu came to power in September on a pledge to kick out Indian security personnel deployed in the Maldives to patrol its vast maritime border.

The two sides had agreed to complete a withdrawal of 89 Indian troops and their support staff in the Maldives by May 10.

Local officials said the three Indian aircraft -- two helicopters and one fixed-wing plane -- will be operated by Indian civilian staff, who have already arrived.

Last week, the Maldives signed a "military assistance" deal with China as the Indians prepared to leave.

The Maldivian defence ministry said the deal was to foster "stronger bilateral ties" and that China would train its staff under the pact.

"We support the Maldives in safeguarding its territorial sovereignty," China's foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters in Beijing yesterday.

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A Palestinian family prepares to break their fast during the first day of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan sitting amidst the ruins of their family house in Deir el-Balah, central Gaza Strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## SPORT

### Bangladesh face SL in search of ODI groove

STORY ON PAGE 11



## PRAYER TIMING

MARCH 13				
Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-55	12-45	4-30	6-10	7-30
JAMAAT 5-05	1-15	4-45	6-20	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
02	13		6:10
03	14	4:49	6:11
04	15	4:48	6:11