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**Bangabandhu calls on Yahya**

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

**March 16, 1971**  
Bangabandhu met Yahya on the morning of March 16. He arrived at the president's house in a car flying a black flag to mourn the death of those killed during the ongoing non-cooperation movement.

It was an hour-long discussion. There were no aides on either side. Yahya started the discussion with explanation for his action in postponing the National Assembly. Bangabandhu charged him with a grave blunder in failing to consult the leader of the majority party before taking such a decision.

Yahya offered that he would find a way out of the present impasse. Sheikh Mujib told him that nothing short of acceptance of the demands raised by him on March 7, particularly immediate withdrawal of martial law and the transfer of power to the elected representatives, would suffice. Yahya expressed his reservation about the withdrawal of martial law saying that there were legal difficulties in withdrawing martial law before framing a constitution. Thereupon, Bangabandhu told him that he would ask his legal experts to sort out the issue with the president's advisers.

On the same evening, Kamal Hossain, being directed by Bangabandhu, met Lt Gen Peerzada, principal staff officer to Yahya Khan. In reference to the immediate withdrawal of martial law, Peerzada argued that it would create a "legal vacuum".

Kamal Hossain countered the argument and said

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Construction of an eight-lane bridge along the existing one over the Turag near Dhaka's Aminbazar is underway. The Roads and Highways Department has sped up the work to open at least two lanes of the bridge on the Dhaka-Aricha highway before the Eid holidays. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

**JnU student found dead at her home**

She earlier posted on FB accusing classmate of sexual harassment, asst proctor of verbal abuse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

The body of a female student of Jagannath University (JnU) was found hanging from the ceiling of her room in her parents' house in Cumilla last night, police said.

Family members of Fairuz Abontika, a student of the law in the 2017-18 academic session, took her to Cumilla Medical College Hospital where doctors pronounced her dead, said Firoz Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Model Police Station.

He added that the body was found around 10:00pm at her home in Bagchagaon area.

Hours later, her fellow students gathered in front of the campus and demonstrated. They said Abontika wrote on Facebook before her death that one of her classmates had sexually harassed her

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**Netanyahu okays plan for Rafah ground assault**

First aid boat reaches Gaza; Israel to attend new truce talks despite rejecting Hamas offer

AGENCIES

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office yesterday said he had approved the military's plan for an operation in Rafah, where most of war-battered Gaza's population has sought refuge.

Netanyahu "approved the plans for action in Rafah," his office said in a statement, without giving details or a timeline.

The statement said the military was "prepared for the operational side and for the evacuation of the population".

Rafah is the last major population centre yet to be subjected to a ground assault during Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza.

Meanwhile, a United States charity yesterday said it was unloading the first shipment of food aid sent via a maritime corridor from Cyprus to war-ravaged Gaza.

"World Central Kitchen is unloading the barge connected now to the jetty," said Linda Roth, a spokesperson for the group.

The Israeli military confirmed that the vessel, the Open Arms, had arrived in Gazan waters and

said Israeli troops had "been deployed to secure the area".

Open Arms, the Spanish charity that operates the vessel, earlier said it had been towing a barge loaded with 200 tonnes of food for Gazans threatened with famine after more than five months of war.

Since October 7, Israel's relentless bombing campaign has killed at least 31,490 people, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory. The ministry said at least 149 people had been killed in the past 24 hours.

US President Joe Biden, who has supported Israel during the war, has said an Israeli invasion of Rafah would be a "red line" without credible civilian protection plans in place.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said during a visit to Vienna on Friday that Washington had not seen any plans for a Rafah operation, but reiterated that it wants a "clear and implementable plan" to ensure civilians are "out of harm's way".

The office of Palestinian president Mahmud

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» Biden says Rafah offensive will be a 'red line' without credible civilian protection plans in place

» Death toll in Gaza hits 31,490

» Hamas lashes out at Abbas's 'unilateral' designation of new PM

**CONFINING 5 JOURNOS Lalmohirhat AC Land transferred**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmohirhat

Abdullah-Al Noman Sarkar, Lalmohirhat Sadar upazila assistant commissioner (land), who allegedly along with his staffers confined five journalists and threatened them with jailing, has been transferred to Haripur upazila of Thakurgaon.

Rangpur Divisional Commissioner Habibur Rahman issued an order in this regard on Thursday night, Lalmohirhat Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Ullah said yesterday.

Noman will be in Haripur for the time being. The authorities have decided to transfer him to the ministry concerned later, said the DC.

"If the high-ups give us permission, a departmental investigation against Noman will be launched," he added. On Thursday, the five journalists were confined to the office of the assistant commissioner for about 40 minutes following an altercation with the staffers of the office over recording video inside the office.

According to the journalists, the incident happened when Mahfuz Sazu, Lalmohirhat district correspondent of My TV and The Daily Observer, tried to record a hearing on

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**Shells from Captain Cook's final voyage saved from skip**



INDEPENDENT ONLINE

An 18th century shell collection from Captain James Cook's third voyage, thought lost for more than 40 years, has been returned to English Heritage after being saved from a skip in "nothing short of a miracle".

The collection, containing more than 200 specimens including an extinct species and several believed to have been sent back from Cook's ill-fated voyage, is to go on public display for the first time in more than 100 years.

The items had been thrown out by a university, but were rescued from the skip by a retired scientist.

The collection, which serves as a record of Britain's role in global trade and its colonial reach in the late 18th century, was the passion of Bridget Atkinson (1732-1814).

She never left Britain, and rarely left Cumbria, but amassed more than 1,200 shells from across the globe.



**ICT Chief Prosecutor Ghulam Arief passes away**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Ghulam Arief Tipoo, the chief prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal, died at a city hospital yesterday. He was 93.

He breathed his last at 8:20am while undergoing treatment at Labaid Hospital, said his daughter Dana Nazlee.

The eminent lawyer, also a Language Movement veteran, received the Ekushey Padak 2019 for his role in 1952.

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Palestinians perform the first Friday noon prayer of the holy month of Ramadan over the ruins of of Al-Farouq Mosque yesterday. The mosque in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip was destroyed in Israeli bombardment.

PHOTO: AFP

**Russian strikes kill 16 in Odesa**

Rescuers among them; Moscow behind 'widespread, systematic' torture in Ukraine, says UN probe

AFP, Odesa/Moscow/Geneva

Ukraine said yesterday that Russian forces had pounded the Black Sea port city of Odesa with missiles, killing more than a dozen people including a paramedic and a rescue worker.

AFP journalists on the scene saw bodies covered by blankets arrayed on the street while images from officials showed exhausted emergency service workers smeared with blood and dirt dousing flames and treating wounded colleagues.

Local authorities said Russian aerial bombardments struck residential buildings, cars and a gas pipeline leaving at least 16 people dead and wounding another 55 people, including rescuers.

"Russian terror in Odesa is a sign of weakness of the enemy, which is fighting Ukrainian civilians at a time when it cannot guarantee security for people on its own territory," said Andriy Yermak, a senior government official in Kyiv.

Yermak was apparently referring to a series of fatal Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory and several attempts by pro-Kyiv militias to gain a hold inside Russian border regions this week.

There was no immediate comment on the strikes from Russia, whose forces have routinely targeted the transport hub with drones and missiles.

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Climate crisis, parched lands and a ray of hope

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Prime Bank

**PRAYER TIMING MARCH 16**

	Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4:52	12:45	4:30	6:12	7:45
JAMAAT	5:02	1:15	4:45	6:22	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

**SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING**

RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
05	16		6:12
06	17	4:46	6:12
07	18	4:45	6:12