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SHAH CEMENT

TREATMENT ABROAD Govt to decide on Khaleda's plea by Mar 25 Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will take a decision by March 25 on the application seeking extension of the suspension of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's jail sentence and permission for her to go abroad for treatment, the law minister said yesterday.

"I have read the application. But I have not yet given my opinion on the application as I am thinking about this issue. The decision on the matter will be given by March 25," Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star.

On Monday, the law minister told reporters at his Secretariat office, "You will have to wait till Tuesday [yesterday] to know the decision on the application."

He said the application and relevant files reached him on Monday.

Khaleda was freed from jail on March 25, 2020 after the government suspended her jail sentence for six months.

The BNP chief landed in jail on

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7



A Palestinian woman and a man in tears as they hold the body of a child killed in Israeli strikes at a hospital in Rafah yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Hong Kong passes tough national security law Introduces penalties for crimes related to treason, insurrection

AFP, Hong Kong

Hong Kong legislators unanimously passed a new national security law yesterday, introducing penalties such as life imprisonment for crimes related to treason and insurrection, and up to 20 years' jail for the theft of state secrets.

The law, which the United States, Britain and the European Union have warned could further curtail freedoms in Hong Kong, was fast-tracked through the legislative process.

"Today is a historic moment for Hong Kong," city leader John Lee said after the vote, adding the law would come into effect Saturday.

The government's previous attempt to introduce Article 23 – as it is commonly referred to – was in 2003, but it was dropped after half a million Hong Kongers took to the streets in protest.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

DENGUE MENACE

Rain raises spectre of fresh bout Experts call for immediate drives to check spread of Aedes mosquitoes

HELEMUL ALAM

The rain will create more breeding places for the Aedes mosquitoes that will eventually spread the deadly dengue virus, experts warn, urging the authorities to act now.

It has rained five times in Dhaka and several times at different districts this month, according to the Met office.

"This early rain will definitely lead to a spread of dengue cases.

Measures to control the Aedes population must be taken immediately," says Kabirul Bashar, entomologist of Jahangirnagar University.

Local government bodies and deputy commissioners of all districts should be asked to identify and destroy the possible breeding spots, he adds.

Entomologist Manjur A Chowdhury says the authorities must identify the Aedes clusters – localities with active transmission – by collecting the addresses of infected patients.

In the first 19 days of March, 172 dengue cases were recorded, up from 111 last year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

The total number of dengue cases

this year is 1,566, and 20 people with confirmed infections have died.

"This is the right time to take effective measures to stop the numbers from climbing," Manjur says.

Infected patients should use mosquito nets to keep the virus from spreading further, he says, adding that identifying and neutralising the clusters will become difficult in the rainy season.

Anti-mosquito drives using larvicide and adulticide along with awareness campaigns are necessary now.

"Unfortunately, there is no sign of such efforts yet. There is also no surveillance to recognise the serotypes of dengue and chikungunya [diseases carried by the Aedes mosquito]."

Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen yesterday said he asked hospitals across the country to be prepared to provide timely treatment to dengue patients.

"We have to buy quality insecticide to kill mosquitoes. We also need good treatment," he said in an intra-ministerial meeting.

He added that community involvement and awareness could help prevent an outbreak, he added.

Local government bodies and deputy commissioners of all districts should be asked to identify and destroy the possible breeding spots.

INDOMITABLE MARCH

Yahya blames Bangalees

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

March 20, 1971

The fourth round of talks between Yahya and Mujib was held.

Bangabandhu was joined by his colleagues – Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Khondokar Moshataque Ahmed, M Mansur Ali, and Kamal Hossain.

The meeting began with a heated debate where Bangabandhu brought up the military attack on civilians in Joydebpur.

Yahya claimed that it was the Bangalees' fault the attack took place because they had blocked the movement of troops. In his response, Bangabandhu suggested that, in such a volatile time, the army must stay in their barracks.

However, after the meeting, Bangabandhu reported "some progress". It was the first time he had acknowledged progress.

However, he remained secretive about the formulas being discussed to meet his demands.

Mujib said he would meet with the president again on March 22, 1971.

Nineteen days into the non-cooperation movement in East Pakistan, peaceful protests continued.

Bangabandhu, in a press statement, urged everyone to continue the movement in a disciplined and peaceful manner until freedom was achieved.

BHUTTO'S ABOUT TURN

Following the Yahya-Mujib talk, Bhutto in Karachi said he had received clarifications, upon his own request, from the president concerning his role in the negotiations.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Hopes growing for Gaza ceasefire

Opening session of talks in Doha 'positive'; Israel continues raid at Al-Shifa hospital

AFP, Palestinian Territories

Efforts to hammer out a temporary truce in Gaza intensified yesterday after months of offensive that have devastated the Palestinian territory and pushed hundreds of thousands to the brink of famine.

While a UN-backed assessment said 300,000 people in Gaza's north would face famine by May without a surge of aid, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said everyone in Gaza is now facing unprecedented food insecurity.

UN human rights chief Volker Turk blamed Israel for the hunger crisis, telling reporters in Geneva they were blocking aid.

Israeli troops yesterday pressed an assault on Gaza's biggest hospital, which they allege is being used for military purposes. The military claimed that more than 50 fighters had been killed, including a top Hamas commander.

Hamas said the assault on Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital was a war crime.

Israel's spy chief David Barnea was in Qatar on Monday for a new round of talks with Egyptian and Qatari mediators,

after they failed to secure a truce for the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which began last week.

Qatar's foreign ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari said he was "cautiously optimistic" about the latest negotiations but it was "too early to announce any success".

The new push for a truce follows a Hamas proposal for a six-week ceasefire, an increase in aid and the initial release of about 42 hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

During the proposed truce, Israeli forces would withdraw from "all cities and populated areas" in Gaza, according to a Hamas official.

Ansari said the opening session of talks in Doha was 'positive' and they were expecting a counter-proposal to be presented to Hamas and technical talks would continue.

Israel's relentless offensive has killed at least 31,819 people, most of them women and children, the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza said.

Blinken, who will travel to Saudi Arabia and Egypt this week to try to shore up

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

- » Entire Gaza population facing food insecurity: Blinken
- » Top Hamas commander 'killed' in hospital raid
- » Death toll in enclave now 31,819

Ship with futuristic sails saves tonnes of fuel in first test



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A cargo ship equipped with high-tech sails saved up to 11 tonnes of fuel per day, according to findings from a six-month test of the technology.

The Pyxis Ocean, owned by Japanese automaker Mitsubishi, was retrofitted with two WindWings sails in August 2023 and has since passed through the Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean.

"In near optimum sailing conditions, during an open sea voyage, the Pyxis Ocean achieved fuel savings of 11 tonnes per day," said John Cooper, chief executive of BAR Technologies, who developed the sails.

"And while the Pyxis Ocean has two WindWings, we anticipate the majority of Kamsarmax vessels will carry three wings, further increasing the fuel savings and emissions reductions by a factor of 1.5."



The road in front of the BNP head office in the capital's Nayapaltan was both gridlocked and waterlogged after just an hour of rain yesterday afternoon. When it rains in Dhaka, many areas often go under water due to poor drainage systems and severe plastic pollution.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Children's park now a grazing land

P4

HASANAH ISLAMIC BANKING | Prime Bank

PRAYER TIMING
MARCH 20

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:48	12:45	4:45	6:13	7:45
JAMAAT 4:58	1:15	5:00	6:23	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
09	20		6:13
10	21	4:42	6:13
11	22	4:41	6:14