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# 11 killed as nor'westers batter 6 dists

More than 200 houses damaged

**STAR REPORT**

At least 11 people died and many others injured as violent nor'westers lashed Jhalakathi, Patuakhali, Pirojpur, Khulna, Bagerhat, and Netrokona districts yesterday.

As many as 200 houses were damaged, 10 cows were struck dead by lightning, and electric transmission lines snapped and trees were uprooted, resulting in the disruption of road communication in many places, according to police and local administration.

Nor'wester also known as "Kalbaisakhi" is a seasonal thunderstorm accompanied by strong winds and heavy downpours.

In Jhalakathi, at least three people, including a schoolgirl, died after being struck by lightning during a thunderstorm, said Afrujul Haque Tutul, superintendent of police.

They are Helena Begum, 40, of Uttar Talgachiya village of Kathalia upazila, Minara Begum, 35, of Sheikherhaat village, and Mahia Akter Esana, 11, of Ponabaliya village of Sadar upazila.

Mahia was a sixth grader at a local high school, said locals and police.

The victims went out of their homes when the storm began to bring back their cattle from nearby fields when lightning struck them, the police official added.

In Patuakhali, at least three more people died and a

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A raging nor'wester battered the Pirojpur district yesterday morning, causing around 100 houses to be damaged by fallen trees. In six districts, the storms claimed the lives of 11 people and injured many more.

PHOTO: KM HABIBUR RAHMAN

# Kyiv to lose war if US Congress withholds aid

Says Zelensky

AFP, Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday that Kyiv will lose the war against Russia if the US Congress does not approve military aid to battle Moscow's invasion.

Republicans in Congress have been blocking tens of billions of dollars in military assistance for Kyiv for months.

"It is necessary to specifically tell Congress that if Congress does not help Ukraine, Ukraine will lose the war," Zelensky said during a video meeting of Kyiv organised fundraising platform United24.

Zelensky said it would be "difficult" for Ukraine to "stay" (survive) without the aid. He said that "if Ukraine loses the war, other states will be attacked."

Russia's invasion of

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# Total solar eclipse to plunge N America into darkness today

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A total solar eclipse will plunge much of North America into darkness today, turning the day skies into night.

The cosmic event will see flares of the Sun's corona appear like a diamond ring in the sky.

As the Earth is plunged into darkness, planets and comets may even be visible to the naked eye, and the eclipse could disrupt communications back on Earth.

A total solar eclipse happens when the Moon completely covers the Sun, and observers are within the darkest part of the Moon's shadow.

Areas covered by partial shade witness a partial eclipse, and this is what some lucky skygazers might see in the UK today.

The path of the total eclipse will end west of Ireland, but after sunset around 20 percent to 30 percent of the Sun will be obscured by the Moon.

Professor Don Pollacco, from the University of Warwick's Department of Physics, said that from Glasgow about 12 percent of the Sun will be obscured at around 8:00pm (BST).

Under clear conditions, people in Edinburgh could see a 6 percent obscuration.

Dr Edward Bloomer, senior astronomer at the Royal Observatory Greenwich, said the UK is only going to get "a small grazing" of the eclipse in the west and north of the country.



# Canada accuses India, Pakistan of interfering in elections

NDTV ONLINE

Canada has accused India and Pakistan of meddling in its elections -- a charge unequivocally rejected by India.

Canada's spy agency released an unclassified summary tabled as part of a federal inquiry examining potential foreign interference, alleging clandestine activities by both India and Pakistan during the 2019 and 2021 general elections.

India has called the probe "baseless" and said that it is Canada who has been interfering in their internal affairs.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) summary points to concerted efforts by India and Pakistan to influence Canada's electoral processes.

The CSIS documents allege that in 2021, the Indian government targeted specific electoral districts believed to harbour Indian-origin voters sympathetic to the Khalistani movement or

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# Israeli military reduces troops in southern Gaza

Netanyahu says no truce without release of hostages; fresh round of ceasefire talks to resume in Cairo

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel pulled its ground forces out of the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, media reports said, in a partial withdrawal six months into the devastating offensive in the Palestinian enclave.

"Today, Sunday April 7th, the IDF's 98th commando division has concluded its mission in Khan Yunis. The division left the Gaza Strip in order to recuperate and prepare for future operations," the Israeli army said in a statement to AFP.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was just "one step away from victory" and vowed there would be no let-up in fighting until Hamas releases all hostages.

Speaking as new truce talks were due to be held in Cairo, he told his cabinet that "there will be no ceasefire without the return of hostages. It just won't happen."

Netanyahu stressed that "Israel is ready for a deal, Israel is not ready to surrender". Israel's partial withdrawal from the southern

- Israel keeps bombing Rafah
- 38 more Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes
- UK sends Royal Navy ship to boost aid for Gaza
- Death toll in the enclave rises to 33,175



Gaza Strip is likely so its troops can "rest and refit," rather than a move towards a new operation, the White House said yesterday.

The news of the partial withdrawal came on the day talks towards a truce and hostage release deal were expected to resume in Cairo, including US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators.

CIA chief Bill Burns and Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani will join Egyptian officials for indirect talks between the Israeli and Hamas delegations, Egypt's Al-

Qahera News said. Netanyahu had long threatened a ground offensive on far-southern Gaza's Rafah city, sparking global concern, including from Israel's top ally the United States.

Air strikes kept pounding Khan Yunis and Rafah during the night, eyewitnesses said.

Israel's military offensive in the Gaza

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# Brazil to help Bangladesh join BRICS

Brazilian FM tells Hasan Mahmud; PM likely to visit Brazil in July

STAR REPORT

Visiting Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira yesterday said his country would consider Bangladesh's keen interest to become a BRICS member "very strongly and positively".

"Bangladesh is the country very close to watch, we shared principles, shared positions ... we will consider it [inclusion in BRICS] from our side, very strongly and positively," said Vieira, reports BSS.

He was speaking at a joint media briefing after a meeting with his Bangladesh counterpart Hasan Mahmud at state guesthouse Jamuna.

Foreign Minister Hasan expressed Bangladesh's interest in joining BRICS during the meeting.

Last year, Bangladesh showed interest in joining the BRICS alliance, comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The alliance was founded to establish economic and political equilibrium among powerful global nations.

At yesterday's meeting, Bangladesh and Brazil also agreed to work together for the promotion of bilateral and regional trades and investments.

Hasan and Vieira, who arrived

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Forest official murder: Sand lifting continues unabated in Cox's Bazar

P5



**PRAYER TIMING**  
APRIL 8

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:27	12:45	4:45	6:21	7:45
JAMAAT 4:37	1:15	5:00	6:31	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

**SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING**

RAMADAN	APRIL	SEHRI	IFTAR
28	8		6:21
29	9	4:21	6:21
30	10	4:20	6:22



Students of Dhaka University's Fine Arts faculty painting the Joyndl Shishu Niketon on the Charukola premises in bright colours and Baishakh motifs just ahead of the upcoming Bangla New Year. Every year, they decorate the premises and the adjacent streets for days, before bringing out the massive "Mongol Shobha Jatra" on the day of the occasion.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# ATTACK ON POLICE UP chairman, 8 others held for bid to snatch AL man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Police arrested Majhira Union Parishad Chairman Md Nuruzzaman, also general secretary of Shajahanpur upazila unit Swachhchasebak League, and his eight associates over attacking police personnel on Saturday night.

Around 9:00pm, police picked up Mithun, general secretary of Aria union unit of the ruling Awami League youth wing, from Aria Bazar with two sharp weapons, Sudip Kumar Chakraborty, superintendent of Bogura police, told a press conference at his office yesterday.

Mithun, who is said to be Nuruzzaman's man, stands accused in at least seven to eight criminal cases, including murder, filed with Shajahanpur Police Station, the SP said.

After Mithun was taken to the police station, Nuruzzaman along with 100 associates entered the police station around 10:30pm and attempted to snatch Mithun. As the police tried to stop them, they attacked police personnel, including the officer-in-charge, said the SP.

On information that Nuruzzaman and around 200 of his supporters took position on the Dhaka-Bogura highway to create chaos, police went to the spot and drove them away. At this time, they threw brick chips at



Md Nuruzzaman

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