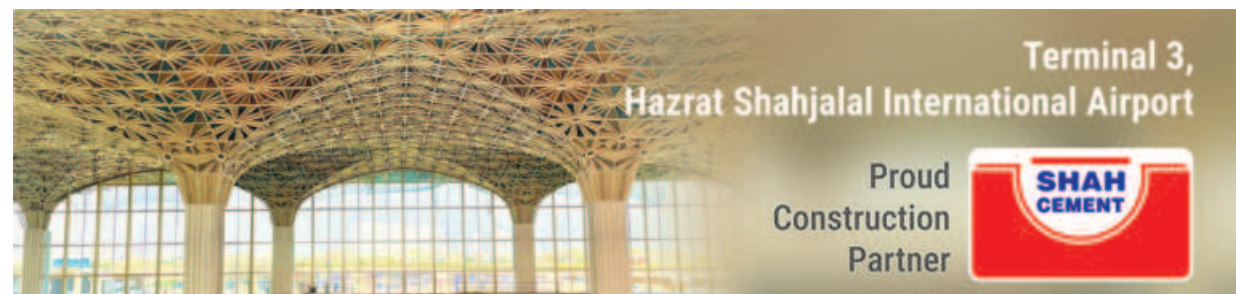




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INDIA'S LOK SABHA POLLS

Congress, CPI-M pursue 'Loot East' policy

Says Modi, wraps up campaign in Tripura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday wrapped up his campaign in Tripura for the Lok Sabha polls, accusing Congress and its ally Communist Party of India (Marxist) of turning the country's "Loot East" policy into a "Loot East" strategy.

Seeking votes for the BJP in two Lok Sabha seats of Tripura, Modi said Congress and the Communists "in the name of Look East Policy, the previous governments renamed it as Loot East Policy."

Modi further said that soon after assuming power in 2014, he put a stop to the looting by adopting Act East Policy so that each state of the northeastern region becomes a model of development.

He alleged that Congress and CPI-M are allies in Kerala but are fighting each other in the elections in the state.

Without naming Rahul Gandhi, Modi said "Congress Yuvraj demanded that the (Kerala) chief minister be sent to jail for

corruption – what ridiculous parties they are?"

"It's incredibly opportunistic to see them (Congress and CPI-M) fighting together in Tripura while opposing each other in Kerala. In Kerala, Congress brands the Communists as terrorists while the Communists accuse the Congress of corruption," he added.

Meanwhile, West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee yesterday said the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) will be scrapped if opposition bloc INDIA

forms government at the Centre. She also alleged that the BJP has made the entire country a "detention camp".

Addressing an election rally in Silchar in support of four TMC candidates in Assam, she said that there will be "no democracy and elections if Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns to power" for the third consecutive term.

TMC unveils election manifesto. Mamata vows to repeal NRC, CAA if INDIA bloc voted to power.

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Vehicles, mostly buses bound for Dhaka from southern districts, are caught in a tailback in the capital's Shyampur around 3:30pm yesterday. The entry to the city saw snarl-ups due the rush of Eid holidaymakers returning to Dhaka. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Ensure fair treatment for my son

Ashfaqu's mother pleads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anowara Mahbub, mother of The Daily Star's former executive editor Syed Ashfaqu Haque, has demanded an unbiased, thorough, impartial, and fair investigation into the death of Preeti Urang, a domestic help at her son's house, to unveil the truth.

In a media statement yesterday, Anowara, wife of late freedom fighter Syed Mahbubul Haque from Magura, also sought justice for her son.

"Finally, I urge the investigators to conduct a fair investigation. I also request all media houses and people from all levels of the society not to spread any misinformation, which may obstruct justice," she said.

She said she has complete faith in the law of Bangladesh.

Anowara said she made the statement to shed light on an accidental death (according to prosecution death arising out of

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Israel decided to retaliate against Iran

Says British FM; Tehran says it is ready to deal with any response

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israel has clearly decided to retaliate against Iran for missile and drone attacks, Britain's Foreign Minister David Cameron said during a visit to Jerusalem yesterday, the starkest warning yet of another volley coming in regional escalation.

World powers are striving to prevent a wider outbreak of conflict in the Middle East after Iran's attacks on Saturday night, which involved hundreds of missiles and drones, the first time Iran has directly attacked Israel after decades of confrontation by proxies.

"It's clear the Israelis are making a decision to act," Cameron told reporters in his visit to Jerusalem. "We hope they do so in a way that does as little to escalate this as possible."

Meanwhile, Iran said yesterday its military was ready to confront any attack by Israel, with the air force saying it was prepared for action.

"Any attack by the Zionist regime (Israel) on our soil will be dealt with a severe response," Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said at a parade held for Army Day, state media reported.

He also hit out at countries that had "sought

to normalise relations" with Israel. Washington and other Western governments hope new economic sanctions against Iran will help persuade Israel to limit the scope of its retaliation.

Cameron said Britain wanted to see coordinated sanctions against Iran by the Group of Seven big democracies, which are meeting this week in Italy. "They need to be given a clear unequivocal message by the G7," he said.

Israel was expected to discuss its response to Iran at a meeting of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's war cabinet yesterday, which also includes centrist rivals brought into the government as a unity gesture.

Israel will make its own decisions about how to defend itself, Netanyahu said yesterday during talks with German and British foreign ministers, who both travelled to Israel as part of a coordinated push to keep confrontation between Israel and Iran from escalating into a regional conflict.

Netanyahu's office said he thanked David Cameron and Annalena Baerbock for their support, while telling them: "I want to make it clear - we will make our own decisions, and the State of Israel will do everything necessary to defend itself."

- Israel will make its own decisions about how to defend itself: Netanyahu
- Iran's President Raisi hits out at countries that sought to normalise ties with Israel

Closely monitor developments in Middle East

Hasina asks ministers to make plans in advance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has instructed her cabinet colleagues to closely monitor the war situation in the Middle East and prepare plans in advance.

She gave the directives during a weekly cabinet meeting at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

Speaking at a press conference at the Secretariat after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain said, "The prime minister instructed the ministers to prepare an outline of steps that might be needed in different sectors if such a situation lingers."

Responding to a question from a journalist, Mahbub came up with an example, "If the oil price increases due to the situation in the Middle East, we will have to think in advance about measures to be taken."

The cabinet secretary stressed the need for making preparations in advance to deal with any kind of situation to avoid making hasty decisions.

He said that the premier asked the ministers to be proactive instead of being reactive in the wake of any incident.

The cabinet in yesterday's meeting approved in principle the draft of the Maheshkhali Integrated Development Authority (MIDA) Act-2024.

Mahbub said the government has

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Queen bumblebees survive underwater for days: study

AFP, Paris



Queen bumblebees can surprisingly withstand days underwater, according to a study published yesterday, suggesting they could withstand increased floods brought on by climate change that threaten their winter hibernation burrows.

The survival of these pollinators that are crucial to ecosystems is "encouraging" amid worrying global trends of their declining populations, the study's lead author Sabrina Rondeau told AFP.

With global warming prompting more frequent and extreme floods in regions around the world, it poses "an unpredictable challenge for soil-dwelling species, particularly bees nesting or overwintering underground", co-author Nigel Raine of the University of Guelph said in a statement.

Rondeau said she first discovered queen bumblebees could withstand drowning by accident.

She had been studying the effect of pesticide residues in soil on queen bumblebees that burrow underground for the winter when water accidentally entered the tubes housing a few of the bees.

"I freaked out," said Rondeau, who had been conducting the experiment for her doctoral studies. "It was only a small proportion... so it was not that big of a deal, but I didn't want to lose those bees."

Chuadanga logs highest temperature so far this yr

STAR REPORT

The highest temperature of the year so far was recorded at 40.7 degrees Celsius in Chuadanga yesterday afternoon.

It was recorded around 3:00pm, Jaminur Rahman, in-charge of the district's Weather Observatory, told our local correspondent, adding that the severe heatwave is likely to continue.

Aminur Rahman, 45, a local van puller said, "People are not being able to come out of their houses today [yesterday] due to the extreme heat, resulting in losses in our daily incomes. I am not being able to earn enough for my family due to the heatwave."

According to the Met office, a severe heatwave has been sweeping over Chuadanga and Bagerhat while a mild to moderate heatwave is occurring over

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A man touches the head of a child killed following Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Dubai reels from flood chaos after record rains



AFP, Dubai

Dubai's giant highways were clogged by flooding and airport passengers were urged to stay away yesterday as the glitzy financial centre reeled from record rains.

Huge tailbacks snaked along six-lane expressways after up to 254 millimetres of rain – about two years' worth – fell on the desert United Arab Emirates on Tuesday.

At least one person was killed after a 70-year-old man was swept away in his car in Ras Al-Khaimah, one of the country's seven emirates, police said.

Passengers were warned not to come to Dubai airport, the world's busiest by international traffic, "unless absolutely necessary", an official said.

"Flights continue to be delayed and diverted... We

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