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## POWER OUTAGE, BANK MERGER 2 JP lawmakers slam the govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Jatiya Party lawmakers Anisul Islam Mahmud and Mujibul Haque Chunnu criticised the government in parliament yesterday for load-sheddings, bank mergers, and frequent road crashes.

During an unscheduled discussion, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Anisul Islam Mahmud said, "Bangladesh Bank has identified 10 banks for forced mergers to meet the IMF conditions required to secure a loan."

"The liabilities of these banks stand at Tk 84,000 crore, of which Tk 54,000 crore are defaulted loans. The names of these banks have come up over the past 10 years."

Referring to Basic Bank as an example, he said, "These banks have not been functioning properly, but the Bangladesh Bank has not taken any major steps till now."

Anusul said steps were being taken for forced mergers now on account of the conditions placed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"If those responsible [for this poor condition of the banks] are not punished, the same things will happen in the future."

Earlier in the session, JP Secretary General Chunnu told the parliament that the people in the villages were facing major load-sheddings issues.

"Villagers are out of power for around 12 hours a day,"

He said, as per the government, the country's power generation capacity is presently 28,000 megawatts.

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**Towhid Hridoy (37 not out) and Mahmudullah Riyad (26 not out) high-five with each other after guiding Bangladesh to a six-wicket victory against Zimbabwe in the second T20I at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday, thereby helping the hosts to take a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.**

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Ask MPs not to influence upazila polls

EC urges Speaker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday wrote to the Parliament Secretariat urging the Speaker to issue special instructions to lawmakers not to take part in campaigns of the upazila elections.

An election commissioner confirmed the development.

The letter said that according to the electoral code of conduct for upazila polls, no MPs or ministers are allowed to join electioneering on behalf of any candidate.

It also urged the Speaker to direct the MPs to abide by the electoral code of conduct.

On May 2, Election Commissioner Md Alamgir said the commission decided that the EC secretary would write to the secretary of the Parliament Secretariat.

"The letter will clarify

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## KILLING OF 2 WORKERS Panchapalli men go into hiding in fear of arrests

23 people nabbed so far; accused UP chairman, member still absconding

SUZIT DAS, Faridpur

Almost all the Hindu men of Panchapalli in Faridpur's Madhukhali upazila have gone into hiding, fearing arrests and also backlash from zealots, following the killing of two brothers suspected of setting fire to a temple.

On April 18, Ashraful Khan, 20, and Asadul Khan, 18, were beaten to death and five others were injured by a mob who alleged the victims had set fire to the Kali temple in Panchapalli's Krishna Nagar, according to media reports.

Two weeks since the incident, law enforcers are still deployed in the area to avert any further violence.

Visiting around 20 houses in Panchapalli on May 1, this correspondent saw only women and children living in them. No men were present.

Arati Mondal, a homemaker, confirmed that all the men in Panchapalli have left their homes amid fear of arrests.

Another resident, Binola Mondal, said, "We can't sleep out of fear, especially with no men in our house or the neighbourhood."

Reba Mondal, a 65-year-old resident of Krishna Nagar, said, "Though police are deployed in our village, we're still afraid of reprisal."

Quoting locals, Morshed Alam, superintendent of Faridpur police, said some residents saw that the

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## UPAZILA POLLS EC scraps nomination of Quader's brother

He hid info about 4 cases against him

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

The nomination of Shahadat Hossain, younger brother of Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, has been cancelled for hiding that he has four cases, including a criminal one, filed against him.

Shahadat was running for Companiganj Upazila Parishad chairman in Noakhali, ignoring the AL directive to the relatives of ministers and lawmakers not to participate in the upazila polls.

Returning Officer Muhammad Ismail, also additional district magistrate, yesterday declared the nomination of Shahadat invalid.

"Shahadat Hossain didn't mention four cases filed against him in the affidavit he submitted with

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## Hopes for Gaza truce appear slim

Israel, Hamas blame each other for impasse in Cairo talks; Israel pounds areas across enclave

REUTERS, Cairo

Prospects for a Gaza ceasefire appeared slim yesterday as Hamas reiterated its demand for an end to the offensive in exchange for the freeing of hostages, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu flatly ruled that out.

The two sides blamed each other for the impasse.

In their second day of truce talks in Cairo with Egyptian and Qatari mediators in Cairo, Hamas negotiators maintained their stance that any truce agreement must end the offensive, Palestinian officials said.

Israeli officials have not travelled to Cairo to take part in indirect diplomacy, but yesterday Netanyahu reiterated Israel's aim since the start of the offensive nearly seven months ago: to disarm and dismantle the Palestinian movement Hamas for good or else endanger Israel's future security.

The prime minister said Israel was willing to pause fighting in Gaza in order to secure the release of hostages still being held by Hamas,

believed to number more than 130.

"But while Israel has shown willingness, Hamas remains entrenched in its extreme positions, first among them the demand to remove all our forces from the Gaza Strip, end the war, and leave Hamas in power," Netanyahu said. "Israel cannot accept that."

» 29 more Palestinians killed in airstrikes

» Israel closes key border crossing targeted by Hamas rockets

» Five Palestinians killed in West Bank raid

» Death toll in enclave rises to 34,683

In a statement released shortly after Netanyahu's, Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh said the group is still keen on reaching a comprehensive ceasefire that ends the Israeli "aggression", guarantees Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, and achieves "a serious" deal to free Israelis being held hostage in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners.

A Hamas official, requesting anonymity as he was not authorised to publicly discuss the talks, told AFP that the group's negotiators in Cairo were leaving for Doha after talks ended.

At least 34,683 Palestinians have been killed, 29 of them in the past 24 hours, and more than 77,000 have been wounded in Israel's

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## PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTEST Dozens arrested at US campuses

REUTERS

Police on Saturday arrested at least 25 pro-Palestinian protesters and cleared an encampment at the University of Virginia, the university said in a statement, as US campuses braced for more turmoil during graduation celebrations.

Tensions flared at UVA's campus in Charlottesville, where protests had been largely peaceful until Saturday morning, when police officers in riot gear were seen in a video moving on an encampment on the campus' lawn, cuffing some demonstrators with zip ties and using what appeared to be chemical spray.

Students across the US have rallied or set up tents at dozens of universities to protest the months long offensive in Gaza and call on President Joe Biden, who has supported Israel, to do more to stop the bloodshed in Gaza. They also demand their schools divest from companies that support Israel's government, such as arms suppliers.

The University of Virginia said in a news release that protesters had violated several university policies including setting up tents on Friday night and using amplified sound.

In Los Angeles, police in riot gear swarmed a pro-Palestinian encampment at the University of Southern California early yesterday to clear away demonstrators, after warning everyone to leave the area or be arrested, officials and media reported.

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## 128 Myanmar border troops take refuge in Teknaf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Amidst the ongoing conflict between the junta forces and rebel Arakan Army in Rakhine State, at least 128 members of Myanmar's Border Guard Police (BGP) fled to Bangladesh through the Naf river near Shahporir Dvip in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar in two phases yesterday and Saturday, said border sources.

Meanwhile, another 200 BGP troops were spotted along the Kaiyunkhali canal near Maungdaw town in Rakhine State waiting to cross the border and enter Bangladesh, the sources added.

However, the Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB) made no official statement to the media in this regard, and this correspondent, despite multiple attempts, was unable to obtain an official comment either.

According to sources, SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



**A woman looking at the photos taken by acclaimed photographer Raghu Rai in 1971. Dhaka University's Faculty of Fire Art is holding an exhibition featuring many of Rai's previously unpublished photos of the Liberation War. The event ends on May 19.**

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Skeletons missing hands, feet found in Hitler's Wolf's Lair

REUTERS, Warsaw

Five human skeletons - all missing their hands and feet - have been discovered at Nazi leader Adolf Hitler's eastern front military headquarters in present-day Poland, buried inside the villa of Luftwaffe commander Hermann Goering.

The bodies of three adults, a baby and an older child were discovered by a group called the Latebra Foundation while digging in the Wolf's Lair.

"You'd never expect such things in such a place as it was ... the most guarded place in the Third Reich and after the war, the Russians took over this place," Latebra member Dominik Markiewicz told Reuters.

"Everyone wondered what might have happened there ... We tried to think of something, but nothing reasonable comes to mind," he said. "We didn't know what we were dealing with at all. Were they some occult rituals of Third Reich fanatics? We have no idea."

He added it was not clear whether the skeletons dated from World War Two, or had been buried there subsequently.