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HEZBOLLAH DRONE Netanyahu residence targeted

AFP, Jerusalem
 Israel said a drone targeted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence yesterday, as Hezbollah launched a barrage of projectiles into Israel from its northern neighbour Lebanon.



On the southern front, Israel hammered Gaza with air strikes, with an overnight raid on Jabalia in the north killing 33 people, according to the besieged civil defence agency.

Netanyahu's office said the prime minister and his wife were not at their residence in the central town of Caesarea during the drone attack and there were no injuries. Earlier, the military said a drone launched from Lebanon had "hit a structure" in Caesarea.

Sirens blared across Israel throughout the morning as Hezbollah fired projectiles from various locations in Lebanon.

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A man tries to stop alleged BNP activists from further beating up a protester in front of the capital's National Press Club yesterday. Some people had gathered there to protest the cancellation of March 7 as a national day.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Harris, Trump deploy star power in must-win states

AFP, Detroit

Kamala Harris and Donald Trump will roll out starkly contrasting celebrity back-ups this weekend in Pennsylvania and Michigan among the most prized battleground states set to decide the tightest of US presidential races.

US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
16 DAYS TO GO

Pop star Lizzo will throw multi-Grammy award-winning glitter behind the vice president's campaign in Detroit, while the world's richest man, Elon Musk, is to stump for Trump in Pennsylvania.

Harris will also be joined by R&B star Usher at a get-out-the-vote rally in Atlanta, Georgia.

Both candidates are fighting on every front to seal up voters' support in a race that polls suggest is effectively tied with fewer than three weeks to Election Day.

Musk, who endorsed Trump in July, is one of President Joe Biden administration's fiercest critics and has emerged as a loud voice in US politics since taking over

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CONTROLLING PRICES If you don't cooperate, we will replace you

Adviser Asif Mahmud tells govt officials in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Labour and Employment Adviser Asif Mahmud yesterday questioned the role of the Chattogram government officials in controlling the price hike of commodities.



Warning the officials, the adviser said the interim government will break the current system and appoint new officials, if needed, to address the problem.

He was speaking at a meeting with the officials of different departments at the Chattogram Circuit House in the morning.

Asif, also the youth and sports adviser, said the commerce secretary sent him reports on nationwide operations of the taskforce.

"I did not see anything [in the reports] on how many operations you [officials in Chattogram] carried out and how much work you did. The commerce secretary

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This year's HSC examinees have tough times ahead

Experts warn they've not been properly evaluated even in SSC

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Some experts feel that students who passed this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent exams are entering higher education with a significant learning gap after nearly half of their tests.

Moreover, the results of the cancelled exams were based on their Secondary School Certificate (SSC) test results, which had been held on abridged syllabi because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the experts pointed out. They warned that such "unprecedented compromise" left these students with weak academic foundations, posing serious risks to their future career prospects.

The HSC exams this year, which began on June 30, were initially scheduled to conclude on August 21. Only three tests were held in Sylhet because of floods.

As the quota reform protests intensified and turned deadly in July, the previous government postponed the tests altogether on July 16 after seven tests had been held.

Following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5, the interim government rescheduled the remaining exams for September 11. However, on August 20, a group of HSC candidates broke into the Secretariat building in Dhaka and locked the gates, demanding the cancellation of the remaining exams.

As a result, the remaining of this year's HSC tests were cancelled and the results of these exams were determined through subject mapping on the basis of the students' performance in SSC.

These students were required to take the exams on only seven subjects, while the exam duration was reduced

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There are concerns that foreign universities may not recognise these results, potentially impacting students seeking higher education abroad

Royal Enfield launches in Bangladesh tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Petrolheads' wait for the 350cc Royal Enfield has come to an end as the bikes will be available for purchase in Dhaka from tomorrow.

Royal Enfield's Bullet, Meteor, Hunter, and Classic in 12 different colours will be available following an unveiling event at the company's flagship store at the capital's Tejgaon.

One or two models will initially be available in three to five colours, according to sources.

Royal Enfield distributor Ifad Group has a production unit in Cumilla's Chaudhagram where it assembles the motorcycles.

The company remains tight-lipped, but insiders say the prices will be between Tk 4 lakh and Tk 5 lakh.

Sources say the average mileage of the motorcycles will be 36-38 km/l.

Motorcycles with engines over 165cc used to be restricted in Bangladesh

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Constitution should be amended, not rewritten

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens yesterday opined that the constitution should be amended, not replaced with a new one.

They said it would not be wise if the interim government, headed by Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus, interfered with historically established or settled issues in the constitution.

They also suggested bringing reforms to the judicial system and reinstating the caretaker government system.

The eminent citizens made the remarks at a consultative seminar titled "Constitutional Reforms for a Democratic Transition", organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Policy Studies (BIPS) at the CIRDP auditorium in the capital.

Presenting the keynote speech, Justice Abdul Matin, a retired judge of the Supreme Court's Appellate Division, stressed the need to take appropriate measures to ensure that the achievements of the student-led mass uprising are not lost.

"Call it by any name, this is a successful movement that led to the downfall of a dictator. Her [Sheikh Hasina's] removal was a constitutional right, even though not all rights are explicitly written down," he said, providing different explanations and examples to support his point.

On whether to amend or rewrite the constitution, he said, "Who has the right to amend or rewrite the

constitution? That right belongs to those who brought about this change in government."

He referred to the 15th amendment, which abolished the caretaker government system, and said that elections turned meaningless after the caretaker government system had been abolished.



"We need to start from the existing framework and address the issues that require reforms"

Justice (ret'd) Abdul Matin

"We could have tasted a bit of democracy after five years. The 13th amendment introduced the caretaker government system, and we held two or three good elections under this system. Later, this system was taken away again."

There was no competition in the 2014 polls with 153 members of parliament elected unopposed. Then, in 2018, large-scale ballot stuffing took place the night before the voting day.

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Almost all drinking water contains 'forever chemicals'

INDEPENDENT ONLINE

Long-lasting toxins known as "forever chemicals" have been found in samples of drinking water from across the world, a new study has revealed.

Scientists discovered PFAS (perfluoroalkyl substances), chemicals that do not break down in nature, in more than 99 per cent of bottled water samples sourced from 15 countries around the globe, with 10 "target" PFAS detected in tap and bottled water in major UK and Chinese cities.



Called "forever chemicals" because they can take centuries to break down in the environment, PFAS can accumulate in the bodies of living organisms and have been linked to severe health conditions. They are used in different products like pesticides, non-stick cookware, food packaging and cosmetics, and can enter wastewater through many day-to-day activities. Government regulation has banned some, while the use of others is still widespread, with their toxic effects yet to be fully investigated.



Displaced Palestinians check the damage inside a UN school-turned-refugee in the Al-Shati refugee camp near Gaza City in the northern Gaza Strip, following an Israeli strike yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Maiden glory on the line

AGENCIES

There will be a first-time winner of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup when New Zealand play South Africa in the final in Dubai tonight.

Sophie Devine's New Zealand completed a narrow win over West Indies in Sharjah on Friday to seal their place in the summit clash, where they will hope to lift the trophy for the first time.

Their opponents South Africa defeated six-time champions Australia in the first semi-final on Thursday, and will be looking to go one better than the last edition, when they were losing finalists on home soil.

This will be just the second time that the Proteas have reached the final of a major tournament, following their run in 2023, which ended with a 19-run loss to Australia in Cape Town.

For the White Ferns, they are set for a first appearance in a T20 World Cup final in 14 years. The Kiwis were losing finalists in each of the first two editions of the tournament, beaten

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