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## Voting rights, democracy must be ensured

Tarique tells Krishak Dal event; city BNP orders removal of party posters, banners from capital

STAR REPORT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said a democratic system must be established by ensuring people's voting rights to address the country's problems and resist conspiracies against the nation.



Speaking at a training programme of Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal in the capital, he announced that if voted to power again, his party will relaunch the canal digging programme initiated by BNP founder Ziaur Rahman in the late 1970s, UNB reports.

The canal digging programme was implemented to address farmers' water crisis and boost agricultural production, ultimately reducing the need for food imports.

"The conspiracies against the country, its people, and the nationalist forces are continuing. The nationalist forces must alert everyone, including those in rural areas, and convey the message that the problems in all sectors cannot be resolved until we establish a democratic

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A trench has been dug into Jurain Medical Road in the capital for a sewer line, leaving little room for pedestrians to walk. The road has been left in such a state for about a month. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## BNP mulling more mega events

Aim is to press home demand for election

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

In an effort to intensify pressure on the interim government for national elections, the BNP on Friday held a massive gathering in the capital.

Its leaders said the rally to mark the National Revolution and Solidarity Day aimed to amplify the demand for national election, and that's why thousands of BNP activists marched from Nayapaltan to Manik Mia Avenue in front of the parliament.

Through the gathering, the BNP gained three things: 1) the interim government received the message that it should come up with a roadmap to the election after making the necessary reforms, 2) local and international anti-democratic forces received a warning, 3) and BNP supporters have been energised.

Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, standing committee member of the party, said, "A new chapter of Bangladesh has emerged.

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## RAILWAY STATION BLAST Separatists kill 26 in Pakistan 14 soldiers among dead

AFP, Quetta

A bombing claimed by Pakistani separatists killed 26 people including 14 soldiers at a railway station in the southwestern Balochistan province, a hospital spokesman said Saturday.

The blast hit as passengers waited on a platform at the main railway station in the provincial capital Quetta.

"Fourteen members of the army and 12 civilians were killed," said Wasim Baig, spokesman for Quetta's Sandeman Provincial Hospital, raising an earlier toll of 25 provided by police.

Forty-six members of the security forces and 14 civilians were wounded, the spokesman added.

An AFP journalist saw pools of blood and ripped backpacks at the scene, where a large metal sheet protecting passengers from the elements had been blown off.

M o h a m m e d Oumer, one of the casualties, said he went to the station to get a train home to his village.

"But just as we arrived, there was the explosion and I found myself wounded and in hospital," he told AFP.

Despite frequent attacks in Balochistan the toll of yesterday's blast was particularly high for the southwestern province, which borders Afghanistan and Iran.

The train station explosion hit at around 8:45am (0345 GMT) and was claimed by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), one of the area's main separatist groups.

The attack "was carried out on a Pakistani army unit at

Despite frequent attacks in Balochistan the toll of yesterday's blast was particularly high.

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## Power master plan will strain the economy

Study finds Bangladesh will need \$50b for LNG by 2041; researchers say inflated power demand was made for 'earning' capacity charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will need to invest around \$50 billion to implement its Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan, according to a report by Market Forces, an Australia-based global environment advocate.

This investment will go toward 41 LNG-based power projects and seven LNG import facilities by 2041.

The proposed 37,400 megawatts (MW) LNG-based power capacity would surpass the country's total existing power generation capacity of 27,086 MW. If the master plan is implemented, the nation's gas power capacity would triple in size, found the study.

The report titled "Expensive LNG Expansion: How Foreign Gas Interests are a Climate Disaster for Bangladesh" was released yesterday at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club. Three local organisations - Waterkeepers Bangladesh, Fossil Free Chattogram, and Dhoritri Rokkhai Amra (Dhora) - co-authored the study.



DIVISION	NUMBER OF PLANTS	CAPACITY (MW)
Chattogram	21	19,100
Dhaka	12	6,600
Barishal	7	8,200
Unknown location	1	3,600

The master plan for 2024-2050 estimates that the country needs to increase its annual LNG import capacity to 30 million tonnes by 2041, which is four times the current capacity.

"By 2041, Bangladesh would face the additional cost burden of importing LNG that would be \$7.1 billion per year, two to three times the cost of all fossil fuel imports today," reads the study.

The list of the 41 power projects was compiled by Market Forces based on data which was available up to 2023, from both internal and external sources.

Speakers at the press conference said some vested interest groups had used inflated power demand projections in different public policy documents during the Awami League rule to earn higher capacity charges.

Capacity charge is the bill the government pays to power producers for the time they sit idle.

According to the report, the estimated cost of the 41 power plants in Chattogram, Dhaka and Barisal divisions will be \$36 billion, and the LNG import facilities like floating storage and regasification units will cost \$14 billion.

It mentions that the 21 proposed plants in Chattogram are projected to release 1.3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) over their lifetimes (15 to 25 years), six times higher than Bangladesh's current annual emissions.

"These threaten at least 26 threatened species which rely on the local forests, including the Asian elephant, Clouded Leopard and a scaly anteater known as the Chinese Pangolin. There are mounting concerns over human rights of women and local community members following violations in similar gas developments," the report said.

"More than one million

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## 'SECRET MEETING' 15 AL-affiliated UP members held at Cox's Bazar hotel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Cox's Bazar court yesterday sent 15 local union parishad members to jail after they were arrested around midnight from a programme organised at a hotel in the beach town's Kolatoli area.

According to the police, initially, 18 UP members were detained when a large group of them were holding a meeting at a hall room on the fifth floor of the Uni Resort Friday night.

Police later arrested 15 of them for "suspicious activities" under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Confirming the matter, Jasim Uddin, additional superintendent of police, said, "If specific allegations are found against them, further legal action will be taken accordingly."

When they were produced before Cox's Bazar Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court yesterday afternoon, they were ordered to be sent to jail, said Md Golam Jilani, court inspector.

The UP members who have been sent to jail are local Awami League leaders.

They are Azim Miya, 35, Md Kayes, 42, and Mohammad Ali, 55, of Kauwarkhop; Kamal Hossain, 37, of Garjoniya; Jasim Uddin, 48, and Rubel Jaldas, 33, of Saharbil; Junaid

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## Elephant teaches itself to shower using hose

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

An Asian elephant has been dubbed the "queen of showering" after it was filmed washing itself with a hose in a German zoo, demonstrating "remarkable skill", according to stunned scientists.

Mary was seen on camera at Berlin Zoo using her trunk to methodically wash her body with a hose, lifting up her limbs to ensure she got in all the crevices, in what researchers called "sophisticated behaviour".

But another elephant - perhaps jealous of Mary's unusual expertise in self-hygiene - attempted to sabotage her happy shower, in what astonished scientists described as an "unexpected bonus".

Anchali the elephant was caught using her trunk to try and cut off the water, clamping the hose and putting pressure on the pipe in an attempt to stop her pal from washing.

Both animals exhibited goal-directed behaviour using tools, according to researchers at the Humboldt University of Berlin. This is a skill once believed to be unique to humans but has recently been observed in chimpanzees, crows, dolphins and other species.



Bangladesh players celebrate an Afghanistan dismissal during the second ODI in Sharjah yesterday. The Tigers posted 252 for seven after electing to bat first and then dismissed the opposition for 184 runs to effect a 68-run victory, drawing level in the three-match series. The third and deciding match will take place at the same venue on Monday.

PHOTO: ACB

## Two killed in fresh Manipur violence

NDTV ONLINE

Two women were killed in a fresh round of violence in the Indian state of Manipur in the last two days.

Manipur has been rocked by periodic clashes for more than a year between the predominantly Hindu Meitei majority and the mainly Christian Kuki community, dividing the state into ethnic enclaves.

In the first incident, a woman from the Hmar tribe was allegedly shot, raped and set on fire in Jiribam district by suspected Meitei insurgents on Thursday night, according to a police case filed by her husband.

In the second incident, a woman from the Meitei community was shot dead by suspected Kuki insurgents while she was working in a paddy field in Bishnupur district yesterday, police sources said.

In Jiribam, the 31-year-old woman and her three children were in their house when the attack happened. A group of suspected Meitei insurgents set several other houses on fire.

In the Bishnupur incident reported yesterday, the woman was working in a paddy field with other farmers when suspected Kuki insurgents opened fire from the nearby hills, police sources said, adding she died on the spot.

Manipur has been rocked by periodic clashes for more than a year.