

THE BEST QUALITY

EVERY TIME GUARANTEED

BSRM

THE NATION'S LARGEST ROD MANUFACTURER

★★★★★

BSRM

building a safer nation



SHAH CEMENT

BANGLADESH'S NO.1 CEMENT BRAND



NCP to suggest lowering voting age to 16yrs

Wants 23 as minimum age for MPs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party (NCP) will submit its initial reform proposals to the National Consensus Commission (NCC) today recommending that the minimum age for MP candidates be lowered to 23 and the voting age be lowered to 16.

Briefing journalists at the party's Rupayan Tower office in the capital's Banglamotor yesterday, NCP's focal point for reform coordination, Sarwar Tushar said the party believes that the minimum voting age can be 16.

Explaining this proposal, Tushar said, "This movement has been referred to globally as a 'Gen-Z uprising'. In post-uprising Bangladesh and the upcoming election, they [Gen-Z] will not be able to express their opinions simply because they are under 18. The NCP does not find this logical. Therefore, we will propose setting the minimum voting age at 16."

Tushar also mentioned that while the Constitution Reform Commission has proposed lowering the minimum age for parliamentary candidates to 21 years,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Kamalapur Railway Station is teeming with people leaving Dhaka for their village homes yesterday. A lot of people leave early to avoid the Eid rush. This Eid holidays effectively start on March 26 for many.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

BOAT CAPSIZE IN BAY

Bodies of four Rohingyas found, 25 rescued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) yesterday recovered four bodies after a boat reportedly carrying around 40 to 50 Rohingya refugees capsized in the Bay of Bengal early in the morning.

While, during the search operation, 25 men, women, and children were also rescued off the Teknaf coast in Cox's Bazar, several others, including a BGB member, were reportedly missing.

The missing BGB member, a sepoy, was serving at the border outpost of Shah Porir Island.

Confirming the incident, Lt Col Ashiqur Rahman, commanding officer of the Teknaf 2 BGB Battalion, said, "A boat carrying Rohingya refugees sank near the jetty at West Para of Shah Porir Island in Teknaf upazila while trying to illegally enter Bangladesh from Myanmar via the sea.

"The boat reportedly capsized after its keel gave in."

Informed, BGB personnel stationed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

India scraps 20pc duty on onion exports from April 1

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India yesterday announced the scrapping of 20 percent duty on onion export with effect from April 1.

The Department of Revenue issued a notification to this effect yesterday on the Department of Consumer Affairs' communication.

The export duty was in place since September 13 last year.

To ensure domestic availability and discourage export of onion, the Indian government had imposed export duty, minimum export price (MEP), and export ban for almost five months from December 8, 2023 to May 3 last year.

Despite the restrictions, India's total onion export during FY 2023-24 was 17.17 lakh tonnes and 11.65 lakh tonnes in FY 2024-25 (till March 18 this year), an official statement said.

The monthly onion export went up from 0.72 lakh tonnes in September, 2024 to 1.85 lakh tonnes in January this year, it added.

The decision to withdraw the export duty on onion export "stands as another testament to the government's commitment to ensuring remunerative prices to farmers while maintaining affordability of onion to consumers at this crucial juncture when both wholesale and retail prices have softened following the expected arrival of Rabi crops in good quantities," said the statement.

Potato farmers facing losses

Many struggling to cover costs and failing to avail cold storage facilities as prices dip

SUKANTA HALDER, KONGKON KARMAKER, MOSTAFA SHABUI, and TANJIL HASAN

Many farmers across Bangladesh are facing significant financial losses this year as potato prices have dropped below production costs during the peak harvest season.

Despite a bumper yield, many farmers are struggling to break even and are now worried about recovering their losses.

Meanwhile, farmers are urging the government to provide incentives for potato exports, reduce transportation costs, and promote the cultivation of export-quality varieties.

Encouraged by high prices during the potato planting season last November, farmers significantly increased their cultivation of the crop this year.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), potato cultivation surged to a record 5.24 lakh hectares this fiscal year, marking a 15 percent increase compared to the previous year. Farmers aimed to capitalise on last year's peak prices, which had soared as high as Tk 80 per kg, hoping for similar gains.

In Dhaka yesterday, potatoes were selling at Tk 20-25 per kg in retail markets. The price has been roughly the same for around a month, according to the data of the state-run

Trading Corporation of Bangladesh

The situation is worse in the potato-producing hubs like Bogura, Pabna, Joypurhat, Thakurgaon, Rangpur, and Dinajpur, with farmers reporting prices as low as Tk 11-15 per kg – far below the production costs.

While the Department of Agricultural Marketing estimates the country's average production cost at Tk 14 per kg this season, for farmers in the northern region it's around Tk 20 per kg.

This has left many farmers fearing they will be unable to recoup their initial investment. They are now pinning their hopes on rising prices in the coming months or government intervention to support them.

This season, total production is expected to reach 1.20 crore tonnes, according to the Bangladesh Cold Storage Association, a major player in the local supply chain.

The figure is close to the 1.09 crore tonnes produced last season, according to DAE data, and surpasses the country's annual demand of around 90 lakh tonnes.

Although the government estimates that around 30 percent of the total produce is lost due to shortcomings in storage facilities, this oversupply means there may be little relief for



SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Don't keep JS seats reserved for women

Khelafat Majlish tells consensus commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

During its talks with the National Consensus Commission, Khelafat Majlish proposed excluding pluralism from the fundamental principles of the constitution.

The party also suggested including "full faith in Allah" in the fundamental principles of the constitution and opposed reserving any seats for women in parliament.

The Electoral Reform Commission and the Constitution Reform Commission had proposed increasing the number of parliamentary seats to 400, with 100 seats reserved for women.

While Khelafat Majlish agreed to increasing the seats, it opposed reserving seats for women.

"All 400 constituencies should be open to all. There is no need to reserve 100 seats for women," Ahmed Abdul Quader, secretary general of Khelafat Majlish told the commission.

The party supported the proposal for bicameral

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

MOB VIOLENCE

Govt being lenient towards those involved

Says Prof Anu Muhammad

A CORRESPONDENT, DU

The government showed leniency towards those involved in mob violence, said former Jahangirnagar University teacher Prof Anu Muhammad, also a member of the Ganatantrik Odhikar Committee.

He said some groups became active after the July uprising. These groups were committing atrocities against women and minorities. Women in the country were feeling unsafe, he said at a rally in front of the National Museum yesterday afternoon.

Student-People's Alliance organised the rally demanding justice for rape and abuse of women and children across the country and removal of the Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury among others.

Anu Muhammad said, "A situation has been created where some groups are actively working to reduce women's presence and activism. They are trying to stop women's participation and their vocal presence in political, organisational, and cultural activities. They don't like women's activism, they don't like indigenous people, and they create divisions between minorities and majorities. They also create divisions like one between Shapla Chattar and Shahbagh."

Regarding rape and violence against women, the professor said, "Women of all ages – be it children

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4



Space 'tornadoes' discovered around our galaxy's core

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

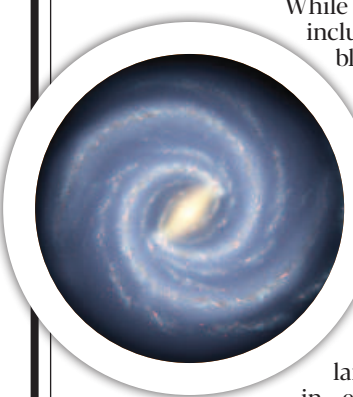
Scientists say they've found "space tornadoes" swirling in the center of our Milky Way galaxy.

While the galaxy's center, including the supermassive black hole Sgr A, is known to be active and filled with swirling dust and gas molecules, the process has remained mysterious.

Using the Atacama Large Millimeter/sub-millimeter Array – a group of dozens of radio telescopes in the Chilean desert and the largest astronomical project in existence – astronomers were able to peel back the curtain and sharpen their view of the area. That's how they found the so-called "tornadoes."

"We can envision these as space tornados: they are violent streams of gas, they dissipate shortly, and they distribute materials into the environment efficiently," Xing Lu, a research professor at Shanghai Astronomical Observatory, said in a statement.

Lu is a corresponding author of the study, which was published in the journal Astronomy & Astrophysics.



As Eid approaches, people are hurrying to complete the shopping for their families and friends. The photo was taken near the capital's Gausia Market yesterday where the entire street is full of shoppers and hawkers.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Foreman's final bell rings at 76

P11

Prime Bank

AL-SALAFI ISLAMIC BANKING

PRAYER TIMING

MARCH 23

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:44	12:45	4:45	6:11	7:45
JAMAAT 4:54	1:15	5:00	6:26	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
22	23		6:11
23	24	4:42	6:11
24	25	4:41	6:12