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Tarique urges parties to prioritise public issues

UNB, Dhaka

Stating that people are the "real capital of politicians", BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday urged political parties to focus on public issues and demands alongside state reforms.

"The people of Bangladesh have many expectations from political parties and politicians. We are discussing various issues of reform, including who should hold what authority. Alongside this, let us begin discussions on what the people's expectations, demands, and key goals are," he said while virtually addressing an iftar party.

Jatiyatabadi Somonoma Jote hosted the programme in honour of politicians and prominent citizens of the country at a city hotel.

In a democratic state or system, Tarique

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Fishermen catching jatka (hilsa fry) using nets at Tulatoli point in the Meghna sanctuary in Bhola Sadar upazila although a two-month ban on fishing, which began from March 1, is on. The ban is imposed to increase the production of hilsa. Those who violate the ban can be sentenced to a maximum of two years imprisonment and fined Tk 5,000. The photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK

Astronomers find 128 new moons orbiting Saturn

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Earlier this week, Saturn gained a whopping 128 new official moons, as the International Astronomical Union recognised discoveries from a team of astronomers led by Edward Ashton at the Academia Sinica in Taiwan.

The sixth planet from the Sun now has a grand total of 274 moons, the most of any planet in the Solar System.

The discovery has raised a lot of questions. How do you spot moons, and why hadn't anybody seen these ones already? Doesn't Jupiter have the most moons? What are they going to call all these moons? Are there more out there? And what exactly makes something a moon, anyway?

These new discoveries cement Saturn's place as the winner of the Solar System's moon competition, with more confirmed moons than all of the other planets combined. But it hasn't always been this way.

Jupiter's four largest moons - Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto - were the first ever discovered orbiting another planet. They were spotted by Galileo Galilei more than 400 years ago, in 1610. Saturn's first known moon, Titan, was discovered by Dutch astronomer Christaan Huygens 45 years later.

The new batch of 128 moons was discovered by stacking images from the Canada France Hawaii telescope. Some of Saturn's other moons were discovered by space voyages, and some during what are called "ring-plane crossings".



Iran unveils missile systems on Gulf islands

AFP, Tehran

Iran's Revolutionary Guards have unveiled new missile systems on three strategic islands in the Gulf, saying they can target nearby "enemy bases, vessels, and assets", state media reported Saturday.

The weapons were deployed on Greater Tumb, Lesser Tumb, and Abu Musa near the Strait of Hormuz, a globally vital shipping lane.

The Guards recently held military manoeuvres in the area.

Saturday's announcement comes with Iran poised to respond to a letter from US President Donald Trump urging a resumption of nuclear talks and warning of possible military action if Iran refuses.

"We have a tactic that we must arm" the island group "and make it operative", said Alireza Tangsiri, naval commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the ideological branch of Iran's military.

"We are capable of attacking enemy bases, vessels, and assets in the region," he told state television.

The new systems "can completely destroy any target within 600 kilometres (370 miles)".

On Friday, supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said US threats against Iran "will get them nowhere", and warned that "if they do anything malign to the Iranian nation, they will get a hard slap".

On Thursday, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY



TUBERCULOSIS INCIDENCE IN BANGLADESH WHO's 2025 targets remain a far cry

percent decrease in the death rate.

The number of tuberculosis deaths was 73,000 in 2015.

While the authorities are yet to disclose the death toll for 2024, Bangladesh needs to bring down the deaths by at least 15 percent from its 2023 fatality tally by this year.

However, data from the National

TUBERCULOSIS Case notification trend

Year	Number
2024	3.13 lakh
2023	3.01 lakh
2022	2.61 lakh
2021	3.06 lakh
2020	2.30 lakh
2015	2.09 lakh

lakh, the data shows.

Against this backdrop, Bangladesh, one of the 30 countries with a high number of tuberculosis patients, is observing World Tuberculosis Day today. This year's theme is "A TB-free Bangladesh can be achieved through commitment, investment, and service delivery".

"We are hopeful of meeting the target regarding reducing mortality rate," said Zubaida Nasreen, line director for Tuberculosis-Leprosy and AIDS STD Programme.

She said they have started Tuberculosis Preventive Therapy from 2022. Last year, 1.77 lakh people were given the therapy.

"However, we are lagging in terms of reducing the rate. It's not possible to say now when we can achieve the target," Nasreen added.

The incidence rate is unlikely to decrease until the country can reduce the number of missing cases (undetected tuberculosis patients), said a public health expert, who asked not to be named.

The WHO estimated the number of patients to be 3.79 lakh in 2023, while 3.01 lakh patients were detected, meaning around 78,000 cases remained undetected, he said.

Once the number of missing cases is addressed, the incidence rate would start to decrease, he said.

He, however, said the number of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Tuberculosis Control Programme shows that the number of people detected with the disease last year increased compared to the previous year.

According to NTP, 3.13 lakh people tested positive for TB last year after around 30 lakh people with tuberculosis symptoms underwent the test. The number of patients detected in 2023 was 3.01



Workers of Apparel Plus Eco Ltd in Gazipur demonstrating in front of Labour Bhaban in the capital's Bijaynagar yesterday, demanding payment of three-month arrears and Eid bonus.

YUNUS' CHINA TOUR

Trade and investment top priority

Rohingya repatriation also on agenda

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh is expecting to boost exports and bring investment and development support from China during Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus' first bilateral visit that will be watched closely by regional powers in the light of the changed Indo-Bangla ties.



Yunus' visit to China this year, which marks the 50th anniversary of China-Bangladesh diplomatic relations, was due and has symbolic significance, said Imtiaz Ahmed, executive director for Centre for Alternatives.

"There is no doubt that many would be watching Yunus' China visit from a geopolitical perspective, but we should look at it through the lens of our national

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Israeli strikes on Gaza kill 30 Palestinians

Top Hamas official among dead

REUTERS, Cairo

An Israeli airstrike in southern Gaza killed Hamas political leader Salah al-Bardawil yesterday, officials of the group said, as residents reported an escalation in Israel's six-day-old military campaign.

At least 30 Palestinians had been killed in Israeli strikes on Rafah and Khan Younis so far, health authorities said. Those killed included three municipal employees, medics said.

At least 50,021 Palestinians have been killed and 113,274 wounded since the beginning of the war, the health ministry said in a statement yesterday.

- Gaza residents report escalation in Israel's campaign
- Israeli official orders evacuation in Rafah
- Death toll in Gaza surpasses 50,000

Taher Al-Nono, the media adviser of the Hamas leadership, mourned Bardawil's death in a post on his Facebook page.

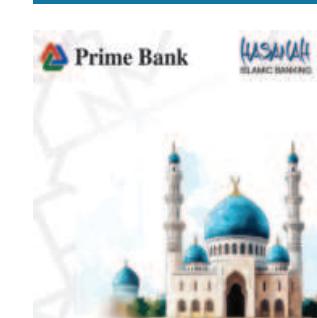
After two months of relative calm in the offensive that began more than 17 months ago, Gaza civilians were again fleeing for their lives after Israel effectively abandoned a ceasefire, launching a new all-out air and ground campaign on Tuesday against Hamas.

Explosions echoed throughout the north, central and southern Gaza Strip early yesterday, as Israeli planes hit

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

The more BNP talks about reforms, the less interested it seems in them

P8



PRAYER TIMING MARCH 24

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:43 12:45 4:45 6:11 7:45

JAMAAT 4:53 1:15 5:00 6:26 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN MARCH SEHRI IFTAR

23 24 4:41 6:11

24 25 4:41 6:12

25 26 4:40 6:12

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS