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MUSTAFA ZAMAN ABBASI

(1936-2025)

## A guardian of Bangladesh's folk music

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the quiet hours of early Saturday morning, Bangladesh bid farewell to one of its most cherished cultural figures. Mustafa Zaman Abbasi—eminent musicologist, author, singer, and television personality—passed away at the age of 87 at a hospital in Banani.

His daughter, Sharmin Abbasi, confirmed the news, marking the end of a luminous life steeped in melody, memory, and an unwavering devotion to Bengal's cultural arena.

Abbasi had long been battling

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2



Traders transporting massive loads of paddy straw on a Nosimon, a locally made vehicle that should be off the highway, while an overloaded rickshaw van carries sacks of farm produce. Such blatant disregard for road safety often leads to crashes. The photo was taken on Khulna-Satkhira highway.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Getting loans to be tougher for bank directors

### BB issues guideline to tackle irregularities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BB tightens rules to rein in bank's in-house irregularities. The central bank has tightened rules on lending to individuals and institutions connected to banks — such as directors, managing directors, their family members, and bank subsidiaries — to tackle widespread irregularities and scams in the banking sector.

On Thursday, the Bangladesh Bank issued a new guideline titled "Transactions with Bank-Related Persons or Institutions" with the view to ensuring the proper use of bank funds and restore depositors' trust.

Although the Bank-Company (Amendment) Act 2023 already covers such transactions, the guideline provides detailed instructions and regulations.

Over the past 16 years of the Awami League rule, several bank directors took out large loans, some of which were allegedly siphoned out of the country.

For example, the controversial S Alam Group — led by its owner and family members — allegedly controlled more than half a dozen banks and took loans through fake or paper-based companies, according to the central bank.

As of 2024, defaulted loans in the banking sector hit

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## People don't want fallen forces rehabilitated

### Says Tarique

UNB, Dhaka

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman has underscored the need for taking legal measures against those who have repeatedly violated the constitution and formed illegitimate parliaments and governments.

Tarique said the people do not want to see the return or rehabilitation of fallen, fugitive, autocratic, and evil forces, who were involved in enforced disappearances, murders, abductions, corruption, looting, and money laundering in any form within government or politics.

He was speaking yesterday at a BNP programme for exchanging greetings with members of the Buddhist community at the party chairperson's Gulshan Office.

Tarique said people are now agreed on two key issues: firstly, that no one should be allowed to turn Bangladesh into a subservient state in the future, and secondly, that the absconding, subservient and anti-democratic forces must not be allowed to raise their heads again.

"Every political party in Bangladesh, including the BNP, completely agrees with this demand of the people," Tarique said.

He called on people from all walks of life to remain alert so that no one can conspire to usurp their right to vote.

"But until a democratic government is established in the country, we must ensure that no one is able to conspire to hijack our democratic political rights and our right to vote," the BNP leader said.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



## India blocks YouTube channels of 6 TV stations

### Jamuna, Ekattor, Somoy among them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh government has warned of "reciprocal action" after YouTube blocked six of its television channels from being accessed in India "at the request of the Indian government", which cited national security concerns.

Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser for the ministry of posts, telecommunications, and information technology, said Bangladesh will seek a formal explanation from the platform and, if none is provided, it may take reciprocal action.

He said in a Facebook post YouTube that India has geo blocked at least four Bangladeshi television stations.

"By blocking Bangladesh as a broadcast location, the rights of Bangladeshi citizens living in India who regularly watch these channels are being infringed upon. Such an action appears to go against international consumer rights norms."

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

## US-China talks to defuse trade war begin in Geneva

Low expectations for major breakthrough amid distrust

AFP, Geneva

Senior US and Chinese officials were meeting in Geneva yesterday in a bid to de-escalate a trade war sparked by President Donald Trump's sweeping tariff roll-out and further fuelled by Beijing's robust retaliation.


US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer were conferring with Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng in the first such talks between the world's two largest economies since Trump slapped steep new levies on China last month.

The closed-door discussions began at mid-morning yesterday and were due to continue today at the residence of the Swiss ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva.

And after a break at around lunchtime, the delegations returned to the discrete villa with sky blue shutters near a large parc on the left bank of Lake Geneva, according to AFP journalists on site.

Tariffs imposed by Trump on the Asian manufacturing giant since the start of the year currently total 145 percent, with cumulative US duties on some Chinese goods reaching a staggering 245 percent.

In retaliation, China slapped 125 percent levies on US goods, cementing what appears a near trade embargo between the world's two



» US slapped China with 145 percent tariff

» In retaliation, China slapped 125 percent levies on US goods

largest economies.

Trump signalled on Friday that he might lower the sky-high tariffs on Chinese imports, taking to social media to suggest that an "80% Tariff on China seems right!".

"The president would like to work it out with China.... He would like to de-escalate the situation," US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told Fox News on Friday.

Trump's press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, clarified that the US would not lower tariffs unilaterally, adding that China would need to make concessions as well.

In any case, a move to that level would be a symbolic gesture, since the tariffs would remain prohibitively steep.

"The relationship is not good" between Washington and Beijing, noted Bill Reinsch, a senior advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"We have trade-prohibitive tariffs going in both directions. Relations are deteriorating," said Reinsch, a longtime former member of the American government's US-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

"But the meeting is a good sign."

"I think this is basically to show that both sides are talking — and that itself is very important," said Xu Bin, professor of economics and finance at the China Europe International Business School.



## Buddha Purnima today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Buddha Purnima, the biggest religious festival of the Buddhist community, will be celebrated across the country today.

Buddha Purnima marks the birth, enlightenment and death of Gautama Buddha. On this day in 563 BC, Buddha was born as Siddhartha Gautama in Kapilabastu at the foothill of the Himalayas.

He attained supreme enlightenment at the age of 35 and finally departed into nirvana at the age of 80 in 483 BC.

The day is a public holiday.

On the occasion, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus greeted the members of the Buddhist community.

Buddhist religious leaders and the leaders of the Buddhist Religious Welfare Trust yesterday met and exchanged greetings with the chief adviser on the occasion of Buddha Purnima at the State Guest House Jamuna.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

## Soviet-era space relic crashes after 50 yrs in orbit

CNN SCIENCE

A Soviet-era spacecraft, Cosmos 482, likely crashed into the Indian Ocean west of Jakarta, Indonesia early yesterday after spending more than 50 years in orbit.

Launched in March 1972, the probe was originally intended to reach Venus but failed to exit Earth's orbit.

According to the European Space Agency (ESA), Cosmos 482 re-entered the atmosphere early yesterday, splashing down in the Indian Ocean west of Jakarta, Indonesia, as confirmed by Russia's Roscosmos.

The ESA noted that the ground sensors lost track of the object, indicating it had already fallen. Experts had monitored the spacecraft for years as it gradually descended due to atmospheric drag.

Designed for Venus' extreme atmospheric conditions, Cosmos 482 was expected to survive reentry. Space debris expert Marlon Sorge noted that its heat shield may have kept it intact. However, authorities advised caution if remnants were found.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

An elderly day labourer pushing a cart in the extreme heat at the capital's Karwan Bazar yesterday when temperatures topped 40C.

## Heatwave disrupts daily life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country has been experiencing extreme heat as temperatures topped 40 degrees C in Dhaka and elsewhere.

In Chuadanga, the season's highest, 42 C, was recorded yesterday while mercury reached 40.1 C in the capital, reports UNB and the Met office.

A severe heatwave is sweeping over Rajshahi and Chuadanga, while mild to moderate conditions prevail in Dhaka, Mymensingh, Chattogram, Barisal, Khulna, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Kurigram, and Moulvibazar.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department forecasts that the sweltering conditions may persist for at least four more days, despite the possibility of rain and thunderstorms in some places.

The weather is expected to remain mostly dry with partly cloudy skies during this period.

Temperatures in Dhaka may fall today and there is a likelihood of rain tomorrow, said meteorologist Shaheenul Islam.

The sweltering heat may persist

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4