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# MONSOON, DEPRESSION OVER BAY

## Thousands suffer in coastal districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Torrential rain triggered by an active monsoon and a depression in the Bay of Bengal yesterday left thousands stranded in the country's low-lying coastal districts. People suffered due to waterlogging in Cox's Bazar, Patuakhali, Feni, Bhola, Barishal, and Khulna, report our local correspondents. Flash floods were reported in Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar. According to Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) officials, the active monsoon has been causing heavy to very heavy rainfall in Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, and Barisal divisions over the past few days. "The country will experience heavy rainfall in many places today. However, rainfall is likely to decrease in the next two days. The intensity will rise again from Saturday [July 12] and continue for three to four days," said Dr Abul Kalam Mallik, a meteorologist at BMD. BMD has also issued a landslide warning for people living in the hilly areas of Chattogram division. In Cox's Bazar, heavy rain submerged

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ABUL KALAM MALLIK  
Meteorologist at BMD

more than 80 villages, leaving thousands stranded. According to BMD, the district recorded 694mm of rainfall over the past seven days. Among the six upazilas of the district, Teknaf has been hit the hardest. Around 40 villages were flooded, marooning nearly 50,000 people, according to local officials. Several villages in Whykong, Hnila, Teknaf Sadar, and Sabrang Baharchhara

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People waded through almost waist-deep water on foot or rickshaws and vans in front of the fire service office on Shaheed Shahidullah Kaiser Road in Feni yesterday after torrential rain flooded several upazilas of the district.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## New species of flying reptile found

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Researchers have discovered a new species of pterosaur – a winged reptile that lived alongside dinosaurs 200 million years ago. Scientists at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History uncovered the fossilised jawbone of the creature in 2011, and have now identified it to be the oldest known species of pterosaur in North America. Unearthed at a remote bonebed in Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona, its jawbone was preserved in volcanic ash 209 million years ago. The new species would have been small enough to comfortably perch on a person's shoulder. The remarkable fossil was unearthed by Suzanne McIntire, who volunteered in the museum's FossilLab for 18 years. "What was exciting about uncovering this specimen was that the teeth were still in the bone, so I knew the animal would be much easier to identify," McIntire said. Because the tips of the teeth were worn down, the team concluded that the pterosaur likely fed on the site's fish, many of which were encased in armour-like scales. The team named the new pterosaur species *Eotephradactylus mcintireae*. The name means "ash-winged dawn goddess" and references the site's volcanic ash where the fossil was found. This part of northeastern Arizona was positioned in the middle of Pangaea and sat just above the equator 209 million years ago.



## 'MILITANCY' LINKS Cops sue 35 Bangladeshi expatriates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police's Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) has filed a case against 35 Bangladeshi expatriates for their alleged links to an internationally banned militant outfit. These Bangladeshis reportedly collected funds for the outfit while staying in Malaysia, according to ATU officials. The ATU lodged the case with the Airport Police Station under the Anti-Terrorism Act on July 5. The development came to light after three of the 35 – Nazrul Islam Shohag, Mohammad Redwanul Islam, and Jahed Ahmed – were deported by the Malaysian authorities and later arrested by the ATU at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka on July 3. Earlier, the Malaysian police disclosed through a media briefing that they had arrested 36 Bangladeshi expatriates on allegations of collecting funds on behalf of the militant outfit. However, the ATU case names 35 individuals, stating that they were detained by the Malaysian authorities between April

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# Gaza ceasefire in sight, needs time

### Say Israeli officials; 78 Palestinians killed as Israeli attacks intensify across enclave

AGENCIES

Gaps in Gaza ceasefire talks under way in Qatar between Israel and Palestinian group Hamas can be bridged but it may take more than a few days to reach a deal, Israeli officials said yesterday. The new push by US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators to halt fighting in the battered enclave has gained pace since Sunday when the warring sides began indirect talks in Doha and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu set out to Washington. Netanyahu met on Monday with US President Donald Trump, who said on the eve of their meeting that a ceasefire and hostage deal could be reached this week. "I don't think there is a hold-up. I think things are going along very well," the US leader told reporters when asked what was preventing a peace deal. Sitting on the opposite side of a long table from the Israeli leader, Trump said Hamas was willing to end the conflict in Gaza, which is entering its 22nd month. "They want to meet and they want to have that ceasefire," Trump told reporters at the White House when asked if clashes involving Israeli soldiers would derail talks. Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff, who played a major role in crafting the ceasefire proposal,

will travel to Doha this week to join discussions there, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters on Monday. The ceasefire proposal envisages a phased release of hostages, Israeli troop withdrawals from parts of Gaza and discussions on ending the offensive entirely, reports Reuters. Palestinian sources said on Monday that there were gaps between the sides on the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Netanyahu meanwhile ruled out a full Palestinian state, insisting Israel would "always" keep security control over the Gaza Strip, reports AFP. "Now, people will say it's not a complete state, it's not a state. We don't care," Netanyahu said. Gaza's health authorities yesterday said that 78 people were killed in Israeli strikes across the Palestinian territory since dawn, reports Al Jazeera. On the ground, Israel intensified deadly attacks across the Gaza Strip, as five of its soldiers were killed and 14 wounded in an explosion in the besieged territory's north. Israeli minister Zeev Elkin, who sits in Netanyahu's security cabinet, said that there was "a substantial chance," a ceasefire will be agreed. "Hamas wants to change a few central matters, it's not simple, but there is progress," he told Israel's public broadcaster Kan yesterday.

- » Trump voices confidence that a deal can be reached
- » Five Israeli soldiers killed in combat in north Gaza
- » Netanyahu rules out a full Palestinian state

## Nahid warns against 'serving Indian hegemony'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, KUSHITIA

National Citizen Party Convenor Nahid Islam has warned against "serving Indian aggression and hegemony", saying his party will stand with the people to resist any such activities. "We have long resisted Indian hegemony. If any political party or group tries to serve that hegemonic force again, we will resist. The people of Bangladesh will rise against it," he said at a rally in Kushtia town yesterday. "We have boldly raised the slogan: 'Not slavery, but freedom!' We freed ourselves from the chains of India, just as we did from those of West Pakistan. In the Bangladesh of the future, we will stand tall with dignity and build a new state." The rally was part of the NCP's nationwide July campaign. Earlier, around 2:30pm, despite heavy rain, NCP leaders and activists began their July march on Kushtia's NS Road. At another rally in Meherpur's Gangni municipal town, NCP Chief Organiser (Southern Region) Hasnat Abdullah said that the party would engage in people-centric politics and will always stand by the people. "If people are with us, we are ready to live and die in this 56,000 square mile land. We do not want to rely on any foreign power – be it Rawalpindi, Delhi, or America. "The true source of power is the people.

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# Next polls key to rebuild trust in police, admin

## Says CEC AMM Nasir Uddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The upcoming national parliamentary election is an opportunity to restore the image of the police and the administration, said Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday. "We have fought for 15 years to establish the right to vote – now is the time to fulfil our responsibility," he told reporters at an event organised by the Reporters Forum for Election and Democracy (RFED) at the Election Commission headquarters in the capital. The elections in 1991, 1996 and 2001 prove that free and fair polls are possible in Bangladesh, he said. He went on to urge the administration, police and other law enforcement agencies to regain the public's trust by performing their duties well. "Only when voters can go to polling stations without any hindrance, cast their votes for their preferred candidates freely and return home safely on their own, will we be able to say that voting rights have truly been established."



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Fatigued and running a fever for three days, Tania leans on a fellow patient while waiting in a queue of over 50 people at the Mohakhali DNCC Covid-dedicated hospital yesterday. Like many others showing overlapping symptoms of dengue and Covid-19, she had been waiting for hours to get tested.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Injured protesters vandalise the July Smrity office over delayed aid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of people injured during the July uprising vandalised the office of the July Shaheed Smrity Foundation in Dhaka's Shabbagh yesterday, claiming they had long been denied the financial assistance they were promised. The incident took place after the protesters, some still undergoing treatment at the nearby Bangladesh Medical University, gathered in front of the foundation office expecting the disbursement of the second phase of aid. Having waited for several hours, they were informed by the foundation's Chief Executive Officer Lt Col (retd) Kamal Akbar that the funds would not be disbursed that day. Enraged, the protesters locked the office and confronted the foundation staff. Tensions flared, and soon an altercation led to vandalism on the premises. Witnesses said 20 to 25 of those injured in July were present at the time. They alleged that false assurances of a second-phase payment had been made on multiple

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