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Debapriya deplors the reform drive losing steam

Urges parties to include reform commitments in manifestos

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Eminent economist Debapriya Bhattacharya yesterday expressed regret that the chief adviser's initial enthusiasm for reform initiatives lost steam before it could build the momentum many had anticipated.

"The chief adviser's enthusiasm...was not carried forward by his associates or the bureaucracy."

Debapriya, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), made the remark while talking to journalists after a regional consultation meeting organised by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, in Sylhet.

Acknowledging that reform is a continuous process, Debapriya noted



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Pedestrians cover their faces to avoid inhaling dust while crossing the Postogola-Narayanganj road at Taltola in Pagla yesterday. A cloud of dust hangs over the area almost constantly and it worsens during the dry season.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Hand the highest punishment to Hasina, Kamal

AG Asaduzzaman urges ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman yesterday urged the International Crimes Tribunal-1 to hand the highest punishment to deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

The prosecution had conclusively established the accused's command responsibility for the July atrocities, he said during the concluding proceedings of the crimes against humanity case against Hasina, Kamal and ex-Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun, who has turned an approver.

He went on to urge the court to ensure justice "for the victims, the state and the people".

"If justice is not ensured, five-year-olds will again be shot dead, ten-year-old Anas will again die from bullet wounds, Mugdha will again be killed while distributing water, and Abu Sayed will again pour out his heart's blood on the streets," he added.

After the trial proceedings ended, the chair of the three-member tribunal

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Govt okays draft to free the judiciary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The advisory council yesterday approved in principle the draft Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance, 2025, aimed at ensuring full separation of the judiciary from the executive branch of the state.

Once enacted, the ordinance will vest all authority over the transfer, posting, promotion, and discipline of lower court judges, ending the law ministry's control. It will also grant the apex court financial independence, allowing it to manage and utilise its own budget, including development expenditures.

The approval came at yesterday's weekly meeting, chaired by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at his Tejgaon office.

The draft ordinance will be presented again to the council for final approval.

Later, while briefing reporters at the Foreign Service Academy, Law

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Israel won't annex West Bank

Says US VP Vance; no reduction in Gaza hunger since truce: WHO

AGENCIES

US Vice President JD Vance said yesterday that Israel would not annex the West Bank, the day after Israeli lawmakers voted to advance two bills paving the way for the territory's annexation.

"If it was a political stunt it was a very stupid political stunt and I personally take some insult to it," Vance said as he wrapped up his visit in Israel.

"The West Bank is not going to be annexed by Israel, the policy of the Trump administration is that the West Bank will not be annexed by Israel, that will continue to be our policy," he added.

Israeli foreign minister Gideon Saar said that Israel is committed to working towards the success of the Trump plan for Gaza, adding that Hamas and Islamic Jihad must lay down their arms, reports Reuters.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio earlier said that the Israeli Knesset's move towards the annexation of the West Bank would threaten Trump's plan to end the conflict in Gaza, which has produced a shaky ceasefire so far.

"I mean, that's a vote in the - yeah, that's a vote in the Knesset, but obviously I think the president's made clear that's

not something we'd be supportive of right now, and we think it's potentially threatening to the peace deal," Rubio told reporters late on Wednesday before leaving for Israel.

➤ Rafah border crossing remains shut despite ceasefire deal

➤ UN urges Israel to allow 15,000 in Gaza to receive treatment abroad

➤ Israel again bombs 'missile sites' in eastern Lebanon

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) said yesterday there had been little improvement in the amount of aid going into Gaza since the ceasefire took hold -- and no observable reduction in hunger.

It also said 15,000 Palestinians, desperately in need of medical treatment, are awaiting medical evacuation from

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TK 40CR TAX SCAM 2 CCC officials suspended over fraud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday raided Chattogram City Corporation's Revenue Department and seized documents related to an alleged scam worth about Tk 40 crore by two of its revenue officials, ACC and CCC officials said.

The anti-graft body also launched a formal investigation into the alleged fraud dating back to 2020-2021, through which two container depots were given undue tax waiver by forging documents.

Contacted, ACC Assistant Director Sayed Alam said, "During our raid, we found evidence of reducing the holding tax through tampering of documents. We have seized the documents from the city corporation's Revenue Department."

The ACC official added that while the CCC has taken action against

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Trump hits Russia's oil giants with sanctions

Says talks with Putin about Ukraine war 'don't go anywhere'; EU bans Russian LNG

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump slapped sanctions on Russia's two largest oil companies on Wednesday, complaining that his talks with Vladimir Putin to end the Ukraine war "don't go anywhere."

The EU countries also formally adopted a 19th package of sanctions against Russia for its war against Ukraine that includes a ban on Russian liquefied natural gas imports. World oil prices surged five percent yesterday.

"Every time I speak with Vladimir, I have good conversations, and then they don't go anywhere," Trump said in response to a question from an AFP journalist in the Oval Office.

But Trump added that he hoped the "tremendous sanctions" against Russian oil giants Rosneft and Lukoil would be short-lived. "We hope that the war will be settled," he said alongside Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky hailed the "strong and much-needed" message sent by US sanctions on Russia's energy sector.

"We waited for this. God bless it will work and this is very important," Zelensky told journalists at an EU

summit in Brussels yesterday, saying Washington had sent "a good signal to other countries in the world to join the sanctions".

➤ Zelensky hails move as 'strong' message

➤ Russia says it is immune to new oil sanctions

➤ World oil prices surge 5%

➤ China opposes new US sanctions on Russian oil

Russia said that new US sanctions on its oil industry risked hurting diplomatic efforts to end the Ukraine war, and that it had developed a "strong immunity" to them.

Former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev said it was now absolutely clear that the United States was Russia's adversary and that US President Donald Trump's recent steps on Ukraine

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Scientists discover new species of flesh-eating dinosaur



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Imaging technology has revolutionized palaeontology, enabling scientists to study fossils buried deep within rock or too small to handle.

Two recent studies highlight the potential of these tools, including one that identified a new dinosaur species that towered over other carnivores it lived alongside hundreds of millions of years ago.

In the first study, researchers examined an impression of a fossil jawbone originally described in 1899 as possibly belonging to a dinosaur. Due to its age—203 million years—the specimen gained significance as a potentially unusually large early flesh-eating dinosaur.

Dinosaurs originated during the Triassic period, between 252 and 201 million years ago. During this era, carnivorous species typically measured less than three metres in length and weighed no more than an Alsatian dog.

However, the 1899 specimen, found in the late Triassic deposits near Cardiff in south Wales, revealed parts of a jaw and flesh-eating teeth that may have belonged to a creature five metres or more in length.

The specimen had received little attention since its discovery, as it consisted only of impressions in rock.



A STUDY IN PINK

A pink sea fan, or pink gorgonian coral, sways gently in the Bay of Bengal off Saint Martin's Island -- a living lacework of colour and resilience. It thrives in shallow waters, 10-100 metres deep, clinging to rocky reefs across the Indian and Pacific oceans. These soft corals feed by filtering microscopic plankton drifting through the currents. Listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN, they face grave threats from pollution, trawling, and warming seas that trigger mass die-offs. As coral ecosystems worldwide approach a tipping point -- with bleaching, acidification, and rising temperatures ravaging once-vibrant reefs -- protecting them is no longer a choice. It is a shared and urgent duty to keep the oceans alive.

PHOTO: SHARIF SARWAR

Youth killed in crude bomb explosion at Geneva Camp

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth was killed and several others were injured in crude bomb blasts during a late-night clash between two groups over control of the drug trade in Geneva Camp in the capital's Mohammadpur area early yesterday.

The deceased, Zahid, 20, lived in the camp and worked at a mobile servicing shop in Kalyanpur, said his brother-in-law Md Ujjal.

Locals said the clash between groups led by Bhuiyan Sohel and Par Monu broke out around 2:00am and continued till 5:00am, with around 100 people involved.

A neighbour of the victim and a witness to the incident, preferring anonymity, said, "Zahid was on the rooftop of a six-storey building when a crude bomb exploded around 3:30am. He fell off the building and suffered critical injuries."

He was first taken to the Trauma Centre and later

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