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JEC MEETING

Dhaka, Islamabad discuss trade, connectivity

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and
ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh and Pakistan yesterday agreed to expand economic cooperation by exploring new trade opportunities and enhancing direct connectivity through shipping links and air services.

The decisions were made at the ninth meeting of the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) held in Dhaka, the first JEC meeting since 2005. The meeting focused on expanding bilateral trade and investment and identifying potential across various sectors.

Salehuddin Ahmed, adviser to the finance and science ministries, led the Bangladesh delegation, while Pakistan's delegation was headed by Ali Pervaiz Malik, minister for energy (petroleum division).

After nearly two decades, ties between Dhaka and Islamabad have improved following the ouster of Hasina last year.

Jute and jute products account for about 38 percent of Bangladesh's exports to Pakistan. However, data shows this is declining. Exports totalled around \$23 million in FY24, down from \$63 million in FY22.

According to draft meeting minutes, Pakistan responded positively to

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Bullet took his voice, future

Father tells ICT about his six-yr-old son paralysed during July uprising

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Once a cheerful boy, whose father dreamed he would become a pilot one day, Basit Khan Musa now sits silent in a wheelchair, a feeding tube in his nose and paralysis gripping the right side of his body.

The now six year-old was not a victim of any accident, but of police atrocities in the city's Rampura area during the July uprising.

The very bullet that pierced the left side of his head and exited through the other side struck his grandmother, Maya Islam, on the ground floor of their house in the afternoon of July 19, 2024.

His grandmother died a day later.

Musa miraculously survived after prolonged treatment at different hospitals here and in Singapore.

Yesterday, Musa came to the International Crimes Tribunal-1 along with his father, electronic goods trader Md Mustafizur Rahman, who broke down in tears while testifying as the second prosecution witness in a case against four police officers, including former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Habibur Rahman.

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Trump to host summit of Central Asian leaders

AFP, Bishkek

US President Donald Trump is to host a Central Asian summit next week, the leaders of two countries have said, as major powers jockey for influence in the resource-rich region.

Russia's traditional dominance in the five former Soviet states has been questioned since it invaded Ukraine, with China, the European Union and the United States all seeking to boost their diplomatic and economic footprint in the region.

The White House has not commented on plans for the summit, but on Sunday the president of Kazakhstan said it was scheduled for November 6 in Washington and on Monday Kyrgyzstan's president said he would attend, local media reported citing their offices.

Heads of the other three states — Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — have not confirmed their participation.



The suspension of direct metro rail service between Uttara and Motijheel, until 11:00am yesterday, caused heavy traffic on city streets, especially during rush hour. The photo was taken at Asad Gate in the morning.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Scores injured as DIU, City univ students clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Violence erupted in Savar Sunday night when students from Daffodil International University (DIU) and City University got into fights, chasing each other through the streets till the early hours of yesterday.

According to authorities, around 200 students from both universities were injured in the clashes that took place in the Khagan area of Savar's Ashulia.

The violence began with the vandalism of a DIU student mess. In retaliation, the administrative building at City University was trashed, and multiple vehicles were set ablaze and damaged.

According to students, it all started over a trivial incident.

On Sunday night, a few City University students were hanging out next to the "Bachelor Paradise Hostel", where DIU students resided. As a City University student spat without looking, it hit a DIU student riding by on a motorcycle. This led to an argument between the two groups.

Later, around 9:00pm, about 50 City University students attacked and vandalised the DIU student mess. As videos of the incident went viral on social media, DIU students gathered at the scene and began moving towards City

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EC finalises list of polling centres

Slow progress in registering parties and observer organisations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 42,761 polling centres and 2,44,739 booths will be set up across the country for the upcoming 13th national parliamentary election scheduled for February next year, according to the final list released by the Election Commission yesterday.

"Each voting centre will have an average of 3,000 voters — if necessary, this number will be adjusted in the future," EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed told reporters at the EC headquarters in the capital.

In the 12th national parliamentary election, there were a total of 42,150 polling centres and 2,61,472 polling booths.

The EC, however, is facing delays in the registration process for political parties and election observer organisations, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed told reporters at the EC headquarters in the capital.

"Progress has been a bit slow in those two areas," The EC has initially identified 22 political

13TH GENERAL ELECTION

42,761
polling centres

2,44,739
polling booths

1,15,137
booths for male voters

1,29,602
booths for female voters

parties as eligible, and additional field-level information has been collected for them, he said, adding that the process is expected to be complete by the end of the week.

Despite the setbacks, the EC assured the public that there is no cause for concern.

"We are slightly behind schedule, but everything will be completed within the remaining time."

On the registration of observer organisations, he said the review for domestic observer groups is underway.

In some cases, journalists have already provided the required information.

The EC hopes to finalise the registration process for observer organisations by the end of the week.

When asked about the EC's preparedness for the election in light of the delays in the two key areas, Akhtar said: "If you ask about percentages, I would say we are 90 percent to 95 percent ready in these two areas."

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Scientists link dental health with stroke

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

People with poor dental hygiene are at an increased risk of stroke, a new study warns.

The research, published in Neurology, notes that people suffering from both cavities and gum inflammation exhibit an 86 percent higher chance of experiencing a stroke.

They face a greater likelihood of ischemic stroke, characterised by a cessation of blood flow to the brain due to clot formation inside blood vessels. Ischemic stroke, which accounts for the majority of cases worldwide, disrupts oxygen delivery to the brain, resulting in permanent neurological deficits or death.

While traditional risk factors for stroke, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, are widely scrutinised, oral health remains underestimated. The new study assesses two dental conditions — cavities and periodontal disease. The former develop as acid-secreting bacteria erode tooth enamel while the latter is a chronic inflammatory condition that destroys gums, provoked by bacterial plaque biofilm.

The study, led by researchers from the University of South Carolina, is based on an extensive analysis of around 6,000 middle-aged adults, all initially free from stroke.

The researchers divided the participants into three categories after giving them dental exams — those with a healthy oral status, those with gum disease, and those affected by both periodontal disease and dental cavities.

DEMAND FOR BHAIRAB DISTRICT

20 hurt as protesters hurl stones at train



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Train services on the Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet routes were disrupted for over two hours yesterday after protesters in Bhaishab blocked the railway lines demanding the upazila be declared a district.

The demonstration, held at Bhaishab Bazar Railway Junction from around 10:00am, turned violent when stones were hurled at trains and police, leaving at least 20 passengers injured.

Witnesses said hundreds of locals occupied the tracks, chanting slogans like "Bhaishab zila chai [We want Bhaishab as a district]". The Dhaka-bound Upakul Express and Karnaphuli Express were among several trains stranded,

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