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Delhi seeks stronger, friendly ties with Dhaka

THE STATESMAN ONLINE

India yesterday said it wants to build and strengthen ties with Bangladesh and the new BNP government which assumed office in the neighbouring country earlier this week.

At his regular press briefing, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Bangladesh's new Prime Minister Tarique Rahman soon after his election victory.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla attended the swearing in ceremony of the new government and handed over a letter from Modi to the new Bangladesh PM.

The letter, the spokesperson pointed out, underlined India's commitment to support a democratic, progressive and

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Work on the 'Dholaikhal Reservoir Greening and Aesthetic Environment Development' project, aimed at turning the polluted Dholaikhal retention pond in Old Dhaka into a scenic, eco-friendly park, remains unfinished despite its April 2024 deadline. The Tk 19.88 crore Dhaka South City Corporation project, spanning 5.31 acres, includes 60,000 sq ft of landscaping, walking and cycling paths, and two amphitheatres. Intended to curb pollution, it has instead become a source of it for locals.

Rebels want reinstatement, BNP unmoved

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

BNP rebel candidates, who lost the polls, are now pushing for a comeback to the party.

At least 66 such candidates were expelled from the party. Of them, 49 were district and upazila-level leaders, while around 17 were central leaders.

Grassroots leaders, expelled for taking part in their campaigns, are now communicating with the party leadership to return to the party.

The BNP has made it clear that those who defied party instructions before the polls should not expect an easy return to the party fold. The high command is signalling a firm stance against acts of defiance, emphasising that disciplinary decisions made ahead of the polls would not be easily reversed.

Talking to The Daily Star, BNP Standing Committee member Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain said, "After discussing the matter at our party meeting, we will decide what stance the party will take, and the decision will be announced afterwards."

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PRAYER TIMING
FEBRUARY 21

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:14	12:45	4:30	5:59	7:30
JAMAT 5:24	1:15	4:45	6:09	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	FEB	SEHRI	IFTAR
3	21		5:59
4	22	5:10	5:59
5	23	5:09	6:00

'10-15 days' left for Iran to make deal

Trump warns of 'bad things'; Tehran says US assets 'legitimate targets' if it attacks

REUTERS, Washington

President Donald Trump warned Iran on Thursday it must make a deal over its nuclear programme or "really bad things" will happen, and set a deadline of 10 to 15 days, drawing a threat from Tehran to retaliate against US bases in the region if attacked.

Amid a massive US military buildup in the Middle East that has fuelled fears of a wider war, Trump said negotiations with Iran to end the tense standoff were going well but demanded that Tehran reach a "meaningful" agreement.

- Kremlin urges all sides to show restraint
- Oil prices have risen on fears of fresh attack on Iran
- Norway relocates some of its 60 soldiers in ME

"Otherwise bad things happen," Trump, who has repeatedly threatened to attack Iran, told the first meeting of his Board of Peace in Washington.

Trump spoke of the US airstrikes carried out in June, saying Iran's nuclear potential had been "decimated," adding "we may

have to take it a step further or we may not."

"You'll be finding out over the next probably 10 days," he said. Asked later to elaborate, he told reporters aboard Air Force One: "I would think that would be enough time, 10, 15 days, pretty much maximum."

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Author Sankar passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent Bangla author Mani Sankar Mukhopadhyay, better known by his pen name "Sankar", died at a private hospital in Kolkata yesterday. He was 92.

He breathed his last around 1:30pm (local time) while undergoing

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'Tank'-like shark filmed in Antarctic waters for first time

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

An unexpected sight has challenged long-held scientific assumptions about marine life in Antarctica, after a substantial sleeper shark was filmed in the region's frigid depths.

The creature, described as an "ungainly barrel" of a shark, was captured on video in January 2025, cruising languidly over a barren seabed far beyond the reach of sunlight.

Researcher Alan Jamieson revealed this week that many experts had previously believed sharks did not inhabit the icy Antarctic waters.

The specimen, estimated to measure between 3 and 4 metres (10 and 13 feet), represents a significant discovery, overturning prior understanding of the area's biodiversity.



Gaza deaths far higher than reported

Lancet study says over 75,000 Palestinians killed in the first 15 months of 2-year war

REUTERS, Jerusalem

More than 75,000 Palestinians were killed in the first 15 months of Israel's military assault in Gaza, a figure far higher than the 49,000 deaths local health officials announced at the time, says a new study by The Lancet Global Health medical journal.

The peer-reviewed study, published on Wednesday, found that women, children and the elderly comprised some 56.2 percent of violent deaths in Gaza during that period, a composition that it said roughly aligned with reporting by Gaza's health ministry.

The field work was conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, run by Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki, who has carried out public opinion polling in the West Bank and Gaza for decades. The lead

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- Women, children, elderly made up 56pc of dead
- UN accepts health ministry figures; Israel disputes them
- Non-violent deaths estimated at 16,300 during conflict

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