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SHAH CEMENT

Allen fires NZ into final

AFP, Kolkata

New Zealand's Finn Allen blasted the fastest century in T20 World Cup history in Kolkata yesterday as his side hammered South Africa by nine wickets to reach the final.

Chasing 170 to win the first semifinal, Allen hit an unbeaten 100 off just 33 balls, to obliterate the previous mark of 47 balls by Chris Gayle, as New Zealand raced home with 7.1 overs to spare.

Allen went on a rampage as he finished with two fours, two sixes and a four off successive balls to hit the winning runs and reach his hundred with a roar of delight at Eden Gardens.

Tim Seifert hit 58 in a 117-run opening stand with Allen off just 9.1 overs to set up the victory romp. Seifert hit two sixes and seven fours while Allen bludgeoned eight sixes and 10 fours in a brutal display of controlled power hitting.

"I think it's easy for me when Timmy's (Seifert) going like that, I can kind of just watch and then hit it when it's in my area and just try and give him the strike," said Allen.

New Zealand will play either India or England in Sunday's final in Ahmedabad.

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Rachin Ravindra moves in to embrace opener Finn Allen, who blazed a scintillating 100 not out off just 33 balls -- the fastest century in T20 World Cup history -- to guide New Zealand to a nine-wicket demolition of South Africa at Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday and book their place in the final.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SURPRISE VISIT State minister finds land office empty

Cabinet div orders officials to be in office from 9:00am to 9:40am

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kayser Kamal, the state minister for land, yesterday expressed dissatisfaction after finding officials absent during a surprise visit to the Siddhirganj Union Land Office in Narayanganj.

The minister arrived at the office around 9:00am. Although the main gate was open, the rooms of officials and staff were locked, reports our correspondent from the spot.

Kayser waited outside for nearly half an hour before officials began arriving after being informed of his presence.

Several service seekers were also seen waiting for land-related services.

In a video circulating among reporters, officials were seen facing questions over what the minister termed "irresponsible conduct".

When asked about the delay, some reportedly gave inconsistent answers.

Terming the incident "undesirable", Kayser told journalists: "Those who neglect their duties will face necessary action. A government elected by the people must work for the people. Irregularities and corruption will not be tolerated."

Similar surprise inspections would be carried out at

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CONTRACTUAL APPOINTMENTS

Where is the administration heading?

BAHARAM KHAN

When the newly elected government assumed office, expectations were high that the civil administration would undergo a genuine restructuring -- different from the reshuffles of recent years.

Officials in the secretariat, the nerve centre of the bureaucracy, anticipated that contractual appointees from the interim government would be phased out, making way for regular cadre officers to reclaim their positions.

ANALYSIS

However, the opposite scenario is unfolding.

Contractual appointees from the interim period, including the Cabinet secretary and the secretaries for Public Administration, Land, and Expatriates' Welfare, have remained in place.

More strikingly, the BNP-led government has yet to grant any regular promotions at the secretary level. On the contrary, it has extended the practice of contractual appointments for many key posts, including those of principal secretary and home secretary.

This week, four former officers were appointed to key positions at various ministries, including the local government ministry. All of them are over 65 years of age. One of them, Shahidul Hassan, is 75 years old. He was appointed as the secretary to the Local Government Division.

This continuation of contractual appointments has caused deep frustration among career officers aspiring to top administrative roles.

Many argue that those brought in on contract have been detached from the mainstream bureaucracy for 10 to 15 years, leaving them unfamiliar with its current dynamics. As a result, they fear the pace of administration may slow down, with contractual appointees struggling

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Prolonged war can hit remittance hard

MD ABBAS and RASHIDUL HASAN

The cancellation of 222 flights and suspension of six Middle Eastern routes over the past five days is likely to put a heavy burden on Bangladesh's labour market and the economy.

The disruption began on February 28 after several Gulf countries closed their airspace due to the ongoing security situation following US and Israeli air strikes on Iran and Iran's retaliatory attacks.

Authorities said 176 flights were cancelled at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka and 46 at Shah Amanat International Airport in Chattogram. The affected destinations include Dammam, Doha, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, and Kuwait.

Even if each flight carried 250 passengers, more than 55,000 travellers had been directly affected. The actual number is likely higher. Thousands of migrant workers are now uncertain about when they will be able to return to their workplaces.

WORKERS IN FEAR
Bangladesh's overseas labour market depends heavily on the Middle East. According to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment, and Training, over 1.13 million workers went abroad in 2025. Of them, 67 percent or 754,369 workers are in Saudi Arabia.

Qatar is the second largest destination, followed by Singapore, Kuwait, the Maldives, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan.

Because of the war, many Gulf countries, including Qatar, Kuwait, and the UAE, have slowed or temporarily stopped certain activities. As a result, migrant workers are facing uncertainty.

A Bangladeshi worker in Kuwait said, "We are living in fear. Most companies have kept their

work stopped. Many who went to Bangladesh on holiday are now unsure if they can return because of airspace closures."

He added that he is worried that if the situation continues, he will not be able to send money home. "God knows what will happen to my family if the war lingers."

Other affected countries' migrants also shared similar concerns.

Workers can still use banking or informal channels to send money. The real issue is whether they will have enough income in hand.

Migration expert Asif Munier



So far, one Bangladeshi has been killed in the UAE and another in Bahrain. Four Bangladeshis were injured in Kuwait and three in Bahrain.

REMITTANCE AT RISK
Remittances and garment exports are the two main pillars of Bangladesh's economy. Even during global crises, remittances help maintain foreign currency reserves and support rural families.

In 2025, Bangladesh received \$32.8 billion in remittances, the highest amount in a single year, according to Bangladesh Bank data.

However, migration expert Asif Munier

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

'Dramatic change' in ant nests due to air pollution

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Ants exposed to air pollution face aggression from their own nestmates, according to a new study that sheds more light on the harmful effects of human activity on ecology.

Ants recognise their nestmates from molecules produced by their glands and one set of these compounds, called alkenes, is crucial for the



colony's unique odour.

These compounds, with carbon-carbon double bonds, are picked up by ants immediately after hatching and tend to degrade on exposure to some chemicals.

When two ants come in contact, they compare each other's smell with the respective odour of their colony.

If they recognise the odour, they are regarded as nestmates and treated kindly. If the odour profiles do not match, they tend to become more aggressive towards each other.

The new study tested whether increasing the levels of ozone, a chemical known to degrade alkenes, in the atmosphere altered the odour

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

PM makes 8 state ministers' roles more focused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has made changes in the allocation of responsibilities among eight state ministers, reducing their previously multiple portfolios to a single ministry or department.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman issued the directive to ensure more focused administration, said a notification of the Cabinet Division yesterday.

Sultan Salahuddin Tuku has been assigned solely to the fisheries and livestock ministry. He previously held the portfolios of agriculture, fisheries and livestock, and food.

Shariful Alam has been given the charge of only the Ministry of Textiles and Jute. Before, he was in charge of three ministries -- commerce, industries, and textiles and jute.

Habibur Rashid has been assigned to the Ministry of Railways and the Road Transport and Highways Division. Earlier, he held portfolios of the road transport and bridges, railways, and shipping ministries.

Rajib Ahsan, who served as state minister for road transport and bridges, railways, and shipping, has now been assigned only to the Ministry of Shipping and the Bridges Division.

Zonayed Saki has been made the state minister for planning. He was previously responsible for the finance and planning portfolios.

Farzana Sharmin has been given charge of the social welfare ministry. She previously also managed the women

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A carriage being repaired at the Pahartoli workshop of Bangladesh Railway. Workers at the workshop are spending a busy time making carriages ready for use during the Eid rush.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Every \$10 oil price rise could add \$80m to monthly bill

B1

HASANAH ISLAMIC BANKING
البنكية الاسلامي
Prime Bank

PRAYER TIMING
MARCH 5

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-04	12-45	4-30	6-05	7-30
JAMAAT 5-14	1-15	4-45	6-15	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MAR	SEHRI	IFTAR
15	05		6:05
16	06	5:00	6:05
17	07	4:59	6:06