



A resident surveys the damage at the site of buildings struck by a Russian drone attack in Southeast Ukraine yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

20 Thai sailors return home after vessel attacked in Gulf

AFP, Bangkok
Twenty Thai crew members of a cargo ship attacked in the crucial Strait of Hormuz arrived in Thailand yesterday, with three of their colleagues still stranded on the vessel in the Gulf.
The Thai-registered Mayuree Naree was hit by two projectiles on Wednesday while transiting through the Gulf waterway, after departing a port in the United Arab Emirates.
Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they had struck the Thai ship, as well as a Liberia flagged vessel, in the strait because they had ignored "warnings".
The 20 sailors landed at Thailand's main international airport early yesterday morning and were immediately escorted away by officials

without speaking to gathered media.
The wife of one of the returned crew, who gave her name as Bass, told reporters she was still waiting to see her husband after the ordeal.
"We are all afraid, but they are employees - if they refuse to go (out to sea), they won't get paid," the 32-year-old woman said.
"I don't know where they went or when they will return home. The company hasn't told me anything," she added.
Bass said she had only spoken with her husband over Facebook Messenger and had brought their one-year-old son to the airport at her husband's request.
AFP journalists saw the returning crew members board a bus after arriving at the airport.

When the Mayuree Naree was struck last week, Bass's husband was only able to grab his phones before fleeing, she told reporters.
He had apologised to his wife for leaving onboard a token from his son - a small pillow.
"I want (the company) to be sure during this war situation that the ship will be safe when it goes out," she said.
"I want them to look at the employees like their own family. If one of them were their family, how would they decide?"
The vessel's owner Precious Shipping said yesterday that the firm would provide "welfare support for the crew, including medical examinations and mental health assessments", according to a statement.

Govt appoints VCs at 7 univs

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affiliated socio-cultural body.
Earlier yesterday, the incumbent UGC chairman SMA Faiz, appointed on September 5, 2024, sought to be relieved from his post citing health reasons.
The government has appointed ABM Obaidul Islam, current vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Open University and a professor of physics at DU, as the next VC of Dhaka University.
Obaidul Islam previously served as convener of DU Sada Dal and currently holds the post of education affairs secretary of the BNP central committee.
He is also president of the University Teachers' Association of Bangladesh, aligned with the BNP bloc.
Mohammad Faridul Islam, a professor of the marketing department at Rajshahi University, has been appointed VC of RU. He currently serves as general secretary of Zia Parishad at the university.
At Jagannath University, Prof Rais Uddin, chairman of the Islamic Studies Department, has been appointed VC. He is president of

the Jagannath University Teachers' Association and general secretary of Sada Dal - the pro-BNP teachers' alliance - at the university.
Following Obaidul's appointment, Mohammad Siddique Rahman Khan has been selected as VC of Bangladesh Open University. He was also associated with DU Sada Dal.
Meanwhile, Mohammad Nurul Islam, pro-VC of National University of Bangladesh, has been appointed VC of Dhaka Central University, a newly established institution formed by integrating seven colleges in the capital.
He previously served as general secretary of Jatiyatabadi Shikkhak Forum, a pro-BNP teachers' organisation, at Jahangirnagar University.
Prof Mohammad Al Forkan, founding chairman of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Department at Chittagong University, has been appointed VC of the university. He currently serves as senior vice-president of the Chittagong University Jatiyatabadi Teachers' Forum.

In addition, Prof Mohammad Masud has been appointed VC of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology. He was earlier appointed KUET VC following the July uprising but was removed from the post in April last year amid student protests.
Asked whether political affiliations influenced the appointments, Milon said involvement in politics does not disqualify a candidate.
"Is it a crime if a person is involved in politics?" he said.
He said the government reviewed candidates' research output, publications, citations, academic qualifications, PhD and post-doctoral work before making the appointments.
An investigation by this newspaper in December 2024 found that during the interim government, at least 30 of 47 vice-chancellors and 18 pro-vice-chancellors and treasurers appointed across 40 positions had links to pro-BNP and pro-Jamaat teachers' organisations.
With the latest eight appointments, the newly formed BNP-led government has also selected academics with similar affiliations.

Bangabandhu's 106th birth anniv today

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activist politician, driven by his involvement in the formation of the Awami Muslim League in June 1949.
Following Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy's death in 1963, he revived the Awami League in January 1964. In February 1966, he unveiled the Six-Point Programme for regional autonomy during a conference of Pakistan's opposition parties in Lahore.
In May that year, he was arrested under the Defence of Pakistan Rules. While in prison, he was charged, in January 1968, with conspiracy to break up Pakistan through what was given out as the Agartala Conspiracy Case.
A mass upsurge forced the withdrawal of the case on February 22, 1969. The next day, at a huge rally at the then Race Course Maidan, Sheikh Mujib was bestowed with the

title "Bangabandhu" - the Friend of Bengal.
Bangabandhu led the Awami League to a decisive victory in Pakistan's first general elections in December 1970.
On March 7, 1971 he delivered the historic speech, which united the entire nation for the Liberation War.
As the Pakistan army launched its genocidal crackdown on Bangladesh on March 25, 1971, Bangabandhu was arrested shortly afterward. He was flown to West Pakistan, where he faced trial on charges of treason.
Pakistan's defeat and the emergence of an independent Bangladesh saw him return home on January 10, 1972.
During his rule, Bangabandhu made several controversial moves, including establishing the Rakkhi Bahini, introducing a one-party rule

called Baksal, and banning or closing all but four state-owned national newspapers.
On August 15, 1975, he along with most of his family members was assassinated by a group of disgruntled army men.
Rab, SB, CID
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Special Branch has been transferred to the Chattogram Range.
Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam resigned after the BNP came to power. Later, Ali Hossain Fakir filled the vacancy.
DMP commissioner Sazzat Ali also stepped down. Additional Commissioner (Admin) Md Sarwar has been given the charge.
According to police headquarters sources, the new DMP commissioner will be appointed very soon.

Iran war an 'abject lesson' on fossil fuel dependence

Says UN climate chief

REUTERS, Brussels
The disruption to energy markets caused by the Iran war is an "abject lesson" in the risks of relying on fossil fuels, and underscores the case for governments to wean their economies off oil and gas, the UN climate secretary will tell EU policymakers yesterday.
While geographically far from the crisis in the Middle East, the European Union has felt its disruption through surging global energy prices. European gas prices have jumped by 50 percent during the two-week war.
"Fossil fuel dependency is ripping away national security and

sovereignty, and replacing it with subservience and rising costs," Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of the UN climate change arm UNFCCC, will tell EU officials and government ministers at an event in Brussels.
"Europe is more reliant on fossil fuel imports than almost any other major economy," Stiell will say, in prepared remarks that warned reliance on fossil fuels was leaving consumers "at the mercy of geopolitical shocks and price volatility".
The EU imports more than 90 percent of its oil and 80 percent of its gas.
EU leaders are hurriedly drafting

emergency measures to shield consumers from the energy price spike, and avoid a repeat of Europe's 2022 energy crisis, when Russia slashed gas deliveries, sending prices to record highs.
In the longer term, the European Commission says its climate change strategy to replace fossil fuels with locally-produced renewable and nuclear energy will secure countries' energy security, and cut them free from volatile fuel prices.
But governments including Italy and Hungary are urging Brussels to weaken its climate change policies, to provide short-term cost relief for industries.

Strengthen human rights

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government to strengthen rights protections, particularly commitments to investigate enforced disappearances and strengthen state institutions.
However, they noted that many challenges remain.
At least 1,569 people were subjected to enforced disappearance during the rule of former PM Sheikh Hasina. Of those, 287 people remain missing and their families are still awaiting answers.
The organisations also raised concerns about allegations of extrajudicial killings and the deaths of about 1,400 people during the protests that toppled Hasina's government in August 2024, with many reportedly shot by security forces.
They urged the government to ensure credible investigations into these incidents and to hold perpetrators accountable through fair trials.
Various commissions set up by the interim government have made valuable recommendations that would help achieve the government's promise to strengthen institutions.
A strong and independent National Human Rights Commission is essential to investigate cases and prevent future abuses, the letter said.
The rights bodies criticised continued arbitrary detentions and the use of laws such as the Special Powers Act and Anti-Terrorism Act, which they said have long been used

for politically motivated arrests.
They called on the government to review cases filed under past cybercrime laws, including the Information and Communication Technology Act, the Digital Security Act and the Cyber Security Act, arguing that many of the cases undermine freedom of expression.
Highlighting that press freedom was a major concern, the rights bodies said journalists, artists and writers in Bangladesh continue to face threats, violence and legal harassment.
They urged Tarique Rahman to ensure that law enforcement authorities carry out prompt, thorough, impartial and independent investigations into attacks on journalists, media and cultural organisations, including the offices of Prothom Alo, The Daily Star and Chhayanaut, and to take proactive steps, in line with the government's obligations under international human rights law and standards, to prevent further incidents.
The rights groups called for reforms in the security sector, including the disbanding of the controversial Rapid Action Battalion, which has long faced allegations of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.
They recommended limiting the role of military intelligence agencies in civilian affairs and introducing independent oversight mechanisms for law enforcement operations.

The letter highlighted concerns about minority rights and rising mob violence, warning that religious and ethnic minorities remain vulnerable.
Indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts were also cited as facing ongoing abuses, including harassment and violence.
The rights bodies urged the government to fully implement the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord and to demilitarise the region while protecting indigenous land rights.
The letter called for stronger implementation of laws protecting women and girls and for the repeal of provisions that allow child marriage under certain circumstances.
The groups also raised the issue of the nearly 1.2 million Rohingya refugees currently living in camps in Cox's Bazar and on Bhasan Char, while calling for the government not to forcibly repatriate the Rohingya to Myanmar.
They suggested expanding access to education, livelihoods and freedom of movement.
Despite the lengthy list of recommendations, the groups emphasised that the reforms were necessary to ensure respect for human rights and democratic governance.
The organisations said they look forward to working closely with the government to support reforms aimed at strengthening human rights protections in the country.

US panel urges sanctions on RSS, RAW

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conditions in India continued to deteriorate as the government introduced and enforced new legislation targeting religious minority communities and their houses of worship.
"Several states undertook efforts to introduce or strengthen anti-conversion laws to include harsher prison sentences. Indian authorities also facilitated widespread detention and illegal expulsion of citizens and religious refugees and tolerated vigilante attacks against religious minority communities," it said.
The USCIRF recommended to the US government that India be designated as a "country of particular concern," or CPC, for "engaging in and tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom

violations".
CONCERNS OVER BANGLADESH
The USCIRF report also raised concerns about arrests over alleged blasphemy, attacks on religious sites, violence against minority groups, and broader humanitarian challenges affecting Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.
It noted several cases where individuals were arrested or prosecuted for allegedly offending religious sentiments.
In February, authorities arrested poet Sohel Hasan Galib for "hurting religious sentiment". The following month, police arrested a Hindu man over a similar allegation, which resulted in his conviction and sentencing to an indeterminate term in prison.
In October, authorities arrested a university student accused of

desecrating the Qur'an. Following the circulation of videos on social media accusing him of the act, a mob surrounded his home.
In November, police arrested a Baul singer on allegations of blasphemy and hurting religious sentiment during a musical performance.
In December, a mob attacked a Hindu man after rumours circulated that he had made blasphemous comments, hurting religious sentiment. According to reports, the mob tied his body to a tree and set it on fire.
The report also documents attacks targeting religious institutions.
In November, police in Dhaka arrested a man in connection to homemade bomb attacks at two Catholic churches and a Catholic school.

BNP begins delivering

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minister also announced that his government has begun work on the Farmer's Card - another key pledge by the BNP.
The Farmer's Card will be launched on a pre-pilot basis by April 14 this year, with around 25,000 farmers in nine upazilas of eight districts set to receive the benefit, officials said.
The subsidy amount is still under discussion but is expected to be around Tk 2,000 to Tk 2,500 for a specific category of farmers for crop production during the upcoming Kharif season (mid-March to mid-November).
Around 2.5 crore farmers will benefit from the programme, according to the BNP manifesto.
On March 14, Tarique also kickstarted a monthly honorarium scheme for imams, muazzins, and khadems of mosques, as well as heads and assistant heads of other religious institutions across the country, in its first phase under a pilot programme.
A total of 4,908 mosques, 990 temples, and 144 Buddhist monasteries are covered, benefiting 16,992 religious leaders.
Government sources have also indicated that cards for expatriates and an e-health card system are in the pipeline.
Tarique's decision to forgo VVIP protocol, his directive requiring all officials to be present at their offices on time, and his own practice of working even on Saturdays - traditionally a holiday - have drawn widespread praise.
His post-election visits to the homes of opposition leaders, including Jamaat-e-Islami's Ameer

Shafiqur Rahman and National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam, have further earned him accolades for setting a rare example of political courtesy in Bangladesh.
Contacted, political analyst and Jahangirnagar University Government and Politics Prof Al Masud Hasanuzzaman said, "What seems most significant after the formation of the government is the prime minister's focus on certain initiatives that can be described as a good start."
He said that although full implementation of programmes such as the Family Card or Farmer Card will take time, the fact that he has already launched them is important.
"These were electoral commitments, and by initiating them early, he has shown sincerity in fulfilling his pledges."
However, some of the government's early decisions drew sharp criticism.
One of the key concerns was the appointment of Khalilur Rahman, who served as the national security adviser under the interim government, as foreign minister.
Opposition Chief Whip and National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam had said, "For the sake of neutrality, student advisers were asked to resign, and they did so. But Khalilur Rahman joining the BNP cabinet proves that he had been working for a particular party while serving in the interim government."
Similarly, the sudden removal of Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur and his replacement with a corporate accountant who owns a garment company also drew flak.
Mansur left the bank on February 25 amid calls for his resignation from central bank employees. The finance

ministry had already fast-tracked the appointment of his successor, 59-year-old Mostaqur Rahman, Managing Director and CEO of Hera Sweaters Ltd.
Later, Mansur's adviser was also ousted following mob pressure inside Bangladesh Bank - both incidents widely described as setting a bad precedent for the institution.
Many, including Transparency International Bangladesh, expressed deep concern over what they described as an attempt by Road Transport, Rail, and Water Transport Minister Shaikh Rabiul Alam to legitimise a serious criminal offence by characterising roadside extortion as a form of consensual transaction.
The government also faced backlash over arrests made for playing the March 7 address of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Reports of police excesses during raids in Suhrawardy Udayan in the capital further fuelled public anger.

No lottery

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mechanisms may be introduced.
Responding to concerns about coaching and private tutoring, the minister said the government would ensure that the new system does not encourage such practices.
He also said the decision followed extensive discussions with stakeholders and internal research by the ministry.
"Our research did not begin today. We have been working on this issue for a long time," he said.
He said the new admission system is expected to be introduced from next year.

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
Company Matter no. 191/2026
An application under section 81(2), 85(3) read section 396 of the Companies Act 1994
AND IN THE MATTER OF
Mr. C.M Aminul Bahar, shareholder and Managing Director, AB Consultancy Ltd. of Level-19, Unique Trade Centre (UTC), 8 Pantha Path, Dhaka-1215. Dhaka
-----Petitioner
VERSUS
AB Consultancy Ltd., having its address at Level-19, Unique Trade Centre (UTC), 8 Pantha Path, Dhaka-1215, Dhaka and another.
-----Respondents
Take notice that an application under section 81(2), 85(3) read section 396 of the Companies Act 1994 was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on behalf of the above named petitioner for condonation of delay in holding Annual General Meeting of AB Consultancy Ltd. for the calendar year 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 & 2025 and to give necessary direction for holding the said Annual General Meetings. Upon hearing the application on 22.02.2026 the Hon'ble Company Judge Madam Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque was pleased to admit the application. Interested person may appear before the Hon'ble Court on or before the date fixed for hearing of the matter. Copy of the application may be obtained on payment of necessary cost.
Ripan Baral
Advocate, Supreme court of Bangladesh, Eastern Arzoo, 61, Bijoynagar, Dhaka, Cell: 01705-074227

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি
১। প্রতিষ্ঠানের নামঃ ৯ সিগন্যাল বাটালিয়ন।
২। কাজের বিবরণঃ ২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থবছরে প্রশিক্ষণ (এটিজি সাধারণ) যাতে সূত্র প্রশিক্ষণ নিশ্চিতকরণে প্রশিক্ষণ মার্চ, এ্যাসস্ট কোর্স এটিজি প্রশিক্ষণ এলাকা গ্রহণকরণ ও সংস্কার/মেরামত, রেঞ্জ নিরাপত্তার সরঞ্জামাদি ক্রয়, টাণ্ডেটি গ্রহণকরণ ও মেরামত, প্রশিক্ষণ সহায়ক সামগ্রী ক্রয় ও মেরামত, প্রশিক্ষণ মার্চ গ্রহণকরণ ও সংস্কার, প্রশিক্ষণ ও ফায়ারিং প্রতিযোগিতা সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যয়ভার বহন, অস্থায়ী ক্যাম্প এলাকা ভাড়া, প্রশিক্ষণ সহায়ক স্টেশনারী ক্রয়, খেদাদুলার বিভিন্ন দলের সংগঠন ও বিবিধ প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যয় নির্বাহে বাবদ।
৩। দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের তারিখঃ ২৪ মার্চ ২০২৬।
৪। দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখঃ ২৯ মার্চ ২০২৬।
৫। দরপত্র খোলার তারিখঃ ০২ এপ্রিল ২০২৬।
৬। বিক্রয়িত তথ্যের জন্য ভিজিট করুন www.army.mil.bd
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৯ সিগন্যাল বাটালিয়ন
সাতার সেনানিবাস