



Dhaka, Tokyo look to elevate partnership

Tarique to visit Japan on October 26-29

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Japan are set to elevate their existing strategic partnership during Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's visit to Tokyo from October 26 to 29, with the commitment expected to be reflected in a joint statement.

Talks are ongoing about elevating the strategic partnership to a comprehensive strategic partnership (CSP), The Daily Star has learnt from foreign ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

Dhaka and Tokyo would discuss ways to reduce interest rates on Japanese loans.

Foreign Secretary **Asad Alam Siam**

"The terminology is yet to be set at this moment -- 2-3 terms are on the table," said one of the officials.

A CSP represents a higher and broader tier in Japan's diplomatic framework than a standard Strategic Partnership and encompasses a deeply multi-layered, expansive network of cooperation across almost all sectors.

At present, Japan maintains CSPs with ASEAN, the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A worker carries a bundle of freshly dyed fabrics as he walks past rows of colourful cloths hung out to dry in Banti village of Narayanganj's Araihazar upazila. Around 500 families in the village depend on traditional hand-batik printing for their livelihoods, producing cotton fabrics used to make dresses, bedcovers and scarves. Inset, workers print colourful patterns onto fabric by hand. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTOS: **ANISUR RAHMAN**



Sohrab Hossain

Star Patuakhali correspondent of 22 yrs dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Sohrab Hossain, who served as The Daily Star's Patuakhali correspondent for more than 22 years, died at Patuakhali Medical College Hospital yesterday.

He was 55.

He died around 7:10pm, with the hospital's death certificate listing cardiac arrest as the cause of death.

Citing family members, The Daily Star's Barishal Correspondent Susanta Ghosh said Sohrab fell ill

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

HIS LAST BYLINE

Reserve forest cleared to make room for farming

Rangabali forest being destroyed after dist admin leased out the land



SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

Some 200-300 trees have been chopped down in a reserved forest at Char Signboard in Patuakhali's Rangabali to make way for watermelon cultivation.

Forest officials say an excavator is also being used to build an embankment there.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Police struggle to act on list of 545 extortionists

Many suspects have links to ruling party

TOUSIF KAIUM

The government has prepared a list of 545 suspected extortionists operating across the capital and instructed the Dhaka Metropolitan Police to take action against them.

However, police have yet to launch a fully-fledged crackdown, as officials struggle to determine how to proceed after detaining suspects and field-level officers hesitate to act against those with political connections for fear of repercussions.

"Whenever field-level officers were instructed to arrest them, they were loath to carry out the orders, saying that the individuals have connections with MPs or ministers and could take revenge on them later."

An additional deputy commissioner of the DMP

The list was made based on information collected by different intelligence agencies, according to home ministry sources.

It is the second such list after the BNP came to power. Earlier, the DMP prepared a list of more than 1,200 suspected extortionists, a large number of whom were affiliated with the BNP.

Joint Commissioner (Crime) Md Faruk Hossain told The Daily Star that the latest list was prepared after verifying the previous list and collecting fresh information from the field.

"Several individuals have already been arrested from the list."

The development comes amid a series of incidents involving extortion and land grabbing in the capital, triggering growing criticism of the law-and- order situation.

According to the latest list, Tejgaon division has the highest number of listed extortionists at 155, followed by Gulshan with 85, Uttara 72, Lalbagh 71, Mirpur 66, Ramna 50, Wari 24, and Motijheel 22.

This newspaper obtained the names of 215 from the list. At least 75 of them were identified as having links to the BNP or its affiliated organisations.

Another 134 have no political or organisational identity. The remaining six included two individuals connected with

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

84 held in raid at add'l DIG's Purbachal house

Alcohol, yaba, cannabis seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Abdullah Al Jahir

The Detective Branch (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested 84 people, including 26 women, during a raid on a house in Police Housing in Dhaka's Purbachal on Monday night.

Alcohol, yaba and cannabis were seized from the house that belonged to Abdullah Al Jahir, an additional deputy inspector general of police.

Jahir had rented out the house, where drug use and illegal "DJ parties" had allegedly been going on for a long time, prompting police to conduct the raid, Shafiqul Islam, additional commissioner (detective) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

Parties and drug consumption were regularly reported at the property in Police Housing-1, said Elias Kabir, deputy commissioner of DB's Uttara division that conducted the raid.

Jahir was the primary organiser of the parties and a man named Mahbub Alam acted as the co-organiser, according to Elias.

Mahbub told investigators that Jahir

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Dema, daughter of Palestinian couple Akram Yassin and Dina Abu Baker, who were killed in an Israeli strike, mourns at their funeral in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

TUPTUP RESORT FIRE

Website names two owners, case names one



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Questions have arisen over the ownership of TupTup Resto and Resort in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, where 10 tourists died in a fire, following discrepancies between the resort's website and the case statement.

While the case statement names only Tanvir Mia as the owner, the resort's website also identifies Neaz Morshed as a proprietor. A message on the site welcomes guests on both their behalf and outlines their ambition to establish hospitality of international standards in Bangladesh.

The case accuses four named and 19 unidentified individuals of causing deaths and serious injuries through negligence. The named accused are

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1