

Complete ongoing projects quickly take new after scrutiny: PM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT:

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Yesterday Wednesday asked the authorities concerned to complete the ongoing development projects as early as possible and embark upon new schemes after proper scrutiny. "We have to complete those ongoing projects quickly which require less cost as I think that we will get more benefit as soon as we accomplish those," she said. The prime minister made the remarks while chairing the Bangladesh Planning Commission meeting at its NEC conference room here this morning. "We get the outcome of a project after it is completed, then we take up new projects," she said. She asked all concerned not to make delay in completing the projects. "Make sure that there is no delay in implementing the projects and no unnecessary time

expansion to complete the projects again and again," she said. The prime minister reiterated her call to take any unnecessary big development projects. She suggested taking projects scrutinising some things like evaluating necessity of the project for the particular area, people's access to its benefit and its contribution to the economy. "Other things which will have to be taken into consideration in taking big projects are-how much money is required to complete the project, how much will be loan, how much to repay, how much time Bangladesh will get to repay the loan and finally, is Bangladesh capable to pay the loan?," she added. "We have to analysis properly of these things (in taking up any mega projects)," Sheikh Hasina said. She asked the planning commission to take ideas keeping in mind the announcement

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks while chairing the Bangladesh Planning Commission meeting at its NEC conference room on Yesterday Wednesday — PID

Chinese Vice Minister Sun Haiyan will meet PM Hasina on today

STAFF REPORTER

Visiting Chinese Communist Party's Vice Minister of the International Department Sun Haiyan will meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on today Thursday. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 10:30am at the Prime Minister's official residence Ganabhaban. A delegation will accompany the Chinese Vice Minister during the meeting. Sun Haiyan arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday night to have meetings with Bangladesh leadership.

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Humayun for recycling plastic wastes to reduce its harmful impacts

STAFF REPORTER

Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun Yesterday Wednesday underscored the need for recycling the plastic wastes to reduce its adverse impacts on environment. "The use of plastic products is increasing day by day. Plastic wastes are also increasing which is harmful to our environment. We'll have to put emphasis on recycling such wastes," he said. The minister said this while speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural session of the four-day '15th International Plastic Fair 2023' held at Bashundhara

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BNP suffers from extreme frustration: Dr Hasan

STAFF REPORTER

Awami League (AL) Joint General Secretary and Foreign Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud today said that BNP is suffering from extreme frustration as the party leaders now can realize that boycotting the January 7 election was suicidal. "Today, the whole world is congratulating the Prime Minister for being newly elected. It has made them (BNP leaders) upset and (they) are talking nonsense," he said. The AL leader said these while talking to reporters after paying homage to martyr of 1969 Mass Uprising Matiur Rahman by placing a floral wreath at Matiur's memorial at Nabakumar Institution in the city's Bakshi Bazar area, said a foreign ministry press release. Dr Hasan along

with other party leaders paid the tributes to Matiur on behalf of the AL, marking the Mass Uprising Day. Noting that BNP-Jamaat had denied the struggles for liberation he said, "Our independence came under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. . . Matiur Rahman had devoted his life to accelerate our freedom. We pay respect to him." Replying to a question from journalists over the upcoming upazila polls, the AL joint general secretary said 'Boat' will be no more as election symbol for upazila elections. "We have been discussing holding the local government elections without party symbols for a long time. The decision was not made suddenly. It

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Israel hits Khan Younis amid talks on one-month Gaza truce

REUTERS

Israel and Hamas have made some progress toward agreement on a 30-day ceasefire in Gaza when Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners would be released, sources told Reuters, as Israel pressed ahead with its assault on southern Gaza's main city. Qatar, the U.S. and Egypt have for weeks shuttled between Israel and the militant group that runs Gaza trying to broker terms for a break in fighting, which would also allow in more food and medical supplies. But the two sides remain at odds over how to permanently end the Gaza war, which Hamas insists must be decided as part of any ceasefire agreement, the sources said. Israeli spokesperson Eylon Levy said on Tuesday there would be no ceasefire that left Hamas in power and hostages in Gaza, following the militant group's cross-border rampage on Oct. 7 in which



At least 25,700 Gazans killed, including 210 in last 24 hours, Palestinian health officials say

Hamas dismisses White House comment that it cannot be part of future Gaza government

Palestinian Islamic Jihad group says it is fighting Israeli forces on three sides of Khan Younis

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some 1,200 Israelis were killed. And the White House reiterated its insistence that Gaza's future government could not include Hamas leaders, prompting Hamas to say it would not let the U.S. or anyone else "enforce a mandate on our free people". Advertisement · Scroll to continue White House spokesperson John Kirby said the U.S. would support a pause in combat to free hostages and let aid in, but gave no timeframe and said he would not call the discussions "negotiations". Qatar and Egypt did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Palestinian health officials said at least 25,700 Gazans had been killed in the war, including 210 in the previous 24 hours, with thousands more feared lost under the rubble of destroyed buildings. In their biggest operation in a month, Israeli tanks have pushed

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COVID-19: Bangladesh reports 38 more cases in 24hrs

STAFF REPORTER

Bangladesh reported 38 more COVID-19 cases in 24 hours till Yesterday Tuesday morning. With the new numbers, the country's total COVID-19 caseload rose to 2,046,861, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). The official death toll from the disease remained unchanged at 29,481 as no new fatalities were reported during this period. The daily case test positivity rate stood at 8.41 per cent as 452 samples were tested, said the DGHS. The recovery and death rates remained unchanged at 98.41 per cent and 1.44 per cent, respectively.

First Bangladeshi WHO SEARO Director: Saima Wazed's appointment signals new era in global health

NEWS DESK

In the tumultuous backdrop of Bangladesh's history, few stories resonate with resilience and triumph like that of Saima Wazed. Born to nuclear scientist Dr. M.A. Wazed Miah and Sheikh Hasina, Saima's life was steeped in adversity from an early age. The dark shadows of the 1975 massacre, which claimed several of her family members including her grandfather, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman – the founding father of Bangladesh, marked her childhood. Amidst this national crisis, Saima and her family endured the pain of being barred from attending their loved ones' burials and the hardship of living in exile. Yet, Saima's spirit remained unbroken. Her grandfather's legacy of public service ignited in her a passion for mental health, a field she pursued



with vigor. Her academic journey took her to Barry University in Florida, USA, where she earned a bachelor's degree and a master's in clinical psychology, and she is currently a doctoral candidate in

Organizational Leadership. Saima's professional achievements are a testament to her dedication. Since 2019, she has been an Advisor to the WHO Director-General on

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Russian plane crashes with Ukrainian POWs on board - RIA cites defence ministry

INTERNATIONAL DESK

A Russian Ilyushin Il-76 military transport plane crashed near the Ukrainian border on Wednesday, and state news agency RIA quoted the defence ministry as saying it was carrying 65 Ukrainian prisoners of war to be exchanged for Russian captives. The plane was carrying 74 people, including six crew and three guards when it crashed, RIA cited the defence ministry as saying. There was no immediate information on the cause. Andrei Kartapolov, a lawmaker in Russia's parliament and a retired general, said during a parliamentary session that the plane had been shot down by three missiles. He



did not say what the source of his information was. Reuters could not immediately verify details of who was on board, but Russia and Ukraine regularly swap prisoners of war. Ukraine's defence ministry and air force did not immediately reply to requests for comment. Video posted on the Telegram messenger app by Baza, a channel linked to Russian security services, and verified by Reuters, showed a large aircraft falling towards the ground near the village of Yablono in the Belgorod region and exploding in a vast fireball. Local governor Vyacheslav

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DAILY FLIGHT TO DUBAI

Stretching Wings TO NEW HORIZON

DHAKA → DUBAI		DUBAI → DHAKA	
DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL
06:30 PM	10:00 PM	11:30 PM	06:00 AM+1
MON, THU, FRI & SUN			
05:30 PM	09:00 PM	10:30 PM	05:00 AM+1
TUE			
03:55 PM	07:25 PM	08:55 PM	03:25 AM+1
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FALL IN LOCAL TIME

China cuts bank reserve requirements and will boost property lending to support its slowing economy

AP NEWS

China's central bank said Wednesday it will cut amount of reserves it holds for banks as part of a slew of measures to support the slowing economy. The announcement by the governor of the People's Bank of China prompted a surge in share prices, with Hong Kong's benchmark jumping 3.6%. Chinese stock markets have languished in recent months as investors pulled money out, discouraged by a faltering recovery from the shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic. A sell-off earlier in the week was followed by unconfirmed reports that the government planned to get state-owned investment companies to funnel offshore funds into the markets to help staunch the losses. The central bank's moves appear to be part of a concerted effort to stabilize the markets and instill greater confidence in the outlook for the

world's second-largest economy. Other news Macy's rejects \$5.8B takeover bid from Arkhouse Management, Brigade Capital Management

Stock market today: Asian stocks gain after Wall St's latest record. Bank of Japan keeps policy lax. Late-year medical costs spike forces Humana to scale back profit expectations for 2023

Central bank Gov. Pan Gongsheng told reporters in Beijing that the deposit reserve requirement would be cut by 0.5 percentage points as of Feb. 5. Pan said that would inject about 1 trillion yuan (\$141 billion) into the economy. As of December,

the reserve requirement ratio was 7.4%. Unlike bank reserves — the cash banks must keep on hand to cover unexpected demand — these reserves are held by the central bank and used mainly as a monetary policy tool. Such changes are usually conveyed in a written notice by the central bank, not at a news conference. Pan said the central bank also plans to issue a policy soon on lending to property developers to help support the industry. China's economy is recovering, he said,

allowing ample room for policy maneuvers. "At present, our country's financial risks are generally controllable, the overall operations of financial institutions are sound, and financial markets are operating smoothly," the government website China.com cited Pan as saying. The economy expanded at a 5.2% annual pace in the October-December quarter, enabling



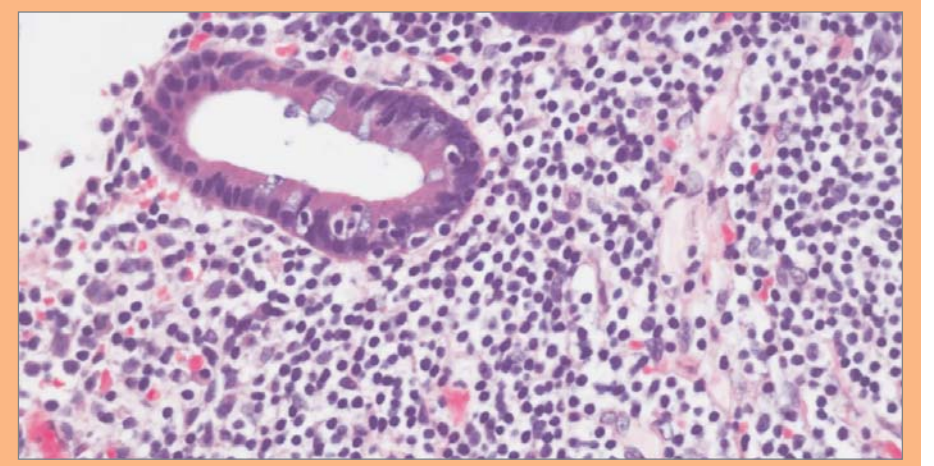
Bangladesh, France to ink climate adaptation deal: Saber Hossain

STAFF REPORTER

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury today said Bangladesh will sign a climate adaptation agreement with France. "The agreement may cover issues such as protection of people from the adverse impacts of climate change, conservation of biodiversity and capacity building of institutions," he told reporters after a meeting with a French delegation. The delegation, led by French Ambassador Marie Masdupuy, met the environment minister at the Bangladesh Secretariat here. Saber hoped that the draft agreement will be finalised within the next month. "Then I think our honorable Prime Minister and the President of France will sign it," he said. During his last visit to Bangladesh, the French President had expressed his interest in signing a climate adaptation agree

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FDA says cancer treatment CAR-T therapy may increase risk of cancer



INTERNATIONAL DESK

The Food and Drug Administration this week told several drugmakers to add a boxed warning — the agency's strongest safety label — to the prescribing information for a type of cancer treatment called CAR-T therapy, saying the treatment itself may increase a person's risk of cancer. Carly Kempler, a spokesperson for the FDA, said that, despite the warning, "the overall benefits of these products continue to outweigh their potential risks." The agency's decision to update the labels was based on reports of rare blood cancers in patients who had previously gotten CAR-T therapy, Kempler said. As of Monday, the agency had received 25 reports of the blood cancers in CAR-T

patients, she said. Bruce Levine, a professor in cancer gene therapy at the University of Pennsylvania, said that in addition to the reports submitted to the FDA, two abstracts published late last year in the journal Blood also cited a potential cancer risk associated with CAR-T therapy, which likely "forced the FDA's hand." CAR-T — or chimeric antigen receptor T cell — therapy uses a patient's own immune cells to treat certain blood cancers, such as leukemia, multiple myeloma and lymphoma. It involves harvesting the immune cells — in this case, T cells — then genetically altering them in a lab to make them target cancer cells, and finally reinfusing them back into the patient. It's proven to be highly effective in hard-to-treat cases,

experts said. In 2022, doctors who had treated two leukemia patients with CAR-T a decade ago said it was fair to say the therapy had cured the patients of the disease. "This has been a game changer when we think about treating lymphoma and other diseases," said Dr. Matthew Frigault, the clinical director of the Massachusetts General Hospital Cellular Immunotherapy Program in Boston. The first CAR-T therapy, Novartis' drug Kymriah, received FDA approval in 2017. Since then, another five have been approved. The makers of five of the drugs — Bristol Myers Squibb, for Abecma and Breyanzi; Gilead Sciences' Kite Pharma, for Yescarta; Johnson & Johnson's Carvykti; and Novartis, for Kymriah — received letters from the

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Election to 233 local government bodies will be held on March 9

STAFF REPORTER

Election to 233 local government bodies, including by-polls to Cumilla City Corporation (CCC) and general election to Mymensingh City Corporation (MCC), will be held on March 9. Election Commission (EC) secretary Jahangir Alam announced the polls schedule at a press conference held at Agargaon Nirbachan Bhaban Yesterday Tuesday. According to the schedule, the last date for submission of nomination papers to the returning officers is on February 13 and nomination papers will be scrutinized on February 15. Appeals against cancellation of candidatures will be settled on February 19 and 20. The last date for withdrawal of candidatures is February 22 and symbol will be distributed on February 23. Voting will take place from 8am to 4pm on March 9. EC secretary said voting of city corporations, pourashavas and district councils will take place in Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). But ballot paper will be used in general elections of union parishads and different vacant posts, he added. Jahangir Alam said

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Economy grows, agriculture falters

Farmers' exodus, declining GDP contribution and food insecurity raise concerns

II

- The recently released Population and Housing Census of 2022 highlights a substantial shift in the country's workforce composition. Over the span of a decade, the percentage of citizens engaged in agriculture has witnessed a notable decrease — dropping from 47.03% in 2011 to 37.91% in 2022.



The hum of industries now drowns out the clinking of hoes — agriculture, once the backbone of the country's economy, is now at a crossroad. While the economy, as a whole, has developed over the years, agriculture's contribution to GDP has shrunk dramatically, leading to job losses and sparking fears of potential food shortages. With more people leaving farming and imports on the rise, concrete steps aimed at revitalising the sector should be a priority, according to industry insiders. As Bangladesh navigates these challenges the agricultural sector is facing, the formulation and implementation of strategic policies, coupled with stakeholders' collaboration, will be crucial for ensuring the sector's sustainability, said economists. The agricultural sector's contribution to the GDP has

gradually declined from 3.54% in FY2016-17 to 2.63% in FY2022-23. In contrast, the industrial and services sectors displayed better growth patterns during the same period. The industrial sector witnessed varying growth rates over the past few fiscal years reaching a peak of 11.69% in FY2019, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) data. However, with growth rates of 11.49%, 9.9% and 8.75% in FY21, FY22 and FY23 respectively, the sector's trajectory prompts a closer examination of its role in the evolving economic landscape. The services sector demonstrated a more stable trajectory, in comparison, registering a growth rate of 6.55% in FY17, 6.58% in FY18 and 6.93% in FY19. The sector's growth has since been steady as it continued to hover

around 6% every fiscal year except for the covid-hit FY20 with 5.77% in FY23. The overall GDP growth of the country remained resilient, standing at 6.24% in FY2022-23. Agricultural exodus Farmers are leaving the agricultural profession, citing reasons including social inequality, financial insecurity, dependence on food imports, and perceived inadequacies in the sector's support measures. This trend raises concerns about a potential future food shortage, experts opined. The number of farmers in Bangladesh has decreased significantly over the past 11 years, declining by 9.13%. Infrastructure development, increased agricultural input prices, and volatility due to import dependence contribute to this decline. The recently released Population and Housing Census of 2022

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Thakurgaon primary and secondary schools closed

Md. Shamsul Alam:

As the temperature in Thakurgaon is likely to drop below 10 degrees, the teaching activities of all primary and secondary level educational institutions of Thakurgaon district have been announced tomorrow on Wednesday and Thursday. Thakurgaon district education officer on Tuesday, January 23. This information was informed in a press release signed by Shahid Akhtar and District Primary Education Officer Khandaker Manchur Rahman. According to the information of weather monitoring office of



Annual sports competition and freshman recruitment held at SM Mokhleshur Rahman School in Melandhar

Md. Ruhul Amin Raju

The 24th annual sports competition, cultural program and freshman recruitment of SM Mokhleshur Rahman Secondary School of Ghosherpara Union of Melandhar Upazila of Jamalpur District was held. Melandhar Upazila Parishad Chairman and

District Awami League Vice President Engineer Md. Kamruzzaman auspiciously inaugurated the annual sports competition and cultural program at SM Mokhleshur Rahman Secondary School ground of Ghosherpara Union of Melandhar Upazila on

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Farmers are working in the field ignoring the cold on a winter morning in Gournadi

Ataur Rahman Chanchal

Barisal in these three rice canals. At one time, Barisal district was called Gornadi Boro paddy planting season is now in different areas of the upazila. Agriculture is predominant in this region. Although vegetables, mustard and maize are cultivated, Boro rice is the only hope as a cash crop. Boro Farmers are preparing beech in the field by clearing the land for cultivation farmer Now started planting seedlings. According to the information of agriculture office in 7 unions and municipal areas of Gournadi upazila Boro paddy is being planted on about 6,500 hectares of land in this season. It can be seen on the



surface, the bank of Gainer Union. It is a busy time for planting boro adjacent to the Dhaka-Barisal highway in the upazila of Barhi

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6 killed in Canada plane crash near remote mine

INTERNATIONAL DESK

A team of investigators has been deployed to look into the accident involving a BAE Jetstream aircraft. A small commuter plane carrying workers to a remote mine in Canada's far north crashed shortly after takeoff on Tuesday, claiming at least six lives. The incident occurred at around 8:50 am local time when the Jetstream twin turboprop airliner operated by Northwestern Air went down just 1.1 kilometers (0.7 miles) from the end of the runway in Fort Smith. One person survived the crash,

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Bajitpur can be transformed into a district through collective efforts: Dr. Ras Bihari Ghosh

NEWS DESK

The world-renowned water scientist and the inventor of the hydrographic project, Professor Dr. Ras Bihari Ghosh's initiative to realize the long 75-year dream of making Bajitpur a district yesterday at Noahata of Bajitpur Upazila. The discussion meeting was held at Ghosh Science and Technology Campus. Charlestown professor Dr. Ras Bihari Ghosh was elected as

Chairperson of Bajitpur District Implementation Committee. In the chairperson's speech, he said that whatever I have achieved today is the credit of the soil and people of Bajitpur. I will consider myself blessed if I can do something for the motherland in exchange of my acquired knowledge and resources without any recognition. Organized action of all surrounding upazilas centered on

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2 UPDF activists killed in Rangamati 'gunfight'

NEWS DESK

Two activists of United People's Democratic Front were killed in a reported gunfight between its two factions at Durchhari village in Rangamati's Naniarchar upazila on Wednesday. The deceased were identified as Rabi Kumar Chakma, 65, and Shanto Chakma alias Bimol, 52. Rohintu Chakma alias Tipon was seriously injured during the gunfight. Angya Marma, Khagrachhari district unit organiser of UPDF Prosit Group, said the three UPDF members came under attack while they were staying in a house at the village. He also said that the injured Rohintu Chakma is still missing. He blamed the UPDF (Democratic) for the attack. The UPDF (Democratic), however, denied any involvement in the incident. Mahalchhari

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Complete ongoing

of her government to transform Bangladesh into a developed, prosperous and smart country by 2041. The prime minister said Bangladesh will start facing the biggest challenge from 2026 after its graduation as a developing nation. She also asked all to leverage the scopes effectively that Bangladesh will get after its graduation. She also reminded all that some opportunities that Bangladesh is currently getting as a least development country will be relinquished to some extent.

"Bangladesh will get some benefits as a least development country till 2029. We have requested to continue the benefits till 2032," she added. The premier asked all concerned to work on way of facing challenges Bangladesh will have after its graduation. "We have to think that how we will face the challenges after Bangladesh's graduation," she said. The head of the government requested the planning commission to undertake plans for the development of Bangladesh as they can materialise the dream of the Father of the Nation by building Bangladesh a poverty and hunger free Sonar Bangla. "We won't have to think lot in taking up development projects. If we go through the Constitution properly, we will get every instruction to run the state," she opined. She asked all concerned to follow the Constitution given by the Father of the Nation soon after the country was liberated. The prime minister thanked the people of Bangladesh as she was reelected as the Prime Minister by the people's mandate. "I am indebted to the people as they voted me to power time and again," she said. Sheikh Hasina said they will start the new journey to accomplish the unfinished tasks of the Father of the Nation and give the countrymen a better and improved life.

Chinese Vice Minister

The Chinese Vice Minister, who visited the Maldives before her arrival in Dhaka, will have a number of meetings during her stay in Dhaka. Confirming the visit, Foreign Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud on Tuesday told reporters that it is normal to see such a visit as Bangladesh maintains friendship with all. "We have excellent relations with all." This is the first visit by any senior Chinese politician after the formation of the new Cabinet led by Hasina. On January 11, Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory message to the premier. President Xi hoped that Bangladesh and China would make joint efforts to further implement the important consensus he reached with Hasina in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August. They had also agreed to enhance political mutual trust, promote traditional friendship, further synergise development strategies, and promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation so as to uplift the China-Bangladesh Strategic Partnership of Cooperation to a new height. On the same day, Chinese Premier of State Council Li Qiang sent a congratulatory message to Sheikh Hasina on her reelection as premier, saying that China and Bangladesh are close neighbours with long-established friendship and development partners of close cooperation. In recent years, Bangladesh and China have deepened mutual trust and achieved fruitful results in Belt and Road cooperation.

Humayun for recycling

International Convention Center (BICC) in the capital, said a press release. State Minister for Commerce Ahsanul Islam (Titu) and Commerce Ministry Additional Secretary Md Monsurul Alam attended the function as special guests while President of the Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BPGMEA) Shamim Ahmed presided over the function. Mentioning that the use of plastic items in daily life is very significant, Humayun said plastic is being used in almost every item like toothbrush to cover of life saving drug. "The plastic industry in Bangladesh has been playing an important role as a linkage industry. It is contributing towards earning of foreign currency and economic growth," he added. The Industries Minister called upon the industrialists and businessmen of this sector to invent newer products and thus marketing those through products diversification to keep pace with the changing market demand. In his speech, Titu called upon businessmen of the plastic sector to produce products combining jute and plastic using modern technology.

BNP suffers

was under discussion for almost two years. The decision was, however, taken in the last working committee meeting (of AL)," Dr Hasan said. AL Presidium Member Advocate Qamrul Islam, Deputy Office Secretary Sayem Khan and Central Working Committee Member Nirmal Chatterjee were present on the occasion, among others.

Israel hits

through the city of Khan Younis, where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians are sheltering after leaving the north - the early focus of the war. On Tuesday, the Israeli military ordered the evacuation of an area that the United Nations humanitarian office said was inhabited by half a million people, opens new tab while also shutting off the road from the city towards the Mediterranean coast. The road was the main escape route for civilians trying to reach Rafah on Gaza's southern edge bordering Egypt - already crammed with more than half the enclave's 2.3 million people. Some people from Khan Younis resorted to dirt roads to try to escape, residents and freelance reporters leaving the area said. Residents reported fierce gunbattles in the west of the city.

First Bangladeshi

Mental Health and Autism, and has been part of WHO's Expert Advisory Panel on Mental Health since 2014. Her commitment to autism awareness led to her designation as Goodwill Ambassador for Autism in WHO South-East Asia in 2017, a role in which she co-authored the WHO South-East Asia Regional Strategy on Autism Spectrum Disorder. Her contributions extend beyond the WHO. Saima is an Associate Fellow at the Global Health Program at Chatham House, UK;

Chairperson of the National Advisory Committee on Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders (NDDs) in Dhaka, Bangladesh; and Chairperson of the Shuchona Foundation. Recognition for her work has been widespread.

Russian plane

Gladkov said that an unspecified "incident" had occurred in the region's Korochovsky district, northeast of Belgorod city, and that he was going to inspect the site. He said investigators and emergency workers were already on the scene.

China cuts bank

the government to attain its target of about 5% annual growth for 2023. But the recovery remains uneven, and most forecasts say the economy will grow more slowly in 2024. Chinese leaders have been talking up the economy in an all-out effort to counter such expectations. Initial reactions were cautious. Mark Williams of Capital Economics said the latest moves would "provide only a small boost for China's economy." "Meaningful improvements in household or corporate borrowing would require substantial rate cuts or a significant change in economic sentiment. Neither seems likely in the near future," he said in a commentary. The slow pace of the recovery after China dropped stringent anti-virus precautions in late 2022 has added to gloom over a crisis in the once-booming property market as dozens of developers defaulted on loans after the government cracked down on excessive borrowing a few years ago. That has left many Chinese families who had invested their life savings in unbuil homes in limbo, unsure if the developers would deliver those apartments. There have been some signs of improvement: Last week, the government resumed its reporting on the rate of unemployment among young people, which stood at a record 21.3% in June. According to a revised methodology, the latest youth unemployment rate was 15%. Overall unemployment stood at 5.1%.

Many youths also were left without work after the government cracked down on technology companies, which tended to hire younger workers. More recently, moves to impose more controls on online gaming spurred massive sell-offs of game company shares, leading the authorities to apparently backpedal on that plan.

Bangladesh, France

ment between France and Bangladesh, the environment minister said. Responding to a question, he said: "We want to issue an alert if air pollution goes to a bad level. To tell the public that the air quality we have today is a serious health hazard. So, if they do not have urgent work, they should not go out of the house." Saber said illegal brick kilns around Dhaka are being demolished to check air pollution. "Tomorrow, we will announce a 100-day programme. There will be details on these matters." French envoy Marie Masdupuy said France's partnership with Bangladesh is deep and strong, while the two countries will work together on climate change, environmental issues and implementation of national climate plan. Guillaume Audren de Kerdel, First Counselor and Deputy Head of Mission of the French Embassy in Dhaka; Julien Deur, Economical Adviser, French Embassy, Dhaka; Cecilia Cortese, Deputy to the AFD Country Director in Bangladesh, AFD; and David Thiery, Personal Secretary to the French Ambassador, Dhaka; were present, among others.

Election to 233 local

Regional election officials will act as returning office for Mymensingh and Cumilla city corporation polls.

Bajitpur can

Bajitpur will play a role in realizing our much desired dream. Other speakers in the discussion meeting said that the rationality of converting Bajitpur into a district was accepted by all, but due to various oppositions, it did not see the light of day in the end. Therefore, instead of stopping at opposition, it should be turned into strength and move forward at breakneck speed. They said that the task of implementing Bajitpur district is difficult but it is not impossible at all. Desired results can be obtained only if properly presented in collective initiative according to person, place, time. In this case, along with the public representatives, the youth, youth and women of the area should be involved more. At the end of the discussion meeting, Dr. Anjana Rani Saha, a distressed woman of the area. Adviser of Bajitpur Upazila Awami League Advocate Shailshwar Das presented a sewing machine by Ras Bihari Ghosh. Veteran writer and Professor Md. Wahiduzzaman moderated the discussion. Senior Professor Indrajit Das, Supreme Court Lawyer Rafiqul Islam Milton, Revolutionary Workers Party Kishoreganj District General Secretary Moklesur Rahman, Bajitpur Government College Former Principal Continel Das, Executive Director, FHP, Krishna Chandra Saha, Ward Councilor Hasina Parveen Hussey, Manager (HRD) FHP, Polly Rani Das, Publisher and Editor of Bhatir Satkahan Md Zahirul Islam, Journalist Hossain Mahubub Kamal, Businessman Utpal Kumar Das, (Retd) Teacher and Poet SM Shamsul Haque, journalist

Khalilur Rahman, teacher and cultural personality Nasima Rahman, advocate Kazi Manjurul Haque Rokan, expatriate Md Morshed, social activist Rubel Sardar and RB Ghosh science and technology teacher Shubham Chandra Das, Hafsa Jahan Priya and Parvez Hasan.

Economy grows,

highlights a substantial shift in the country's workforce composition. Over the span of a decade, the percentage of citizens engaged in agriculture has witnessed a notable decrease - dropping from 47.03% in 2011 to 37.91% in 2022. In contrast, both the industrial and service sectors have experienced a significant uptick in their workforce. The industrial sector's share increased from 14.92% in 2011 to 18.40% in 2022, indicating a growing presence in the nation's economic landscape.

Thakurgaon primary

Panchagarh and Rangpur district, neighboring Thakurgaon district, the mild cold current will continue in Thakurgaon district for the next two days i.e. January 24 and 25 and the temperature will be below 10 degrees Celsius. Therefore, teaching activities will be closed in all primary and secondary level educational institutions of Thakurgaon district tomorrow Wednesday and the next day Thursday and the teachers will attend the institutions and continue other activities. Thakurgaon District Education Officer and Md. Shahid Akhtar and District Primary Education Officer Khandaker Manzur Rahman said that teaching will continue in the school as usual from next Sunday. However, there is a possibility that the temperature will drop below 10 degrees in the weather forecast and necessary measures will be taken. Deputy Commissioner of Thakurgaon, Mahbubur Rahman said, "For the weather to be below 10 degrees, holiday has been announced for two days in all the primary and secondary level educational institutions of Thakurgaon district considering the students."

Annual sports

Wednesday morning, Md. Kamruzzaman BPM, the journalist-friendly humanitarian police superintendent of Jamalpur district, was present as the chief guest. Barrister SM Saifullah Rahman, president of the school's managing committee, presided over the event. Officer-in-charge of Melandah Police Station Raju Ahmed, Headmaster of SM Mokhlesur Rahman Secondary School, Md. Masudur Rahman Masud, members of the school's managing committee, teachers/students/students were present as special guests. At the beginning of the program, the managing committee and teaching staff of the school along with the principal of the institution felicitated the guests along with the chief guest. Later the guests hoisted the national flag.

Farmers are

seedlings in the agricultural land ignoring the severe winter in various fields of the area Farmers are crossing. From morning to afternoon in winter, plowing, pulling ladders are going on in the field. Application of fertilizers, construction of land aisles, water irrigation, harvesting and planting of seedlings from the seed bed are in progress. Along with men, women workers also went to the field to plant paddy. Busy farmers and laborers Eating lunch in the field. Such a charming scene is now in the field of Gaurdani Upazila. Upazila farmer Zillur Rahman said that 2 bighas have been planted out of my 8 bighas of land. Planting of early variety Iri-Boro rice is going on in the rest of the land except mustard land. Mustard is in the house Boro paddy planting will start in full swing after harvesting, per bigha if the weather is good About 25 maunds of paddy will be available in the land. Gouradani Upazila Agriculture Office sources informed that 6 and a half thousand hectares of land are Boro paddy Cultivation targets are set. Planting work has been going on for a few days. So far about 1 Saplings have been planted in thousands of hectares of land. Bridhan-28,29 is also common in this area Bangabandhu 100 varieties of rice including improved 50, 58, 64, 81, 84, 89, 92, 96 are being cultivated. Upazila Agriculture Officer Md. Sekender Sheikh said, Boro rice seedlings in the current season Planting has started. As the price of paddy is good, farmers are profiting by cultivating boro paddy at present.

6 killed in Canada

reported AFP citing a person aware of the crash probe details. However, the survivor's condition remains undisclosed at the time of writing. Northwestern Air revealed that the ill-fated flight was a charter carrying workers to a mine. All flights departing from Fort Smith have been grounded until Wednesday as authorities begin their investigations. Canada's Transportation Safety Board has deployed a team to scrutinise the accident. R.J. Simpson, Premier of the Northwest Territories, expressed his condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the crash. "It is with a heavy heart that I express my deepest condolences to the families, friends, and loved ones of those who were aboard the Northwestern Air flight that crashed outside of Fort Smith today," Simpson said. "The impact of this incident is felt across the territory. The people we lost were not just passengers on a flight; they were neighbours, colleagues, friends, and loved ones. Their stories and contributions to our communities will not be forgotten," he added.

2 UPDF activists

Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Nasir Uddin said police are yet to reach the spot as the area is remote. Details will be known when they return from there.

FDA says

FDA, stating that they must submit proposed label changes in the next 30 days to note that, in rare cases, CAR-T therapy can increase the risk of rare blood cancers. (Kite Pharma did not receive a letter about the sixth CAR-T drug, Tecartus.) If the drugmakers disagree, they can instead submit a rebuttal explaining why a change isn't needed.

In a statement to NBC News, a spokesperson for Novartis said the company has not found "sufficient evidence" to support a link between cancer and its treatment, which has been used in more than 10,000 patients. However, the spokesperson said, the company will work with the FDA to update its label "appropriately." Spokespersons for Johnson & Johnson and Gilead Sciences also said the drugmakers would work with the agency to update their labels. A spokesperson for Bristol Myers Squibb said the company is evaluating "next steps" following the FDA's notice, although it has not seen any cancer cases associated with its treatment. "Patient safety is our top priority," the spokesperson said.

How might CAR-T therapy cause cancer? Still, there's the question of how CAR-T could cause cancer - if it does at all. "We actually don't know whether this is casual, meaning, we don't know for a fact that the CAR-T cells in the tumor have led to this," said Frigault, of Mass General. CAR-T treatments are still relatively new: Frigault noted that the FDA has required that the makers of the products conduct 15-year follow-up studies to assess the potential risk of secondary cancers following treatment. (Secondary cancers are cancers that can arise from treatment.) The FDA "is not saying that every single one of the cases they've reported has clearly shown CAR-T has led to this," he said, "but more that there may be an association." "This is what the FDA does. They look for a signal," he added. If CAR-T does cause cancer, the risk is likely very small, said Dr. Hemant Murthy.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Office of Executive Engineer, Education Engineering Department, Panchagarh. e-Tender Notice No: 12/XEN/EE/PAN/2023-2024/NF SHED-05 Lots. Date: 24.01.2024. e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of stated below.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Local Government Engineering Department, Office of the Upazila Engineer, Ullapara, Sirajgonj. Memo No: 46.02.894.000.007.004.23.77. e-Tender Notice Invitation for Tender No: 06/2023-24. The following e-Tender are being invited in the National e-Gp system Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) in LTM method Under Ullapara, Sirajgonj.

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh, Local Government Engineering Department, Office of the Executive Engineer, District: Rajshahi. www.lged.gov.bd. e-Tender Notice No: 56/2023-24 (3rd Call). e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the below Package.

Table with 6 columns: SI No., Tender Packages No. & Tender ID No., Description of Works, Tender Documents Last Selling Date & Time, Tender Closing & Opening Date & Time, Tender Method.

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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After two Covid-blighted Olympics, a successful Paris Games could revive the Olympic brand, a former IOC executive believes — AFP

Pressure on Paris Games 'to Kickstart New Olympic Golden Era'

SPORTS DESK

The Paris Games has the chance to "kickstart a resurgence of the Olympic brand" following the last two Covid-affected editions and the doping-blighted 2014 Sochi Winter Games, former IOC marketing executive Terrence Burns has told AFP.

With just six months to go to the opening ceremony in the French capital, organizers face plenty of hurdles if they are to seize this opportunity.

Chief among them are security concerns over the revolutionary opening ceremony and a first ever digital ticketing system. Displaying typical French artistic flair, the ceremony will take place on the river Seine as opposed to in a stadium.

Burns, who since leaving the IOC has played a key role in five successful Olympic bid city campaigns, admits "the world has changed dramatically" since the ceremony plan was given the thumbs-up. "I know Etienne (Thobois, director general of the organizing committee) and Tony (Estanguet, head of the organizing committee) and I am sure that they realize that this issue, security, can make or break their Games depending on the outcome," Burns

told AFP. "They are serious and prudent." Burns says Paris has a huge opportunity in hosting the July 26-August 11 showpiece. "I think Paris 24 realizes how important these Games are to the (Olympic) movement and to the world," he said.

He said Paris would be the first Games since London in 2012 "to reach any sense of comparative opportunity". Tokyo 2020 and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics were excellent but "their global impact was muted beyond their own borders," due to the strict Covid protocols in place, he said.

Rio in 2016, meanwhile, "was beset by a host of organizational problems which led to unending negative reportage" and Sochi "struggled with doping" and a controversy over the respect of the LGBTQ community in Russia.

"Never mundane" Thus the onus falls on Paris to reboot the image of the Games, which represents a formidable challenge. "The fervent hope is that Paris 24 will shine brilliantly and help kickstart a resurgence of the Olympic brand and Games around the world," Burns told AFP. "Beautiful, wonderful things that inspire us are usually rare and difficult to achieve; if they were easy, they would be mundane."

"The Games are never mundane." Ticketing will be a crucial test of whether Paris can host a successful Games. The French organizers will want to avoid a repeat of the debacle at the 2022 Champions League final which left French officials red-faced having pointed the finger at Liverpool fans when in fact the police were to blame.

World Athletics President Sebastian Coe is unhappy about the ticket prices but for Michael Payne, the IOC's former head of marketing, the nerves may be jangling more over the all-new system. "This time ticketing will be digital — a first," the 65-year-old Irishman told AFP. "I hope that they have tested, and retested the systems, with full loading, as if for any reason the system goes down, or it cannot take the load, then a massive problem is on hand." Coe compared the prices unfavorably to those of the 2012 London Olympics which he organized. However, his view is not shared by British Olympic Association chair Hugh Robertson, who was the government minister responsible for delivering the London Games.

"I think above all it's important to have tickets available at a range of price points so that the Games can

remain both accessible and sustainable for years to come," Robertson told AFP. "The organizing committee have done well to strike a balance -- for Paris, general ticket prices begin at 24 euros (\$26) and almost half are 50 euros or less -- and they've already sold over seven million of them." The war in Ukraine has inevitably cast a shadow over Paris, but Burns, Payne and Robertson agreed that if Ukraine boycott the Games in protest at the presence of even a limited number of Russian competitors, it would only hurt the athletes. "I think it would be a great shame -- (Ukraine) can make a far bigger statement by competing than by not being there," said Payne, who in two decades at the IOC was credited with overhauling its brand and finances through sponsorship. Burns thinks the IOC criteria that Russians must meet -- no team sports, no athletes with military or security connections and no athlete who has supported the war -- could make Ukraine's threat superfluous. "Given the Russian NOC and government has already stated it will not support an athlete that 'meets' the IOC criteria for participation, this (Ukraine boycott) may indeed be a moot point," he said.

Maturing Chelsea's semi-final show of strength leaves one key question

SPORTS DESK

After months of unpredictability, Chelsea are now a mere 90 minutes from what they know best. Mauricio Pochettino has the chance to win a first trophy of this ownership, and his own first trophy in England, after the easiest of 6-1 wins over Middlesbrough. Chelsea are through to the Carabao Cup final for the third time in six

Poor Middlesbrough endured a night they'll want to instantly forget, when they had themselves been just 90 minutes from an occasion to remember. They buckled under the force of Chelsea's attacking. That phrase should be put in some context, and it's not like many will be building up a mere Carabao Cup final appearance as a new dawn. Chelsea still probably have to play

Rarely will Pochettino's side have a victory as easy as this. At a time when he is trying to instil a system -- and he was notably frustrated at the slow speed of their play in the first half -- it was Michael Carrick's adherence to his own approach that just served up a series of goals to Chelsea. Middlesbrough kept trying to play it out from the back and kept giving it to Pochettino's attack. There were times when there was so much space they just strolled through. For the first goal, that rendered this a formality, the returned and restored Ben Chilwell just seemed to waltz through Middlesbrough's backline. Raheem Sterling squared and Jonny Howson unfortunately put the ball into his own net trying to challenge Armando Broja. It only took until the 15th minute for Chelsea to complete their objective for the evening, which was making it 2-1 on aggregate. Enzo Fernandez scored after Chelsea again walked through. It was already at the point with Carrick where you'd be wondering if even Ange Postecoglou would have said this puritanical commitment to playing out from the back was a bit much, mate. There shouldn't be much scolding of Middlesbrough, though. This is the kind of result that really should be happening given the financial gap between Premier League and Championship, something that has become such a live issue with the absence of a deal between the

competitions and the forthcoming bill on football governance. What matters is how Carrick perseveres in the Championship, especially given it was this football that got them further than 17 other Premier League clubs. They also got a reward their fans certainly deserved for the constant singing. Morgan Rogers, who Aston Villa have been chasing all window, ended up scoring late on. It was already 6-1 by that point. Axel Disasi had scored maybe the goal of the game through a sweeping passing move that saw the defender surge up the pitch to sweep the ball in. Cole Palmer then twice used the Middlesbrough area as his own little stage, conjuring some magic. By the time of Noni Madueke's goal, Middlesbrough looked like they had just been exhausted by the occasion. That only made Rogers's goal all the more creditable. As regards how impressive this was for Chelsea, that will depend on what comes next. It's obviously great to enjoy a 6-1 win and it was all about getting to a final. Both are great for confidence anyway, but they're particular psychological boosts given how this season has gone. The question is really whether enjoying a win like this fosters the assurance in Pochettino's approach that they more consistently start to recreate it in more demanding games. There was almost a sense here they got to play it out at a relatively slow pace.



seasons, even if the previous ones feel like a different lifetime. The worries of the first leg of this tie meanwhile feel like a different world. This match against Middlesbrough had been billed as the sort of awkward tie that could start to cause Pochettino's time to start spiralling, especially with how they'd lost the first leg 1-0. It ended up a show of strength.

Liverpool, although even Fulham would be, again, awkward opponents. There was then the manner they won this. In a game characterised by youth, Chelsea's exuberance won out against Middlesbrough's naivety. The different cost of that youth helped. There is a chasm between the clubs in the accounts, and it led to numerous gaps on the pitch.

Ukrainian Teen Criticized for Shaking Russian Player's Hand at Australian Open

SPORTS DESK

Top Ukrainian junior Yelyzaveta Kotliar said she was "deeply sorry" after her tennis federation criticized the 16-year-old for shaking the hand of a Russian opponent at the Australian Open. Kotliar came under scrutiny in the opening Grand Slam of the year when she congratulated Vlada Mincheva after being beaten in the first round of the girls' tournament. The handshake defied an unwritten rule among her fellow Ukrainians to not congratulate their Russian and Belarusian opponents as war rages in their homeland.

The Ukraine Tennis Federation called it an "unpleasant incident", reiterating its position that "Ukrainian tennis players not hold handshakes with representatives of aggressor countries". "Our

calling Kotliar's action "a mistake". Kotliar's father, Konstantin Kotliar, said his daughter was not thinking clearly in a pressure situation. "She is only 16 years old and has no real experience of appearing in major competitions like Grand Slam tournaments, the pinnacle of both professional and youth tennis," he said in statement on her behalf. "She performed a post-match ritual, shook the hand of the opponent, did not understand that behind the net was a representative of the country who attacked our homeland. "It was definitely a mistake that she is deeply sorry (for) and assures that she will never allow anything like this again."

Dayana Yastremska defended Kotliar when asked about the issue after she beat

know, Ukrainians, we have our position," said the 23-year-old, who came through qualifying in Melbourne. "We are not shaking hands. But I think she's still a little bit young, not so experienced. It can happen with everyone, you know. "I cannot judge her because I don't know what was in her head. So did she make this on purpose or not on purpose? I don't know. But I'm sure that she stands by Ukraine, and I'm sure that she just got too emotional and confused." Earlier in the tournament, Ukraine's Lesia Tsurenko, the 28th seed in the women's main draw, said the handshake snub had become part of the players' protest against Russia. "This is another reminder that there is a war in my country. If you can just imagine (being) in my place or any other Ukrainian you would not



leading players have been informed about this and support this position," it added in a statement,

unseeded Czech Linda Noskova on Wednesday to reach the women's main draw semi-finals. "You

have this question," she said. "This is the right thing to do and I do this for Ukraine."

New T20 captain for Australia in Windies T20 series

SPORTS DESK

Mitchell Marsh will captain Australia for their Twenty20 series against the West Indies with regular skipper Pat Cummins being rested, the country's cricket board

managed to prepare for Australia's tour to New Zealand, which begins on Feb. 21, CA added. "We see these matches as an opportunity to narrow down on those who may be part of the T20 World Cup squad later this year," chair

block of six games to provide opportunity to players in some different roles and positions. We will then be keeping a close eye on the Indian Premier League before choosing a World Cup squad."



(CA) said on Wednesday. Australia are hosting West Indies for three T20s between Feb. 9-13 as part of their preparations for the T20 World Cup, which will be held in the Caribbean and U.S. in June. Cummins and Mitchell Starc are being

of selectors George Bailey said in a statement. "There are a further three T20 internationals in New Zealand following this West Indies series where we will continue to build towards the T20 World Cup as required. "It is likely we will use the

AUSTRALIA SQUAD: Mitchell Marsh (C), Sean Abbott, Jason Behrendorff, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Matt Short, Marcus Stoinis, Matthew Wade, David Warner and Adam Zampa.

Rohit hopes England's Bashir visa row resolved 'quickly'

SPORTS DESK

India skipper Rohit Sharma said Wednesday he feels for England's Shoaib Bashir after the uncapped spinner was forced to return home to resolve visa issues ahead of a five-Test series. Britain-born Bashir, a 20-year-old of Pakistani heritage, was unable to join the rest of the squad flying to India from a training camp in Abu Dhabi ahead of the opener in Hyderabad following a delay in his visa application. "I feel for him honestly," Rohit told reporters in Hyderabad on the eve of the opening match starting Thursday. "Unfortunately I don't sit in the visa office to give you more details," he added. "But I hope he can make it here quickly and enjoy our country and play some cricket as well." The England and Wales Cricket Board had tried to resolve the issue with their Indian counterpart, BCCI, but the decision appeared to be out

of their hands. There was no immediate response from India's foreign ministry. It was unlikely that Bashir would have made his Test debut on Thursday, but England captain Ben Stokes on Tuesday still described the situation as "frustrating". England hope the Somerset off-spinner will be able to return to India over the weekend. India and neighbouring Pakistan are arch-rivals, both on and off the field. A long-standing diplomatic stand-off between the two nuclear-armed nations has affected sporting ties, with India refusing to tour Pakistan or to play ICC events there. Other cricketers of Pakistani descent have previously had trouble in gaining entry to India, with batsman Usman Khawaja late in joining Australia's tour of the country last year. nThe Pakistan cricket team also faced a delay in obtaining visas ahead of last year's ODI World Cup in India.