

## Khaleda returns from Saudi Arabia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia returned home from Saudi Arabia yesterday after performing Umrah.

Khaleda went to Saudi Arabia on July 26 at the invitation of the Saudi government.

During her visit, Khaleda addressed several iftar parties of local BNP men in Saudi Arabia where she urged them to continue their movement against the Bangladesh government from where they are.

She also briefly met with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

A regular flight of Emirates airlines carrying Khaleda and her entourage landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 6:00pm, press secretary of the BNP chairperson Maruf Kamal Khan Sohel told The Daily Star.

Khaleda's younger brother Shamim Eskander and his wife and BNP leader Mosharraf Hossain, among others, accompanied Khaleda to Saudi Arabia.



The injured workers of the Rana Plaza garment factories and relatives of the missing and deceased victims stage a sit-in in front of the collapsed building in Savar from 3:00pm to 8:00pm yesterday as part of their continuous demonstration for payment of salaries from May, bonus, compensation and rehabilitation before Eid-ul-Fitr.

PHOTO: STAR

## Govt giving false info on billboards: MK Anwar

Hanif says ruling party wants to show BNP its successes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Senior BNP leader MK Anwar yesterday accused the government of giving false and misleading information on the billboards advertising the successes of the Awami League-led administration.

Separately, AL joint general secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said the billboard campaign was launched to show the BNP leaders the government's development activities. Hanif, also a special assistant of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, urged the BNP to launch a similar campaign if it did have any success while in power.

Addressing a discussion at the capital's Jatiya Press Club, organised by pro-BNP Swadhinata Forum, Anwar claimed that the information about the development activities were only partially true.

"There were many issues on the billboards, but there was no information about the price hike of the essentials on those," Anwar told the discussion titled "Stop the smear campaign and conspiracy against BNP senior vice chairman Tarique Rahman."

He also claimed that the government had spent Tk 60 crore for the billboards and questioned the source of the money. He, however, did not disclose how he came across this information.

Speaking at a discussion at party's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue, the AL leader, Hanif, said the BNP had been spreading propaganda that the government did not carry out development activities. "That's why we are showing them the gov-

ernment's development activities." He said the AL would win the next polls if it could properly project its successes.

In response to BNP's threat to wage a one-point agitation after Eid to topple the government, Hanif said any anarchy would be handled with an iron hand.

Meanwhile, BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir and BNP standing committee member Moyeen Khan again threatened that the opposition alliance would wage the "oust-government" movement after Eid if the government did not agree to restore the caretaker government system.

"If the government comes to its senses, it will consider the demand of the caretaker government. Otherwise, they will have to face the movement after Eid," Fakhru told reporters after paying tributes to BNP founder and former president Ziaur Rahman at his grave in the capital on the occasion of the 24th founding anniversary of pro-BNP Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB).

At an iftar programme of Bangladesh Labour Party (BLP) at a city hotel, Moyeen Khan said the opposition alliance had finalised its post-Eid one-point programme.

BLP President Mostafizur Rahman Iran said all the members of the BNP-led 18-party alliance would have to forge an "iron-like unity" to wage the one-point movement.

Pointing to the High Court declaring Jamaat-e-Islami's registration with the Election Commission illegal, BLP Secretary General Hamdullah Al Mehedi said the court could not meddle in political affairs. "Political issues should be resolved politically," he said.

## Eid brings no joy for Rana Plaza victims, families

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

When most people around him are preparing to celebrate the Eid festival, Niru Sardar, a garment worker who lost the left eye in the Rana Plaza collapse, is fighting a battle for survival.

The 30-year-old sewing machine operator sold off a piece of land at his village home in Rajbari sadar upazila and spent the money for treatment for his wounded eye, nose, and head.

His four-member family is now totally dependent on charities for housing and food, as he has almost lost the capacity to work and needs more treatment, including a nose surgery.

With the hope to get some financial assistance, Niru came to Garment Workers' Trade Union Centre in Genda, near Savar, where some donations arrived for the victims yesterday.

A total of Tk 2,000 is all he got there. Niru told The Daily Star that he did not receive any aid either from the government or the garment factory owners association, BGMEA, other than Tk 15,000 as his salaries.

Asked about his Eid plan, Niru said, "I cannot manage milk and barley for my four-month-old daughter. What will Eid mean to me?"

The baby was born four days before the nine-storey Rana Plaza in Savar crumbled on April 24, killing 1,132 people and leaving hundreds of others, including Niru, maimed or injured.

Six hours after he was pulled out alive from the rubble, Niru was sent to a local clinic before being shifted to the National Institute of Eye Science



Niru Sardar, 30, who lost an eye in the Rana Plaza disaster.

PHOTO: STAR

and Hospital at the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

He had been treated there for 51 days and then returned to his home in Savar.

"I didn't get any financial help from anyone. I was at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, and none visited me there or extended any help. But I have heard that many people helped the victims," Niru said.

The story of Sakina, another garment worker at Rana Plaza, is no different, if not worse.

The 30-year-old had bought clothes and foods

for her family during the Eid festival for the last few years. After the Rana Plaza disaster, even her body vanished.

"What Eid will we celebrate? With whom? My daughter will never come back," wailed her mother Hanufa Begum before the Rana Plaza site where hundreds of victims and their relatives have been demonstrating for arrears, bonus, compensation and rehabilitation, blocking the Dhaka-Aricha highway for the last three days.

"She is no more. Even I can't see her body," a tearful Hanufa told The Daily Star. There are many more like Hanufa who are yet to receive any aid because bodies of many victims were not identified though over three months have passed since the collapse.

Mannan Kochi, vice-president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said the government was working to identify the victims through DNA tests, and the matter of compensation for families of the missing would come after that.

Official estimates say around 300 victims remain unidentified, while as per claims of the families of the victims, the number of the missing stands at 329.

According to rescue officials, 3,553 people had been trapped in the debris of Rana Plaza which housed several garment units. Of them, 2,438 people were pulled out alive. In later days, some survivors succumbed to their injuries, raising the death toll to 1,132 so far. Among the deceased, around 300 were buried unidentified.



Vagrants implore travellers for money on Abdul Gani Road in the capital yesterday. The city sees a surge of these destitute people ahead of every Eid. Beggars come to Dhaka from across the country on these occasions with the hope of a good earning.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Suranjit urges AL, BNP to sit for talks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Minister without portfolio Suranjit Sengupta yesterday urged the two main political parties of the country to sit for dialogues and avoid violence before the upcoming parliamentary polls.

He said the national election is quickly approaching and the parties are running out of time to hold dialogues.

"Problems that rise due to political disputes should be solved through political activities," Suranjit Sengupta said at a discussion commemorating the recently deceased Belal Mohammad, a freedom fighter and an organiser of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote organised the event in the capital's Central Public Library. Suranjit said the upcoming parliamentary polls would be held according to the constitution.

Cultural personalities Hasan Imam and Kamal Lohani, among others, spoke at the discussion.

## Youth held with arms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Railway police yesterday arrested a passenger with one pistol and two bullets in his possession at Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital.

Police searched the body of Mohammad Sagar, 22, of Chatkhil in Noakhali who travelled by a train from Rajshahi and found the arms at 5:30am.

Sagar told police that a man gave him the arms at Rajshahi asking to sell it to another person in the rail platform, said Abdul Majid, officer-in-charge (OC) of Dhaka Railway Police Station.

A case was filed against him.

## Biman air-hostess caught with illegal gold bars released

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Biman Bangladesh Airlines air-hostess was released yesterday even after customs officials seized five undeclared gold bars, weighing around 50 tolas and priced around Tk 25 lakh, from her possession.

Customs officials searched Shabiha Afroz Kumu, arriving from Dubai, at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 9:40am and found four of the bars attached to her body and another inside her luggage, said one anonymity-seeking official.

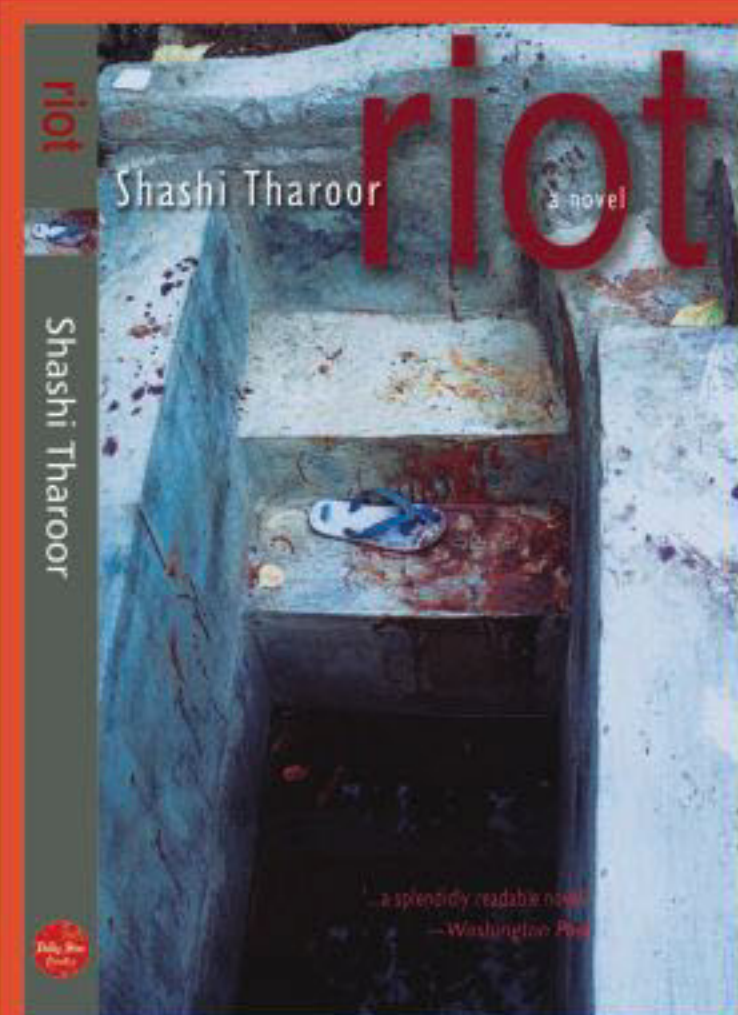
The Airport Police Station officer-in-charge said he was not informed of the incident.

The airport customs Additional Commissioner Wahidul Alam said they had legally released the accused, since gold was not a contraband item and the amount was "not that much". Biman Director (customer service) AM Mosaddique Ahmed said they would take departmental action against the staff.



### Daily Star Books

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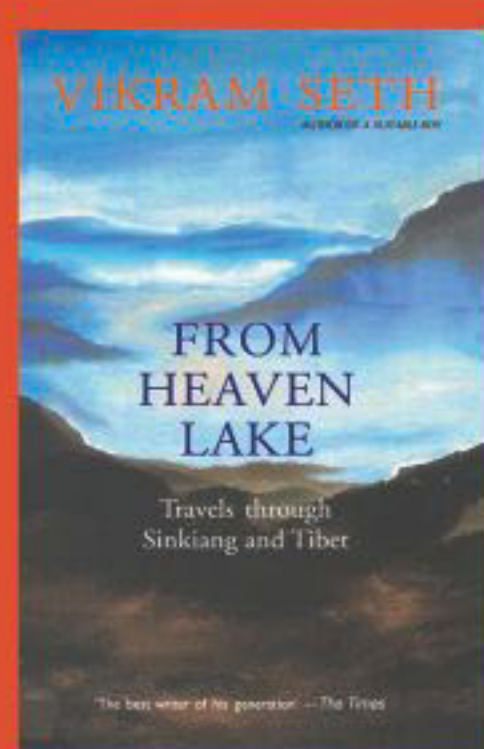


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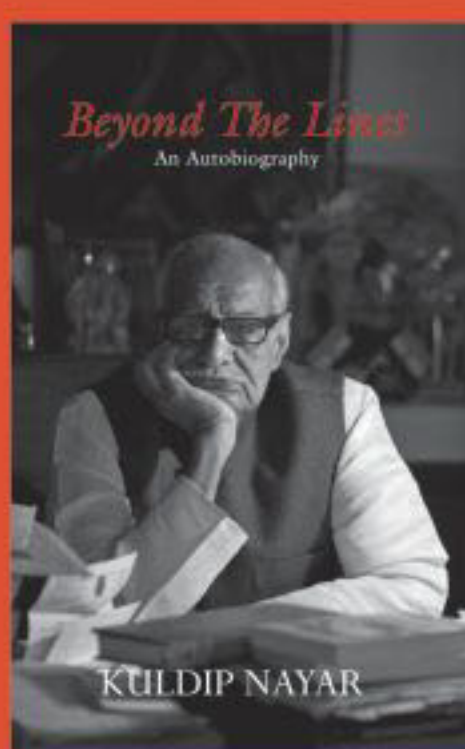
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