



Women who work as house helps in Banasree in the capital abstain from work yesterday and gather to demand justice for Laily Begum, who they claimed was murdered on Friday.

PHOTO: SHAHEEN MOLLAH

## Muhith cops the flak

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the government under article 112 of the constitution.  
However, Law Minister Anisul Huq has refrained from making any comment on the verdict since the apex court released the full text of the judgment on Tuesday.  
The SC scrapped the constitutional amendment that restored parliament's power to remove apex court judges on grounds of misconduct or incapacity.  
The Jatiya Sangshad had passed the amendment in September 2014. It abolished the decades-old Supreme Judicial Council, led by the chief justice.  
Expressing serious resentment over the verdict, Muhith on Friday said they would amend the charter again to re-empower parliament to remove SC judges.  
"Yes, we'll pass the constitutional [16th] amendment in parliament again and we'll do it continuously. Let's see how far the judiciary goes. Because I think the judiciary's position is untenable. Will they interfere with people's representatives? We appoint them as judges," he told reporters after attending a programme in Sylhet.  
Khasru, who had been the law minister from 1996-2001, said it was Muhith's "personal remark".  
He said they were aggrieved and hurt by some remarks made by the apex court.  
"The political remarks made by the chief justice in the 16th amendment verdict are not at all relevant to the

subject matter of the case. We are injured, hurt and aggrieved."  
"He is not only the chief justice of the Supreme Court, but also of entire Bangladesh. He is an institution. We didn't expect such an observation from him," said Khasru, also an AL presidium member and chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Law Ministry.  
About passing of the 16th constitutional amendment again, Shafique said, "Practically it is not possible. He [Muhith] might have made the comment having been driven by emotion. It's not a proper remark."  
Shafique, who served as law minister from 2009-2014, said the only option before the government now was to file a petition with the Appellate Division seeking review of the verdict.  
If the government can prove any error in the judgment, the apex court will correct it, he added. "Otherwise, the government would have no other option but to implement the verdict."  
BNP leader Moudud Ahmed said, "A very senior cabinet member has said they will pass the 16th amendment time and again. This is just horrifying."  
"The remark of a senior minister has made it clear that the Awami League government doesn't believe in the independence of the judiciary. It also doesn't believe in the rule of law," he told a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club.  
He called upon the government not to enter into a confrontation with the judiciary. "I urge the government to

avoid conflicts with the judiciary. It would be a losing contest for them."  
Speaking at another programme at the same venue, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said some quarters were very happy with the SC verdict.  
"Some quarters are very happy with the scrapping of the 16th constitutional amendment. They feel happy in this way. They are seeing a ray of hope. This ray of hope will fade out soon."  
Contacted, AL Law Affairs Secretary SM Rezaul Karim said he would not make any comment as his party was yet to decide its stance on the verdict.  
Meanwhile, Manzill Murshid, counsel for nine lawyers who had filed the writ petition in November 2014 challenging the 16th amendment, yesterday said the finance minister made the remark as he has "no idea about the constitution".  
"His remark is pointless and against the constitution and court. The government won't be able to make any new law in this regard. There is nothing in this comment to lay emphasis on," he told reporters at a Sylhet court.  
Asked if the court's attention would be drawn to Muhith's alleged contemptuous remark, he said no contempt petition would be filed against him considering his age.  
Addressing a press conference at the party's Nayapaltna central office, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed said the finance minister was making "fatuous remarks out of fear that the government would lose power".

## US to join climate talks

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increase fifty-fold from an estimated 3,000 per year recently to 152,000 by the end of this century - if global warming is not reined in.  
In Washington, the State Department said in a statement US was still committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and engaging with the international community on combating climate change.  
"We will continue to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions through innovation and technology breakthroughs, and work with other countries to help them access and use fossil fuels more cleanly and efficiently and deploy renewable and other clean energy sources," said the statement.  
It added: "The United States will continue to participate in international climate change negotiations and meetings... to protect US interests and ensure all future policy options remain open to the administration."  
"Such participation will include ongoing negotiations related to guidance for implementing the Paris Agreement."  
Trump sparked widespread international criticism when he announced on June 1 that he had decided to pull the world's largest economy out of the painstakingly-negotiated accord, in line with this pledge to voters in last year's election.  
While Trump said he was open to a renegotiation of the pact, the suggestion was swiftly shot down by fellow world leaders who said it was non-negotiable.  
Speaking on a visit to Paris last month, Trump again raised the prospect of a change in policy by saying "something could happen" regarding US participation in the accord but gave no details.  
Friday's statement reiterated that Trump was "open to re-engaging" in the pact if the US could "identify terms that are more favorable to it, its businesses, its workers, its people, and its taxpayers."  
The United States is the world's

second biggest producer of greenhouse gases after China and its withdrawal was a seen as a body blow to the Paris agreement.  
The accord commits signatories to efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming, which is blamed for melting ice caps and glaciers, rising sea levels and more violent weather events.  
They vowed steps to keep the worldwide rise in temperatures "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) from pre-industrial times and to "pursue efforts" to hold the increase under 1.5 degrees Celsius.  
In Europe, at least five deaths in Italy and Romania have been attributed to the extreme conditions since the heatwave set in around the start of August.  
Unusually high, sometimes unprecedented temperatures, are being recorded across an area spanning much of the Iberian peninsula (Spain and Portugal), southern France, Italy, the Balkans and Hungary.  
Thermometer mercury has regularly risen above 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) across the affected areas, exacerbating the impact of an extended drought and the lingering impact of a July heatwave which sparked wildfires that claimed 60 lives in Portugal.  
Hospital admissions have spiked 15-20 percent in Italy, where at least three people have died.  
In Romania, two deaths were linked to the weather, including a farmworker who collapsed after working in fields in the heat at Mogosesti in the north-east of the country.  
Scientists meanwhile warned that deaths due to extreme weather in Europe could increase fifty-fold from an estimated 3,000 per year recently to 152,000 by the end of this century - if global warming is not reined in.  
Southern Europe will suffer most and heatwaves would account for 99 percent of the deaths, according to

research conducted for the European Commission and published in The Lancet Planetary Health.  
The conclusions were questioned by Korean peers of the researchers who suggested humans would become less vulnerable to extreme weather with experience of it.  
Scientist warned last week that large parts of South Asia, home to a fifth of the world's population, could become unbearably hot by the end of this century.  
**College girl**  
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raped in the last seven months.  
The Daily Star reported at least 13 incidents of rape in which 16 women and children were violated in July alone.  
One of the victims was as young as four, who was allegedly killed by the perpetrator after rape.  
Of these incidents, the alleged rape of the Bogra college student by the now-suspended Sramik League leader Tufan Sarkar sparked widespread outrage.  
**Islami Bank**  
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interest-based treasury bonds like other traditional banks. As a result, the liquidity balance of the bank was about Tk 5,700 crore on June. The surplus liquidity was invested in the country's most preferred and productive sector by complying with all the banking rules and regulations. As a result, the bank's investment-deposit ratio increased to 89.44 percent in June, which was within the maximum limit of 90 percent authorised by the Bangladesh Bank.  
**Our reply**  
The report was made based on the bank's half-yearly statement that was approved at its 487th audit committee meeting. We stand by our report.

## House owner

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suicide hanging herself.  
Soon after the news of her death spread, angry locals ransacked the house, torched a vehicle and damaged a dozen others. They locked into sporadic clashes with police that left dozens injured including five policemen.  
The police also filed a case against 30 named and more than 400 unnamed people on charge of attacking law enforcers and vandalising vehicles during the violence.  
Shiblee Noman, additional deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Motijheel Zone), said law enforcers arrested three others for attacking them.  
House owner Moeen and security guard Tipu were placed on three-day remand for interrogation.  
Metropolitan Magistrate AKM Moinuddin Siddique passed the order after Sub-Inspector Monjur Rahman, also investigation officer of the murder case, had placed them before his court seeking 10-day remand.  
The court sent Shahnaz to jail.  
Complainant Shahidul alleged the employer was angry with Laily as she left the job for not getting salary for four months. He added she was scheduled to go to her village in Kurigram after collecting the dues on Friday.  
Moeen has denied the allegations, police said.

According to the inquest report prepared by SI Manzur, there is only a black spot on the victim's throat and no other injury marks were seen on her body. The police have also given a query to the morgue to check if she was raped or not.  
Dr Sohel Mahmud, head of forensic medicine at DMC, who conducted the autopsy, said they found minor injuries on her head and throat but could not specify the reason of her death immediately.  
"We have kept tissues from the throat, high vaginal soft and viscera for further examination," he said, adding, they could clearly say about the death once the report came.  
During a visit to Banasree yesterday, this correspondent found a tense situation prevailing in the area. At least 100 domestic maids, who work in different houses, gathered in front of the building boycotting their work.  
Shahnaz Begum, 50, who works in two separate houses as a part time housemaid, said they would not go to work protesting against Laily's death and demanding life security for them.  
Demanding a fare investigation into Laily's death, Shahnaz further said, "We doubt police might be convinced by the employer and Laily would not get justice."  
A huge number of police personnel were deployed in the area to avert further unwanted situations.

## Boy, 9, applies

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"I have seen almost all the space and alien movies I can see," the 9-year-old explained.  
He also showed he's on the case when it comes to career development.  
"I have also seen the show Marvel Agents of Shield and hope to see the movie Men in Black."  
Jack also described his fine motor skills and the ability to quickly learn and apply new concepts. "I'm great at video games," he said. "I am young, so I can learn to think like an Alien."  
Nasa replied to the letter and Jack even got a phone call from Planetary Research Director Jonathan Rall.  
In the letter, they congratulated Jack on his interest and offered some extra insights about the job.  
"It's about protecting Earth from tiny microbes when we bring back samples from the Moon, asteroids and Mars. It's also about protecting other planets and moons from our germs as we responsibly explore the Solar System," wrote James L. Green, director of Nasa's planetary science division.  
While Nasa ended up not offering him the job, it wasn't an outright rejection.  
"We are always looking for bright future scientists and engineers to help us, so I hope you will study hard and do well in school," Green said.  
Seems like Jack won't be replacing Catharine Conley, who's listed as Nasa's current planetary protection officer, or getting the \$127,000 a year salary now but maybe in the future.

## Man killed

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minor injuries during the "shootout".  
However, Jalal's wife Halima Begum said some youths of the village got involved in a scuffle with her husband over gambling Friday morning.  
After some time, police went there and picked up her husband.  
"I visited my husband at the Akhaura Police Station and gave him a meal around noon. I went to see him again in the evening with clothes. But I got the news of his death Saturday morning," she said.  
Some villagers of Baulola said they had no idea about the beating up of any drug peddler in their village.  
Monir Hossain, chairman of Mugra Union Parishad, said Baulola is under his jurisdiction where no incident of mob beating had occurred.  
The OC said the police recovered a locally made gun and four sharp weapons from the spot.  
Jalal's body was sent to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.  
The police said he was accused in three drug peddling and two theft cases filed with Akhaura police.

## Hope for the helpless

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that with a little assistance struggling families prosper.  
Since then guchhogram-style housing initiatives under various names have been completed nationwide. The Guchhogram Phase 2 initiative, launched in 2015, aims to provide homes for 50,000 families in 2,550 settlements nationwide by June 2020. The Hatia development is one.  
"Poverty is an enemy of Bangladesh," says SM Abu Horayra, the regional project director for guchhogram implementation across Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions. "Climate-related factors like river erosion really devastate. They create ultra-poor citizens and destitute families. The government is working at addressing such catastrophe. The guchhogram initiative provides climate victims with a basic footing from which, with hard work, they can ultimately thrive."  
A contemporary guchhogram includes more than home construction. Recipients are provided with basic education in areas such as healthcare and work skills, as well as income-generation training. "After training, many resettled families pursue fish, pigeon or poultry farming, or cattle rearing," says Horayra. "Many activities can be successful in the household yard without the need for greater landholdings." Favourable credit facilities are also available.  
He says it's a formula that works. "After three to five years the lifestyles of guchhogram residents are very much improved. In Dinajpur there is one guchhogram where most villagers use solar panels; in Natore is another where most houses are now brick, developed by the residents themselves. But the most inspiring change is in their outlook. They have much greater awareness of issues like nutrition, family planning and the importance of education for their children. They feel such relief at having a permanent shelter, that feeling

of ownership."  
Nationwide however, the guchhogram initiative faces a significant challenge: the amount of suitable khas land is decreasing. The government might consider constructing multi-storied housing to accommodate more families on less land, Horayra suggests; and he believes future projects could be improved in other ways.  
"Most guchhogram sites include a multipurpose hall," he says. "It could be beneficial if these halls become learning centres with books, newspapers and computer facilities. It'd be nice if each project included electricity grid connectivity from the outset, and the current basic kitchen and latrine facilities could be further developed. Associated skills training could be strengthened too, with available credit for income-generating projects raised to Tk 50,000 per family." He says that although efforts are sincere, the government target to accommodate 50,000 families by mid 2020 is ambitious.  
Meanwhile in Hatia's Gaburjan village there's a lot of activity. Concrete defences against erosion are being built along the Brahmaputra's bank. With dredging work completed, house construction at the guchhogram site is underway.  
"We have allocated 2.43 acres to this guchhogram," says Ullipur's upazila nirbahi officer Shaiful Islam. "We are fortunate to have more khas land. I hope we can lease some of it to the guchhogram residents for cattle grazing. I also want to ensure fish-farming training."  
Yet the welcome initiative won't alleviate all local housing need. "We have around 1,000 homeless people," says the union council chairman Abu Hossain. "We hope the national government will commit to more projects here."  
"There are many homeless families in Hatia," Horayra agrees. "We need to help all of them. I hope we can, as soon as possible."



Hajj guide Abul Khayer, left, checks if he has his 37 pilgrims on a list at Ashkona Hajj Camp yesterday. He was supposed to leave for Makkah on July 30 with 133 pilgrims but only 96 of them left that day. The rest could not fly due to incomplete or erroneous documents, and unpaid fees. He was scheduled to fly with the remaining pilgrims last night.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Strange aides for hajj

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in Saudi Arabia said such people do not come of any use to sick pilgrims.  
"Treating and serving hajjis are their main job. But most of the delegation members do not do that," the official said wishing anonymity.  
Health Minister Mohammed Nasim said he did not understand why drivers, gunmen or office assistant were included.  
Minister Motiur Rahman's phone was found switched off last night.  
However, talking to Bangla daily Prothom Alo, he said, "We included those who applied from Mymensingh."  
Talking about sending drivers, he told the daily that different ministries had requested him. "Besides there are many who are close to us. That's why we are taking them in Hajj Assistance Delegation," he told Prothom Alo.  
According to the religious affairs ministry circular, the team would stay at Makkah, Madina, and Jeddah from July 29 to September 5 and each of them would get Tk 8-10 lakh in accordance with their positions.  
Earlier, the ministry sent a medical team comprising 114 doctors, 97 nurses, 43 pharmacists and 12 lab technicians for providing pilgrims with medical assistance in Saudi Arabia. The 171-member Hajj Assistant Delegation was sent to assist the medical team.  
But members selected from medical colleges in Dhaka, Mymensingh and other medical institutions have no background in medicine or healthcare. They are mostly office assistants.  
The gunman of Opposition Leader Raushan Ershad, "room caretaker" of Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and her personal assistant, and a personal staffer of Deputy Speaker Fazle Rabbi Mia were in the Hajj Assistant Delegation.  
Several class-I officials, including a joint and an assistant secretary, were in the team.  
Meanwhile, Saiful Islam, director of the Ashkona Hajj Camp, yesterday said all three Biman hajj flights left on time yesterday.  
He said 65,000 pilgrims have got visas so far and that there would be no problems in the rest getting visas.  
As of yesterday, Biman and Saudia carried around 40,500 pilgrims, said

Shakil Meraj, general manager, public relation of Biman.  
This year's maiden hajj flight from Chittagong carrying 416 Bangladeshi pilgrims left Hazrat Shah Amanat International Airport for Saudi Arabia on Friday.  
In a views-exchange meeting on hajj at the airport, Civil Aviation Minister Rashed Khan Menon told journalists, "Hopefully, we will be able to send all hajj pilgrims on time. We have already asked the authorities concerned of Saudi Arabia to give slots for the cancelled flights."  
**India**  
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slow decline.  
The report by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs' Population Division forecasts that the current world population of nearly 7.6 billion will increase to 8.6 billion by 2030, 9.8 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion in 2100.  
After decades of the one-child policy, coupled with new economic and social pressures to succeed, many couples in China have decided to stop with one child, or to not have any at all. China's ageing population remains a cause for concern, with the number of elderly people growing rapidly.  
India's population, currently around 1.3 billion, has quadrupled since the country became independent in 1947 but the speed of growth -- still very high at around 17.7 percent in the decade to 2011 -- is slowing significantly.  
Other populous Asian countries are Indonesia (258 million), Pakistan (189 million), Bangladesh (161 million), Japan (127 million) and Philippines (101 million), as per data from UN.  
Vietnam and Thailand have a total population of 93 and 68 million respectively. Even if Mongolia, which has much larger land area as compared to other smaller Asian countries, like Myanmar (having population of 52 million), South Korea (50 million) and Malaysia (30 million), is comparatively less populated. Its total population is only 2.97 million.  
Bhutan, Brunei and Maldives are the least populated countries in Asia. With a population of 409,163, Maldives is the smallest Asian country.