



People shout slogans as they carry placards during a protest against a bill passed by India's lower house of parliament that aims to give citizenship to non-Muslims from neighbouring countries in New Delhi, India yesterday.

College boy

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Kabir is businessman in Satkania.

CMP Assistant Commissioner (west) Moinul Hossain, who led the drive, said Sadeq was picked up at gunpoint by Jahangir, a driver, and three others from Satkania's Thakur Dighi area on Thursday morning when he was on his way to his college in Chandanish.

The abductors forced him into a microbus and tied his hands and legs with towels.

"The victim was taken to a fish enclosure in Notkhola, a remote hilly area of Lohagara. The kidnappers phoned the victim's father and demanded Tk 50 lakh in ransom," Moinul told The Daily Star.

Fouzul said he filed a complaint with Satkania Police Station around noon on Thursday after receiving the call from the abductors who used his son's phone.

As Satkania police traced the phone location in Chattogram city's Double Mooring area, they requested the DB to look into the matter.

AC Moinul said they started probing the incident on Friday and traced Jahangir's location.

Jahangir called his uncle on Sunday morning and asked him to keep a school bag with Tk 50 lakh ready by the evening. He said he would later inform his uncle about where to hand over the bag."

Sensing that the law enforcers were conducting drives, the abductors took preparations to kill Sadeq, the police official added.

Police said the complaint filed with Satkania Police Station was turned into a case and they were trying to arrest the other suspects.

JP won't

FROM PAGE 16

possibilities for the Jatiya Party to emerge as a stronger organisation. Many popular and socially established political leaders will join the Jatiya Party due to a new political equation," he said.

He also said many other political parties have been lost but the JP will survive "with people's love".

Rajshahi city JP General Secretary Mostafa Rahman Dalim and many other party leaders, including Lutfor Rahman, Nazrul Islam and Enamul Haq, were present at the meeting.

Beijingers vent

FROM PAGE 16

Since the venture opened in September, customers have smashed around 15,000 bottles every month, said 25-year-old Jin Meng, who co-founded Smash with her friends.

Not intended to promote violence, Smash aims to help people deal with the pressures of living in big cities like Beijing, Jin said, adding that their target customers are between 20 and 35 years old.

Another customer, Liu Chao, 32, looked relaxed and pleased after his session.

"If you have money, you can smash anything - smash some TVs, computers, wine bottles, furniture, mannequins, but the only thing you can't do is to smash someone," said Liu.

Similar ventures already exist in other countries, including the United States.

Jin said around 600 people visit Smash each month.

"A woman brought all her wedding photos here, and she smashed them all. We welcome people to bring their own stuff," Jin said.

"Every time we come across cases like this, they affirm our belief that we've provided a safe place to let out negative energy. And we are happy for that."

In Beijing, Jin said her next step is to open a new anger room in a shopping mall where people can take a break from their shopping to smash a bottle or two.

BNP to decide

FROM PAGE 1

He said the BNP also wants a fresh election to be held under a neutral caretaker government and establishment of people's rights.

Fakhrul along with Jatiya Oikyafront leaders Kader Siddique, Subrata Chowdhury, Mostafa Mohsin Montu and ASM Abdur Rab visited Sylhet as part of the alliance's movement demanding a fresh national election.

On Sunday, Oikyafront leader Dr Kamal Hossain appreciated Hasina's decision to hold fresh talks with political parties, saying it was a positive step, reported UNB.

"I call upon the government to hold talks with political parties to find an effective way for holding a fresh credible election. Now the prime minister herself has decided to hold the talks. I hail the decision. It's certainly a positive initiative."

Dr Kamal said the alliance leaders would sit after receiving the invitation to decide on what might be discussed at the talks.

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader on Sunday said Hasina would hold a fresh dialogue with all political parties who had joined talks at the Gono Bhaban before the December 30 polls.

He said the PM would send letters to Oikyafront, Juktakranti, 14-party alliance, Jatiya Party and others inviting them to take part in the talks.

Earlier in November, Hasina held dialogues with political leaders on different major issues, including the nature of the polls-time government and dissolution of parliament before the announcement of the polls sched-

ule, among others. Before the announcement of the polls schedule, Jatiya Oikyafront leaders, led by Gonoforum President Dr Kamal, sat with the PM at the Gono Bhaban on November 1 and 7.

SYLHETTOUR

Reaching Sylhet around noon yesterday, the Oikyafront leaders offered prayers at the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal (RM). They later visited the house of Balaganj upazila Chhatra Dal Secretary General Sayem Ahmed who was killed in a clash with police on the polling day.

Talking to journalists at the shrine, Fakhrul termed the national election a 'black chapter in the country's history as people's constitutional rights were robbed'.

Asked whether his party would contest the coming upazila elections, the BNP leader said, "The whole world has seen how incompetent the Election Commission is. They don't have the capability to hold an election fairly. So no question arises about taking part in the upazila elections under this commission."

Enquired if there was any problem in the Oikyafront, Fakhrul said, "There is no problem in the Jatiya Oikyafront at all. But every political party is a separate organisation and each of them has distinct features."

About Dr Kamal's call on parting company with Jamaat-e-Islami, he said it was Gonoforum's opinion, not of the Oikyafront's. "We have not yet discussed the matter [in the Oikyafront], but we will discuss it in our party."

Later in the day, the Oikyafront leaders left Sylhet for Dhaka.

channels will be completed with the help of 11 dredgers in the next 14 months.

In the third step, initial maintenance dredging will be done by the project company in the channel for 6 months.

Approximately 111,399 million cubic meters of dredging material will be removed during the capital dredging and approximately 152,399 million cubic meters including initial maintenance dredging, the PPA statement said.

The PPA also said a maximum of up to 12-meter draft vessels will be able to come alongside the port jetty with the help of the tide.

Annually, 20 million metric tons of coal can be handled directly from the port jetty, which will fulfil the demanded power generation in the western part of the country at lower transportation cost.

Container ships of 3,000 TEUs and the bulk cargoes of 40,000 tons can come directly to the port jetty.

According to the government plan, construction of five coal-based thermal power plants and an LNG terminal are under construction in adjacent areas of Payra Port. These power plants will be able to produce about 9000 MWs of electricity. Twenty million metric tonnes of coal will be imported every year for the said purpose.

Shipping ministry officials said the PPA will have to pay back interests and service charges of around €1,000 million including principal loan.

According to the PPA statement, under the project capital and maintenance dredging work will be completed by 36 months to facilitate up to 10.5 drafts of 40,000 metric tons of deadweight (DWT) bulk carriers.

It said up to a maximum of 10.5-meter deep channel will be created followed by six months of initial maintenance dredging. Then both the parties will find sources of funding for maintenance of the remaining years of the contract and the project company will continue dredging during that period subject to availability of funding.

The project will be implemented in 34 months in three steps. In the first step (14 months), the actual amount of siltation in the channel will be determined.

He said he was aware of the approach road problem and expressed hope that the administration would take immediate steps to solve it.

In the second step, main capital dredging work of inner and outer

approach roads to the port will be

done.

No case was filed in this connection, he said.

Photo: Reuters

Bridge lies

FROM PAGE 2

construct the approach roads immediately.

Md Istiak Hasan, deputy assistant engineer of LGED in Kulaura, said building the approach roads is important for the use of the bridge. He added that they could not construct the approach roads unless the Project Implementation Office filled up the low land to that end.

Kulaura Upazila Parishad Chairman ASM Kamrul Islam told this correspondent that allocations received from the upazila parishad were provided every year. The UPS can repair public roads through maintenance and development programmes, he added.

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Photo: Reuters

Palestinian dies after Israel border clashes

AFP, Gaza City

A Palestinian teenager succumbed to his wounds yesterday three days after being shot by Israeli forces during clashes on the Gaza border, the health ministry in the coastal enclave said.

In a statement, health ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qudra said Abdul Raouf Salha, 14, "died as a result of his injuries from (Israeli) occupation fire last Friday east of Jabalia" in the northern Gaza Strip.

Palestinians have been taking part in often violent protests at least weekly since March along the Gaza-Israel border.

The demonstrators are calling to be allowed to return to the homes their families fled or were expelled from in territory that is now inside Israel.

Israel accuses the strip's Islamist rulers Hamas of orchestrating the protests and using them as cover for violence.

The Israeli army said Friday around 13,000 Palestinians had taken part in violent "riots" in multiple sites along the border.

It had not responded to a request for comment on the teenager's death yesterday.

At least 243 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since protests began in March.

The majority have been killed during protests and clashes, though others have died in airstrikes or shelling.

Two Israeli soldiers have been killed over the same period, one by a Palestinian sniper and another during a botched special forces operation inside Gaza.

One dead, four missing in Russia gas blast

AFP, Moscow

One person was killed and four were missing after a gas explosion tore through a multi-storey residential building in southern Russia early yesterday, authorities said.

The blast, in the town of Shakhty in the southern Rostov region, destroyed several apartments on the top two floors of the nine-storey building, the emergencies ministry said.

"The fate of four people remains unknown," emergencies ministry spokeswoman Marina Chernyavskaya told AFP, adding that a rescue operation involving more than 200 workers was under way.

The blast came two weeks after a gas explosion tore through a Russian apartment block in the Urals city of Magnitogorsk on New Year's Eve, leaving 39 people dead.

Chernyavskaya said the building in Shakhty, 1,000 kilometres (620 miles) south of Moscow, was in danger of collapse and officials planned to prop it up.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has been notified of the gas explosion, with the Rostov governor reporting to him on the rescue operation, the Kremlin said.

"The president tasked the head of the region to provide comprehensive assistance to the victims," the Kremlin said in a statement.

On New Year's Eve Putin inspected the collapsed building in Magnitogorsk and visited the hospitalised victims.

Authorities said the rescue operation in Shakhty would take at least 24 hours.

A man and a two-year-old girl were hospitalised and their condition was "satisfactory," said Chernyavskaya.

More than 40 people were evacuated to a nearby school.

Earlier in Magnitogorsk, investigators ruled out foul play, saying the accident came as a result of a gas explosion.

Gas explosions are relatively common in Russia, where much of the infrastructure dates back to the Soviet era and safety requirements are often ignored.

Appreciating Khushi's devotion, her employer increased her salary to Tk 1,500 after two months.

"With time, I started envisioning that one day I will launch an embroidery business at my home," Khushi said.

With her husband's help, she got in touch with some Dhaka-based boutiques and brought panjabis. She did embroidery on them and thus gave herself a new income alongside her job.

After three years, she quit the job and joined another handicraft business.

"Shotodal" as a designer in Jamalpur for Tk 3,000 a month.

She continued working there for five years and honed her skills, which led her to start her own business, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury (media affairs) and Sajeeb Wazed Joy (ICT affairs). The two were appointed after the 2014 polls.

On January 7, the PM and 46 members of her cabinet took oath at the Bangabhaban.

Twenty-seven of the cabinet members have been appointed for the first time and the move surprised many in the country's political arena.

However, while choosing her advisers, the PM kept her faith in the old faces.

LION AIR JET CRASH

Second black box found in Java Sea

Indonesian authorities to download contents of cockpit voice recorder

REUTERS, Jakarta

Indonesian authorities yesterday said they will immediately begin to download contents of a cockpit voice recorder (CVR) from a Lion Air jet that crashed into the sea near Jakarta more than two months ago, killing all 189 people on board.

The crash was the world's first of a Boeing Co 737 MAX jet and the deadliest of 2018, and the recovery of the aircraft's second black box from the Java Sea north of Jakarta yesterday may provide an account of the last actions of the doomed jet's pilots.

"We have our own laboratory and personnel to do it," Haryo Satmiko, deputy chief of the transportation safety committee, told Reuters.

Satmiko said it had in the past taken up to three months to download, analyse and transcribe the contents of recorders.

Contact with flight JT610 was lost 13 minutes after it took off on October 29 from the capital, Jakarta, heading north to the tin-mining town of Pangkal Pinang.

A preliminary report by Indonesia's transport safety commission focused on airline maintenance and training, as well as the response of a Boeing anti-stall system and a recently replaced sensor, but did not give a cause for the crash.

A group of relatives of victims urged the transportation safety committee to reveal "everything that was recorded" and to work independently.

Navy Lieutenant Colonel Agung Nugroho told Reuters a weak signal from the recorder was detected several days ago and it was found buried deep in soft mud on the sea floor in water about 3