

## Schools re-open in Kashmir

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Protests began after the August 5 decision by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to withdraw Kashmir's special status and integrate it fully into India, with equal rights for all Indians to buy property there and compete for government jobs.

Critics said the decision will alienate many Kashmiris and add fuel to a 30-year armed revolt in the Himalayan territory that Pakistan also lays claim to.

On the weekend, residents of Srinagar - the hotbed of the separatist revolt - threw stones and clashed with police. Dozens of people were injured, two senior officials and witnesses said.

Reuters journalists visited two dozen schools in Srinagar yesterday. Some schools were lightly staffed and classrooms deserted. Gates at other schools were locked.

Only one student showed up at Presentation Convent Higher Secondary School, which has an enrolment of 1,000 pupils, and went home, said a school official.

A handful of teachers but no students turned up at the barricaded Burn Hall school in one of the city's high security zones.

"How can students come to classes in such a volatile situation? The government is turning these little children into cannon fodder," a teacher said, adding that schools should stay closed until the situation is normal.

### CROSS BORDER FIRING

New Delhi's decision on Kashmir has heightened tensions with its

neighbour and rival nuclear power, Pakistan, and triggered cross-border exchanges of fire.

In the latest incident, two civilians were killed in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir by Indian soldiers firing across the disputed border, Pakistan's foreign ministry said, adding that it had summoned India's deputy commissioner in Islamabad to protest.

"The ceasefire violations by India are a threat to regional peace and security and may lead to a strategic miscalculation," the foreign ministry said.

There was no immediate comment from India which has previously accused Pakistan of trying to whip up tensions to draw global attention.

Some 120,000 extra soldiers have been deployed, a security source told AFP, joining around 500,000 already in the northern Himalayan region divided with Pakistan since 1947.

At least 4,000 people have also been detained under the Public Safety Act (PSA), which allows imprisonment for up to two years without charge or trial, government sources said.

More than 50,000 people have died in the revolt that erupted against Indian rule in Kashmir in 1989. India blames Pakistan for giving material support to the militants and helping them cross into its part of the mountainous region.

Pakistan denies the allegation and says it only gives moral and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people in their struggle for self-determination.



**Workers clean the campus of a closed school in Srinagar yesterday. Some Kashmir schools re-opened yesterday but many pupils stayed away, following weekend clashes after India stripped the region of its autonomy and imposed a lockdown two weeks ago. Inset, security personnel stand guard near a closed school in Srinagar.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Girl's body

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said his daughter left their home on Sunday morning without telling anyone and had been traceless since then.

Asma had arguments with him and her mother in past couple of days over her relationship with a local man, Razzaq said.

## VP Nur

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frequently face the wrath of ruling party men only for protesting their wrongdoings and irregularities. Besides the ruling party leaders, we are also receiving threats from members of detective agencies. They are even threatening me with life," he said.

"Galachipa upazila Chairman Shahin Shah led the attack on the directives of Pataukhali-3 lawmaker SM Shahjada Shaju," Nur alleged.

He claimed that Shahin's brother Nure Alam, Dashmina unit AL Organising Secretary Mainul Islam, Ulania unit Jubo League leader Shakil, and over 100 others of the ruling party affiliated organisations attacked him with rods, steel pipes, and machetes.

The attackers also prevented him from getting treatment at hospitals, the Ducus VP alleged.

Contacted, Shahin and lawmaker Shahjada refuted the allegation of their involvement in the attack.

"Nur is spreading propaganda against me to demean me," Shahjada told The Daily Star.

Shahin claimed that neither he nor any AL activists were involved in the attack.

"I have been attacked eight times by the activists of Chhatra League and other ruling party affiliated organisations since I was elected Ducus VP on June 30 last year," Nur said.

He alleged that no actions were taken against those involved in the attacks.

"The attackers' intention was to kill me and weaken the resolve of the activists of my organisation. So, I request the countrymen to stand by me and raise their voice demanding punishment of the attackers," he added.

Demanding justice from the prime minister, Nur said, "A few days ago, you said there is no bar to criticise the government and there is freedom of expression in the country.

"So, we request you to instruct your party men and law enforcement agencies to stop the repression against the dissenting voices so that the democratic atmosphere continues to prevail in the country. Make the law enforcement agencies effective by freeing them from party influence."

## British man

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by Moss Bikes using 3D printed components and parts from a motocross bike.

The Porsche had a large attachment on the rear, which affected its aerodynamics, punching a hole through the air for Campbell to cycle in.

He said: "I am thrilled and relieved, the team worked amazingly well."

Preparations had gone badly with poor weather on Friday. A practice run fell 20mph short of the record, but conditions improved on the day and a tailwind helped.

Changing the aerodynamics of the car was a balance, as it decreased the 4x4's top speed, but reduced wind resistance when the bike was released.

Campbell laughed: "Porsche spend millions testing their cars in a wind tunnel and we stick a big Tupperware box on the back of it!"

## Crackdown will harm trade talks

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The trade dispute between the US and China has been blamed for setting world financial markets on edge amid signs of a possible global economic slowdown.

Phone calls between the deputies from two sides are planned for the next 10 days and, if those are successful, negotiations between more senior officials could resume, Trump's chief economic advisor Larry Kudlow said on Sunday.

The demonstrations in Hong Kong have tipped into violence, with protesters paralyzing the city's airport last week and tarnishing a campaign that took pride in its peaceful intent.

Communist Party-ruled mainland China has in turn sharpened its tone towards the dissidents, decrying the "terrorist-like" actions of a violent minority.

State media has broadcast images of military personnel and armoured personnel carriers in Shenzhen, across the border from Hong Kong,

propaganda read across Hong Kong as intimidation.

China deployed tanks to end student-led protests in the bloody 1989 crackdown in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, resulting in an estimated death toll between several hundred to over a thousand.

If such a situation was repeated in Hong Kong, "I think there'd be... tremendous political sentiment not to do something," Trump said, referring to the trade negotiations with China.

Under a deal signed with Britain, China agreed to allow Hong Kong to keep its unique freedoms when the former crown colony was handed back in 1997.

But many Hong Kongers feel those freedoms are being hacked away, especially since China's hardline President Xi Jinping came to power.

Trump stopped short of endorsing the protesters, saying, "I'd love to see it worked out in a humane fashion," and calling on Xi to negotiate with the

dissidents.

Last week, China's state-run daily the Global Times said there "won't be a repeat" of Tiananmen Square in a rare reference to the crackdown.

"China is much stronger and more mature, and its ability to manage complex situations has been greatly enhanced," the newspaper wrote in an editorial.

Analysts say any intervention in Hong Kong by Chinese security forces would be a disaster for China's reputation and economy.

The political turmoil was sparked by widespread opposition to a plan for allowing extraditions to the Chinese mainland, but has since morphed into a broader movement for democratic rights in the semi-autonomous city.

Sunday's march, billed as a return to the peaceful origins of the leaderless protest movement, was one of the largest rallies since the protests began about three months ago, according to organizers the Civil Human Rights Front.

## ACC arrests land owner of FR Tower

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Court yesterday granted ad-interim bail to Tasvir UI Islam, one of the owners of Banani FR tower, a day after his arrest in a case filed over his alleged involvement extending the building beyond the permitted number of floors.

Dhaka senior special judge KM Imrul Kayes passed the order after his lawyer filed a petition before his court seeking bail.

Tasvir's lawyer Ehsanul Haque told the court that his client had been suffering from several ailments, including heart disease.

Tasvirul was arrested by an ACC team from the capital's Segunbagicha area around 4:00pm on Sunday.

After his arrest, ACC kept Tasvir in the custody of Ramna Model Police Station.

Earlier on March 31, both Faruque and Tasvir were arrested and each of them was placed on a seven-day remand.

On June 25, the ACC filed two cases accusing 23 people for their alleged involvement in illegally extending the building that caught fire on March 27.

At least 27 people were killed in the fire incident.

The two, along with Liakat Ali Khan

alias Mukul, 57, chairman of Rupayan Group -- the builder company of FR Tower, leaders of the building management committee, and some unidentified people were charged for the death of people due to negligence.

According to the case statement, Faruque on June 25, 1989 took lease of the over eight katha plot at Banani Commercial area from Dhaka Improvement Trust, which was renamed to Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk).

On October 02, 1990 he applied to Rajuk for erecting a 15-storey building. The application was approved 28 days later.

On January 25, 1996, Faruque applied to Rajuk again, but this time to revise the original plan and extend the building to 18 storeys. Rajuk approved the plan illegally, reads the FIR.

Afterwards on April 27, 2003 Faruque signed a contract with managing director of Rupayan Housing Estate Ltd Liakat Khan Mukul, also an accused, for erecting the 18-storey building. Later, both Faruque and Liakat signed another contract for extending the building to 23-storeys and completed construction. According to the FIR,

however, no clearance certificate was taken from the housing authority for the latest extension.

"Not even the design [for extension] was approved," it says.

On March 13, 2005, Liakat signed a contract with Tasvir to sell him office space on the three floors in level 19, 20 and 21.

The contract was valued at about Tk 5.65 crore. To meet the expenditure, Tasvir took out a Tk 3.6 crore mortgage from GPS Finance Company Ltd. Liakat and Tasvir, however, produced a "forged design of the building" and "misused their power" to get Rajuk's approval for the mortgage, the case statement read.

## Submit report

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following day, the remand hearing and whether she was interrogated on remand.

The court asked Deputy Attorney General Md Sarwar Hussain Bappi to know the matters properly.

Earlier on August 8, another HC bench led by Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman refused to grant bail to Minni in the case, upon which Minni's lawyer withdrew the bail petition from the HC bench saying he would move the same petition before another HC bench.

In the petition, Minni said she was innocent and not involved in the murder in any way.

She also said she had been made accused with an ulterior motive and on the instructions of a vested quarter.

Earlier, two courts in Barguna rejected her bail on July 22 and July 30.

Police arrested Minni after a daylong interrogation on July 16. A court placed her on a five-day remand the following day. Three days later, a Barguna court recorded her statement. Minni's husband Rifat Sharif, 25, an internet service provider, was hacked to death in broad daylight in front of her in Barguna town on June 26.

In a footage of the incident that went viral on social media, Minni was seen screaming and trying to save her husband from the attackers.

Rifat's father filed the murder case with Barguna Sadar Police Station against 12 people on the day of the murder. Prime accused in the case, Nayan Bond, was killed in a "gunfight" with police on July 2.

## Indian FM flies in

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The Indian High Commission in Dhaka said Jaishankar was visiting Bangladesh to take forward the high-level exchanges between the two countries.

The Indian minister will visit Bangabandhu Memorial Museum on Dhanmondi-32 around 9:30am today and pay tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing wreaths at his portrait there, an official told UNB.

He will have a bilateral meeting with Momen around 11:00am.

There will be a media briefing at noon following a meeting between the two foreign ministers at the State Guesthouse Jamuna.

Momen will host a lunch in honour of his Indian counterpart after the meeting.

Jaishankar is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban around 5:00pm today. In the evening, Indian High

Commissioner in Dhaka will host a private dinner for the visiting minister.

He will leave Dhaka for Kathmandu tomorrow morning.

India is a leading development partner of Bangladesh as it has extended concessional lines of credit of around \$8 billion.

Foreign Minister Momen said he would discuss the LoC projects, expenditures and barriers to implementation of those projects, if any.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit India in October to discuss bilateral issues, including the ones related to common rivers, and to take the growing Bangladesh-India relations forward.

She will attend the India Economic Summit of the World Economic Forum with the theme "Innovating for India: Strengthening South Asia, Impacting the World" to be held in New Delhi on October 3-4, a diplomatic source told UNB.

## Fair price still eludes

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from 300 millers.

Procurement will continue till August 31.

### HOW FARMERS ARE SELECTED

First of all, representatives of local government bodies like union parishads prepare a list of farmers. Then the local DAE office arranges lotteries and selects the farmers from whom the government would procure.

Ashish Kumar Roy, food officer in Shalla upazila, said it is not possible to buy paddy from all the farmers. For example, 6,619 farmers in the upazila applied to sell paddy to the government, but only 912 were selected through lottery.

But farmers alleged that there was some foul play involved, which favours people associated with the ruling party.

Khairul Bashar Thakur Khan, legal affairs secretary of the central committee of Krishak Sangram Samity, said the government officials are favouring the ruling party men in the name of lottery, and thus depriving real farmers.

Middlemen are also playing a role. Mohammad Ali, a member of North Baradal Union Parishad of Tahirpur upazila, said farmer Abdul Malek of Brahmangaon village died three years ago, but a middleman sold paddy using the dead man's farmer card. This is one of many instances of how middlemen, who are locally influential, use fake cards, he said.

**WHAT IS HAPPENING TO MOST FARMERS?**  
Visiting Madhaynagar rice market in Dharmapasha upazila, the biggest rice wholesale market of Sunamganj, this correspondent found that rice mill owners were buying paddy directly from farmers.

Kamrul Islam, a farmer from Karchar Haor in Bishwambhapur upazila, said, "I'm selling paddy here for Tk 550-650 per maund because I was not selected in the government's lottery. I may give up paddy cultivation in the future."

Only eight out of 190 farmers in his village made it to the final list through lottery, he said, adding, they got the fair price, but the rest did not.

Farmer Swapan Kumar Barman of Bishwambhapursaid most farmers of his village took bank loans for paddy cultivation. Since they are not getting the fair price, they do not know how they would repay the loans. "One cannot buy 1kg of hilsa by selling one maund of paddy. How

can we survive?" he asked.

Jyotirmoy Roy, a rice trader and president of Madhyannagar Dhan Arotar Samity, said, "We are buying paddy at Tk 540-680 per mound as farmers are desperate to sell their paddy for survival."

Bazul Majid Chowdhury Khasru, president of Haor Bachao Sunamganj Bachao Andolon, claimed that farmers were forced to sell paddy to middlemen at a lower price due to the lack of government's monitoring and proper initiatives.

The government has so far bought 9,444 tonnes of paddy and 16,496 tonnes of rice till yesterday (August 19) in Sunamganj, according to the district food controller.

Contacted, Sunamganj District Food Controller Zakaria Mostafa said DAE enlisted the farmers under supervision of local UP chairmen and the upazila executive officers.

"We cannot verify who is a middleman or who is a farmer. We collect paddy only after seeing the farmer card. None of us is involved in irregularities," he said.

When told that they have procured only 50 percent of the target since April, he said, "We will apply for an extension of the procurement period."

Md Safar Uddin, deputy director of local DAE office, also denied the allegation of irregularities.

## China plans to make Shenzhen a 'better place' than Hong Kong

AFP, Beijing

China's government has unveiled plans to boost the mainland city of Shenzhen and make it into what state media called a "better place" than neighbouring Hong Kong, following another huge pro-democracy rally in the semi-autonomous financial hub.

Weeks of rallies, demonstrations, and occupations have plunged Hong Kong into crisis -- which Beijing is now framing as an opportunity for Shenzhen's development.

Yesterday, state-run media outlined a set of guidelines released by the central Chinese government that aims to turn Shenzhen into a pilot area of "socialism with Chinese characteristics".