



# The Daily Star



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**"It is our misfortune that many of our brilliant minds were trampled on by state powers."**  
 PROF SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY SAID AT A DISCUSSION.

**"This drive is not bringing any good for party, it is rather damaging the party."**  
 AL PRESIDILUM MEMBER MOHAMMED NASIM, ABOUT ONGOING DRIVE, AT NATORE

**"You, the queen of warmongers, embodiment of corruption, and personification of the rot that has sickened the Democratic Party for so long, have finally come out from behind the curtain."**  
 US DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TULSI GABBARD HITS BACK AT HILLARY CLINTON OVER RUSSIA REMARKS



## Toiling away CHILDHOOD

After hours of exposure to metal dust, the skins of these boys working at silverware factories have turned ominously grey. The little ones make only TK 150-200 a day. Apart from rashes and breathing difficulties, they often suffer cuts and injuries. The photos were taken recently in the capital's Shyampur where several hundred children work in some 50 such factories.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



## More trains, longer delay

*Schedule problems worsen as trains added on low-capacity tracks in northwestern, southern zones without proper assessment*

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Though most of the trains running in the country's northwestern and southern regions face delay mainly due to inadequate capacity of railway tracks, Bangladesh Railway is adding new trains in the regions without proper assessment, worsening the situation further.

The BR now operates 42 trains in Joydebpur-Ishwardi section with a 174-km single track that connects the capital with the western zone via Bangabandhu Bridge.

The Joydebpur-Ishwardi section has a capacity of smoothly operating a maximum of 22 trains a day. And to handle trains more than that, it has to apply "block system" that allows only one train to run at a time from one station to the next one, forcing other trains to wait, said BR officials.

The BR introduced four intercity

trains in the western zone in the last six months with the latest one starting operation from Dhaka to Kurigram on October 16.

Experts say the authorities select more routes under pressure and lobbying from influential people without any assessment of whether these routes would be financially viable or the train schedules would be convenient for passengers.

BR officials said two of the four trains, launched in the last six months, failed to draw expected response from passengers mainly due to ill-suited schedules and delays.

Admitting the schedule problems, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan on several occasions said more trains would result in more delay in the western zone.

He, however, said they had to introduce more trains in the face of public demand.

Contacted, Railways Secretary Mofazzal Hossain claimed they introduced new trains on the basis of BR data.

Asked about the pressure of influential people in selecting routes, he said, "Such pressure doesn't work in case of route selection. But it may work in selecting stations."

The BR operates 360 passenger trains through its 3,000km network across the country divided into eastern and western zones.

The number of railway passengers has increased over the years. It was 90.05 million in fiscal 2017-18, up from 77.80 million in the previous fiscal year. But the BR incurred a loss of Tk 1,432 crore in fiscal 2017-18.

**INADEQUATE CAPACITY**  
 The delay in the schedules of trains, except for a few, which connect the capital with northwestern and southern regions has been a common

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## BORDER SHOOTING It was an 'accidental incident'

Foreign minister tells Deutsche Welle

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said the recent exchange of fire between the border forces of Bangladesh and India was an "accidental incident".

He also said the members of Indian Border Security Force intruded into Bangladesh territory in a show of bravado.

"This is one incident. This happened due to a misunderstanding," he said, adding that the members of Border Guard Bangladesh opened fire as the last resort.

In an interview with Deutsche Welle's Bengali service in Berlin, Momen brushed aside the reports on the firing incident by a section of Indian media outlets. "The information that Indian media carried was not correct."

Describing the Bangladesh-India relations as "very friendly", he said the key purpose of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent India visit was to further strengthen the "warm relationship".

On Thursday, BGB said its members were forced to fire back in self-defence

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## UK MPs vote to put off Brexit

Defiant Boris Johnson says he will not negotiate further delay



EU supporters march as parliament sits to discuss Brexit in London. PHOTO: REUTERS

AFP, London

British MPs yesterday voted to force Prime Minister Boris Johnson to ask the European Union to delay Brexit yet again but he insisted Britain must leave on October 31.

In a day of high drama in the House of Commons, MPs declined to give their backing to the divorce agreement Johnson struck with the EU this week until accompanying legislation has been passed.

In doing so, MPs triggered a law requiring Johnson to write to EU leaders asking to delay Brexit to avoid a "no deal" departure in less than two weeks.

The result is a major blow to Johnson, who said he would rather be "dead in a ditch" than prolong the tortuous Brexit process that has left Britain in political turmoil since the 2016 EU referendum.

But in a typically defiant response, the Conservative leader refused, sparking outrage among opposition MPs -- and fresh uncertainty about what happens next.

"I will not negotiate a delay with the EU and neither does the law compel me to do so," he told MPs, who were sitting on a Saturday for the first time since the 1982 Falklands War.

He said he would tell EU leaders that "further delay would be bad for this country, bad for the European Union and bad for democracy".

The Tory party went further, writing in a tweet:

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## ANTI-GRAFT DRIVE DNCC ward councillor held in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab last night arrested a councillor of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) in the capital's Bashundhara Residential Area on charges of his involvement in extortion and land grabbing.

Rab officials said they held Tarequzzaman Rajib from one of his friends' home around 11:00pm in a raid carried out as part their ongoing drive against graft.

Rajib is the councillor of ward-33, which covers part of Mohammadpur area. He is also a joint general secretary of Jubo League's Dhaka north unit.

Rab officials also claimed to have seized seven bottles of foreign liquor, an illegal pistol, three bullets and Tk 33,000 in cash during the drive yesterday.

Following the arrest, Rab members started raiding Rajib's home in Mohammadpur. The drive was underway when this report was filed around 2:00am today.

"Rajib was hiding. We were looking for him for the last several days following some specific allegations against him. We raided the house in Bashundhara on information that he was

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## 3 murders shock the port city

Father-daughter, child specialist slain in separate incidents

STAR REPORT

A father and his daughter, and a child specialist were found murdered in separate incidents in Chattogram over the last two days.

Police yesterday recovered the bodies of a man and his four-year-old daughter from their house in the port city's Nimtala-Biswa Road area.

The dead were identified as Abu Taher, 35, a day labourer, and his daughter Bibi Fatema, from Noakhali, said police.

Their bodies were found with the throats slit.

Police detained Taher's wife Hasina Begum, who worked as domestic help, for interrogation, said Kamrul Islam, assistant commissioner (Bandar Zone) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

"The wife told police that she first spotted the bodies when she came back home around 11:30am from work," he added.

AC Kamrul said they believe the

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## Day of reckoning for Jubo League?

PM today meets the leaders of her party's embattled youth front

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The National Youth Policy, formulated by the Awami League government, defines any citizen between 18 and 35 as a youth.

But this definition does not seem applicable to the party's youth wing, Jubo League. None of the members of the organisation's 351-member central committee falls under this age group.

The youngest person in the committee is 44, and the oldest is none other than the organisation's current chief Omar Faruk Chowdhury, who turned 71 this year.

Faruk is the oldest chairman of Jubo League in its history of 47 years. He secured the post at the age of 64 in 2012.

When Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni, nephew of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, founded the outfit on November 11, 1972, he was 33. All his six successors were older than him when they became chairman of the front.

According to insiders, only 10 to 12 leaders of Jubo League units across the country are below 44, while most others are in their late 40s and early 50s.

The Jubo League charter does not mention any age limit, but says any employable youth is eligible to engage with the youth front.

The organisation was founded with an aim to alleviate poverty and establish the rights of the young generations. But a group of Jubo League leaders deviated from the objectives and got busy making their own fortune. And instead of working for protecting the rights of the youths, they got engaged in numerous misdeeds and criminal activities -- starting from grabbing tenders to running illegal casino business in the sporting clubs, the insiders said.

All their misdeeds came to the fore after the law enforcement agencies

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