## Of mysticism

FROM PAGE 16 Aamaay Eto Dukkho Dili and Piriter Bazar Bhalo Na. The synchronised musical arrangement for the live performances were embellished with the high-pitched flute piece, the rhythm of dhol and guitar especially when the instrumentalists styled the melody of Kirttan in the song Na Na Na Kodom Tolaay Ami Jabo Na.

The Malian singer-musician Habib Koité and his band Bamada entertained the audience with his unmatched guitar recital and musical scores. Their transfixing performances have endeared them to an evergrowing audience all over the world. Koité is known primarily for his unique approach to playing guitar by tuning it on a pentatonic scale and on open strings. Other aspects of his melodies are more like the blues and flamenco.

Koité's vocal style is intimate and relaxed, emphasising calm, moody singing rather than showcasing technical prowess. Members of Bamada accompanied him playing talking drum, guitar, bass, drum set, harmonica, violin, calabash and balafon. Koité composes and arranges all songs, singing in English, French, and Bambara for the band.

Renowned Bangladeshi artiste Fakir Shahabuddin entertained the packed audience with beautiful rendition of several folk songs at the Connecting a number of musical

souls with the ultimate, the show was concluded with the mesmerising performance by Hina Nasrullah from Pakistan. She began with a Bulleh Shah Kalam (melodic verse). The supremely talented Sufi singer, along with her ensemble, charmed the Dhaka music lovers with several unmatched compositions of Sultan Bahu and Shah Hussain, among others. She wove a garland of melodies with a speedy taan and soul searching pukaar while covering Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan scores. The artiste later captivated the crowd with Damadam Mast Qalandar, leaving a lasting impression of melodic bliss.

The Dhaka International Folk Festival, presented by Meril, powered by Dhaka Bank and organised by Sun Communications, concludes today featuring performances by Chandana Majumdar and Malek Kawal from Bangladesh, Sattuma from Russia and Junoon from Pakistan.

### 2 killed FROM PAGE 16

on the ground. He was taken to Teknaf Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him brought dead, he said. BGB officials claimed to have

recovered 1.20 lakh Yaba pills, a firearm, and bullets from the spot. Two cases -- an obstruction of

government duty and a drug case -were filed with Teknaf police station regarding this, said Faisal. In Narsingdi's Shibpur upazila,

Razzaq Mia, 39, of the upazila, was killed during a "gunfight" with police around 3:30am.

Police arrested Razzaq, an accused in 16 criminal cases, at his home on Thursday midnight and took him on a drive to Telia Shashan Ghat area, said Inspector (Investigation) Mominul Haque of Shibpur Police

Station. As soon as they reached the spot, the associates of Razzaq started shooting at them, said Mominul, adding that, the law enforcers were forced to fire back to defend

themselves. After the "gunfight", police found that Razzaq was lying dead on the ground, he said, adding that they had recovered firearms and sharp

weapons from the spot. (Our Cox's Bazar and Brahmanbaria correspondents contributed to the report)

### Epitome

FROM PAGE 16 his home and kept it at the safest

"I was afraid that muggers could attack me and snatch the money. This is why I kept the money at my home and hoped that the owner would somehow find me as I failed to find him," Lal Mia said.

SM Bodiuzzaman, officer-in-charge of the police station, said they found Lal Mia with the help of a CCTV footage and called him at the station.

"We asked Lal Mia if he had found a bag full of papers," he said, adding, "Lal Mia said he found a bag but that was not full of papers. If said he would only disclose further detail if the owner could tell what was inside the bag.

"Later, receiving proper documentation, Lal Mia returned the money to Rajib," the police official

Rajib, getting his money back, highly praised Lal Mia and gifted him

Tk 50,000. Rajib left the money with police and urged them to buy Lal Mia a battery-run auto-rickshaw with it. Contacted, Lal Mia said he was

happy that he managed to return the money but he did not expect the gift. "I pay Tk 200 every day to the

owner of the rickshaw I pull. I am happy that he [Rajib] wanted to give me a rickshaw," he said.

Ashraf Bhuiyan, superintendent of Bogura police, said, "Truly speaking, the rickshaw puller was very honest and had no ill intension. Such honesty is praiseworthy and an inspiring example."



Iraqi protesters run from tear gas during clashes with security forces at Baghdad's Khallani square during ongoing anti-government demonstrations yesterday. Iraq's political elite has come under renewed pressure in recent days from both the street and the international community to seriously address calls for reform.

Bachelor degree at the age of 9! The TUE has allowed Laurent to have ever had here," he said. "Not father.

FROM PAGE 16

teachers soon concurred.

"They noticed something very special about Laurent," said Lydia.

Laurent was given test after test as teachers tried to work out the extent of his talents. "They told us he is like a sponge," said Alexander.

While Laurent comes from a family of doctors, his parents have so far not received any explanation as to why their child prodigy is capable of learning so quickly.

a lot of fish during the pregnancy," she youngster. joked.

complete his course faster than other students. "That is not unusual," said Sjoerd Hulshof, education director of the TUE bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, in a statement.

"Special students that have good reasons for doing so can arrange an adjusted schedule. In much the same way we help students who participate in top sport."

Hulshof said Laurent is "simply But Lydia has her own theory. "I ate extraordinary" and praised the his PhD.

only is he hyper intelligent but also a very sympathetic boy." Laurent told CNN his favourite

subject is electrical engineering and he's also "going to study a bit of medicine." His progress has not gone too.

unnoticed and he is already being sought out by prestigious universities around the world, although Laurent's family wouldn't be drawn on naming which of them he is considering for

"The absorption of information "Laurent is the fastest student we is no problem for Laurent," said his

"I think the focus will be on research and applying the knowledge to discover new things."

РНОТО:

AFP

While Laurent is evidently able to learn faster than most, his parents are being careful to let him enjoy himself

"We don't want him to get too serious. He does whatever he likes," said Alexander. "We need to find a balance between being a child and his talents."

Laurent said he enjoys playing with his dog Sammy and playing on his phone, like many young people.

# Thousands defy Xi with rallies

FROM PAGE 16

EVERYONE PLAYS A ROLE

Earlier yesterday, thousands of mainly office workers took to the Chinese territory's streets, many chanting "Stand with Hong Kong" and raising an open hand with five fingers splayed.

It is a reference to the five demands of the protest movement, which include the right to freely elect Hong Kong's leaders, as well as an independent inquiry into alleged police brutality.

"Every person in Hong Kong has a role to play," James, a 33-year-old banking employee told AFP, adding "sacrifice" was necessary to keep the wind behind the protest movement.

Black-clad protesters also occupied university campuses, while the city endured another day of transport chaos with suspensions on the vandalised train network and roads blocked by barricades.

Their actions were in defiance of a warning by Chinese President Xi who on Thursday backed Lam and the police force, while warning the protest movement was threatening the DISRUPTION AND VIOLENCE governing the semi-autonomous city.

Xi said "stopping violence and controlling chaos" was the top priority.

With the crisis deepening by the week, fears have grown that Xi's patience will run out and Chinese troops will be force. deployed into to Hong Kong.

The Global Times, one of the powerful arms of the Chinese state media, on Thursday fuelled tensions with a tweet reporting that a curfew was imminent.

But it quickly withdrew the tweet and the Hong Kong's government denied a curfew was planned.

"one country, two systems" principle With China offering no concessions, commuters to stay at home. protesters switched tactics on Monday when they launched a "blossom everywhere" campaign to cause as much disruption as possible across Hong Kong and overwhelm the police

Until this week protests had been mainly in the evenings and on weekends, allowing the international financial hub to still function relatively smoothly during the week albeit with its economy dragged into recession. But roadblocks and vandalism to

metro stations and lines have brought chaos to the city transport network, forcing schools to close and many

Their actions have been accompanied by intensifying violence from both sides -- two people have died in a week in incidents linked to the protests.

# Council after 7 years amid image crisis

FROM PAGE 1

activity centring the council.

Neither Kawser nor Pankaj was invited to the one-day council to be inaugurated by Prime Minister and AL President Sheikh Hasina at 11:00am today at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan.

This is the organisation's third council where a total of 1,845 councillors from across the country are all set to pick their new leadership.

Swechchhasebak League has around 3 lakh members at central, district, upazila, municipality and union levels, said its sources.

According to its charter, Swechchhasebak League's leadership should be elected in every three years through direct voting by the councillors, but this provision remains only on paper.

The previous council took place

seven years ago. Swechchhasebak League was founded in 1994 with Makbul Hossain as convenor and Habibur Rahman Habib as joint convenor. Later Habib joined the BNP and from then on, the activities of the organisation became

Swechchhasebak League had its first council in 2003 through which AFM Bahauddin Nasim was elected president while Pankaj Devnath general secretary.

Nine years later, the second council elected Kawser the president and reelected Pankaj to the GS post.

Since Swechchhasebak League came into being, it has been the place for former Chhatra League leaders who would work for the volunteers' wing to secure different posts of the AL and its youth wing Jubo League, said party sources.

Recently, Swechchhasebak League have come to limelight following Kawser's removal from the president post after his name surfaced in the ongoing drive against illegal casino business that began on September 18.

According to police documents, Kawser is also the president of Dhaka Wanderers Club, which has been shut down on charges of running an illegal

A day before Kawser was relieved of the post, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) had asked different

commercial banks to freeze all his accounts to look into his tax compliance.

ups directed Pankaj, lawmaker for Barishal-4, not to join any activities centring the Swechchhasebak League council. Pankaj got into transport business in 2009. He is the chairman of

Bihongo Paribahan, a minibus service company. He is also a member of Dhaka Road Transport Owners Association. The charter of Swechchhasebak League makes it mandatory to

complete district councils before its national council, but the leaders could hold council only at 45 out of 78 units in the districts. According to the organisation

insiders, many of its top leaders have indulged in different controversial and illegal activities, including casino business, tender manipulation establishing supremacy, to make fortune. These have tarnished Swechchhasebak League's image, they

Most of its central committee

either businessmen or contractors. For an example, the organisation's vice presidents On October 24, the AL high-Motiur Rahman, Abdur Razzak, and Organising Secretary Abdul Alim, Dhaka City North unit President Mobasshar Hasan Chowdhury and General Secretary Faridur Rahman Iran, Dhaka City South unit President

Debashis Biswas and General Secretary

Arifur Rahman are all contractors.

Asked about new leadership, Nirmal Ranjan Guha, convenor of the council preparation committee, told The Daily Star that PM Sheikh Hasina adopted "zero tolerance" policy against corruption, and the new committee would reflect her commitment.

"I hope tested, dedicated and honest leaders would be at the leadership position of Awami Swechchhasebak League."

About not inviting Kawser and Pankaj, Guha, also a president contender of the wing, said, they did not take any decision in this regard. "We were not asked to invite or not invite them. So we didn't take any decision on our own."

### Tortured FROM PAGE 16

her family.

On May 30 this year, she went to the Saudi capital Riyadh. An agency named "Ruposhi Bangla Overseas" sent her there, she said. During the time at her employer's

house in Riyadh, Sumi was often beaten. She was given only Tk 15,000 as a month's wage. Eventually, she fell sick due to

excessive workload and torture. As she was unable to work anymore, the employer sold her to another person in Najran city for 22,000 Saudi riyals, said Sumi. Her new employer was also tough on

her, she alleged. Not only the beating continued but also confinement was added to worsen her situation. She was once confined in a room

for 14 days at a stretch, she said. At one stage, she requested her employer to give her a cell phone so that she could at least talk to her husband. When she was given the phone, she

made a video call to Nurul and cried out for help. In the video, Sumi sought the prime

minister's intervention in rescuing her. Nurul uploaded the footage on social media which went viral. "I came

to Saudi Arabia through a 'Ruposhi

Bangla Overseas' office. They brought me saying good things. But they behaved inhumanly...they tortured me," she said in the clip. Nurul then filed a general diary (GD) with the capital's Paltan Police Station. Later, with the assistance of Brac Migration Programme, he

filed an application to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment for bringing his wife Being informed, a team of Bangladesh mission in the KSA, with the help of local police, rescued Sumi from her employer's home in Najran

labour counsellor at the Bangladesh Consulate General in Jeddah. "Her employer demanded the 22,000 riyals that he had spent for 'buying' her," said Aminul, adding that the issue was "settled" at a labour court

on November 4, said Aminul Islam,

They took Sumi to a safe home in Jeddah prior to her departure from the country, he said. Shariful Hasan, programme head

of the Brac Migration Programme, said Saudi employers usually impose restrictions on using cell phones by female migrant workers in the name of privacy.

Also, the workers' passports are also taken away by their employers, he said, adding that the situation did not change despite right defenders' continuous protest against it.

#### Trump FROM PAGE 16

"The bribe is to grant or withhold military assistance in return for a public statement of a fake investigation into the elections," Pelosi said.

Republicans have ramped up their defence of the president, saying Wednesday's witnesses -- top US envoy to Ukraine William Taylor, and deputy assistant secretary of state George Kent

-- never spoke with Trump. which "Their understanding, is the foundation of the case for Democrats, was based on second-hand information," House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy said. "Nothing is there

that's impeachable." Public impeachment hearings resumed yesterday with the testimony of former ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch, who says she was ousted because the Trump administration believed she would not go along with plans to pressure Ukraine to investigate Democrat Joe Biden, a potential Trump

White House rival in 2020. Trump was quick on attacking the

ousted envoy. "Everywhere Marie Yovanovitch went turned bad," Trump said, finishing his tweet with a reminder that presidents have the "absolute right" to

hire and fire ambassadors. Adding to the extraordinary nature of the president commenting on testimony against him in real time, Yovanovitch was asked to respond on

live television. the tweet "very She called intimidating.

Several witnesses, including Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland -- whom Taylor said was on a previously unpublicised telephone call with Trump in which they discussed the Ukraine pressure -are due to testify publicly next week.

### Chile to vote on new constitution in response to protests

AFP, Santiago

Chile announced yesterday it will stage a referendum to replace the country's dictatorship-era constitution -- a key demand of protesters after nearly a month of sometimes violent civil unrest.

The current charter, in force since 1980 and enacted by the former military junta of Augusto Pinochet, has been changed numerous times in the years since. But it does not establish the state's

responsibility to provide education and healthcare -- two demands made by millions of Chileans who have taken to the streets.

#### Turna driver, two others at fault FROM PAGE 16 Earlier on Thursday, Railways Visiting the spot on Wednesday, committees which has submitted its Minister Nurul Islam Sujan said he the railways minister said the driver of

report.

Soon after the accident, Bangladesh Railway suspended Turna Nishita

driver Taser Uddin, his assistant Apu Dey and guard Abdur Rahman over violating signals. Asked whether the probe found the

three guilty, a member of the probe committee said, "Their names came up several times." Contacted last night, BR Director

General Md Shamsuzzaman said he was yet to receive the investigation report.

would disclose the probe findings after receiving reports from the three committees formed by the BR and his ministry.

probe reports would be available within next week.

The Dhaka-bound Turna Nishita Chattogram-Express rammed bound Udayan Express from Sylhet at Mandobagh Railway Station in Brahmanbaria's Kasba early on Tuesday.

Turna Nishita Express violated signals, which caused the accident. FOUR MORE REPORTS PENDING The railways ministry had formed a

He expressed optimism that three four-member probe committee, led by Additional Secretary Rafiqul Islam five working days.

and asked it to submit a report within The BR formed a four-member investigation committee, headed by Chief Operating Superintendent

government railway inspector to probe the incident and submit a report. Moreover, the Brahmanbaria

possible.

district administration formed a probe body, led by Additional District Magistrate Mitu Mariyam, and asked it to file a report within three working

The ministry also asked the

days. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Mitu said although they could not talk to any railway officials yet, they were hopeful of completing their probe (East) Nazmul Islam, and asked it to within the deadline of Sunday. come up with its report as soon as