

MYANMAR ARMY OFFENSIVES IN CHIN STATE
More than 500 civil rights groups urge UN intervention
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Your Right to Know

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"They [AL leaders] are indulging in plundering by repeatedly hiking prices of commodities, diesel and electricity. Those directly involved in the looting will cash in on the increased fuel prices."

SENIOR BNP LEADER AMIR KHASRU MAHMUD CHOWDHURY

"We need to help support a free and fair global press to hold leaders to account."

USAID CHIEF SAMANTHA POWER WHILE ANNOUNCING FINANCIAL HELP FOR OVERSEAS JOURNALISTS TO SURVIVE LAWSUITS MEANT TO SILENCE THEM

"Those who forget their ancestors, betray their motherland and split the country will not come to a good end."

CHINA SPOKESWOMAN ZHU FENGLIAN SAYS BEIJING WILL SHOW NO MERCY FOR TAIWAN'S INDEPENDENCE 'DIEHARDS'

HOSTAGE to mindless moves

People suffer as transport owners, workers enforce strike over fuel price hike; veg, fish get costlier

STAR REPORT

Commuters and businesses suffered heavily yesterday as buses and trucks stayed off the roads to protest the abrupt 23 percent hike in the prices of kerosene and diesel.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader urged the transport owners and workers to withdraw their strike considering the people's sufferings, but his words rang hollow to them.

The city dwellers woke up to find the thoroughfares were largely devoid of buses and minibuses. Only some state-owned BRTC buses operated in the capital, but those were packed with passengers.

This left most with the costlier auto-rickshaws or motorcycles as their only means to get around.

When a journey would cost only Tk 30, it cost Nazrul Islam, a resident of Shewrapara, Tk 350 yesterday.

"We are simply held hostage - nobody cares for us," said Mizan Rahman, who had to pay three times the regular rickshaw fare yesterday to reach his workplace in Gulshan-1 from his Malibagh home for his workplace.

To avoid paying the higher fare, people were seen walking to their destinations in most of the areas.

But many did not have the luxury of time: candidates for the admission test of the seven Dhaka University-affiliated colleges and two dozen government recruitment tests struggled to reach their exam centres on time for the transport scarcity.

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A countrywide strike by transport owners and workers over the fuel price hike caused huge suffering to passengers yesterday. People heading for the capital are seen crossing the Gabtoli bridge on foot as buses are off the road. Top right, a woman along with a child is waiting to catch a three-wheeler near Barishal Kendrio Bus Terminal in the city's Nothullabab area. Bottom right, the Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover is largely empty while buses are parked near the Sayedabad bus terminal in the capital.



PHOTO: STAR

LEARNING LOSS

Redress it, right now

Experts urge measures as govt yet to assess gaps caused by school closure amid pandemic

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

A report last month said nearly eight million students across the country were at risk of learning loss due to the prolonged school closure caused by the pandemic, but the government still appears to be in the dark about the situation on the ground.

It has recently tasked the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) and the Bangladesh Examination Development Unit (BEDU) with assessing the Covid-induced academic loss of primary and secondary students. It also asked them to figure out ways to recoup the losses.

The NCTB plans to carry out its own study to learn about the educational opportunities lost by primary students due to the closure for about 18 months. The BEDU, which mainly deals with evaluations at the secondary level, is likely to have its assessment done by the end of next month, officials of the two organisations told The Daily Star.

Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk, director general of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), said, "We are



working on analysing the learning loss. It will take time to complete the work.

"After getting the findings, we will take up programmes to recover the loss."

The term learning loss refers to any specific or general loss of knowledge and skills or to reversals in academic progress, most commonly due to extended gaps or discontinuities in a student's education, according to the UK-based education and development forum, UKFIET.

As their attention was drawn to the matter, several educationists said the government should already have completed the assessment and started taking measures.

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Excellent resources for researchers

PM on 2 new publications on Bangabandhu

UNB, London

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the publication of "Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" will be excellent resources for researchers on Bangladesh's politics and history as these unveiled how the Pakistani government snooped on Bangabandhu and his family.

"The real and complete history of the country from Language Movement to Independence will be found here; people across the globe will get ideas about the sacrifice and struggle of Bangabandhu," she said.

Hasina said this at the international launching ceremony of the two publications titled "Secret Documents" and "Mujib & Introduction" at a hotel in London on Thursday.

The Secret Documents is a collection of the Intelligence Branch Reports on the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Bangladesh during the Pakistani period. The prime minister unveiled the cover of the two publications at the programme.

Talking about the newly-published volumes of secret documents, she said these volumes will provide useful insight for political leaders across nations and generations.



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CLIMATE SUMMIT 2021

If not now, when?

Youth groups protest lack of action at climate summit; Thunberg brands COP26 a 'failure'

AGENCIES

Thousands of young people marched through the streets of Glasgow yesterday to protest a lack of climate action with a clear message to negotiators at the COP26 summit: "If not now, when?"

Inside the COP26 conference venue in the Scottish city, civil society leaders took over discussions at the end of a week of government speeches and pledges that included promises to phase out coal, slash emissions of the potent greenhouse gas methane and reduce deforestation.

"We must not declare victory here," said former US Vice President Al Gore, who shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for his work informing the world about climate change. "We know that we have made progress, but we are far from the goals that we need to reach."

Campaigners and pressure groups have been underwhelmed by the commitments made so far, many of which are voluntary, exclude the biggest polluters, or set deadlines decades away.

Swedish teenage activist Greta Thunberg said that pledges from some nations made during COP26 to accelerate their emissions cuts amounted to little more than "a two-week long celebration of business as usual and 'blah, blah, blah'."

"It is not a secret that COP26 is a failure," she told the thousands of people gathered at the protest.

"This is no longer a climate conference. This is now a global greenwashing festival."

Campaigners say they expect up to 50,000 demonstrators in the Scottish city today as part of a global round of climate protests.

Onlookers to yesterday's march lined the streets and hung out of windows to watch the stream of protesters, who held banners reading "No Planet B" and "Climate Action Now".

Sixteen-year-old protester Hannah McInnes called climate change "the most universally devastating problem in the world", adding: "It's our lives and our futures that are on the line."

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POLLS VIOLENCE
Don't want any mother to lose child

Election commissioner seeks help from all candidates in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Election Commissioner Md Rafiqul Islam yesterday sought cooperation from all the candidates to hold union parishad polls in Narayanganj in a peaceful manner.

"If you [candidates] work fairly, you all together can maintain a healthy election atmosphere. I can firmly say that we don't need to deploy Rab, BGB or police if you all act rightly," he said while addressing a meeting as the chief guest.

Rafiqul was exchanging views with chairman and member aspirants at Narayanganj Sadar Upazila Parishad auditorium in the town.

"We want to see fair and peaceful elections in Narayanganj. We will take legal actions against those who will try to make the situation volatile. Whoever the person is either

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Firefighters put out pockets of fire at a shoe factory in the capital's Swarighat. The fire, which swept through the factory early yesterday, claimed the lives of five workers.

Five perish in Old Dhaka factory fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people were killed as a fire ravaged an unauthorised shoe sole manufacturing factory, stashed with flammable polymer and glue, in Old Dhaka's Swarighat area early yesterday.

All the victims are believed to be staffers of the factory. The bodies, charred beyond recognition, were kept at the morgue of Sir Salimullah Medical College and would be handed to families after DNA tests.

Police, fire service and local sources said the fire broke out around 1:15am. At that time, seven factory staffers were in their sleep on the first floor of the factory named Rumana Rubber Industry.

Some 50 people work at the factory in two shifts. The building also houses a warehouse. All machines were kept on the 6500sqft ground floor.

"I woke up hearing screams for help. I saw flames engulfing both the ground and first floors," Abdur Razzaq, a labourer working at an adjacent rubber factory, told The Daily Star. The man lives nearby.

Dinomoni Sharma, deputy director (Dhaka) of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said they rushed to the spot immediately after being informed, but the fire had already spread inside the two floors.

"The fire spread fast as there was a huge stash of combustible polymer and glue. The factory does not have any authorisation to run. Its structure is faulty. Besides, it did not have any fire safety gear," he told this daily.

Eight fire engines brought the blaze under control around 3:00am. The bodies were recovered around an hour later.

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