

## UK clears Assange extradition to US

AFP, London



Britain yesterday approved a US government request to extradite WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to face trial over the publication of secret military files, prompting outrage from his supporters.

Home Secretary Priti Patel's interior ministry said Assange had 14 days to appeal the decision, which comes after a UK court issued a formal order clearing his removal in April.

Assange's supporters have held frequent rallies to protest the planned deportation in what they claim is a defence of media freedom and free speech.

His wife, Stella, has pleaded for his release from custody after they had two children in secret he was holed up for years in Ecuador's London embassy. "We're going to fight this. We're going to use every appeal avenue," she told reporters.

WikiLeaks called Patel's decision a "dark day for press freedom and for British democracy" and vowed to pursue the appeal to the High Court.

It accused the United States of having "plotted his assassination".

"Julian did nothing wrong. He has committed no crime and is not a criminal. He is a journalist and a publisher, and he is being punished for doing his job," the group said in a statement.

WikiLeaks said the case was "political", as Assange published evidence that the United States "committed war crimes and covered them up".

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## Covid positivity rate rises to 6.27 percent

UNB, Dhaka

Amid a surging positivity rate Bangladesh recorded 433 new coronavirus cases in 24 hours till yesterday morning, taking the country's total caseload to 1,955,427, the health directorate said.

The country's total fatalities, however, remained unchanged at 29,131 as no death was reported during the period, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

The daily test positivity rate rose to 6.27 percent from Thursday's 5.76 percent with 6,905 samples tested during the period.

The country on Thursday saw 357 cases with zero death.

The mortality rate remained unchanged at 1.49 percent. The recovery rates declined to 97.46 percent as 93 patients recovered during this period.

In May, the country reported only four Covid-linked deaths and 816 new cases, while 7,356 patients recovered from the disease, according to the DGHS.

Among the four deaths during the period, one was vaccinated with a single dose of Covid vaccine while three were vaccinated with two doses.



A man uses a phone to photograph the bullet casings at the spot where three Palestinians were killed inside a vehicle during an operation by Israeli forces in Jenin in the occupied West Bank, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

### OCCUPIED WEST BANK

# Three Palestinians killed in Israeli army raid

12 others hurt as tensions flare ahead of Biden's visit next month

AFP, Jenin

Three Palestinians were killed and 12 others were wounded yesterday during an Israeli army raid in Jenin, a stronghold of armed Palestinian factions in the occupied West Bank.

The men were killed when Israeli forces opened fire on a vehicle in which they were, the Palestinian news agency Wafa said.

"Fierce clashes" then ensued in the area, with Israeli troops firing at Palestinians, wounding 12, Wafa reported.

An AFP photographer said a white vehicle riddled with bullet holes was in the area where Israeli forces have stepped up operations in recent months.

The men were identified as Yusef Salah, 23, Baraa Lahluh, 24, and Laitih Abu Srur, 24, all from Jenin.

The Islamic group Hamas said Lahluh was one of its commanders in the West Bank and vowed that the killings "will not go unpunished".

The funerals of the three men took place early yesterday afternoon in Jenin in the presence of large crowds

and armed Palestinian fighters.

The Israeli army said in a statement that its troops had been conducting an operation in Jenin to search for weapons at two different locations.

The soldiers had come under fire as they arrived at the first location and they retaliated before identifying a suspicious vehicle on the side of the road on their way to the second location, it said.

"Armed assailants inside a vehicle shot at the soldiers, who responded with live fire to neutralise the assailants," the army said on its Twitter account.

Following an exchange of fire, soldiers found weapons, including two M-16 assault rifles and cartridges at the scene.

The Israeli army has ramped up raids in and around the occupied West Bank's Jenin camp, a stronghold of Palestinian armed factions.

US President Joe Biden is expected in Israel and the West Bank next month.

Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, a prominent

TV reporter with Al Jazeera, was shot dead last month in Jenin while she was covering an Israeli army operation.

The Palestinian Authority, Al Jazeera and Qatar, where the channel is based, accused the Israeli army of killing the journalist. Several journalistic probes have also pointed in the same direction.

A Palestinian investigation said the reporter -- who was wearing a bullet-proof vest with "press" written on it and a helmet when she was shot -- was killed in what it described as a war crime.

Israel has denied the allegations, arguing that she could have been killed by a Palestinian gunman, but later said it could not rule out the possibility that it was Israeli soldiers.

The Israeli army has not yet released its conclusion following an internal investigation.

The Israeli police had launched the internal investigation following an international outcry after Abu Akleh's coffin was almost dropped when police attacked the pallbearers during her funeral.

## DB arrests two more over Tipu murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of police has arrested two more men over the murders of Awami League leader Jahidul Islam Tipu and college student Samia Afran Jamal Prity.

Emran Hossain Jitu, 32, and Rakibur Rahman Rakib, 31, were arrested from Motijheel area on Thursday night, said a DB official, seeking anonymity.

Jitu is an arms trader from whom criminals collected bullets used in the double murder.

The bullets reached key suspect Sumon Shikder Musa after changing hands of three people including Rakib, he added.

Yesterday, a Dhaka court placed Jitu and Rakib on two-day remand for interrogation after the investigation officer of the case placed them before it with seven-day remand prayers.

With the two, at least 16 persons have been arrested in the case so far.

The court also placed Musa on a four-day fresh remand in the case yesterday.

### ROOPPUR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

## Another worker dies at project site

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A labourer died at Rooppur nuclear power plant site after a heavy electric equipment fell on him on Thursday night.

Anwar Hossain, 30, of Kushtia's Bheramara upazila, was an electrical mechanic.

Ruhul Kudus, in charge of the site office, said Anwar was working on a project when a distribution box suddenly fell on him.

Anwar was critically injured and rushed to a hospital. He breathed his last on the way to the hospital around 10:30pm, he added.

Arbinda Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station, said the body was sent to Pabna General Hospital for autopsy.

## Shipyard worker dies in accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A shipbreaking yard worker has died after fighting for his life for five days after being hit by a steel wire.

Mohammad Faruk, 27, of Noakhali's Companganj upazila, suffered serious injuries at his workplace Golden Shipyard.

The shipbreaking yard is owned by former Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Manjur Alam.

Contacted, Manjur said the worker got hit by a steel wire straight in the head.

"We took him to Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of Treatment Hospital in the port city where he died on Thursday," he said.

Asked, he said his shipbreaking yard takes every possible safety measures.

## Floods pummel Northeast

FROM PAGE 1

Guchhagram village in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila said, "The level of the floodwater is reminding us of the 2004 and 1998 floods. Most people are heading to shelter centres."

The Jadukata and Surma rivers were flowing 154cm and 120cm above danger level at Lorergarh and Sunamganj points respectively yesterday morning. The Surma was flowing 108cm above the danger level at Kanaighat and 70 cm at Sylhet points, according to the FFWC.

Thirteen rivers were flowing above the danger level in the country yesterday.

Sirajul Islam, president of shop owners' association in Sunamganj town, said, "Even in 2004, I did not see water rise so much in a day. In the last 20 years, the people of Sunamganj have not seen such a terrible flood situation."

Jahangir Hossain, deputy commissioner of Sunamganj, said the severity of the flood situation has surpassed all

past records.

Md Mozibur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Sylhet, said, "The situation is getting dangerous and the army responded to our call to help stranded people. We are trying our best to rescue people and to extend relief to them."

A huge number of people in Sylhet and Sunamganj was without power as electricity supply was halted to avoid accidents.

According to the Power Development Board in Sylhet divisional office, at least 1.8 lakh consumers did not have electricity in different upazilas of Sylhet and Sunamganj, including Sadar upazila of Sylhet, South Surma and Chhatak upazilas of Sunamganj, and Sylhet metropolis and its surrounding areas.

Md Arafat-al-Majid Bhuiyan, sub-divisional engineer of Power Development Board in Sylhet, told The Daily Star that the power supply in Sylhet and Sunamganj districts were severely affected by the flood.

Abdur Razzak, executive engineer of PDB in Sylhet, said electricity supply will be restored as soon as the flood situation improves.

Debojit Singha, additional divisional commissioner (general) of Sylhet, said almost 90 percent of Sunamganj Sadar, Dowarabazar and Chhatak upazilas of Sunamganj, and Gowainghat and Companiganj of Sylhet was seriously affected.

"We're taking measures to provide dry food to people. Food from the less affected districts like Habiganj and Moulvibazar are being transported to the affected areas to reach people quickly," he said.

**FLOOD IN NORTH** Besides Sylhet division, the flood also affected Netrakona, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram and Rangpur.

The situation may further deteriorate in the low-lying areas of Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Rangpur, and Kurigram districts, according to the FFWC.

In Rangpur, low-lying

areas of Gangachara upazila were inundated as the Teesta rose to 5cm above danger level on Thursday night.

It inundated crops on vast areas, roads and households causing immense hardship to over two million people.

"Almost all croplands in our village have been submerged. Even my peanut field has gone under water," said Shahin Islam of Purba Mahipur village.

The Brahmaputra was flowing 5cm above the danger level in Kurigram's Chilmari point and Dharla 9cm above the danger level at Shimulbari point of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon, according to officials of Bangladesh Water Development Board.

Many people have taken shelter on roads, schools and dykes. Road communications have collapsed, crops on vast areas have gone under water.

[Our Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Lalmonirhat and Dinajpur correspondents contributed to this report]

## Forever young!

FROM PAGE 1

Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan, a teacher of DU international relations department, blamed it on the parent organisations. "They just want someone who can fight the opponents and hurl abuse."

Criticising the process of choosing student leaderships by parent organisations, Prof Anu Muhammad also said it became the tradition that no student bodies would elect their own leaders.

The issue came to the fore after BCL last month barred JCD activists from entering the DU campus on the ground that all of them are not students.

JCD leaders, however, said it is the BCL top leaders who are not regular students.

"They [BCL] are not letting us enter the campus saying we are not regular students. But they themselves are not regular students. So, how could they do politics on the campus?" questioned JCD General Secretary Saif Mahmud.

Saif enrolled at DU in 2005-06 session, and after completing regular graduation courses, he is now an evening course student under the Institute of Social Welfare and Research.

JCD President Kazi Rawnakul Islam Srabon, a DU student of 2003-04 session, is enrolled in an evening course at the Department of Information Science and Library Management.

According to the university rules, only

regular students are allowed to stay in the halls.

An order of the Dhaka University Syndicate states that none can remain a regular student of DU for more than eight years. Within these eight years, he or she has to complete graduation in six years and post-graduation in two years.

Evening courses, designed to spread higher education among job holders, take one to two years.

JCD's DU unit Convener Akter Hossain was admitted to the university in 2007-08 session and Member Secretary Aman Ullah Aman in 2009-10.

BCL President Al Nahian Khan Joy and General Secretary Lekhak Bhattacharya enrolled in 2008-09.

Joy is now admitted to an evening course of the criminology department. Lekhak also has got admission to an evening course of Institute of Social Welfare and Research.

BCL DU unit President Sanjit Chandra Das was admitted to the DU in 2009-10 and its General Secretary Saddam Hussain in 2011-12.

Saddam was the most junior among the top four BCL leaders who had studentship till last year. It took him eight years to complete his graduation. He was given the extra years following a special permission of the dean.

Contacted, DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Akhtaruzzaman said, "It's true that there is a rule of six years for honours and two years for master's. But sometimes, students are

given extra time through different processes."

Nahian Khan Joy told this newspaper that Chhatra League activists can actively take part in student politics till 29 years of age, as per the organisation's constitution.

"Both Chhatra Dal president and general secretary are 10 years older than me," he said, adding that JCD leaders are not allowed to stay in dormitories as they are not regular students.

However, The Daily Star found at least 70 central and DU unit leaders of BCL who are not regular students but still staying at the dormitories illegally.

Joydev Bhattacharya, acting president of Chhatra Front (Marxist) central committee, was a student of the 2003-2004 session and General Secretary Rashed Shahriar of 2005-2006.

The DU unit president and secretary of the organisation, Salman Siddiqui and Pragati Barman Toma, were admitted in 2010-2011.

None of the four are regular students of the university anymore.

Asked about it, Salman said, "Our leadership is selected in line with the constitution of our organisation."

Chhatra Union President Faiz Ullah was a student of 2010-11 session while General Secretary Dipak Sil of 2009-10. "Our leadership is elected according to our own constitution. Studentship cannot be a criterion; basically the issue is being brought up to

keep us away from student politics," said Faiz.

Rashidul Haq, president of Chhatra League backed by a faction of Jatiya Samjantrik Dal President, was a Dhaka College student of 2005-06 session while General Secretary Masud Ahmed a DU student of 2008-09.

Kazi Abdul Motaleb, president of Chhatra Maitree, is not a regular student while Atulan Das, its general secretary, is doing his post-graduation from a private university. The organisation has formed a seven-member convening committee to arrange a council of its DU unit.

Chhatra Front DU unit President Rajib Kanti and General Secretary Sohail Ahmed are regular students as they are from 2016-17 session.

Prof Syed Anwar Husain, noted academic and historian, said, "I have never seen in my 52 years of career that the Chhatra League and Chhatra Dal fought each other over the issues relating to students' interest -- like crises of seat, library or classroom."

"So, how can we say those are student organisations?"

Prof Tanzimuddin thinks that Ducsu elections not being held was a reason for non-students leading the organisations as only regular students can participate in the Ducsu polls.

"These so-called student leaders usually remain isolated from general students ... this cannot be beneficial to general students as they remain busy serving the interests of their parent organisations," he added.