

THAKURGAON POLLS VIOLENCE

## No case filed even 2 days after infant’s death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

Even after two days of the incident, no case was filed over the death of an infant who died allegedly in police firing amid post-polls violence in Thakurgaon’s Ranisankail upazila.

“A case will be filed after the declaration of the union parishad election results,” said SM Jahid Iqbal, officer-in-charge of Ranisankail Police Station.

Officials of the Election Commission will file the case as the death was related to the polls, he added.

Sumaiya, eight-month-old daughter of local Mohammad Badsha, died on her mother’s lap on Wednesday evening at the polls centre after police opened fire on the supporters of a defeated member candidate.

Although 48 hours have passed since the incident took place, villagers were still in a panic, multiple villagers told The Daily Star.

The victim’s family members said they only wanted a fair investigation of the incident and justice for the child.

## Holy Ashura on August 9

UNB, *Dhaka*

Holy Ashura, commemorating the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), will be observed in the country on August 9 as the Muharram moon was not sighted in Bangladesh sky yesterday.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee held at the conference room of Islamic Foundation’s Baitul Mukarram office with Additional Secretary of Religious Affairs Ministry Md A Awal Howlader in the chair.

The Arabic month of Zilhaj will end on Saturday and the counting of Muharram will begin on Sunday, read a press release of the Islamic Foundation.

Holy Ashura is observed on 10th of Muharram in the Hijri year commemorating the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), grandson of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM).

On this day in the Hijri year of 61, Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) along with his family members and 72 followers embraced the martyrdom in the hands of soldiers of Yazid in the desert of Karbala to uphold the teachings of the Prophet (SM).



This handout picture taken and released by Ukrainian Emergency Service yesterday shows firefighters extinguishing a fire in a burned building as a result of shelling in Kharkiv region, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

## RUSSIA-CONTROLLED DONETSK 40 POWs killed in missile attack

Moscow, Kyiv trade blame; Zelensky says grain ships loaded for first shipment

REUTERS, *Odesa*

Dozens of Ukrainian prisoners of war appeared to have been killed when a prison building was destroyed in a missile strike yesterday, with Moscow and Kyiv accusing each other of carrying out the attack.

The deaths, some of which were confirmed by Reuters journalists at the damaged prison where the men were held, overshadowed UN-backed efforts to restart shipping grain from Ukraine and ease a looming global hunger crisis.

Russia’s defence ministry said 40 prisoners were killed and 75 wounded in the attack on the prison, in the frontline town of Olenivka, in a part of Donetsk province held by separatists.

It accused Kyiv of targeting it with US-made HIMARS rockets, Russian news agencies reported.

Ukraine’s armed forces denied carrying out the strike, saying Russian artillery had targeted the prison to hide the mistreatment of those held there and lay the blame on Ukraine. Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said Russia had committed a war crime and called for international condemnation of the incident.

Reuters TV footage showed the remains of a cavernous burned-out building filled with metal beds, some with charred bodies still lying on them while other bodies were

lined up on military stretchers or on the ground outside.

The Russian defence ministry said that the prison housed Ukrainian prisoners of war and that eight prison staff were also wounded. Russian-backed separatist leader Denis Pushilin was quoted saying there were no foreigners among the 193 detainees.

The Ukrainian government has accused Russia of atrocities and brutality against civilians during the invasion and said it has identified more than 10,000 possible war crimes.

Its armed forces general staff said the prison attack was an attempt to shift the blame.

“In this way, the Russian occupiers pursued their criminal goals - to accuse Ukraine of committing ‘war crimes’, as well as to hide the torture of prisoners and executions,” it said.

Russia has denied involvement in war crimes, accused Kyiv of staging them to smear its forces and said it is investigating Ukrainian war crimes.

A spokesman for the Moscow-backed separatists told journalists in Olenivka that Ukraine had attacked after the prisoners of war had begun talking about crimes conducted by the Ukrainian military. There was no way to immediately verify either of the two versions of events.

Separately, Ukraine said at least five people had been killed and seven wounded in a Russian missile strike on the southeastern city of Mykolaiv, a river port just off the Black Sea, as Russia fired across frontlines in eastern and southern Ukraine.

A missile struck near a public transport stop, regional governor Vitaly Kim said on Telegram.

News of the missile strike came as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his country was ready and awaiting a signal from the United Nations and Turkey to start the grain shipments from its southern ports.

Russia and Ukraine agreed last week to unblock grain exports from Black Sea ports, which have been threatened by Russian attacks since it invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov told reporters in the southern port of Odesa that the country was ready to ship grain from two ports under the UN-brokered agreement but that no date had been set for the first shipment to leave.

“In total, 17 ships were loaded before the war. Today we began the loading of another ship at Chornomorsk. We have, in principle, solved almost all technical questions,” he said.

## Member of militant outfit ABT gets life term

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

A Lalmonirhat court yesterday sentenced a member of the banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team to life imprisonment in an arms case.

The convict is Mahadi Saddam Hossain Sabuj, 25, of Bhotmari village in the district’s Kaliganj upazila.

According to the case statement, four-five ABT members led by Sabuj were holding a secret meeting to carry out subversive activities near Bhotmari Bazar in Kaliganj on September 9, 2018.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-13 in Rangpur raided there. The team arrested Sabuj while others managed to flee.

Rab members recovered a foreign pistol, magazine, two bullets and books on jihad from his possession, said the case statement.

Two cases were filed against Sabuj with Kaliganj Police Station.

Akmal Hossain, public prosecutor of Lalmonirhat Judge’s Court, said Sabuj is now in the district jail.

## 10th-grader sent to correction centre over rape of two minors

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Manikganj*

A teenager has been sent to Gazipur Correction Centre in connection with rapes of two children in Manikganj.

The judge of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal ordered this on Thursday afternoon, said AKM Nurul Huda Rubel, special public prosecutor of the tribunal.

Abdur Rauf Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Manikganj Sadar Police Station, said on July 12, a 10th-grader, aged around 15, of a village in Sadar upazila took a 10-year-old girl to his house and raped her. He also raped another sixth-grader, the OC added.

The police officer said after they were informed of the incidents, they arrested the teenage boy on Wednesday.

Mother of a victim filed a case accusing the teenager on Thursday.

The Daily Star is not naming the accused as he is under 18.

## Another dies from Covid

UNB, *Dhaka*

Bangladesh recorded another coronavirus death and 355 fresh cases in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

With the latest count, the country’s total fatalities reached 29,285 while the caseload 2,004,543, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

The daily case positivity rate declined to 5.84 percent from Thursday’s 6.62 as 6,083 samples were tested.

The dead was a man from Dhaka division.

The mortality rate remained unchanged at 1.46 percent. The recovery rate rose to 96.82 percent from Thursday’s 96.80 percent.

In June, the country reported 18 Covid-linked deaths and 20,201 new cases, according to the DGHS.

Bangladesh reported its first zero Covid death on November 20 last year since the pandemic broke out in March 2020.

The country registered its highest daily caseload of 16,230 on July 28 last year and daily fatalities of 264 on August 10 in the same year.

## Fun trip ends in tragedy

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barriers were lowered because the train was approaching. But a passenger of the vehicle got down and pulled up the barrier. The vehicle then attempted to cross the tracks.

Police later held Saddam for interrogation, said Hasan Chowdhury, superintendent of General Railway Police (GRP) in Chattogram.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Students of a coaching centre pose for a photo in Chattogram’s Hathazari yesterday morning, hours before a few of them embarked on a trip to Purbha Khoiyachora Jhorna in Mirsharai by a microbus. Some of those pictured died in the accident when a train hit the microbus at a level crossing in Mirsharai.

Jahangir Hossain, general manager (east zone) of Bangladesh Railway, also told reporters that he heard that the driver of the vehicle ignored the gateman.

However, quoting witnesses, police and the UNO said no gateman was present at the level crossing and the barriers on both sides of the crossing were not lowered at the time.

Locals said they first heard a loud bang and a screeching noise. They later saw the mangled vehicle in front of the locomotive and started rescuing the passengers before the firefighters arrived.

“Firefighters recovered 11 bodies and rescued the injured passengers,” said Station Officer Imam Hossain of

Mirsharai fire service.

It took officials three hours to remove the totalled vehicle from the tracks and resume Dhaka-Chattogram train services, officials said.

**A WITNESS ACCOUNT**

Kalim Uddin, who was travelling in the locomotive, said it was raining at the time and he saw the HiAce moving a bit slowly towards the tracks and get

## Everything shattered

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R&J Coaching Center in Jugirhat of Amanbazar. He lived in Akbar’s house in Hathazari. Hisham’s brother lives in Australia while another sister is a teacher in Dhaka.

Overcome with grief in front of Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH)’s emergency gate, Akbar said, “His [Hisham’s] father passed away when he was two. I raised him as my son and fulfilled his every demand, just like his father would have.

“Around 8:00am as he was leaving the house, Hisham said he was going to the waterfall along with his teachers and friends [of the coaching centre]. He was very excited and also made a video call to his mother before leaving,” the uncle said.

“I repeatedly asked him not to go to the picnic, but he would not listen.”

A total of 18 people – 12 students, four teachers of R&J Coaching Center, and the driver and his assistant – were going to visit the Khoiyachora falls in Mirsharai yesterday morning by a HiAce microbus.

Five of the students were HSC examinees from Jogirhat Ziaur Rahman College while seven were SSC candidates from Najumia High School.

The tragic accident happened on the way back from the picnic. Eleven people died on the spot, including all four teachers – Jiaul Haque Sajib, Wahidul Alam Jisan, Rakib Khan, and Ridwan Rahman.

As news of the accident spread, family members, students and friends gathered at Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH). The air at the hospital seemed to become heavy with fear, panic and grief as nothing but news that their loved ones were okay could console them.

Seven passengers of the hired microbus were undergoing treatment at CMCH.

**ALL FOUR FRIENDS KILLED**

On June 15, four friends – Sajib, Jisan, Rakib, and Ridwan – established the coaching centre.

As students started enrolling there, the families of the four friends started hoping that the centre would flourish, but that hope was shattered just a month and a half later.

When Sajib, a student of mathematics department at Omar Gani MES College in the port city, left home for the visit to Khoiyachora falls, he asked his father Md Hamid to pray for him.

“Sajib told me that he was going to attend a picnic with the teachers and students of his coaching centre. He asked me to pray for him ... Who could ever imagine that this would be his last journey?” said a wailing Hamid.

“What will happen to us now? How will we live without him?” asked Hamid, who runs a grocery shop in Aman Bazar.

Holding on to his father, Sajib’s younger brother Mujibul Ahmed Tausif said, “I was sleeping when he [Sajib] left the house. Please come back, brother, please!”

The father and the son were waiting for the dead body in the hospital.

Faruk Chowdhury, a teacher of another coaching centre in the same area, said, “All four teachers were my students and they were part-time teachers of my coaching centre before starting their own coaching centre.”

He continued: “They started the coaching centre in the last month with big dreams.”

[FM Mizanur Rahaman, Md Nazrul Islam, Mohammad Suman and Arun Bikash Dey contributed to this report]

## Venezuela’s Maduro regime loses latest step of UK gold case

AFP, LONDON

The Venezuelan government of President Nicolas Maduro yesterday vowed to fight on after the latest UK judgment in a long-running legal tussle over who gets to control the oil-rich country’s gold reserves.

UK judge Sara Cockerill ruled for the rival government of opposition leader Juan Guaido in her technical decision concerning appointments made to the Banco Central de Venezuela (BCV) by Guaido.

## Death lurks

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the authorities at an inter-ministerial meeting in January last year decided to take several measures.

Constructing speed breakers on both sides of level crossings, reducing the number of illegal level crossings and building overpasses or underpasses in future projects were among the decisions. Representatives of LGRD, road transport and bridges and railways ministries and Bangladesh Railway (BR) were present at the meeting.

ARI Director Prof Md Hadiuzzaman yesterday said accidents are taking place at unmanned and unapproved level crossings amid absence of gatemen and lack of awareness of commuters.

“The fatalities could have been reduced significantly had the authorities constructed speed breakers and installed and maintained flush lights,” he told The Daily Star.

He also said it is unfortunate that different government agencies have constructed many level crossings without the approval from Bangladesh Railway. There are also no gatemen at these points.

“The government agencies which built the crossings have to be held accountable if any accidents take place in those places,” he said.

## Young Tigers take on Zim

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the aforementioned four stalwarts. Previously, the last time that the Tigers played a T20I without any one of Shakib, Mushfiqur, Mahmudullah and Tamim was during their 65-run loss to New Zealand in Auckland in April 2021.

With seniors missing from the side, the onus will be on youngsters to lift the Tigers’ spirits up in the format, in which they have only won one in their last 12 outings.

22-year-old pacer Hasan Mahmud, who last featured for Bangladesh 16 months ago, was included in both the T20I and ODI squads for the tour after regaining full fitness from injury.

Uncapped opener Pervez Hossain has also been called up, while Mehedi Hasan Miraz, a Test and ODI regular,

There are 1,412 authorised level crossings and 964 of those are unmanned, according to a latest document of Bangladesh Railway. Besides, there are 1,149 unauthorised level crossings which have no gatemen.

At least nine government bodies were involved in building unauthorised level crossings, with the LGED having constructed the highest 516.

Asked whether the decisions taken in January last year’s meeting have yet been implemented, Rail Minister Nurul Islam Sujan said it is not possible in one day. But some decisions like constructing underpasses or overpasses are being implemented under the new projects.

“The problems will not be solved if only the railway is given all the responsibilities; other government agencies who have jurisdiction over roads also have to take responsibilities,” he said, adding the railway authority giving any approval doesn’t mean it has taken the responsibility of safety of all the crossings.

The minister said there are around 4,000 level crossings and it requires six gatemen for each. It is not possible for the railway to appoint such a huge manpower.

## Govt pushing

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are skyrocketing, reserves are becoming empty, load shedding is happening on a massive scale; so, it is high time to oust the government.

“Now we have only one demand and that is resignation of the government. Step down from office immediately and hand over power to a caretaker government.”