

Bangladesh, all other countries should have free, fair polls

Says US state dept

UNB, Dhaka

The United States has reiterated that they support everyone's right to freely exercise their role in a democratic society.

"We oppose any restrictions on human rights," US Department of State Spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters during a regular media briefing in Washington yesterday.

He said visa restrictions would apply to anyone who undermines the democratic election process in Bangladesh.

"Actions that constitute undermining the democratic election process include vote rigging, voter intimidation, the use of violence to prevent people from exercising their rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, and the use of measures designed to prevent political parties, voters, civil society, or the media from disseminating their views," said the spokesperson.

Responding to another question, he said they do not take a position with respect to any political party in Bangladesh or in other country.

"But we believe that Bangladesh and all countries throughout the world should have free and fair elections," US Department of State Spokesperson Miller said.

3 Palestinians killed by Israeli troops in West Bank

AFP, NABLUS

Israeli troops killed three Palestinians in the occupied West Bank yesterday, the Palestinian health ministry said, the latest deaths in a surge of violence in the territory since early last year.

"Three Palestinians have been killed by Israeli bullets in Nablus," the ministry said. Palestinian militant group Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, said the three were members of its armed wing.

The Israeli army said three "armed terrorists" had opened fire on its soldiers from a vehicle in a Nablus neighbourhood and the troops fired back "to neutralise" them.

The soldiers recovered three M-16 rifles, a gun, cartridges and other military equipment, the army said in a statement.

The Palestinian health ministry identified the dead as Nour al-Deen al-Ardah, 32, Montaser Saleme, 33, and Saad al-Kharaz, 43.

AL plans tight rein on the capital

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Apart from the rallies to be organised by the BNP and its like-minded parties, ruling party leaders are also worried about a protest rally that the Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB) has announced to hold on the same day at the north gate of the Baitul Mukarram, which is quite near the AL's rally venue.

Though the IAB is not an ally of the BNP, it has recently extended its support for the party's one-point movement. At tomorrow's protest rally, it will press for several demands, including the dissolution of parliament and the Election Commission.

Law enforcers have also taken all-out measures, including keeping BNP leaders and activists under close watch, and preventing its activists from inviting people to join its grand rally using loudspeakers.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) will set up check posts at various points in the capital to enhance security, along with additional posts with metal detectors at the city's entry points.

Intelligence-led operations to recover arms and explosives have also been ordered in connection with the BNP rally, a high-ranking police official told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

At the BNP rally, an adequate number of police officials will be

deployed to capture footage while watchtowers will be erected around the venue for enhanced surveillance, said police sources.

Dog squads will also be deployed at check posts to ensure thorough searches. Uniformed policemen will be accompanied by plainclothes officers to further strengthen security arrangements.

The DMP will give BNP permission at the last minute to hold its rally. The final decision on BNP's rally venue will be made after analysing an intelligence report so that the police can take security measures to ensure safety for all, said sources at the DMP.

Speaking to The Daily Star, DMP Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq said the police, as public servants, would provide necessary support to all parties to hold rallies. He, however, said any attempt to incite violence and anarchy would not be tolerated.

Mohammad Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (Detective Branch) of DMP, said comprehensive security measures would be taken to address all potential risks, although there was no information about any subversive activities or attempts at the moment.

"Nevertheless, we are exercising increased vigilance to prevent any unauthorised activities and ensure a safe environment during the events," he added.

EU worried over DSA, media environment

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want to purchase goods from the same kind of environment.

Meanwhile, Kamal Uddin told reporters after meeting Gilmore that the NHRC always raises its voice against incidents of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and custodial deaths.

"The government will need to pay more attention [to these issues] as they undermine the country's image," he told reporters after the meeting.

After discussions with Shahriar Alam, state minister for foreign affairs,

Gilmore said, "We wish to see free and fair elections conducted in a peaceful, democratic atmosphere."

He added that an EU exploratory electoral mission recently visited Bangladesh and they will now approach EU high representative Josep Borrell, who will decide whether or not an EU observer mission would be sent during the upcoming national election.

"We also spoke about the need for a healthy, open and free environment for the civil society and the media," Gilmore said.

He further said the EU does not only

notice the voting day when observing elections but also the pre-polls environment, the situations relating to party participation, political debates, media freedom and more.

Shahriar Alam said that while the election was discussed, ensuring the participation of all parties was not. "We have, however, renewed our commitment to holding a free and fair election."

He added that he hopes the 50-year-long relationship between Bangladesh and the EU further advances, which would help strengthen democratic institutions.



PHOTO: DHAKA SUMMER CON

Dhaka's thriving anime, comic book scene

NAVID ANJUM

In the busy streets of Dhaka, where tradition and modernity co-exist, a new phenomenon is sweeping through the city: the rise of an exciting pop-culture renaissance. As the global wave of anime, comic book movies, and fandom culture continue to captivate audiences everywhere, Dhaka has emerged as a vibrant hub for enthusiasts and creatives alike, showcasing a deep passion for all things animated and heroic.

With the advent of streaming platforms and online communities, the youth of Dhaka are exploring diverse narratives, vivid animation styles, and immersive storytelling that transcend cultural boundaries. Anime once considered a niche has found a devoted following within the city's borders. From timeless classics like "Dragon Ball" and "Naruto" to recent hits like "Attack on Titan" and "Chainsaw Man," Dhaka's anime fandom is flourishing.

Local enthusiasts have formed communities and arranged conventions, fostering a sense of camaraderie and creating shared experiences. So, many people are doing cosplays, making fan art, and animated short films. Some have even published their original work in magazines.

Dhaka's comic book scene is also experiencing a remarkable surge in popularity. The colourful pages that



COVER ART: RASHAD IMAM TANNOY

once transported readers to distant galaxies and heroic adventures are now cherished by a growing number of comic book enthusiasts. From American superheroes to Japanese manga, local comic book stores are teeming with graphic novels and collectibles that evoke nostalgia and ignite the imagination.

Recognising the potential of this burgeoning subculture, Dhaka's creative industry is embracing the influence of anime and comic books. Local artists, writers, and animators are infusing their work with the

distinctive visual styles and narrative elements that have made these art forms so beloved worldwide. This convergence of cultures is giving rise to a unique blend of storytelling that resonates with both local and international audiences.

Moreover, the popularity of anime and comic book adaptations has created a thriving market for merchandise, including action figures, apparel, and memorabilia. Entrepreneurs in Dhaka have seized this opportunity, establishing shops, and online platforms that cater to the ever-growing demand for fandom-related products.

Dhaka's newfound passion for anime and comic books has not only provided an avenue for entertainment but has also created a platform for expression, collaboration, and the celebration of creativity. It is a testament to the city's ability to adapt, embrace, and integrate diverse influences into its cultural fabric.

As we witness the emergence of a vibrant pop-culture scene, Dhaka stands poised to become a hub where imagination knows no bounds. So, let us celebrate Dhaka's anime and comic book scene, as it propels us into fantastical realms, encourages artistic exploration, and inspires the next generation of dreamers and storytellers.

Girl 'takes own life' during police raid

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Leaders and activists have already started arriving in the capital, the insiders added. BNP leaders said the successful holding of the grand rally may change the course of the party's movement. And that's why plans are being drawn up centering the rally.

The party on Monday sought permission from Dhaka Metropolitan Police to hold the rally either at Nayapalton or at Suhrawardy Udyan.

The ruling Awami League, however, has announced that Jubo League, Svecchhasebak League and Chhatra League will jointly hold a rally tomorrow at the south gate of the Baitul Mukarram national mosque. Political analysts see it as an apparent move to counter the BNP's programme.

The BNP's 37 like-minded political parties and alliances are also set to organise separate demonstrations tomorrow at 10 places near the BNP's rally venue in a bid to arrange mass

gatherings in a major part of the capital, party insiders told The Daily Star.

Islami Andolan Bangladesh, which recently conveyed its support for the BNP's one-point demand, will also hold a rally tomorrow at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram.

The grand rally is going to be a turning point in our anti-government movement. The course of the movement will be changed. We want to take the movement towards the final phase through this grand rally," BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury told this correspondent yesterday.

He said the Dhaka rally would turn into "people's rally" for restoration of their voting and democratic rights.

Khasru said a series of fresh programmes will be announced at the rally.

According to several top BNP leaders, discussion is underway within the party about the fresh agitation programmes.

They claimed that we run a drug business here. But they did not find any drugs," she said, adding that police threatened to take her away when she refused to pay the money.

She admitted to The Daily Star that she used to sell cannabis and Yaba, but she left the trade a year ago.

Lovely alleged that she suffered some bruises as police and their informants tried to forcibly take her away.

THERAID Baishakhi's family members said SI Zahir and ASI Ferdous along with five to six informants started banging the gate of their house at Aradsha Nagar on Monday evening.

Her grandmother, Rahima Khatun, said she told the police to go away as her sons were not home. SI Zahir then threatened to arrest Lovely.

At one stage, Rahima opened the gate and the policemen went straight to the top floor where Lovely, Baishakhi and her husband Mintu were.

As police wanted to search Lovely's room, Lovely and Baishakhi resisted, resulting an altercation.

"At one point, ASI Ferdous slapped Baishakhi and dragged her down to the second floor. He then kicked and slapped Baishakhi and locked her in a room," said Baishakhi's sister, who

claimed to have witnessed the incident. She also said Baishakhi insisted from inside the locked room that there was no narcotics in the house.

As the policemen were unmoved, Baishakhi threatened to take her own life if the police did not open the door, said Baishakhi's sister and her aunt Rozina Begum.

They alleged that ASI Ferdous then went upstairs and informed SI Zahir about the threat.

Zahir grabbed a scarf that was hanging on a rope on the third-floor balcony and gave it to Ferdous, who then threw it through the window and asked Baishakhi to do whatever she wanted, they said.

After a while, ASI Ferdous peeked through the window and saw Baishakhi hanging.

On the news of her death, locals lay siege to the house and clashed with the cops.

Additional police force led by DC Jasim Uddin Mollah rushed there and brought the situation under control around 1:00am, when this correspondent was present at the scene.

Victim's uncle Mohammad Sumon said police recovered Baishakhi's body

HC bench asks lawyers not to use "my lord" to address them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two judges of a High Court bench asked lawyers not to use the words "my lord" to address them.

The bench of Justices Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain and AKM Zahurul Huq instructed lawyers to use "your honour" or "sir" instead.

An official of the bench issued a notice in this regard yesterday.

Contacted, Supreme Court's Appellate Division Registrar Mohammad Saifur Rahman told The Daily Star that he was unsure if there was any rule for addressing SC judges.

An HC source said lawyers have been using "my lord" to address SC judges since the British era and it is a tradition in most commonwealth countries.

There is no provision in the rules of the Appellate Division or the High Court Division for addressing judges as "my lord", the source added.

The source also said former chief justice Fazle Kaderi Mohammad Abdul Munim issued a notice on October 4, 1982, banning the use of the words "my lord". But the directive is not followed anymore.

Arrest warrant issued against suspended ASP

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday issued an arrest warrant against Sohel Uddin Prince, a suspended assistant superintendent of police (ASP), in a case filed against him on charge of raping a woman.

According to the case statement, the victim, who was in a relationship with the ASP, went to the Ramna Police Officers' Mess around 7:00pm on February 4, 2021 and was raped there by the accused at gunpoint.

Following the incident, the victim filed a case against Sohel with the tribunal on November 23 last year.

After a hearing, the tribunal ordered the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court to conduct a judicial inquiry into the matter and to submit a report.

A metropolitan magistrate conducted a judicial inquiry and found the incident true. The magistrate then sent the inquiry report to the tribunal for the next course of action.

Earlier, the accused was sued by his wife on charge of torturing her for Tk 10 lakh dowry, following which he was suspended.

9 BCL men expelled for breaching discipline

UNB, Rangpur

Nine activists of Rangpur district unit Chhatra League were expelled on Sunday for breaching discipline and clashing during a party programme around a month ago.

They are Siam Alam of Rangpur Textile College, Jihad Rahman Jisan of Lalmonirhat's Uttar Bangla College, Monazat, Al Amin Hossain, Rajon Hossain of Rangpur Government College, Shahadat Hossain Rimon, Imon Islam, Masud Rana Safin, and Amin Hossain of Rangpur's Carmichael College.

SMSabbir Ahmed, president of Rangpur district unit BCL, said the central body expelled them after scrutinising video footage of the clashes during the divisional rally.

Tomorrow's rally could be a turning point for BNP

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gatherings in a major part of the capital, party insiders told The Daily Star.

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