



BNP-Jamaat knows nothing but violence PM says they're still trying to hold people hostage



UNB, Dhaka Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said BNP and Jamaat know nothing but bomb and grenade attacks. "They killed people, unleashing arson violence .... They are still trying to harass people in different ways by holding them hostage," she said referring to the violence before and during the 2014 general polls.

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With footbridges too far away, students of Scholar's School and College, near Dhanmondi's Abahani field, would earlier cross the road with a lot of risk. To ensure their safety, the school authorities have now assigned a worker to hold up a sign for incoming cars and help the students cross the road. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'I was in a frightening situation'

Says Bangladeshi UN official on his return from Yemen where Al-Qaeda held him hostage for 18 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi UN official Lt Col (retired) AKM Sufiul Anam, who was taken hostage by Al-Qaeda in Yemen, returned home yesterday after 18 long months in captivity. An Emirates flight carrying Sufiul landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital at 5:20pm from Dubai. At the airport, a senior official of the National Security Intelligence (NSI) briefed reporters about his release.

Speaking to journalists at the second terminal, Sufiul said he, along with four other colleagues, was relocated 18 times to various places during his captivity, but he was not tortured by his captors.

"They would record videos of me, where I was made to play for my life. I was not sure who they sent the footages to."

The first such video appeared on Site Intelligence's SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



AKM Sufiul Anam

## Islami Bank tightens lending to mend health

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Islami Bank has tightened its lending activities as the embattled bank looks to shore up its financial health by September.

At the bank's 324th board meeting held on June 19, the discretionary powers of its officials for loan sanctioning and opening letters of credit were curtailed.

The managing director has to approve fresh loan proposals of up to Tk 50 lakh, according to the internal circular to heads of all zones, principals, wings, divisions, head office departments and branch managers, in-charges of sub-branches on July 20. Previously, the MD approved loans of Tk 5 crore and above.

For loan proposals of upwards of Tk 50 lakh, the executive committee would take a call.

All letters of credit (LCs) shall be opened with at least 100 percent margin with coverage of foreign exchange rate fluctuation to protect the interest of the bank except for back-to-back LCs, LCs for industrial raw materials and LCs under government priority sectors including essential commodities.

All LCs within the limit must be opened by taking case-to-case permission from the head office.

The moves are expected to shore up the Shariah-based lender's cash stockpile, which came under pressure after media reports of its loan irregularities. The bank had approved Tk 7,246 crore in loans to nine companies that exist only on paper, as per the reports.

This prompted depositors to withdraw deposits from the bank, which was once a trusted lender of common people.

At the end of March, which is the latest available data, the bank's defaulted loans stood at Tk 6,101 crore, up SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## FUEL PRICES

# Syncing with int'l markets may not begin in Sept

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The plans to finalise a system to automatically synchronise domestic fuel prices with international ones from September may get delayed.

The system called dynamic fuel pricing makes local prices reflect fluctuations in the global market.

Implementation of a dynamic fuel pricing mechanism was one of the conditions set by the International Monetary Fund for its \$4.7 billion loan. Besides, many economists have long been recommending dynamic fuel pricing.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal in his budget speech in June said officials were working to establish a system of formula-based price adjustment in the energy sector.

He expressed hopes that the formula would be finalised by September. Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), which submitted a formula to the energy ministry in July, is still waiting for the ministry's feedback. BPC officials at a meeting at the ministry last week presented their recommendations that included a 10 percent profit margin for the BPC, said a ministry official, adding that the large margin of profit was not realistic at all.

**"The prices have been rather high in the international market in the last three months, and the government will wait until the international prices fall."**

An energy ministry official said, requesting anonymity

by the singapore-based S&P Global Commodity Insights and adjust local prices every three months.

According to a BPC official with knowledge of the proceedings, the local prices will be set in accordance SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## They want instability, not welfare Momen on foreigners

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has said foreigners do not want welfare of the country, they rather want instability.

"Foreigners have many advantages if there is instability in the country and if it is weak. That's why they want to weaken the country," he said at a seminar on the recent development trajectory of Bangladesh.

The event was organised by Bangladesh Study Trust at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The minister said the citizens and the government should develop the country.

He said elections will be held in 22 countries ahead of Bangladesh's parliamentary polls in December, but the Bangladesh elections is the most talked about issue at the US state department. "This is very sad."

Momen said one of the SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## US-BASED IRI SURVEY 53 percent thinks Bangladesh heading the wrong way

### 70pc lauds Hasina, govt for good show in many sectors

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A survey by the US-based International Republican Institute (IRI) has found that 53 percent of Bangladeshis believes the country is headed in the wrong direction, while 44 percent thinks it is in right direction.

However, 70 percent of Bangladeshis approves of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government's performance on a range of issues. The approval of the opposition has gone up from 36 percent in September 2019 to 63 percent in this survey.

The study, published on Tuesday, was conducted on behalf of IRI's Center for Insights in Survey Research under the supervision of Redstone Scientific between March 1 and April 6, 2023.

Data was collected using a multi-stage stratified probability sample through in-person, in-home interviews. The sample consists of 5,000 respondents aged 18 and older and is representative of voting age adults nationally.

Stratified sampling is a random sampling method of dividing the population into various subgroups and drawing a random sample from each.

"Only 44 percent say Bangladesh is headed in the right direction, down from 76 percent in September 2019. Rising prices are the primary reason for this rise in pessimism," the survey found.

Three percent respondents either did not answer or said they don't know. SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## ONE-POINT MOVEMENT BNP to bring out processions in city tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP will bring out two processions in the capital tomorrow as part of its one-point movement demanding resignation of the government.

"The processions will be brought out after 2:00pm," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said at a press conference at its Nayapaltan central office yesterday.

He said the BNP's like-minded political parties who are waging a simultaneous movement would hold similar programmes.

BNP's Dhaka south and north city units will organise the processions.

Fakhrul said they hope the government will not obstruct their peaceful movement. "If any obstacle is made, the government will be responsible for it."

Responding to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's statements regarding BNP's movement, Fakhrul said, "BNP's movement is peaceful. However, the Awami League is consistently creating obstacles to our every movement."

In reply to a query from a journalist, he said, "No permission is required from any authorities for our newly announced programme."

On July 29, the BNP and its like-minded parties held sit-ins at the entrances to the capital.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Indigenous dancers perform the Tripura Katharak dance, also known as "botol naach", at the Central Shaheed Minar on the occasion of World Indigenous Day yesterday. This dance is an ode to "Katharak", a tribal deity, worshipped for happiness, prosperity and a beautiful future for newlyweds. The props used represent knowledge (wax lamp), power and honor (bottle), wealth (dish) and welfare (water pitcher).

## AL MAN'S DEATH Houses, shops of Jubo Jote leader, relatives attacked

STAR REPORT

Houses and business establishments owned by a Jubo Jote leader and his relatives were vandalised by unidentified people yesterday, hours after the death of a ruling party man, who was earlier attacked by miscreants, in Kushtia.

The deceased, Sanjay Kumar Pramanik, 35, was the president of Bheramara municipality Swachhchasebak League, an associate body of Awami League.

Sanjay, who suffered bullet and stab injuries after the attack on the night of August 2 in Bheramara, died around 8:30am yesterday while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said his younger brother Sampad Kumar Pramanik.

The day after the attack, Sanjay's wife Bithi Rani Dey filed a case against 14 people with Bheramara Police Station.

Mostafizur Rahman, sports affairs secretary of Bheramara upazila Jubo Jote -- the youth wing of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal -- was made the prime accused in the case, according SEE PAGE 6 COL 4