



ATTACK ON NESCO OFFICE Assaulted engineer gets suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, LALMONIRHAT

Rocky Chandra Das, executive engineer of Northern Electricity Supply Company (Nesco) office in Kaliganj upazila of Lalmonirhat, has been suspended for “violating office rules”.

The move came on Wednesday, a day after he was assaulted and threatened by a group of youths who identified themselves as ruling party men.

The suspension letter issued by Nesco said Rocky has been attached to the company chief engineer’s office in Rangpur.

A copy of the suspension letter was sent to journalists on Wednesday night.

This newspaper could not reach Rocky for comments as his mobile phone was found switched off.

Meanwhile, Nesco Managing Director Zakiul Islam visited Kaliganj Nesco office yesterday afternoon.

Speaking to journalists, he said, “The social welfare minister’s son Rakibuzzaman Ahmed, also an Awami League leader, was not present at the scene of the attack at Nesco Kaliganj office. His was not involved in the incident.”

He said a three-member committee has been formed to identify those involved.

A written complaint was filed by a Nesco official with Kaliganj Police Station yesterday noon over the attack.

However, he did not name the accused in the complaint.

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Farmers harvest Aman from a field in Sylhet's Sonatola area. They are happy with the good yield this season thanks to favourable weather. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

UN body’s suggestions not reflected in draft CSA

Special rapporteur writes to govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The technical recommendations made by a UN rights body about the Digital Security Act have not been reflected in the draft Cyber Security Act, Irene Khan, UN special rapporteur for freedom of expression, said in a letter to the government.



Irene Khan

The draft CSA contains vague and overly broad provisions, criminalising legitimate forms of expression, reproduced from the DSA, she said.

The recommendations, sent by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in June

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BNP stares at tough times on streets Say insiders; party observes founding anniv with nationwide programmes today

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP observes its 45th founding anniversary today amid growing doubts among supporters about the effectiveness of their movement demanding Awami League government’s resignation.

Many leaders and activists feel that the rallies and processions they have been organising will not cut as they can see that the party lacks a proper strategy and coordination between top leaders and the rank and file, a BNP standing committee member told The Daily Star.

They fear that the non-partisan polls-time administration might be an elusive goal, especially since the BNP events in August visibly lacked energy and organisation.

“We are going through the toughest time. The one-point movement [for election under a caretaker government] lacks public support and direction. If it fails, the BNP may become irrelevant,” said the leader of a Dhaka city unit, requesting anonymity.

As the party has not been in power for 15 years, the longest the party has ever been in opposition, even the key leaders doubt whether their party has a future after the parliamentary election, likely to be held in January.

Insiders say the absence of dynamic leadership and weakness as an organisation have hamstrung BNP’s

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AL to stay on streets entire month

Plans to gather 5 lakh people for rallies today, tomorrow

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and AASHIQ ABDULLAH APU

Apart from preparing for the election, the Awami League will tighten its grip on the streets throughout September by organising political programmes on a regular basis.

The AL high-ups believe that the BNP will hold several programmes this month to realise its one-point demand for the removal of AL from power and elections under a non-partisan government and that is why the ruling party wants to stay on the streets with its programmes, sources said.

The AL wants to flaunt its strength and popularity today through Bangladesh Chhatra League’s, pro-AL student body, rally at the Suhrawardy Udyan and tomorrow at another rally at the old trade fair ground centring the inauguration of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway.

It plans to gather 5 lakh people for the programmes.

AL Joint General Secretary Bahauddin Nasim told The Daily Star that the party would be on the streets until the election.

“We along with the people will be

on the streets so that no evil force can deteriorate law and order. We will not allow BNP to carry out any destructive activities and if the party tries to do so, we will resist them,” he added.

The AL’s election-related activities will be in full swing in October and party President Sheikh Hasina will join rallies in different parts of the country, the sources said.

The prime minister will inaugurate a number of infrastructure projects in October and her party will organise rallies centring the inaugurations. It will also publicise the achievements across the country.

Hasina will not be in the country for about half of the month. She will be in New Delhi between September 8 and 10 to join the G20 Summit and in New York for 13 days from September 17 to join the 78th session of the UN General Assembly.

During her absence, the AL will publicise the government’s achievements since 2009 and hold mass contact programmes and rallies across the country, the sources said, adding that the party’s front and

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Govt not harassing Prof Yunus Momen says

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has said the government is not harassing Grameen Bank founder Prof Muhammad Yunus over political or any other issues, and that the global leaders writing letters in his support may lack information on the cases against him.

He also said that Bangladesh’s judiciary is independent and the government cannot influence the court.

“They can write letters for Prof Yunus. The matter is possibly not very clear to many of them. Many are thinking that the Nobel laureate is being harassed for political or other purposes. So far as I know, the case has not been filed by the government,” Momen told journalists in response to a question at a briefing at the foreign ministry yesterday.

On August 28, more

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Webb images reveal Ring Nebula in unprecedented detail

CNN ONLINE

The James Webb Space Telescope has revealed colourful new portraits of the iconic Ring Nebula.

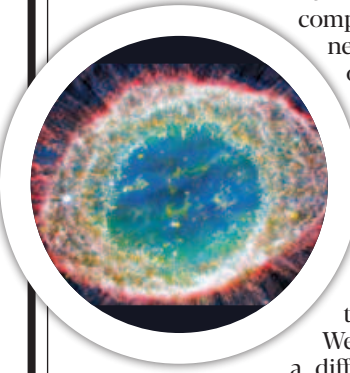
The new images capture the complex details of the planetary nebula, an enormous cloud of cosmic gas and dust that’s home to the remnants of a dying star.

The two images were taken in different wavelengths of infrared light, which is invisible to the human eye, using instruments on the space observatory.

Webb previously captured a different perspective on the Ring Nebula, as well as the similar-looking Southern Ring Nebula.

A longtime favourite of astronomers, the Ring Nebula has been studied for years due to its observability and the insight it can provide into the lifetime of stars. It is located in the Lyra constellation more than 2,000 light-years from Earth, but on clear evenings during the summer, sky gazers using binoculars can see it.

Planetary nebulae, which have nothing to do with planets despite the name, usually have a rounded structure and were so named because they initially resembled the disks from which planets form when French astronomer Charles Messier discovered one for the first time in 1764.



ALLEGED STOCK MANIPULATION India’s Adani hits back at new report

AFP, New Delhi

India’s Adani Group yesterday hit back at a new report investigating alleged manipulation of the conglomerate’s share prices, accusing its authors of conspiring to drive down its stocks for profit.

The globe-spanning ports-to-power conglomerate saw around \$120 billion wiped from its market value after US short-seller investment firm Hindenburg Research accused it of “brazen” corporate fraud.

On Wednesday, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) said it had uncovered financial documents backing Hindenburg’s claims that Adani had used offshore tax havens and related party transactions to drive up its share price.

The report said two men who had served as directors in Adani Group companies had spent years trading

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COMPETING FOR CANOPIES ... A black giant squirrel lounging on a tree branch in Moulvibazar’s Adampur. Found in many South and Southeast Asian countries, including Bangladesh, this is one of the largest species of squirrels in the world – sometimes weighing up to 1.05-1.25kg, with its head-and-body length going up to 34-37cm and a long tail which can grow till 42cm. The animal, like other squirrels, is solitary and extremely shy. It prefers living in forested areas, where it competes for canopies and food – seeds, pine cones, fruits and leaves -- with other arboreal animals such as primates. It also has a host of predators, mainly birds of prey, but its most dangerous one is humans. In recent decades, the animal’s habitat globally has steadily been encroached upon by human settlement, timber harvesting and agriculture, which, along with overhunting, has resulted in its population declining by at least 30 percent over the last 10 years. For this, the IUCN has listed the black giant squirrel in its “Near Threatened” category, urging its immediate conservation.

PHOTO: SHABBOSACHI DAS

74 killed as fire guts housing block in South Africa

52 hurt; Johannesburg city authorities say the block was turned into illegal housing

AFP, Johannesburg

A fire that tore through a five-storey building taken over for illegal housing killed more than 70 people including children in central Johannesburg overnight, the South African city’s emergency services said yesterday.

An additional 52 were injured in what is on track to become one of the deadliest fires worldwide in recent years. Bodies were discovered piled up at a security gate that was closed, preventing people from escaping the blaze, an official said.

City authorities said the municipality-owned building in a deprived, crime-ridden area had been turned into illegal housing after being abandoned. Most of those living there were foreigners, one resident said.

“We have now 74 fatalities and 52 people injured who were transported to various healthcare facilities for further medical care,” Emergency Management Services spokesman Robert Mulaudzi said.

At least twelve children were among those killed, the youngest under two years old, he said. Some were left burned beyond recognition.

“I’m grateful to be alive, there was a lot of us running, trying to find the fire exit and a lot of people eventually died because of the smoke inhalation,” said Kenny Bupe, a survivor caught up in the blaze while visiting a friend.

The 28-year-old told AFP he was part of a group that managed to break open a locked fire escape gate and run to safety, while others “jumped out” of windows to escape

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