



A section of filling station owners goes on strike today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A faction of Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners' Association is set to begin a nationwide strike from today demanding 7.5 percent sales commission, a gazette recognising pump owners as agents, and 50 years of economic life for tanker trucks.

The faction, led by Syed Sazzadul Karim Kabul and Mizanur Rahman Ratan, president and secretary general, announced the strike on August 27.

However, another faction yesterday announced it was in talks with the government which promised to fulfil the aforesaid demands by September 30.

This faction, led by Nazmul Haque and Mir Ahsan Uddin Parvez, urged the pump owners to "keep the business running as normal".

Mir Mohammad Aslam Uddin, deputy information officer at the energy ministry, said a gazette recognising the owners as agents may be issued soon while "the other demands are being considered".



Gridlocks on major city roads yesterday forced many to get off their vehicles midway and walk to their destinations. The photo was taken from Farmgate area in the afternoon.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Dhaka grinds to a halt on weekend

City dwellers suffer in gridlocks as civic rally has knock-on effect

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of city dwellers suffered long delays yesterday as they endured massive gridlocks on different city roads due to a civic rally organised by north and south city units of Awami League at the old trade fair ground in Agargaon.

The massive gathering caused traffic congestion on streets leading to the venue as leaders and activists from the AL's various affiliated bodies marched there in processions. The halt in public transportation eventually disrupted traffic flow across the street.

Major roads from Gulistan, Paltan, Shabagh, Science Lab, and Panthapath all remained gridlocked since 9:00am. Traffic almost came to a standstill on Mirpur Road, Bijoy Sarani, Farmgate, Mohakhali, Banglamotor, Elephant Road, Dhanmondi, and Green Road.

The situation worsened when people started commuting to work.

Eyewitnesses said that although the rally was on the occasion of the inauguration of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway, the suffering of commuters started earlier as ruling party supporters marched to the venue in procession from daybreak.

Meanwhile, getting to hospitals was a nightmare for many.

Jalal Hossain left Gulistan with his sick mother for

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College teacher hacked to death in broad daylight in Bogura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A college teacher was hacked to death in Shajahanpur, Bogura over a "family feud" yesterday.



Shahidul Islam, officer-in-Charge of Shajahanpur Police Station said, "Parvez was killed over a family feud. The attackers are from the same village. We are looking for the suspects."

He was also a vice-president of the Ashkepur Union Awami League.

Union Parishad Chairman Hazrat Ali said Parvez was going to Bogura town on his motorcycle around 10:45am when 4-5 people stopped and attacked him in Mathail Chapor area.

The attackers left him with a hand severed from the wrist.

Locals rushed him to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College hospital where he was declared dead.

Ali said, "One and half months ago, some locals attacked Parvez's elder brother Panna demanding money. They threatened Parvez too."

Shahidul Islam, officer-in-Charge of Shajahanpur Police Station said, "Parvez was killed over a family feud. The attackers are from the same village. We are looking for the suspects."

Mega projects alone can't ensure true development

Improving human resources is crucial: Wahiduddin Mahmud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Development of the country is not possible through the implementation of mega projects alone and without the human resource properly developed, said a noted economist.

"The infrastructure will end up looking like a skeleton and the country may fall into the low-middle income trap if the human resource is not developed," said economist Wahiduddin Mahmud.

The government should look into whether its infrastructure projects could attract foreign direct investment (FDI), he said in a conversation with journalists about the economy.

The event was organised by Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) at its Paltan office in the capital yesterday.

Wahiduddin, also an adviser to a former caretaker government, said some measures could have been taken instead of implementing a few mega projects with foreign loans.

For example, if buses stopped at designated places of the city roads and the traffic was managed better, the government would not have had to construct the mega infrastructures to ease traffic congestion, he added.

The economist said if the rivers could have been protected from encroachment, the

government would not have had to spend money on eviction drives and it would have also been able to develop an environment friendly communication system with low cost projects.

Wahiduddin said the government is implementing many mega projects with foreign loans which will have to be repaid.

Bangladesh's foreign loan doubled to \$100 billion from \$50 billion in the last three years and it will have to repay \$5 billion every year within the next three to four years. If the country borrows more, the repayment amount will increase, he said.

Also, some mega projects have been taken up at a time when giving financial assistance to low-income people is needed more. "This is not the time for taking up prestige projects," Wahiduddin said.

The former Dhaka University professor said it is important to assess how much foreign and local investments would be available for mega infrastructure projects before taking up those.

He said Vietnam also built major infrastructures and was able to attract \$10 billion FDI in a year, but Bangladesh could attract only \$1 billion a year despite implementing mega infrastructure projects.

On education, he said numerous universities

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North Korea fires multiple cruise missiles

AFP, Seoul

North Korea fired multiple cruise missiles off its west coast yesterday, Seoul's military said, the latest in a string of recent Pyongyang military actions.

The launches come three days after the North launched a pair of short-range ballistic missiles as part of a "tactical nuclear strike drill" prompted by the annual US-South Korean Ulchi Freedom Shield military exercises, which always infuriate the reclusive regime.

Pyongyang views such the drills as a rehearsal for invasion while the two allies say they are defensive in nature.

An unspecified number of cruise missiles were launched at around 4 am (1900 GMT) towards the Yellow Sea, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said yesterday in the statement, adding the specifications of the missiles were being evaluated.

"We have stepped up surveillance and monitoring and are maintaining utmost readiness in close coordination with the United States," the JCS said.

India launches spacecraft to study the sun

REUTERS, Bengaluru

Following quickly on the success of India's moon landing, the country's space agency launched a rocket yesterday to study the sun in its first such solar mission.

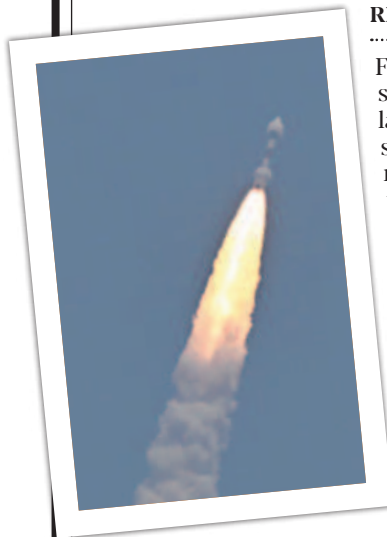
The rocket left a trail of smoke and fire as scientists clapped, a live broadcast on the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) website showed.

India's space agency on social media platform X, formerly Twitter, later said the satellite was now in orbit.

The broadcast was watched by more than 860,000 viewers, while thousands gathered at a viewing gallery near the launch site to see the lift-off of the probe, which aims to study solar winds which can cause disturbance on earth commonly seen as auroras.

Named after the Hindi word for the sun, the Aditya-L1 spacecraft took flight barely a week after India beat Russia to become the first country to land on the south pole of the moon. While Russia had a more powerful rocket, India's Chandrayaan-3 out-ended the Luna-25 to execute a textbook landing.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is pushing for India's space missions to play a larger role on a world stage dominated by the United States and China. Home Affairs Minister Amit Shah, on social media platform X, said the launch was a "giant step" towards Modi's vision.



Flood worsens in six districts

STAR REPORT

Swelling rivers have worsened flooding in six districts.

The Jamuna was flowing 18cm above the danger level at one place in Sirajganj yesterday, according to Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB).

In Tangail, vast areas have been flooded as the Jhanai was flowing 59cm above the danger level at Jokarchar, Jamuna 19cm at Porabari, and the Dhaleshwari 10cm at Elasin yesterday morning, according to BWDB.

Educational institutions in the flood-hit areas remained closed, said locals.

"Flood water started entering our house in the morning," said Laboni Ghosh, a resident of Kostapra in Bhuapur upazila.

In Jamalpur, homes of around 40,000 people have been flooded by the Jamuna, said Alamgir Hossain, the district relief officer.

The river was flowing 30cm above the danger level at Bahadurabad Ghat, according to BWDB.

At least 120 villages of Dewanganj upazila have been inundated. Academic activities at 28 educational institutions have been suspended, according to local administration.

People and their farm animals have taken shelter at flood centres. Local government representatives from the areas say people are suffering from shortage of food and water.

In Gaibandha, the Brahmaputra was flowing 26cm above the danger level at Fulchari yesterday afternoon.

"My house has been under water for five days. We

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Farmers harvest half-ripe paddy and load them into a boat yesterday, 10 days after the cropland was flooded in Shonpocha Char under Karnibari union in Bogura's Sariaikandi upazila.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

24th session of 11th JS begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 11th parliament is set to go into its 24th session today.

The session will start at 5:00pm at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, according to a press release of the parliament secretariat.

This is likely to be a brief session. Some important bills, including the much talked about cyber security bill, is likely to be placed in this session, sources at the parliament secretariat said.

The cabinet on August 7 approved in principle the proposed Cyber Security Act. It is expected to be passed in this session.

The Digital Security Act will be renamed Cyber Security Act, bringing some changes to the existing law.

The government, however, did not pay heed to the demands by rights groups and civil society members for repealing the DSA and enacting a new law.

According to sources, parliament may go into another session in October which will be the last session of the 11th Jatiya Sangsad.

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