

CASES UNDER DSA Khadija to be freed from jail after 14 months CJ-led SC bench clears way for her release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jagannath University student Khadijatul Kubra, who had been imprisoned under two DSA cases for over a year, is finally free to walk out of jail after a Supreme Court bench cleared the path yesterday.



During the hearing of her bail petition, filed by her lawyers BM Elias Kachi and Jyotirmoy Barua, Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, who led the bench, asked, "For how long has she been in jail?"

"One year and three months, your honour," responded her lawyers.

This visibly astonished the chief justice. The six-member bench of the Appellate Division then dismissed two petitions filed by the state challenging her bail.

Other five members of the bench are: Justice Burhanuddin, Justice M

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WHAT THE SLUG! ... A *Hypselodoris kanga*, a type of sea slug, more specifically a nudibranch, spotted around 10-12ft deep into the Bay of Bengal. This fascinating creature can be found largely in the Indo-Pacific region. It uses its striking orange and blue spots as a deterrent against predators. Nudibranchs have voracious appetites and prefer feeding on sea sponges, from which they absorb toxic chemicals and incorporate them into their mantle glands on their backs. They then use this chemical to repel their own predators! They also eat corals, anemones, algae or other nudibranchs. Sea slugs are crucial to the environment as they are indicator species, meaning their behaviour can give off clues about the health of the sea they are inhabiting. Nudibranchs, specifically, are also medically important as the toxic compound they acquire from their food can be used as powerful chemical agents to deter the growth of cancer cells in human beings.

PHOTO: SHARIF SARWAR

Won't join polls under Hasina-led government Say 6 Islamist parties

RASHIDUL HASAN

An alliance of six Islamist parties yesterday decided not to run in the January 7 general election under the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The combine demands the Election Commission announces a fresh polls schedule after political parties reaches a consensus through talks.

The decision came in a meeting of the alliance at the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh's office in the capital's Paltan, an alliance leader told The Daily Star.

The five other members of the alliance are Khelafat Majlish, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish, Muslim League, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon, and Nejam-e-Islami. All but Nejam-e-Islami are registered with the EC.

The alliance will take out a procession from the south gate of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Juma prayers today protesting the "unilateral

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GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES Bangladesh to face growing pressure

Director of Wilson Centre's South Asia Institute tells *The Daily Star*

Washington has been repeating its calls for a free and fair election in Bangladesh. Meanwhile, Delhi, after much silence, told the US at a meeting in New Delhi that it was Bangladesh's "internal issue". What are the big powers saying, doing, and why? Washington-based geopolitical analyst Michael Kugelman, director of South Asia Institute at the Washington-based Wilson Center, explains in an email interview.



PORIMOL PALMA

The Daily Star (DS): In the meeting, Delhi further told Washington it wants to see a democratic, progressive and stable Bangladesh. India also made the discussions with the US on Bangladesh public, but the US did not. What does this mean?

Michael Kugelman (MK): This is what one would expect India's publicly stated position to be: an uncontroversial stand, and, significantly, also a position that aligns with Washington's own publicly stated position. The US and India are close partners, and so they have a strong interest in taking public stands that reflect convergence. However, there may well be differences between New Delhi's publicly stated position and what India actually said.

DS: Is there any chance the US and

India are on the same page?

MK: I don't think they are completely on the same page with regard to Bangladesh. Broadly speaking, they may both support a democratic, progressive, and stable Bangladesh. But there are several likely points of divergence. First, the US has made democracy promotion a big part of its policy in Bangladesh, and it has been very public about it. India would prefer that the US not emphasise this policy, and especially that it not be so vocal about it.

The second point is, Delhi worries about the implications of BNP returning to power. It views BNP and its allies, especially the Jamaat-e-Islami, as an Islamist threat that could well be destabilising. In this sense, when New Delhi speaks of its support for a progressive and stable Bangladesh, it is

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ROHINGYA REPATRIATION Take steps to create conducive environment

UN tells Myanmar, adopts resolution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UN yesterday adopted a resolution calling on Myanmar to address the root causes of the Rohingya crisis and create a conducive environment in Rakhine to facilitate the voluntary, safe and dignified return of the refugees to their homeland.

The resolution on the situation of human rights of Rohingyas and other minorities in Myanmar was adopted by the third committee of the UN General Assembly by consensus.

Jointly tabled by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the EU, the resolution was co-sponsored by 114 countries, marking the highest level of international support since 2017, according to a statement.

This year's resolution highlights several critical developments.

It commends the generosity and humanitarian support of Bangladesh in hosting more than 1.2 million Rohingya refugees including its extensive investments in the Bhasan char project.

The resolution welcomes the recently adopted Security Council Resolution 2669 (2022), in which the council demanded an immediate end to all forms of violence throughout Myanmar, according to the statement.

It also calls for swift implementation of the Asean's five-point consensus to expedite the repatriation of Rohingyas from Bangladesh to Myanmar.

The resolution noted the ongoing justice and accountability processes and welcomed the developments in the case against Myanmar with the International Court of Justice and the investigation by the prosecution of the

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Israel takes Gaza port, battles Hamas fighters

EU top diplomat asks Israel 'not to be consumed by rage'

AGENCIES

Israeli troops yesterday advanced in their campaign to destroy Hamas in Gaza, fighting gun battles and taking control of a key port a day after a raid on the territory's main hospital.

The ground campaign has taken aim at key sites like Gaza government buildings and infrastructure, but also the Al-Shifa hospital that Israel says sits atop a Hamas command centre — a charge the group denies.

Bombardment thundered and gunfire rattled in besieged Gaza, AFP live video showed, while Israel's ambassador to the United Nations branded as "meaningless" a UN Security Council resolution calling for "extended" pauses in fighting.

The heads of numerous United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organisations said yesterday they would not take part in Gaza "safe zones" declared by only one side in the conflict.

The Israeli army said yesterday its troops had taken "operational control" of the port at Gaza City in the territory's

north, showing at least a dozen tanks and groups of soldiers massed on the coast near Gaza City.

With the Hamas-run health ministry saying the death toll from the offensive has now topped 11,500, including thousands of children, calls for a truce are mounting.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, on an Israel visit yesterday, called for the hostages to be immediately freed, but also urged Israel "not to be consumed by rage" in its battle with Hamas.

The Israeli military said that it launched an additional operation at Al-Shifa, hours

after a pre-dawn raid that Israeli forces said uncovered rifles, ammunition and explosives from the compound.

Before Israel first sent troops into the hospital complex on Wednesday, UN agencies estimated that 2,300 patients, staff and displaced civilians were sheltering at Al-Shifa. Palestinian medics said they are increasingly afraid for the

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- Two state solution only way to resolve conflict: Biden
- Palestinian death toll in Gaza rises to 11,500
- UN rights chief urges int'l probe into Israel-Hamas war violations

Archaeologists discover unknown ancient language

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Archaeological research in the Middle East is revealing how a long-forgotten ancient civilization used previously undiscovered linguistics to promote multiculturalism and political stability.

The ground-breaking discoveries are also shedding new light on how early empires functioned.

Ongoing excavations in Turkey — in the ruins of the ancient capital of the Hittite empire — are yielding remarkable evidence that the imperial civil service included entire departments fully or partly dedicated to researching the religions of subject peoples.

The evidence suggests that, back in the second millennium BC, Hittite leaders told their civil servants to record subject peoples' religious liturgies and other traditions by writing them down in their respective local languages (but in Hittite script) — so that those traditions could be preserved and incorporated into the empire's highly inclusive multicultural religious system.

So far, modern experts on ancient languages have discovered that Hittite civil servants preserved and recorded religious documents from at least five subject ethnic groups.



A Palestinian boy sits in a car trunk with belongings amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas, in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Depression in Bay may turn into cyclone

STAR REPORT

A deep depression formed in the Bay may intensify into a cyclonic storm today and start moving towards the coast, said the Met office.

The storm is not likely to be very strong, said Bazlur Rashid, meteorologist at the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).

The Indian Met office last night reported that the storm is expected to make landfall between Mongla and Khepupara with a wind speed of 60-70kmph tomorrow morning.

Meteorologists say there will be heavy showers in districts along the coast and in a few places in Dhaka, Rangpur, Sylhet and Mymensingh divisions.

The BMD asked authorities to hoist cautionary signal-3 at four seaports.

Vessels stopped operating between St Martin's Island and Teknaf yesterday morning, said Adnan Chowdhury, upazila nirbahi officer of Teknaf.