

Correction

In our story headlined “Candidates’ Affidavits: Asset values that don’t fail to amuse” published yesterday, we inadvertently mentioned that the value of the 4,265 square feet Dhanmondi flat owned by Narayanganj-5 MP Selim Osman’s wife was shown Tk 13.1 lakh in the lawmaker’s affidavit submitted to the Election Commission. The correct figure is Tk 39.1 lakh. We sincerely apologise for the mistake.

Woman suffers burns as former husband throws acid at her

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A woman has suffered burns after her ex-husband allegedly threw acid on her in Lalpur upazila of Natore.

The incident happened in Durduria village around 9:00pm on Tuesday, said Nasim Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Lalpur Police Station.

Rima Khatun, 23, is undergoing treatment at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, said the OC.

Maimuna Khatun, a four-year-old niece of Rima, also suffered minor burns as the child was sitting on her lap during the incident, the OC added.

According to the OC, Rima filed for divorce from Mohammad Zia four months ago failing to change his drug abuse habits. Zia was in jail for a drug-related case when Rima took the step.

According to the OC, Zia, who came out of jail a few days ago, went to Rima’s father’s house in Durduria village on Tuesday.

When Rima told Zia about the divorce around 9:00pm, he got angry and, at one point, threw acid at her.

He fled the scene before relatives of Rima came to her help.

Rima’s father Rantu Mondol yesterday filed a case under Acid Control Act against Zia with the Lalpur Police Station.

Police are conducting an operation to arrest the accused, said Md Tariqul Islam, superintendent of police in Natore.



Some underprivileged people gather around a fire for warmth in Dhaka’s Indira Road area on Tuesday night. The low temperatures over the last few days are causing difficulties for those living on the streets of the city.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

‘FOREIGN EFFORTS TO DISTABILISE RUSSIA’  
Putin calls for ‘severe’ response  
Ukraine to produce ‘one million drones’ in 2024, says Zelensky

AFP, Kyiv, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin called yesterday for a “severe” response to foreign agents who aim to destabilise Russia by aiding Ukraine.

“The Kyiv regime with direct support of foreign special services has taken the path of terrorist methods, practically state terrorism,” Putin said in a video address.

“These are acts of sabotage against civilian sites, transport and energy infrastructure, attacks against civilians and representatives of authority,” he said.

Numerous sabotages on Russian railroads and drone attacks attributed to Ukraine have been reported since Moscow launched its offensive in Ukraine in February 2022.

“The attempts by foreign special agents to destabilise the political and social situation in Russia must be severely stopped,” Putin said in his address on security agency workers’ day.

“Security services have no easy task. But you have all the necessary potential, all the possibilities in order to ensure the security of the state, of society and our citizens.”

Meanwhile, Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky said Tuesday that his country would next year produce one million drones, which have become a crucial factor in the fighting between Kyiv and Moscow.

“We will produce one million drones next year,” Zelensky said, adding that Ukraine would be able to make its own,

modern devices itself: “Our soldiers will receive Ukraine-made drones in their brigades.”

Both Ukraine and Russia are extensively using drones to scope out enemy positions, drop explosives and crash into targets.

Drones can then be sent to attack the target, or the intelligence they provide can be used for combat.

The prevalence of drone warfare has triggered an arms race between Moscow and Kyiv, with the latter planning to use artificial intelligence to better target Russian positions and defend against attacks.

Ukrainian officials told AFP the armed forces needed 100,000 to 120,000 drones per month in their efforts to fend off invading Russian troops.

Non-cooperation call after 27 years

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“In the interest of restoring the rights of every citizen of this country, there is no alternative to non-cooperation with the illegal regime of Hasina,” Rizvi said, urging people to suspend the payment of all taxes, fees, utility bills and other payments from today.

He also asked people to reconsider the safety and security of keeping their money in banks as the financial institutions have become “another medium for plundering by this illegal government”.

Rizvi urged voters to boycott the “one-sided dummy election” slated for January 7 next year.

“Do not go to the voting centres – that is your democratic right.”

The winners in the 12th national elections have already been decided, Rizvi said, while urging the returning

officers to refrain from carrying out election-related duties on January 7.

The “lakhs of party leaders and activists” accused in what he called “false and fabricated cases” have been told to stop appearing in courts.

“This government has taken away the independence of the court and the judiciary’s capacity to give you justice,” Rizvi added.

Asked if the BNP would be able to achieve what the AL pulled off in 1996, Shantanu Majumder, a professor at the University of Dhaka’s political science department, said: “The context is different this time.”

In 1996, all the political parties including the Jamaat-e-Islami were against the BNP. But this time, it is AL and allies versus BNP and allies.

“BNP could not mobilise a good number of people to take to the street

and that’s why their movement did not yield any result,” he said.

Since October 29, the BNP and its allies have enforced a series of hartals and blockades to press home their one-point demand.

The party held two rallies on December 10 and December 16, which helped boost the morale of the rank and file, BNP leaders told The Daily Star.

“Let’s see how people respond to this non-cooperation movement call,” Majumder added.

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters at the secretariate yesterday, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said that if the BNP men do not pay gas, electricity and water bills, the relevant government departments will take actions that they usually take for non-payment of bills.

Rail vulnerable to sabotage

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Kurigram found that nuts and bolts holding the rails to the sleepers had gone missing on a bridge.

Officials say it was by sheer luck that the problem was detected before any train got on the bridge.

Earlier in the day, the Rupsha Express heading to Khulna narrowly escaped derailment as several sleepers were removed near Dinaipur’s Birampur station.

According to a high BR official, residents of villages next to the risky spots will be alerted soon, and the police will also create awareness.

An intelligence source told this correspondent that officers were preparing a list of BNP Jamaat activists living near the risky places.

Anowar, superintendent of Dhaka Railway Police, said police were

working closely with BR’s “way men”.

The railway police recently sent a letter to the BR, requesting more fire extinguishers and CCTV cameras in every carriage.

A train usually has 14 to 20 carriages and only three to four police personnel, said SP Anowar. “If CCTV cameras are installed, it will be helpful to detect criminals,” he added.

BR Joint Director Saleh said there were security cameras in every station. “But no decision has been made about installing CCTV cameras on running trains.”

BR sources said a letter was sent from the office of the chief operating officer of railway’s eastern region to various departments of the railway, saying that “in the ongoing adverse political situation, tracks in certain areas should be patrolled.”

Cops zero in on two unidentified

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statements and trying to know from where the two youths boarded the train,” he said.

Asked what materials were used to set fire to the train, he said they found the presence of phosphorus in the samples of burned materials.

“We suspect that some other chemicals were used as well. We may be able to say clearly after having the chemical report,” the official added.

Mahmudul Hasan, deputy commissioner of the Intelligence Analysis Division of the CTTC, said they were collecting details of the fire.

Around 4:55am on Tuesday, the train attendants of Mohanganj Express spotted the fire when it reached near Cantonment station on the way to Kamlapur.

After the fire was doused around 6:30am near Tejgaon station, firefighters recovered the bodies of four people, including a three-year-old boy, from one of the three burnt carriages of the train.

The victims are Nadira Akhter Poppy, 35, her son Yeasin, 3, Bashir Dhali, 60, and Khokon Mia, 34, an assistant operator of a textile factory in Narayanganj.

Law enforcers were yet to make any arrest in connection with the incident at the time of filing the report last night.

Khaled Mosharrarf, a guard of the train, filed a case with Dhaka Railway Police Station on Tuesday night in this regard accusing unidentified people.

Anwar Hossain, superintendent of police of Dhaka Railway Police, told The Daily Star that they collected CCTV footage from nearby stations and areas and analysed those to detect any suspicious movements of people.

2 workers die in Gazipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Two workers died inside a septic tank yesterday while cleaning it in Sreepur upazila of Gazipur.

Mokhles, 40, of Netrakona and Masum, 24, of Thakurgaon may die inhaling toxic gas accumulated inside the tank, our Gazipur Correspondent reports quoting the fire service and police.

Quoting locals, Saruj Mia, duty officer of Sreepur Fire Service, said the workers got inside a septic tank at a house in Bormi area of Sreepur municipality around 5:25pm.

After waiting for nearly an hour, as they were not responding, the house owners called the Fire Service and Civil Defence, who recovered the bodies around 6:50pm. The duo might have died due to inhalation of the poisonous gas accumulated inside the septic tank, said Mahbub Hossain, in-charge of Sreepur Fire Station.

The bodies would be sent to a hospital for autopsy.

Jailed BNP leader dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A local BNP leader, jailed for political violence, died yesterday while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Noagaon.

Motibul Mondal, 55, organising secretary of ward 2 of Nazipur Municipality, was sent to jail on November 27, said Nazrul Islam, jail super of Naogaon Jail. He had been accused in two cases – one for assault and one for possessing explosives.

Nazrul Islam said Motibul had been under treatment at the jail hospital for respiratory issues since December 14.

As his condition worsened, Motibul was shifted to Naogaon 250-bed General Hospital today morning, he added. He died around 9:00am.

Abdus Salam deceased’s son confirmed his father’s death.

Zahidul Islam former general secretary of Naogaon district BNP demanded a proper investigation over Motibul’s death.

HUSBAND’S MURDER

Iran hangs ‘child bride’

AFP, PARIS

Iran yesterday hanged a woman convicted of murdering her husband, whom she married while still a child, defying an international campaign for clemency, rights groups said.

Samira Sabzian, who had been in prison for the past decade, was executed at dawn in Ghezel Hesar prison in the Tehran satellite city of Karaj.

Her execution comes as concern grows over the numbers of people this year executed by Iran, where hundreds of people have been hanged mainly on drugs and murder charges, including more than a dozen women.

Another 31 BNP men

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before the court.

According to the case statement, on February 1, 2018, some 40-50 leaders and activists of BNP and its allies illegally gathered on the street in front of Ananda Bhaban Community Centre in Paltan.

They then blasted three to four crude bombs, which caused panic among people and prevented police from carrying out their duties.

On the same day, Sub-inspector Arshad Hossain filed a case with Paltan Model Police Station.

Besides, 12 BNP activists were jailed for two years in another case filed with Badda Police Station over damaging properties in December 2018.

No convicts were present in the courtroom when Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ataullah delivered the judgment.

In another development, a Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against BNP leader Aman Ullah Aman and 212 others in two cases lodged in November 2013 and June 2017 over political violence in Keraniganj.

The cases were filed with Keraniganj Model Police Station on charges of blasting crude bombs, damaging properties, torching vehicles, vandalism, and assaulting police and obstructing them from performing duties.

Aman, convener of Dhaka north city unit BNP, is now in jail in the cases, while 170 others, now on bail, pleaded not guilty and demanded justice after Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate of Dhaka AKM Rakibul Hasan read out the charges to them.

The court set January 2 for starting the trial of the cases.

Soumya heroics in vain

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with the bat.

The difference in the performances of the top-order batters from both teams made the difference in the match.

Besides Soumya, the other top-order batters from Bangladesh Anamul Haque, skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto and Liton Das departed for single digit scores.

In contrast to Bangladesh’s innings, every top-order batter from New Zealand contributed significantly with Henry Nicholls top scoring with 95 and opener Will Young making 89.

The host batters also looked unperturbed against Bangladesh’s bowling attack, which lacked

penetration on a flat track.

The team management made a couple of changes from the first ODI with leg-spinner Rishad Hossain making his debut and pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib coming in place of Alif Hossain and Mustafizur Rahman respectively. But both had an ordinary day with the ball and went wicketless.

With the defeat, New Zealand have taken an unassailable 2-0 lead, turning the third match of the series into a dead rubber.

Having already lost the ODI series, Bangladesh will be playing for pride and to end their 18-match losing streak in ODIs in New Zealand against the hosts in the third ODI in Napier on Saturday.

Vote for boat to let us serve you again

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“They [BNP Jamaat] thought that with some incidents of arson attacks, the government would fall. It’s not that easy...,” she said.

The people of the country are getting the benefits and results of AL in power, she added.

“Our aim is to build a poverty-free Sonar Bangla and I am working with utmost rigour to that end.”

Hasina mentioned that she has nothing more to lose after losing most of her family members, including her father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

“Only my younger sister [Rehana] and I survived. After losing everything, I even deprived my children of the love of their mother as I returned to Bangladesh in 1981 to fulfill my father’s dream, which was to build the country with the spirit of the Liberation War.”

She said her government has already taken up a plan to build “Smart Bangladesh”.

“Bangladesh will be a modern technology-based country that will have a sustainable economy, merit-based education, and advanced society ... A righteous and transparent Bangladesh is what we want to build.”

Highlighting different development projects implemented by the government in last 15 years, she said if AL is voted back to power, it will take an initiative to introduce a metro rail in Sylhet, along with developing river banks for flood prevention.

She also said it will install a double-track rail line on the Dhaka-Sylhet

“Our aim is to build a poverty-free Sonar Bangla and I am working with utmost rigour to that end.”  
Sheikh Hasina

AL General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader; AL candidate for Sylhet-1 and Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen; presidium member Syeda Jebunnesa Huq; Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury, AL advisory council member Nurul Islam Nahid, Joint General Secretary and Education Minister Dipu Moni, Organising Secretary Shafiul Alam Chowdhury Nadel, and noted actress Tarin Jahan also spoke at the event.

Masuk Uddin, freedom fighter and president of Sylhet city AL, was in the chair while its General Secretary Zakir Hossain and Sylhet district AL General Secretary Nasir Uddin conducted the programme.

Centring the rally, the excitement was palpable in the entire region as locals as well as AL ranks decorated the city with pomp and flair for the arrival of their party chief ahead of the polls.

Though Hasina was scheduled to

join the rally at 3:00pm, thousands of people thronged the ground from early in the morning. Within a few hours, the ground was bursting at the seams.

Many even reached the venue the night before to book the spots of their choice.

Hours before Hasina arrived, the crowd had already spilled over to surrounding areas and roads.

While many people were seen happily waiting in queues to get inside the venue since morning, others were seen marching towards it in procession, chanting “Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu”, holding colourful placards, banners, festoons, and the party’s flag and electoral symbol – the boat.

AL leaders, activists and supporters from adjoining districts joined the rally on buses, pickups, motorcycles, while some even came on foot.

VISIT TO SHRINES

Ahead of the rally, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her sister Rehana offered prayers at the shrines of Hazrat Shahjalal and Hazrat Shah Paran, formally starting her party’s campaign for next month’s national election.

After arriving in Sylhet city in the morning, they first went to the mazar of Hazrat Shahjalal. As they spent some time there, Hasina recited from the Holy Quran and offered prayers.

They then visited the mazar of Hazrat Shah Paran and did the same.

On her way to the shrines, she was greeted with slogans and claps by people who had been waiting for her arrival on both sides of the road.