



**FASTBUILD**  
PROVIDES RODS OF ANY SHAPE AND SIZE AS PER DESIGN



**BSRM**  
building a safer nation

Terminal 3,  
Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport

Proud Construction Partner



## Dispute over money led to triple murder

Say cops after arresting relative in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police yesterday arrested the prime suspect over the gruesome triple murder in Sirajganj's Tarash upazila.

The bodies of the victims – Paromita Sarkar Tushi, 15, and her parents Bikash Sarkar, 46, and Swarna Rani Sarkar – were recovered on Tuesday. Police say they were suspected to have been hacked to death two days before.

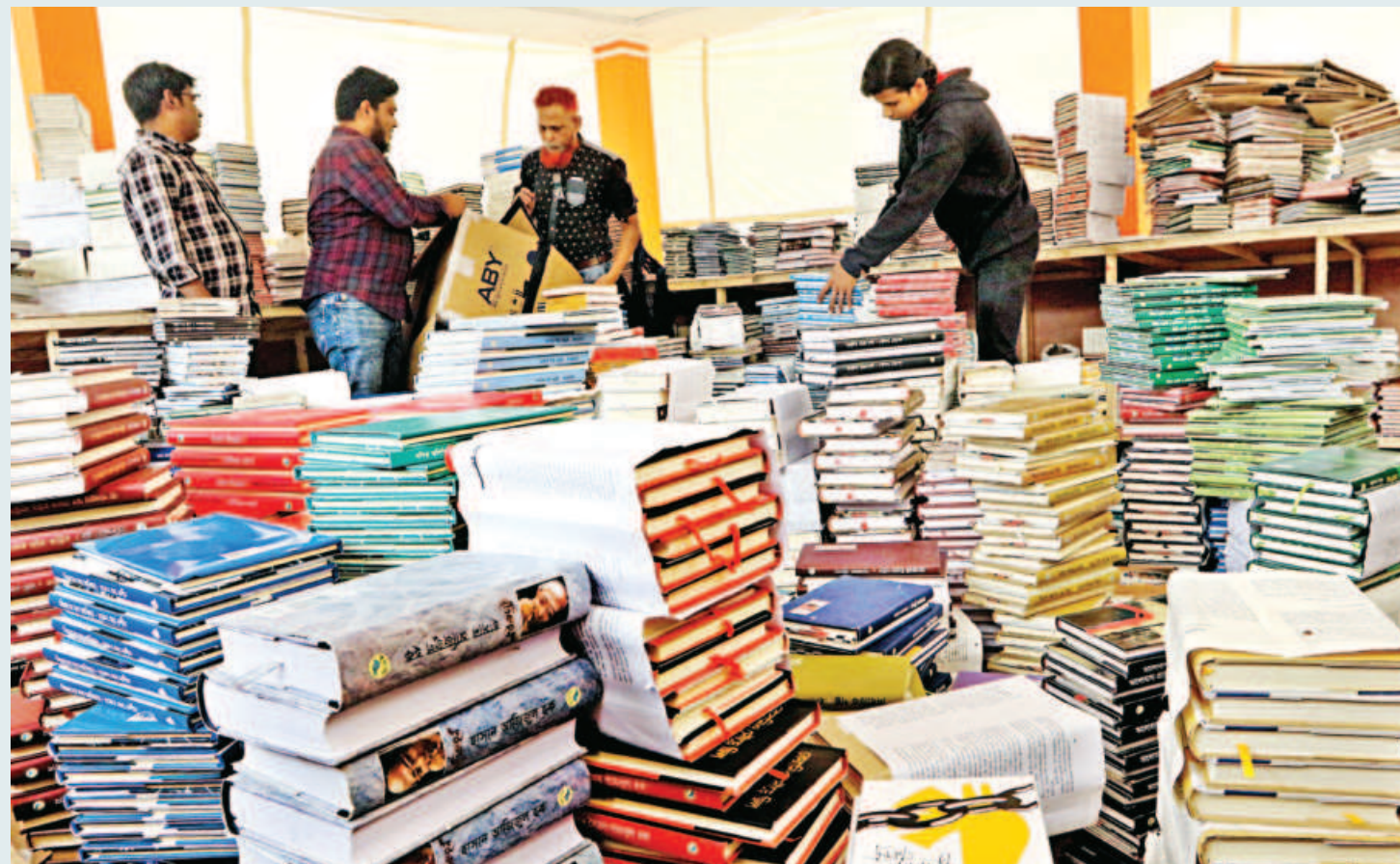
The arrestee, Rajib Bhoomik, 35, is Bikash's nephew, who claimed to have committed the murder over issues involving money.

After the bodies were recovered, Swarna's brother Shukomol Shah filed a case with Tarash Police Station against an unnamed accused.

Speaking at a press briefing yesterday, Arifur Rahman Mondol, superintendent of police in Sirajganj, said Rajib had been arrested and has confessed to the murder during primary interrogation.

According to his confessional statement, the motive behind the murder was his failure to repay a loan of Tk 35

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



Staffers arrange books at a stall at the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela at Dhaka's Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday, a day before the opening of the month-long book fair. Preparations for holding the fair on the Bangla Academy premises and the Suhrawardy Udyan are almost complete.

## Curtain lifts on Ekushey Boi Mela

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

This year's Amar Ekushey Boi Mela is set to begin today at Bangla Academy premises and the adjacent Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital.

The highly anticipated cultural event is expected to bring together renowned writers, poets, novelists, emerging authors, publishers, intellectuals, and book enthusiasts on a single platform.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the fair at 3:00pm. Later, she will present the winners with the Bangla Academy Literary Award 2023.

The theme of this year's book fair is "Poro Boi, Goro Desh: Bangabandhur Bangladesh".

A total of 937 stalls have been allocated to 635 organisations – with 173 stalls on the Bangla Academy premises and 764 stalls at the Suhrawardy Udyan.

Bangla Academy and publishing houses were busy yesterday with last-minute preparations.

KM Muzahidul Islam, member secretary of the fair management

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH DEV

## Four officials to be sacked over Tk 13.96cr graft

Youth and sports ministry seeks PSC's advice

SHARIFUL ISLAM and BAHARAM KHAN

The government is set to dismiss four officials of the Department of Youth Development (DYD) on charges of corruption involving Tk 13.96 crore.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports on Sunday sent four letters to the Public Service Commission seeking advice on the ministry's decision to sack the officials.

The four officials are Ali Ashraf, deputy director of DYD Barguna (previously posted as DD of finance and audit at the director general's office), Farhat Noor, DD of DYD Magura (previously posted as DD of administration at the DG office), Fazlul Haque, assistant director of DYD Jhenidah (previously posted as accounts officer at the DG office) and Abul Kalam Azad, upazila youth development officer of Gulshan (previously posted at the National Service Cell of the DG office).

Early last year, an investigation by the youth and sports ministry found 10 officials, including the four, involved in embezzling the money.

Ashraf illegally allocated the fund to a skills training programme for the young in Sylhet's Zakiganj in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 fiscal years even though the programme ended in November 2019, according to the probe findings.

Ashraf and the others then withdrew the money and misappropriated it, reads the probe report.

Following the investigation, the ministry filed departmental cases against the four.

Considering the magnitude of the allegations, reviewing their replies to show-cause notices and considering all

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

## Gaza faces humanitarian disaster, warns UN

Says withdrawing funds from UNRWA 'perilous' as Israeli forces pound enclave's north, south

AGENCIES

Israeli forces pounded areas in northern and southern Gaza yesterday as UN agency chiefs said a bitter row over the main aid agency for Palestinians could "have catastrophic consequences for the people of Gaza".

The focus of the fighting in recent weeks has been Khan Yunis, the southern Gaza Strip's main city, where an AFP correspondent reported constant air strikes and shelling overnight.

The health ministry recorded at least 125 deaths across the Hamas-ruled territory in the latest Israeli strikes. At least 26,900 Palestinians have been killed and 65,949 injured in Israeli strikes since October 7, it said in a statement yesterday.

Major donors, including Israel's top ally the United States and Germany, have suspended funding to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, over accusations that several staff members were involved in the October 7 attack that sparked the offensive.

Withholding the funds was "perilous and would result in the collapse of the humanitarian system in Gaza", the heads of the UN agencies said in a joint statement.

Meanwhile mediation efforts



Shelling continues around Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis

Staff, patients at Al-Amal Hospital live in constant fear

Mediators seek a halt to Israeli offensive

Death toll in enclave now 26,900

gathered pace following a Sunday meeting of top US, Israeli, Egyptian and Qatari officials that produced a proposed framework for a new truce and hostage release.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



## Webb captures 'stunning' images of 19 spiral galaxies

REUTERS, Washington

A batch of newly released images captured by the James Webb Space Telescope show in remarkable detail 19 spiral galaxies residing relatively near our Milky Way, offering new clues on star formation as well as galactic structure and evolution.

The images were made public by a team of scientists involved in a project called Physics at High Angular resolution in Nearby Galaxies (PHANGS) that operates across several major astronomical observatories.

The closest of the 19 galaxies is called NGC5068, about 15 million light years from Earth, and the most distant of them is NGC1365, about 60 million light years from Earth. A light year is the distance light travels in a year, 5.9 trillion miles (9.5 trillion km).

The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) was launched in 2021 and began collecting data in 2022, reshaping the understanding of the early universe while taking wondrous pictures of the cosmos. The orbiting observatory looks at the universe mainly in the infrared. The Hubble Space Telescope, launched in 1990 and still operational, has examined it primarily at optical and ultraviolet wavelengths.

## Rohingyas to be taken back after removal of junta

Says Myanmar unity govt; promises full citizenship for them

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Myanmar's National Unity Government (NUG) says that it wants repatriation of the Rohingyas with full citizenship and other rights, toppling the military junta.

"The people of Myanmar, the revolutionary groups including the ethnic communities are more united than ever today. We will form a federal democracy," said Kyaw Zaw, spokesperson and adviser to the president of NUG.

He was speaking as a panellist at a webinar on the Myanmar crisis organised by the Centre for Peace Studies of the South Asian Institute of Policy

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



A smoke rises from the North Gaza, amid Israel's offensive in the Palestinian enclave, as seen from Israel yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## MYANMAR CRISIS Junta extends emergency rule

US imposes more sanctions ahead of coup anniversary

REUTERS

Myanmar's military rulers yesterday extended a state of emergency in place since a 2021 coup, as the junta battles to contain a bloody, pro-democracy rebellion that has severely tested its ability to govern.

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing deemed it necessary to extend emergency rule for a further six months to undertake tasks necessary "to bring the nation to a normal state of stability and peace," military-run media outlet Myawaddy said on Telegram.

Meanwhile, the United States yesterday imposed sanctions on two Myanmar entities and four people.

Marking the coup anniversary, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stressed "the urgency of forging a path towards a democratic transition with a return to civilian rule," said UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric.

The military has promised to hold an election but has disbanded at least 40 parties and jailed Suu Kyi for 33 years, commuted to 27, on what her supporters say were trumped-up charges.

Yesterday it announced an easing of registration requirements for political parties, without saying why. It gave no timeframe for the election. Western countries have signalled they will not recognise the polls.