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60pc DSA cases filed by agencies, govt or AL activists

Says CGS; 4,520 people charged in 1,436 cases in five years till Sept 2023

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 60 percent of the Digital Security Act cases were filed by law enforcement agencies, the government, or pro-government political parties, according to a research paper by Centre for Governance Studies (CGS).

It found that at least 4,520 people have been charged in 1,436 cases filed between October 2018 and September 2023.

CGS tracked the identities of the accusers of 859 cases and found that ruling party activists filed 263 of them, suing 887 people.

In comparison, activists from other political parties filed nine DSA cases.

The DSA was wholly abused as a tool of political repression, the researchers found.

The study titled "The Ordeal: Five years of the Digital Security Act" stated, "The share of politicians among the arrestees has increased compared to our previous

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A farmer harvesting paddy from the submerged Chalna Haor in Sylhet's Dakshin Surma upazila. Several haors in the area started going under water about two weeks ago following rain and onrush of water from upstream. Farmers allege that some influential lessees of Jalmahals (marshlands) stop the haor water from flowing into the Kushiara river to retain water in the Jalmahals, causing damage to their crops on hundreds of hectares every year. The photos were taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



UPAZILA POLLS

Relatives of AL MPs in 15 races of 2nd phase

40 BNP leaders running, party expels 4 more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League's move to keep relatives of its lawmakers from participating in the upazila parishad election is falling flat in the second phase of the polls as well.

Around 15 relatives of AL MPs are participating in the May 21 election as they had not withdrawn their candidacy by yesterday, the deadline for withdrawing candidature.

Only Golam Mortuza, son of Narayanganj-1 lawmaker and former minister Golam Dastagir Gazi, quit the race in Rugganj.

Voting would be held in 159 upazilas.

According to sources, Nazrul Majid Mahmud, younger brother of Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun, is running for chairman in Monohardi, Narsingdi; Eashanul Hakim, cousin of Railway Minister Zillul Hakim, is running for chairman in Baliakandi, Rajbari; and Jamil Hasan, elder brother of State Minister Rumana Ali, is running for chairman in Sreepur, Gazipur.

Besides, relatives and family

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ACCESS TO BB Noab, Editors' Council slam restrictions on journalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council and Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) yesterday condemned Bangladesh Bank's (BB) decision to impose restrictions on journalists' entry into its headquarters and demanded ensuring free access of journalists to the central bank.

The statement comes after the central bank on Thursday imposed strict restrictions on journalists' access to its building.

BB's unwritten ban on journalists is against independent journalism, democracy, and fundamental and constitutional rights, said a joint statement signed by Editors' Council President Mahfuz Anam and Noab President AK Azad.

"For more than a month, journalists from various media have not been able to enter Bangladesh Bank to perform their professional

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US campuses rage against war

Pro-Palestinian students occupy Columbia University building; UN expresses concern

AFP, New York

Demonstrators at Columbia University barricaded themselves inside a campus building early yesterday, escalating a standoff with school officials as pro-Palestinian protests upend campuses across the United States.

The occupation of Hamilton Hall at the prestigious university in New York came hours after administrators said they had begun suspending students for failing to comply with an order to disperse.

Masked individuals smashed windows and moved metal tables to block the building's entrances, images shared overnight on social media showed.

"After 206 days of genocide and over 34,000 Palestinian martyrs, Columbia community members took back Hamilton Hall just after midnight," the group said in a statement citing Israel's war in Gaza.

It said the group had renamed the building "Hind's Hall" in honour of a six-year-old Gazan girl killed by Israel during

its ongoing offensive against Hamas.

The demonstrators vowed to remain at the hall until their demands are met, including that Columbia divest all financial holdings linked to Israel.

The school has rejected the demand, with a statement Monday by university president Minouche Shafik saying talks with students "were not able to come to an agreement."

There was a small police presence on Columbia's campus yesterday as a crowd began to gather outside, an AFP journalist saw.

Protests have swept through higher education institutions from coast to coast, with many erecting tent encampments on campus grounds, after around 100 protesters were first arrested at Columbia on April 18.

At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, police moved in Tuesday morning to clear one encampment, and could be seen in social media images detaining a few protesters.

TV footage showed police at the

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HC scraps its order to probe loan scams in three banks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday scrapped its suo moto (voluntary) rule that directed the authorities concerned to probe the alleged loan scams in Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank and First Security Islami Bank.

However, if the Anti-Corruption Commission, Bangladesh Bank, Financial Intelligence Unit and Criminal Investigation Department feel that it is necessary to take legal steps, they can, said the court.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Ebadoth Hossain delivered the verdict in light of a Supreme Court's Appellate Division judgement that on February 5 discharged the HC's suo moto rule asking for an enquiry into S Alam Group's alleged wealth abroad.

S Alam Group's lawyer Ahsanul Karim told The Daily Star that there is no

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Rafah offensive 'with or without' Gaza truce

Says Israeli PM as Hamas prepares response to truce offer

AGENCIES

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday vowed that the military would launch a ground offensive on Gaza's far southern Rafah city "with or without" a truce deal being negotiated with Hamas.

The hawkish premier issued the warning despite strong concerns raised by top ally Washington and hours before US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was set to arrive in Israel on his latest Middle East crisis tour.

"The idea that we will halt the war before achieving all of its goals is out of the question," said Netanyahu.

"We will enter Rafah and we will eliminate the Hamas battalions there with or without a deal, in order to achieve the total victory," he told families of some of the hostages still being held in Gaza, his office said.

Netanyahu's comments came as Hamas was weighing the latest plan for a truce proposed in Cairo talks with US, Egyptian and Qatari mediators that

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9yr-old raped, murdered in Cumilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

A third grader was raped and killed in Cumilla's Sadar upazila on Monday.

Police recovered the nine-year-old girl's body around 3:30pm from a paddy field next to a local mosque.

Her body was sent to the Sadar hospital morgue for autopsy, said Alamgir Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Cumilla Sadar South Model Police Station.

"As per our primary observation, the girl was killed after rape," he told The Daily Star.

A case has been filed and an investigation has been launched to arrest the criminal, the OC added.

The girl's mother told The Daily Star, "My daughter went to school in the morning like every other day but did not return home on time. We searched for her at every possible spot in our area but couldn't find her. We then went to the police and informed them."

"Later, some locals informed us that my

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A sherbet seller loading ice chunks onto a rickshaw in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar area yesterday. The trader has bought the ice chunks for Tk 150 per square foot. Sherbet, soft drinks and bottled water are high in demand in the city amid the sweltering heat. Many people put their health at risk by drinking sherbet that have been prepared without maintaining hygiene.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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ROOPPUR PLANT Transmission line up to Bogura ready for use

Says power grid company after tests

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Power Grid Company of Bangladesh yesterday ran test transmission through its newly built 89km Rooppur-Bogura power line, which is dedicated to Rooppur nuclear power plant.

A team of engineers and experts of the PGCB tested the power transmission from the national grid, said Md Masudul Islam, chief engineer of the power supply company.

"After completion of 400kV single circuit grid line work, it is our priority to check the newly built line," said Masudul, also the project director of grid line construction for Rooppur plant.

MORE NEWS

- Bangladesh's ever-neglected working class **PAGE 9**
- G7 to phase out coal-fired power plants by mid-2030s **PAGE 10**
- All eyes on Mbappe in Dortmund-PSG clash **PAGE 11**

Agrani Bank PLC.
Head Office, 9/D, Dilkhusha C/A, Dhaka-1000

Vacancy Announcement for the post of Chief Audit Officer in the rank of General Manager

Agrani Bank PLC, a state-owned Commercial Bank invites proposals for providing services as Chief Audit Officer in the rank of General Manager on Contractual basis with full executive power, responsibility and accountability of the Audit Division of the Bank from eligible Bangladeshi candidates for a period of 03 (Three) years.

For detailed qualifications, experiences, job description and instructions to apply for the position, please visit our website: www.agranibank.org

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