

## Palestinians thank PM

As the people of Palestine go through the most horrific genocide, living in conditions unimaginable in the human mind and conditions that cannot be accepted by the human soul, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, has offered an unparalleled hand to help the persecuted people of the Gaza Strip. The Prime Minister has generously offered to provide Tk 50 million in humanitarian aid support to the innocent children, orphans and residents in Gaza, who are unjustly paying the price of Israel's criminal aggression.

This is not the first time that the Prime Minister has shown her humanity. During the first week of Israel's onslaught in Gaza, she sent batches of medicines and basic raw materials, followed by another batch the week after. The Government of Bangladesh has shown unyielding support for Palestinians. Bangladesh became the first nation to offer to intervene in South Africa's case against Israel in the International Court of Justice. Bangladesh has also expressed its readiness to host the largest possible number of students from the Gaza Strip, especially female students, to study in Bangladeshi universities through full scholarships. The prime minister has also consistently urged all countries to recognise the State of Palestine.

The prime minister has stood with Palestine since she began her political career, taking after her father, the Father of the Nation, Sheikh  
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# NO HOME FOR HARIJANS

DSCC evicting at least 87 families, many not rehabilitated

MD ABBAS

When the city corporation excavators reached the Miranzilla Harijan Colony in Bangshal yesterday, tears streamed down the face of Chinothi Rani Devi.

She held her children tight as dust swirled around them.

"Despite being citizens, we are treated as if we have no value. We are being evicted without any consideration for our rehabilitation."

"I have three children and my elderly parents. Where will we go in such a state? There is no one to listen to us," she added.

Laxmi Rani, a 75-year-old woman from the colony, could not bear the thought of seeing her home get bulldozed. The colony is where she spent her entire life. She died of a stroke on Sunday, possibly anticipating what awaited them the next morning. She died due to the stress of getting evicted, her neighbours said.

Babul Chowdhury, a resident for nearly six decades, stood in front of his home in despair as it too will be demolished today.

"The city corporation took my job as a sweeper, and now they are evicting us from our homes," he said. "Where will I go now with my seven family members?"



PHOTO: MD ABBAS



“Despite being citizens, we are treated as if we have no value. We are being evicted without any consideration for our rehabilitation.”

Chinothi Rani Devi

He claimed the authorities did not even give them any time to relocate.

Miranzilla Harijan Colony had been their haven for generations, a refuge built by their ancestors during the British era. Now, the Dhaka South City Corporation was deeming their existence illegal. DSCC wants to expand its existing kitchen market in the place.

Over 87 families are being evicted, without any alternative housing, they claimed.

Community leaders said DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh assured them

that only 20 families would be evicted. However, they later learned from DSCC officials that over 87 families would be evicted.

"Although the authorities claimed they will evict 87 families, they are planning to evict more than 120 families," said Nirmal Chandra Das, secretary general of Bangladesh Harijan Oikya Parishad.

The heartbreak of losing their ancestral land was compounded by the uncertainty of where they would go next. These underprivileged families, many of whom had toiled as sweepers for the city, were now being cast out with nowhere to turn.

Meanwhile, Chinothi Rani Devi looked at her children after she was done speaking to this correspondent.

Their frightened eyes mirrored her own dread. This eviction wasn't just about tearing down their homes; it was about tearing apart their lives, their community, their very identity.

Krisna Lal, president of Bangladesh Harijan Oikya Parishad, led a delegation to the Nagar Bhaban as the excavators arrived. But the mayor did not meet them, he claimed.

A team of DSCC officials, led by its Executive Magistrate Md Jahangir Alam, conducted the eviction drive, accompanied by law enforcers.

A DSCC official stated that the team  
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## GRAFT CASE Charges against PK Halder accepted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday accepted the charges brought against 23 people, including former managing director of NRB Global Bank Proshanta Kumar Halder, known as PK Halder, in a case filed over embezzling Tk 70.82 crore from International Leasing and Financial Services Limited (ILFSL).

Judge Mohammad Ash-Shams Joglu Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after scrutinising the case dockets and other relevant documents in the case.

On April 29, Anti-Corruption Commission's Deputy Director Gulshan Anwar Pradhan, also the case's investigation officer, submitted the charge sheet to a court.

PK Halder, the prime accused in the case, was arrested in Ashoknagar, India, on May 14 of 2022 on charges of money laundering.

The charge sheet stated that the accused took Tk 70.82 crore from the ILFSL and the amount stood at Tk 103 crore along with interest until October 16, 2022 which was embezzled and laundered by the accused.

# A submachine gun in hands of 'unstable' cop?

Constable who shot his colleague dead had history of mental illness, claims family; police unaware

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

SMT-9 submachine gun -- a sophisticated weapon that can wreak havoc in the wrong hands.

Police constable Kawsar Ali, who shot his on-duty colleague dead in the highly secured diplomatic zone in the capital's Baridhara, was mentally unstable and even received treatment at a hospital, claimed his family members.

Yet, there he was, entrusted with the SMT-9, a weapon designed to unleash controlled chaos.

The police brass, however, claimed they did not know about Kawsar's mental condition.

But this "ignorance", if it's in fact true, raises further questions, "What background checks do law enforcers conduct before handing over such weapons to their own?"

"My son was supposed to be on duty with a stick. We do not know why he was given the weapon as his department was aware of his sickness," Kawsar's mother Mabia Khatun told The Daily Star yesterday.

His wife Nilufa Yeasmin said Kawsar received treatment from a Pabna hospital, and provided a medical certificate taken in 2010.

The Daily Star has a copy of the certificate, which shows Kawsar being released from a mental facility in 2010.



Police cordoned off the area after the shooting on Saturday night.

According to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Kawsar has been working at diplomatic security since August 2, 2022. He has been doing regular duty with heavy weapons since then.

Kh Mahid Uddin, additional commissioner (crime and operations) of the DMP, said, "We were not aware of Kawsar's mental condition since he was doing duty properly."

"During interrogation, Kawsar spoke about some personal discomfort. The real reason why he shot a colleague dead would be known during investigation," he said.

Around 11:45pm on Saturday, Kawsar shot his colleague constable Monirul Islam with his SMT 9 submachine gun in front of the Palestine embassy in Dhaka. During the incident, he fired a total of 38 rounds from two magazines.

Gulshan police arrested Kawsar for murder, and he is now on a seven-day remand.

An embassy driver, Sajjad Hossain, was also shot and is receiving treatment at United Hospital.

DMP yesterday formed a three-member committee to probe the murder with deputy

commissioner of Gulshan Division Rifat Hasan Shamim as head. The committee was asked to submit a report within seven working days, Mahid said.

The police officials did not disclose any reason behind the shooting till yesterday.

On Sunday, investigating officer of the murder case, Abdul Mannaf, a sub-inspector at Gulshan Police Station, reported that Kawsar shot Monirul during an altercation centring duty.

Contacted, DC Rifat Shamim told The Daily Star, "Many issues have come up. We need some  
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### WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR

- Kawsar joined the force in 2005
- Took treatment at a mental hospital in 2010
- Received awards 25 times
- He was punished 4 times for negligence
- Has been doing duty at diplomatic security division since Aug 2022
- 3-member committee formed to probe killing
- Police say altercation centring duty led to the shooting

## WHITENING BLACK MONEY An injustice to honest taxpayers Say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The provision for whitening black money by paying 15 percent tax in the proposed national budget for 2024-25 fiscal year will encourage corruption, and it stands against the values of a just society, said speakers at an event yesterday.

They remarks came at a national budget review programme organised by the Economics department of Dhaka University on the premises.

Prof Selim Raihan, executive director of SANEM, criticised the tax disparity between honest earners and black money holders.

"People with legal incomes have to pay 30 percent or more taxes, while those legalising black money will pay 15 percent. This is an injustice to honest taxpayers," he said.

Raihan questioned the realism of the government's target to reduce inflation to 6.5 percent within the next fiscal year, with a GDP growth target of 6.75.

"The exchange rate needs to be stabilised and the government should further undertake major reform initiatives to address problems in the financial sector, including defaulted loans," he added.

Prof Masuda Yasmin, chairman of DU Economics department, expressed her disappointment with the budget, saying it failed to meet expectations amid the current economic crisis.

**The economy needs stability, even if it means slower growth.**

PROF MASUDA YASMIN  
Chairman of DU Economics dept

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Pedestrians choose to climb this island and cross the road amid traffic despite a footbridge being right behind them. Just one slip and an accident might happen. The photo was taken opposite the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Street food may not be that good

Study confirms harmful bacteria presence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Street foods like chotpoti, chola-muri, sandwich, sugarcane juice, aloe vera juice, and mixed salads in Dhaka contain harmful bacteria, a recent study reveals.

A seminar that took place the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFS) conference room recently showed how researchers found E.coli, Salmonella, and Vibrio bacteria in popular street foods.

Latiful Bari, head of the Food Nutrition and Agriculture Research Laboratory at Dhaka University, presented these findings. The study shows alarming bacterial levels in these foods. Each plate of chotpoti has an average of 72 million E.coli, 750 Salmonella, and 750 Vibrio bacteria. Chola-muri contains 740,000 E.coli, 2,000 Salmonella, and 3 million Vibrio bacteria. Sandwiches have 2,000 E.coli, 2,000 Salmonella, and 1.6 million Vibrio bacteria. Sugarcane juice contains 65,000 E.coli, 17,000 Salmonella, and 13,000 Vibrio bacteria. Aloe vera juice has 56,000 E.coli, 1.8 million Salmonella, and 14,000 Vibrio bacteria. Mixed salad contains 1,800 E.coli, 510 Salmonella, and 300 Vibrio bacteria.

These bacteria cause various stomach diseases, including diarrhea. The study indicates that out of every 10,000 people consuming these street foods, two get sick from E.coli, four from Salmonella, and one from Vibrio bacteria.

Researchers collected 450 samples from street food vendors in 37 regions of Dhaka north and south city



Corporations. Contaminated water, dirty towels, unclean hands, and dusty environments contribute to these germs entering the food.

Latiful Bari said, "The lack of health and sanitation knowledge among vendors is a significant issue."

He emphasised the need for training vendors and conducting daily monitoring to ensure food safety.