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## AL, BCL men to take position at unit offices

To ‘help’ cops keep law and order

**PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN**

Leaders and activists of the ruling Awami League and its associate bodies will take positions at their respective unit offices across the country from early morning today and remain vigilant against blocking of roads and highways.

Sources say AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday gave the instruction as the quota reform movement turned violent yesterday, killing at least six people in Dhaka, Chattogram and Rangpur.

They say the party wants to face the student movement politically.

The ruling party's student wing Chhatra League has also been asked to take position at their respective units. BCL leaders were also instructed not to initiate any attacks, but resist if they come under attacks, according to the sources.

AL's Dhaka city's north and south units will take position at their ward offices from early morning. A section of

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A dockyard has been built occupying a part of the Buriganga in Keraniganj's Telghat area inside the demarcation pillar. The grabbers construct bulk carriers and repair launches at the dockyard. BIWTA often evicts the grabbers, but they soon return. The photo was taken yesterday.

## Editors' Council calls for ensuring safety of journos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing deep concern over the attacks on journalists covering the quota protests, the Editors' Council yesterday called upon the government, student organisations, and law enforcers to ensure the safety of journalists.

Mentioning that at least 25 journalists were wounded in the attacks in different parts of the capital over the last two days, the council condemned such assaults on journalists on duty.

Several of them were undergoing treatment at hospitals.

Citing media reports, the statement, signed by the council's President Mahfuz Anam and General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud, said eight journalists were injured at Jahangirnagar University on the night of July 15, six at Dhaka University, and nine others in Chattogram, Dinajpur, and Bogura during clashes yesterday.

The injured include Mehdi Mamun of Daily Bonik Barta, Abdur Rahman Sarjil of Dainik Bangla, Jobayer Ahmed of Bangladesh Today, Mushfiqur Rizwan of Somoyer Alo, Hasibur Rahman of bdnews24.com, Wajhetul Islam of Daily Janakantha, Arifuzzaman Ujjal of Daily

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## Punctuality of Biman found wanting

RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman is lagging far behind the international standard for on-time performance for its flights, an indication of the continued operational inefficiency of the national flag carrier.

The on-time performance of airlines is the percentage of flights that arrive or depart within 15 minutes of the scheduled time. Globally, airlines target 80 percent and above.

Some 69.37 percent of Biman's flights between July last year and June this year departed on time, according to the flag carrier's own data. During that period, 66 percent of the flights arrived on time.

Biman's poorest on-time performance for international departures from Dhaka was recorded in December last year, 47.25 percent. Its best was in March, 72.24 percent.

Many airlines have embedded on-time performance as a key performance indicator as delays affect productivity and cost airlines thousands of dollars every year.

"It means flights spend longer on taxiways burning fuel unnecessarily -- it means passengers miss connections and get upset," said ATM Nazrul Islam, an aviation expert.

The knock-on effects of the disruptions to onward travel are far-reaching, he said.

In Europe, where passengers are entitled to compensation for late flights, there is a direct cost associated with poor on-time performance.

In 2023, Biman failed to make it to the list of the top 20 most punctual airlines in the Asia-Pacific region.

Biman has identified at least 20 reasons for the flight delays, including the non-availability of adequate number of check-in counters, delays in allocating gates, and assigning a gate to multiple flights.

Many airlines have embedded on-time performance as a key performance indicator as delays affect productivity and cost airlines thousands of dollars every year.

Space constraints at airports also make it difficult to load baggage containers onto aircraft.

The other reasons include the breakdown of carousels, bad weather, and delays in cabin cleaning.

Biman admitted that passengers become displeased due to flight delays, documents show.

The newly-appointed Biman Managing Director and CEO Zahidul Islam Bhuiyan said maintaining on-time performance is one of his main challenges.

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## Mobile internet sluggish at campuses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students on many university campuses experienced issues accessing mobile internet last night.

The issue was first reported in the evening, hours after the day's violence surrounding the quota reform protests.

Meanwhile, BTRC officials could not be reached over the phone for comments in this regard.

Ashrefa, a student at Dhaka University and a resident of Shamsun Nahar Hall, said, "We started getting poor mobile network coverage on campus in the afternoon, with the internet speed slowing down in the evening."

"As a result, my parents couldn't reach me after repeated attempts, causing them to worry about my safety."

Several more Dhaka University students, as well as those at Rajshahi University and Jahangirnagar University,

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## Israeli forces battle Hamas across Gaza

57 Palestinians killed in bombardments in southern, central areas of enclave

AGENCIES

Israeli forces battled Hamas-led fighters in several areas across Gaza yesterday, while Palestinian health officials said at least 57 people were killed in Israeli bombardments in southern and central areas of the enclave.

In Rafah, a southern border city where Israeli forces have been operating since May, five Palestinians were killed in an air strike on a house, while in nearby Khan Younis, a man, his wife and two children were killed, they said.

An Israeli airstrike on a car killed at least 17 Palestinians and wounded 26 others in Khan Younis in southern Gaza, the officials said.

In the historic Nuseirat camp in central Gaza, at least four Palestinians were killed in separate shelling and aerial strikes in central Gaza, medics said. An Israeli airstrike killed four in Sheikh Zayed in northern Gaza, they said.

Hours later, an Israeli air strike on

a school in the Nuseirat camp killed 16 people and wounded many others, health officials said.

The Israeli military said troops continued "intelligence-based" activities in Rafah, killing many Palestinian gunmen over the past 24 hours. It said air strikes had targeted Hamas fighters, tunnels, and other military infrastructure.

It added that the Israeli air force had struck around 40 targets across the enclave.

The armed wings of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad said in a statement yesterday that their fighters attacked Israeli forces in several locations with anti-tank rockets and mortar fire.

More than 38,713 Palestinians have been killed and 89,166 have been injured in the Israeli military offensive in Gaza since October 7, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday.

Efforts mediated by Egypt and Qatar to end the conflict and release the hostages, as well as Palestinians in

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## Govt cancels Tk 5cr fund for 10 Minute School

CEO's Facebook post backing quota reform appears to be the reason

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Startup Bangladesh, the government's venture capital fund, yesterday pulled back its proposed investment of Tk 5 crore in 10 Minute School (IOMS), Bangladesh's largest edtech platform.

No official explanation was given by Startup Bangladesh for withdrawing its planned investment in the edtech start-up announced in October last year.

However, the move comes after Ayman Sadiq, the co-founder and chief executive officer of IOMS, made a Facebook post supporting the ongoing student movement for reforming the quota system for government jobs.

"We want quota reform. Merit should be the biggest quota. #QuotaMovement," Sadiq, also a media personality, posted on his

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## Ashura today

BSS, Dhaka

Ashura, commemorating the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hossain Ibn Ali (RA), the grandson of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), will be observed in the country today with due religious solemnity.

Today is the 10th day of the month of Muharram in Hijri calendar 1446. This day is well-known as Ashura.

It is regarded as the day of Karbala, a "mourning and heart-breaking event", which has a special religious significance for the Muslim community across the globe.

Muslims across the world recall the sacrifice of Hazrat Imam Hossain (RA) along with his family members and 72 followers, who embraced martyrdom in 680 AD in the desert of Karbala on the banks of the Euphrates river in Iraq while fighting for truth and justice against the Yazid forces.

Their self-sacrifice at Karbala Maidan to uphold the great ideals of Islam,

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A portion of Jurain road near the Dhaka-Mawa expressway is occupied by makeshift shops, parked vehicles and discarded equipment, obstructing pedestrians. But the authorities seem to have turned a blind eye. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Biden defends 'mental acuity'

Says 'bullseye' remark about Trump a mistake

AFP, Washington

US President Joe Biden defended both his "mental acuity" and his rhetoric about Donald Trump Monday, in a second TV interview aimed at ending calls for him to quit his re-election bid following a disastrous debate.

The 81-year-old delivered an often combative defence of his mental and physical fitness for office during the one-on-one with broadcaster NBC, which nevertheless featured some of the word salads that have worried Democrats.

"I'm old," Biden told host Lester Holt in the interview at the White House. "But I'm only three years older than Trump, number one. And number two, my mental acuity has been pretty damn good."

He added: "I understand why people say, 'God, he's 81 years old. Whoa. What's he gonna be when he's 83 years old, 84 years?' It's a legitimate question to ask."

Biden's interview was the latest attempt by the White House to assuage growing fears over the Democrat's age and mental state following the dismal debate performance on June 27.

The sit-down was announced last week, before the assassination attempt on Republican candidate Donald Trump on Saturday -- which inevitably became a key subject of the interview.

