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Over 1,000 killed during mass uprising, 400 blinded

Says health adviser

STAR REPORT

Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum yesterday said more than 1,000 people were killed and over 400 blinded during the student-led mass uprising.

The adviser spoke about protest casualties while briefing reporters after visiting the Central Police Hospital in Rajarbagh.

The Human Rights Support Society on August 21 said it had received information on the deaths of 819 people during the protests from the victims' families, hospitals, witnesses, and national dailies.

According to a primary report of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights published on August 16, as many as 650 people were killed in Bangladesh during the student-led protests between July 16 and August 11.

Adviser Nurjahan said numerous injured policemen were undergoing

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Two streak-throated woodpeckers perched on a tree in Chattogram's Karnaphuli, having a little chat. These birds occur mainly in the drier woodlands, from lowlands to mountain foothills, across the Indian subcontinent. The males, like those in the photograph, have red crowns on their heads while the females have black ones. They eat mostly insects, particularly ants and termites. Sometimes, however, they opt for nectar and seeds from flowers. Due to their vast range, they are in the "Least Concern" category of the IUCN Red List.

PHOTO: NOBLE CHAKMA

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History beckons Tigers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will be looking to seal their first-ever Test series victory over Pakistan when they take on the hosts in the series-deciding second match at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium today.

The Tigers find themselves in a favourable position in the two-match series after they clinched a comprehensive 10-wicket win over the hosts -- their maiden Test win against Pakistan in 14 attempts -- in the opening Test at the same venue last week.

As it stands, Bangladesh can't lose the series -- a situation not so unfamiliar to the Tigers. However, in the previous instances when they had the chance of sealing a series, the Tigers went on to lose the decider and ended up sharing the spoils with their opponents.

Two AL men shot dead in port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two men were shot dead by unknown gunmen in the Kuyaish area under Hathazari upazila of Chattogram last night. The armed assailants, riding a motorcycle, fled the scene quickly after the incident, said sources.

The deceased were identified as Awami League activists Masud Kaisar, 32, and Md Anis, 38, said Chattogram's acting Superintendent of Police (SP) Wasim Firoj.

Wasim said the duo was heading to Hathazari from Baizid Bostami's Nur Mosque around 9:25pm.

At one point, the two on the bike fired at them near Ever Care Hospital in Kuyaish area, leaving Anis dead on the spot, he said.

"Injured Masud died in Mojuripara area of Hathazari while he was trying to flee from the spot after the attack," the SP added.

However, the reason behind the incident could not be known immediately.

Police sources said the two were supporters of former Hathazari upazila chairman Yunus Goni Chowdhury.

UNPAID DUTIES Ctg Customs demands Tk 246cr from S Alam

Asks S Alam Refined Sugar Industry to explain bond misuse

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

The Chattogram Customs Bond Commissionerate has sought Tk 246.26 crore in unpaid duties from the S Alam Refined Sugar Industry against the import of 60,500 tonnes of sugar.

The S Alam Group concern had released the raw sugar under bond (home consumption) facility without paying any customs duty on the condition that the customs duty will be paid when the goods are shifted from the company's bonded warehouse, The Daily Star has learnt from customs bond officials.

According to the law, oil and sugar refining companies have been permitted to release their imported raw materials without incurring import duty under the bond facility since January 2019.

However, in February, S Alam Refined Sugar Industry began selling the commodity in the local market without paying the duty.

"As per the law, no good can be marketed without paying customs duty -- the company sold 60,500 tonnes of sugar but did not pay any duty," Md Mizanur Rahman, joint commissioner of Customs Bond Commissionerate, Chattogram told The Daily Star.

Subsequently, on August 22, Bond Commissioner Mohammad Lutfor

Rahman issued a show-cause letter demanding Tk 246.26 crore in revenue.

The Bond Commissionerate will initiate legal proceedings to recover the dodged revenue if the company fails to provide a satisfactory response or pays the duty within 15 days.

Meanwhile, the revenue authority is planning to review all import and sales data from 2019 to determine if the company has engaged in any additional irregularities related to the import of products utilising the bond facility, said a top official of the National Board of Revenue.

On August 20, the Chattogram Customs, Excise and VAT Commissionerate, another wing of the NBR, formed four audit teams to investigate the business operations and transactions of 18 companies within the S Alam Group.

The teams have been directed to review all types of financial transactions and purchase-sale records of the last five years starting from 2019.

A detailed report will be prepared and submitted by the teams within the next 30 days, with the assistance of 20 customs officials.

Subrata Kumar Bhowmick, executive director of S Alam Group, and Mohammad Akhter Hossain, general manager (corporate), could not be reached for comment.

Salman, Anisul put on remand for third time

Court places them on fresh 5-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed former law minister Anisul Huq and Sheikh Hasina's private industry affairs adviser Salman F Rahman on a fresh five-day remand in a murder case.

With this, Anisul and Salman have been placed on 25 days of remand in three phases.

At the hearing around 7:00am, the magistrate asked Anisul and Salman if they had anything to say.

"We were in favour of the quota reform protests. I don't know anything about the incident [the case is about]. I want justice," Anisul was quoted as saying by a police officer present at the court.

He also told the court that he was innocent. The hearing was on the case filed over the murder of Suman Sikdar, 31, at the capital's Badda during a demonstration on July 19.

Hasina is also among the 182 people accused in the case filed by Suman's

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Israeli West Bank raids enter second day

Death toll rises to at least 14; Islamic Jihad commander killed; UN demands immediate halt to violence

AGENCIES

The death toll climbed yesterday as Israel pressed a large-scale military operation in the occupied West Bank for a second day, despite UN concerns it is "fuelling an already explosive situation".

The operation was launched as violence raged on in the other main Palestinian territory, the Gaza Strip, which has been devastated by Israeli offensive on the territory.

Israel began coordinated raids in the northern West Bank cities of Jenin, Tubas and Tulkarem early on Wednesday, in what the military called a "counter-terrorism" operation.

Columns of Israeli armoured vehicles backed by troops and warplanes were sent in before soldiers encircled refugee camps in Tubas and Tulkarem, as well as Jenin, and exchanged fire with Palestinian militants.

The army said it killed five militants

in Tulkarem yesterday, bringing to 14 the overall death toll since the launch of the West Bank operation.

"Following exchanges of fire, the forces eliminated five terrorists who had hidden inside a mosque" in Tulkarem, the military said.

Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad confirmed the death of Muhammad Jabber, also known as Abu Shujaa, its commander in the Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarem.

The violence has caused significant destruction, especially in Tulkarem, whose governor described the raids as "unprecedented" and a "dangerous signal".

AFPTV footage showed bulldozers ripping up the asphalt from streets in the city. Widespread damage was reported to infrastructure, including to water and sewage networks.

The Palestinian health ministry said 12 Palestinians were killed on the first day of the operation.

- Immediate Gaza truce demanded for polio vaccination
- EU top diplomat seeks sanctions on Israeli ministers
- Gaza death toll rises to 40,602

Hasina faces 6 more cases

Several ex-ministers, top cops also sued

STAR REPORT

Six more cases have been filed against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her several cabinet members.

Three of them were lodged in Gazipur while one each was filed in Dhaka and Brahmanbaria. Besides, another complaint was filed yesterday with the investigation agency of the International Crimes Tribunal against Hasina and 51 others.

Several former ministers, including Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader and Asaduzzaman Khan, top police officers and two dozen senior journalists were among the accused.

Hasina is now facing at least 81 cases -- 68 on murder charges, eight over allegations of crimes against humanity and genocide, three on charges of abduction, and two on other charges.

In Gazipur's Sreepur, SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



"Depto Shapath", a memorial built in front of then Gulshan Police Station in memory of the two police officials killed in the Holey Artisan terrorist attack in July 2016, was vandalised on August 5 this year. Law enforcers are yet to identify those responsible for the damage. Posters of the outlawed Islamist outfit Hizb ut-Tahrir have been pasted on the wall next to the memorial. The photo was taken yesterday. Inset, the memorial before it was vandalised.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN, PRABIR DAS

1,369 pro-AL bots commenting on Facebook

Dismislab finds they're talking about polls months after its conclusion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a recent investigation, dismislab uncovered a coordinated bot network on Facebook that used fake accounts to sway public opinion in Awami League's favour and to discredit the opposition, particularly the BNP.

The investigation began with a seemingly unrelated article on bdnews24.com, where a political comment under the post sparked curiosity.

On June 21 this year, an article titled "Is There an Invisible Code on Every Page Printed by a Color Printer?" appeared on the website and Facebook page of bdnews24.com.

The technical nature of the story might have eluded the interest of political enthusiasts, but it caught the eye of a researcher from dismislab -- not for the article itself, but for a comment under the Facebook post.

"This election will be transparent. People will be able to vote freely in the upcoming election. The BNP is scared to participate because they can't rig the vote this time."

The dismislab report said, "The researcher was taken aback by the subsequent comments. Even months after the election, users were still making remarks critical of the opposition party and its leaders, expressing hopes for a successful and fair election, and insisting that the

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