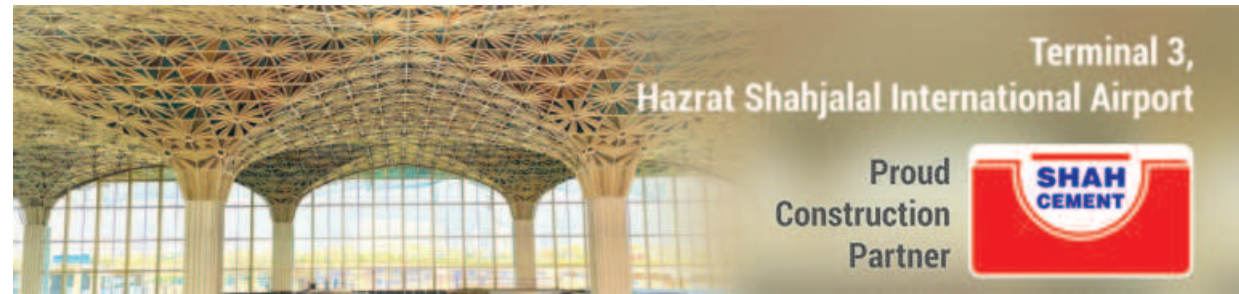



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## No alternative to free, fair elections

Says Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday underscored the need for holding fair elections for continuation of democracy.

"We must hold a free and fair election to keep the country's democracy continuing," he said in a message to mark Shaheed Jihad Day remembering Nazir Uddin Ahmed Jihad, a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activist who was killed during the anti-Ershad movement.



Jihad, of Ullapara upazila in Sirajganj, was shot dead in Dhaka on October 10, 1990.

"An election-time non-party caretaker government is the prime condition for holding a free and fair election," said Tarique.

"Democracy doesn't only mean elections but restoration of people's freedom and fundamental rights.

"Being imbued with the spirit of

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Bangladesh opener Shathi Rani gets stumped by West Indies wicketkeeper Shemaine Campbell during a Group B fixture of the Women's T20 World Cup in Sharjah yesterday. Despite a promising start, the Tigresses could only manage 103 for eight, a target West Indies chased down with eight wickets in hand and 43 balls to spare.

PHOTO: ICC

## Song at Ctg puja mandap sparks outrage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A group of youths sang a song calling for Islamic revolution on the stage of a puja mandap in Chattogram city yesterday evening, causing widespread outrage.

A video clip of the rendition at JM Sen Hall in the Rahmatganj area went viral on the social media.

In another clip of the incident, the six men were seen singing in chorus a song about harmony among people of different religions.

Hillol Sen Uzzal, general secretary of the Puja Udjapan Parishad in Chattogram, told The Daily Star that the incident shocked the local Hindu community and created a tense situation in the area.

Farida Khanom, deputy commissioner of Chattogram, then visited the spot and said a case would be filed over the matter.

Those involved will be brought to book in a day or two, she added.

Uzzal said the incident happened around 7:00pm.

"When I heard about it, I went there and learned that the men introduced themselves as members of Chattogram Cultural Academy and asked Sajal Dutta, the

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## 50 down with dengue in 10 days at JU

Students blame lack of cleanliness drives, poor waste management

SAKIB AHMED, JU

At least 50 teachers, students, and staff members at Jahangirnagar University (JU) have contracted dengue in the last 10 days, bringing the total number of cases of the viral infection among campus residents to approximately 80 since September 1.

On average, one or two new cases were reported daily at JU during the first 25 days of September. However, after September 25, the daily infection rate surged to four or five cases, according to Najmul Hossain Rasel, the lab-in-charge at the JU Medical Centre.

"The conditions of many patients, due to low platelet counts, are particularly alarming. At its current capacity, the JU Medical Centre is struggling to provide medical care to the rising number of patients."

"Our medical centre lacks the necessary facilities to handle critical cases. We are referring patients to external hospitals for advanced treatment," said Dr Shamsur Rahman, chief medical officer at JU.

From dorms to dining halls, the campus is overrun with mosquitoes, students have said, adding that several

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## A community scourged by child marriage

Ostracisation, poverty plague Satkhira's Kaiputras

TAHIRA SHAMSI UTSA

Inside the straw-roofed clay houses that line the dusty streets of Alipur union in Satkhira Sadar upazila, a silent crisis is unfolding.

The Kaiputra community, long stigmatised and marginalised, is scourged by a child marriage epidemic that threatens to perpetuate a cycle of poverty and social exclusion.

As the sun rises over the small village, 20-year-old Shiba Mondol cradles her three-year-old son, Shaown, while her 10-year-old son, Shadhin, prepares for school. Shiba's weathered face belies her young age, a testament to the hardships she has endured since her own marriage at the age of 10.

"I never had the chance to go to school," Shiba recalls. "I was called 'Kaora' and ostracised by other children. It seemed simpler to stay home, and soon, marriage followed."

The term "Kaora" is a derogatory label carried for generations by the Kaiputra community. Historically associated with pig rearing, the community has struggled to break free from the stigma that accompanies their caste identity.

"Moreover, we're eliminated from society as if we're untouchables, making it impossible for me to secure any regular job. Then, what use is education to me?"

"I remember the pain," Shiba whispers. "I didn't understand what was

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**INT'L DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD**

## Landowner's son killed over dispute with developer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A landowner's son was beaten to death allegedly by several staffers of a property developer and its hired goons over a dispute about handing over flats in the capital's Hatirjheel area yesterday.

The deceased, Tanjeel Jahan Islam, 32, was a broadcast engineer at Deepto TV.

Saiful Islam, officer-in-charge of Hatirjheel Police Station, said four people, including Abdul Latif, an engineer of Pleasant Properties Ltd, were detained over the killing in the Mahanagar Project area.

There had been a longstanding dispute between the landowner and the developer company about the handover of flats, the OC said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, victim's father Sultan Ahmed said he and two other landowners



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## 28 killed in Israeli strike on Gaza school

Says Red Crescent; 3 hospitals in north of enclave told to evacuate

REUTERS, Cairo

An Israeli airstrike on a school sheltering displaced people in central Gaza killed at least 28 people, including women and children, yesterday, while three hospitals in the north were told to evacuate putting patients' lives at risk, medics say.

The strike, in which many more were wounded, happened in the city of Deir Al-Balah, where a million people have taken shelter after fleeing fighting elsewhere after more than a year of offensive.

The Israeli military said yesterday it had carried out a "precise strike on terrorists", who had a command and control centre embedded in a school.

"This is a further example of the Hamas terrorist organization's systematic abuse of civilian infrastructure in violation of international law," the military statement said.

Hamas denies such allegations. Medics said 54 other people were wounded at the school. More than 42,065 Palestinians have been killed and 97,886 injured in Israel's military offensive on Gaza since October 7 last year, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday.

In the north of the enclave, the Israeli military is pushing on with an offensive begun six days ago, when it sent its troops into Jabalia, the largest of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps and the nearby towns of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia.

Palestinian health officials say at least 130 people have been killed so far in the operation, which Israel says is aimed at preventing Hamas from regrouping.

The military has told residents to evacuate an area in which the UN estimates more than 400,000 people are trapped.

The health officials said the Israeli military on Wednesday gave patients and medics 24-hours to leave the Indonesian, Al-Awda and Kamal Adwan hospitals or risk being stormed as happened earlier in the war at the Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City.

## ST MARTIN'S ISLAND Bangladeshi killed in firing by Myanmar Navy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fisherman was killed and two others injured when the Myanmar Navy opened fire on Bangladeshi fishing trawlers in the Bay of Bengal near St Martin's Island on Wednesday, according to Teknaf UNO.

Myanmar Navy had also detained over 50 fishermen from six boats and handed them over to the Bangladesh Coast Guard.

The deceased was identified as Osman Gani, 55, of Konapara village under Shahporir Dwip in Teknaf, confirmed Adnan Chowdhury, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Teknaf upazila in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

In the evening, the body of Osman, along with 58 detained fishermen, was brought back to Teknaf by the coast guard, he added.

Explaining what had happened, boat owner

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**THE LITTLE GREATS**



Two baby great egrets, properly known as egretlets, excitedly flapping their wings at the sight of their mother (not in photo) coming back with some food for them. Great egrets are large, widely distributed birds found in Asia, Africa, the Americas and southern Europe. They seek out tropical and warmer temperate regions, where they build tree nests in colonies close to water. Owing to such a large distribution, great egrets often share their habitat with other similar species. They live close to water particularly for foraging and feed mainly on fish, frogs, insects, crustaceans, and small mammals and reptiles. Interestingly, not all the young that hatch in a single nest survive the nestling period. It is common, especially in poor breeding conditions, for larger egretlets to be aggressive towards the smaller ones, often killing them – a behaviour known as sibicide, which is not uncommon among many birds such as hawks, herons and owls. However, these two siblings, spotted in Rangpur, seem to have each other's backs!

PHOTO: MOSABBER HOSSAIN RIBON

## 5,000-yr-old jade dragons may reveal origins of Chinese civilisation

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Archaeologists have unearthed over 100 strange Stone Age jade artefacts in inner Mongolia, shedding more light on the origins of Chinese civilisation.



Among the relics uncovered at the Yuanbaoshan archaeological site in Chifeng city are three jade dragons of different colours and sizes, each over 5,000 years old.

One of the jade dragons, the size of a palm and emerald green in colour, is the largest of its kind found in northern China, according to Xinhua news agency.

These "pig-headed dragons" differ significantly from more modern depictions of the mythical beast. They are related to the Stone Age Hongshan culture that once flourished in Inner Mongolia and the nearby provinces of Liaoning and Hebei.

This ancient culture is known for making some of the earliest jade artefacts in the world, especially as part of its burial rituals.