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‘Time for girls to go beyond South Asia’ Says Bangladesh women’s football team captain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After conquering South Asia twice, Sabina Khatun, captain of the Bangladesh women’s football team, wants to achieve greater glory at the Asian level.

Sabina Khatun

On Thursday, Bangladesh successfully defended their SAFF Women’s Championship title by defeating hosts Nepal 2-1 in an entertaining final at the Dasarath Rangasala Stadium in Kathmandu.

The champion team received a grand reception upon their return to Dhaka on Friday, which included a trip around the city on an open-top bus. They were also greeted by Youth and Sports adviser Asif Mahmud at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) headquarters.

The triumphant girls received a cheque of Tk one crore from the Ministry of Youth and Sports while the Bangladesh

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Shoppers carrying vegetables in polythene bags at the Town Hall kitchen market in the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday. Although a ban on the use of polythene bags came into force the same day, both traders and shoppers ignored the restriction at different markets. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

5 schoolchildren among 7 killed in Pakistan blast

REUTERS, Quetta

At least seven people including five school students were killed and 23 injured in a blast in southwestern Pakistan yesterday, a police official said.

“The target was a police van which was going to pickup a polio (vaccination) team,” Senior Superintendent of Police Rehmatullah told Reuters. One police officer was also among the dead, while 23 other people and officers were injured.

The explosion came from an improvised device attached to a motorcycle parked near a school for girls in the town of Mastung, he said.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attack in a statement.

Pakistan is grappling with a surge in militant attacks in its northwest and a growing separatist insurgency in the south. On Tuesday, a policeman was killed in an attack on a health office that manages door-to-door polio vaccination campaigns.

The attacks have coincided with Pakistan’s third nationwide polio campaign, which was launched on Monday amid a significant rise in cases of the viral disease.

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Lawyers worried over attacks on court premises

Call for stricter security measures

RAFIUL ISLAM and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Lawyer Morshed Hossain Shahin was speaking to reporters outside the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate’s Court in Dhaka after defending former independent lawmaker Syed Sayedul Haque Sumon on October 22. Suddenly, a pro-BNP lawyer approached and hit Morshed on the head.

Shortly thereafter, while he was speaking again, another lawyer confronted Morshed, forcefully grabbing him and pulling him out of the court premises.

This incident is the latest in a series of attacks on lawyers, former ministers and lawmakers, Awami League leaders, police officials, and journalists on court premises nationwide since law enforcers arrested them following the fall of the AL government on August 5.

Videos of the attacks went viral on social media.

The first attack was reported on August 14 when Salman F Rahman, former private industry and investment adviser to ex-prime minister Sheikh Hasina, and former law minister Anisul Huq were produced before the Dhaka CMM court in a murder case.

According to lawyers and court

“It is the duty of the law enforcers to ensure the safety of individuals in their custody, and any assault on an accused under such protection is a clear violation of human rights.”

NUR KHAN LITON
Human rights activist

staffers, pro-BNP lawyers frequently obstructed attorneys from representing the accused and, at times, even threw eggs at them before and after hearings.

When leaders of the AL and its allies were produced before the CMM court in cases filed after the July-August mass uprising, a group of people, including pro-BNP lawyers, created chaos.

In some instances, the pro-BNP lawyers caused disruptions in the courtroom

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OUTSTANDING BILLS

Adani halves power supply to Bangladesh

ASIFUR RAHMAN

India’s Adani Power Jharkhand Limited has halved its power supply to Bangladesh, saying it has yet to receive outstanding bills.

Bangladesh reported a shortfall of more than 1,600MW on Thursday night after the 1,496 megawatt Adani plant reduced supply.

Power Grid Bangladesh PLC data show the plant is producing around 700MW from a single unit now.

Earlier, Adani Power Jharkhand Limited (APJL) had written to the power secretary, asking the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) to pay the bills by October 30.

“Otherwise APJL shall be constrained to take remedial action under the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) by suspending power supply on October 31,” Adani wrote in the letter seen by The Daily Star.

The letter, dated October 27, said: “As you [secretary] are aware, the deadline is approaching shortly and till date, PDB has neither provided LC for an amount of \$170.03 million from Bangladesh Krishi Bank nor cleared the outstanding amount of \$846 million.”

A PDB official told The Daily Star that they had cleared a portion of previous dues earlier, but since July, Adani has been charging more than the previous months.

He said the PDB has been paying around \$18 million weekly, while the charge is more than \$22 million. “This is why the due payments increased again.”

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GAZA STRIP

Truce hopes fade as Israeli airstrikes kill 64 Palestinians

REUTERS, Gaza

Prospects of a ceasefire between Israel and its foe Hamas ran aground yesterday as Israeli airstrikes killed at least 64 people, most of them women and children, in the Gaza Strip, according to medics in the Palestinian enclave.

The attacks occurred in the city of Deir Al-Balah, the Nuseirat camp and the town of Al-Zawayda.

The Israeli military said its troops had identified and eliminated “several armed terrorists” in central Gaza and had eliminated “dozens of terrorists” in targeted raids in northern Gaza’s Jabalia area.

Israel’s assault on Gaza has killed at least 43,259 Palestinians and reduced most of the enclave to rubble, Palestinian authorities said yesterday.

At least 46 Palestinians were killed in Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip on Thursday, mostly in the north where one attack hit a hospital, torching medical supplies and disrupting operations, the

enclave’s health officials said.

Israel’s military has accused the Palestinian group Hamas of using Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya for military purposes and said “dozens of terrorists” have been hiding there. Health officials and Hamas deny the assertion.

The health ministry in the Gaza Strip called for all international bodies “to

protect hospitals and medical staff from the brutality of the (Israeli) occupation”.

Medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said on Thursday that one of its doctors at the hospital, Mohammed Obeid, had been detained last Saturday by Israeli forces. It called for the protection of

him and all medical staff who “are facing horrific violence as they try to provide care”.

Meanwhile, Israeli bulldozers damaged the office of UN aid agency UNRWA in the West Bank’s Nur Shams camp on Thursday, the agency’s chief said, with Israel disputing his account in the latest exchange between both sides.

- Most of the dead are children, women
- Israeli forces damage UNRWA’s West Bank office
- Death toll in the enclave rises to 43,259

3 Jubo Dal men expelled over tender manipulation

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Lalmonirhat

Jubo Dal has expelled three local leaders of Lalmonirhat on charges of tender manipulation by preventing others from submitting bids and helping preferred individuals win contracts.

In addition, the Lalmonirhat District Jubo Dal committee has been dissolved, Minhajul Islam Bhuiyan, assistant office secretary of Jubo Dal’s central committee, told The Daily Star yesterday.

An order signed by Minhajul confirmed the expulsion of the three local leaders on Thursday night, citing misconduct, and violations of party discipline, principles and unity.

The expelled leaders are Jahangir Alam Julhas, vice president of the organisation’s

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Lebanese people check the devastation in the aftermath of Israeli strikes in the neighbourhood of Haret Hreik in Beirut’s southern suburbs yesterday, amid the ongoing war between Israel and Hezbollah. PHOTO: AFP

Giant rats could help curb illegal wildlife trade

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The world’s largest rats could help conservationists in the ongoing fight against the illegal wildlife trade.

Researchers have trained African giant pouched rats to pick up the scent of highly-sought elephant tusks, rhino horns, African blackwood and pangolin scales. The rare wood is threatened and the animals are critically endangered.

The rats weigh as much as nine pounds and measure up to 35 inches long from snout to tail and are classified an invasive species in Florida. In the past, the rats have been used to detect explosives. The rats are able to remember specific wildlife targets for several months.

“Our study shows that we can train African giant pouched rats to detect illegally trafficked wildlife, even when it has been concealed among other substances,” Dr Isabelle Scott, a researcher at the Okeanos Foundation, said in a statement.

Scott and other researchers from around the world conducted research at APOPO, a Tanzania-based non-profit organization. APOPO is also training “rescue rats” to potentially save lives. The work was published Wednesday in the journal Frontiers in Conservation Science.