

Robbers snatch away baby girl from mother

Loot cash, gold jewellery from Lalbagh house in broad daylight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers abducted an eight-month-old girl of a home ministry employee after looting cash and gold ornaments from her home in the capital's Lalbagh yesterday morning.

Till filing of this report at 8:00pm, law enforcers could not rescue the baby named Zaiifa, daughter of the ministry employee Farzana Akhter, 33.

Her relatives said four people, including a woman, kidnapped the girl and looted the cash and gold ornaments after tying up Farzana inside her home. She and her daughter were alone at that time.

The woman involved in the robbery recently got introduced with Farzana. The woman said she was a student at a public university and working at Transport Pool of the Secretariat, said colleagues of Farzana, citing her.

On Thursday afternoon, the woman visited Farzana's home and requested her to allow her to stay there, a ground-floor flat at a two-storey building near BGB's Gate-2 at Pilkhana in Lalbagh, as a paying guest and Farzana agreed, said a relative.

Farzana and her daughter live in the flat with her parents. Her husband Abu Zafar Hawlader had not been with them over the last two months, said her next-door neighbours.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



A ball of fire erupts as an Israeli strike hits a building in Beirut's southern Gobeiri neighbourhood yesterday. More than a year of Israel's offensive that recently escalated into war has cost Lebanon more than \$5 billion in economic losses, with actual structural damage amounting to billions more, the World Bank said.

PHOTO: AFP

SPORT

AN INQUEST INTO PLAYER-UMPIRE RELATIONS

The Page 10 of today's paper looks into the underlying causes of a worrying rise in code of conduct violations by cricketers in domestic competitions in Bangladesh this year. While there are genuine concerns regarding the standard of umpiring in Bangladesh cricket, the lack of remuneration and training of umpires are believed to be the root causes of sub-standard umpiring, prompting players to often publicly disrespect the umpires, breaching Bangladesh Cricket Board's code of conduct left and right.

Get ready for youth-led ballot revolution

Says convener of Jatiya Nagorik Committee at event marking 100 days since July uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Any attempts to obstruct the transformation of the state will trigger a ballot revolution by the youth in the next general election, similar to the July uprising, said Nasiruddin Patwari, convener of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee.

"Different political parties have reached a political settlement with the Awami League leaders or supporters in exchange for money... This has become evident to the society," he said at a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

The event was organised to mark the 100th day of the "July Revolution". Nasiruddin urged the students and the young people to prepare for the ballot revolution. "Take the power into your own hands. The upcoming ballot revolution will end the reign of looters, extortionists, mafia syndicates, and dynasty rule in Bangladesh."

He warned that if the students and the young people failed to succeed in the ballot revolution, Bangladesh's future would be at risk.

"To protect the nation and ensure its survival, this revolution is essential. It will pave the way for a brighter and more promising future for Bangladesh."

The Nagorik Committee leader alleged that the Awami League's allies in different branches of the state were still working to shield the party.

"Fascist collaborators still hold various posts in the administration, from the bureaucracy to the army, Rab, and police. They are actively trying to protect the Awami League. They must be removed immediately."

If the senior bureaucrats, who ordered killings during the July uprising, were still preferred over others in the pretext of their skills, the Nagorik Committee would wage another war, Nasiruddin added.

"In the future, students will run the administration and the



Nasiruddin

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Ready for truce

Says senior Hamas official, urges Trump to 'pressure' Israel to end Gaza offensive

AGENCIES

A senior Hamas official said yesterday that the group is "ready for a ceasefire" in the Gaza Strip and urged US President-elect Donald Trump to pressure Israel to end the offensive.

"Hamas is ready to reach a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip if a ceasefire proposal is presented and on the condition that it is respected" by Israel, Hamas political bureau member Bassem Naim told AFP.

"We call on the US administration and Trump to pressure the Israeli government to end the aggression."

"Hamas informed the mediators that it is in favour of any proposal submitted to it that would lead to a definitive ceasefire and military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, allowing the return of displaced people, a serious deal for a prisoner exchange, the entry of humanitarian aid and reconstruction," Naim added.

The demands are the same ones Hamas has made in successive rounds of ceasefire negotiations since the start of the offensive.

On the campaign trail, Trump promised peace in the Middle East and has vowed to give freer rein to Israel.

Naim's comments come after Qatar said Saturday that it had suspended its role as a key mediator for a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal until Hamas and Israel show "seriousness" in talks.

Israel's campaign has killed at least 43,764 people in Gaza, most of them civilians, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry that the United Nations considers reliable.

Meanwhile, a UN humanitarian official said yesterday that aid access in Gaza is at a low point with deliveries to parts of the besieged north of the enclave all but impossible, reports Reuters.

The remarks run counter to a US assessment earlier this week that Israel is not currently impeding humanitarian aid for the Gaza Strip, avoiding restrictions on US military aid. Israel has said it has worked hard to assist the humanitarian needs in Gaza.

"From our perspective, on all indicators you can possibly think of in a humanitarian response, all of them are going in the wrong direction," said Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in response to a question at a Geneva press briefing about whether humanitarian access had improved.

"Access is at a low point. Chaos, suffering, despair, death, destruction, displacement are at a high point," he added.

Laerke voiced concern about north Gaza where residents have been ordered to head south as Israeli forces' more than month-long incursion continues. Israel says its operations there are designed to prevent Hamas fighters from regrouping.

- Qatar suspended role as mediator until Hamas, Israel show "seriousness" in talks
- UN warns Gaza aid access "at a low point"
- Death toll in Palestinian enclave rises to 43,764

COP29 talks no longer fit for purpose

Say climate leaders; NGOs slam presence of fossil fuel lobbyists

AGENCIES

A group of former leaders and climate experts said the annual UN COP climate talks were no longer fit for purpose and needed to be reformed, publishing a critical open letter mid-way through what has so far been a fractious summit.

Nearly 200 countries are gathered in Baku, Azerbaijan with a primary goal of agreeing a new target for how much money needs to be provided to help developing countries adapt to climate change and recover from destructive weather.

So far those talks have made little progress. Delegates struggled for hours on the opening day to agree an agenda and the mood has been soured by doubts about the United States' future role under a Donald Trump presidency, diplomatic spats involving the host nation and the withdrawal of Argentinian delegation.

Yesterday's letter, signed by more than 20 experts, former leaders and scientists, including former UNFCCC boss Christiana Figueres and former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, said the COP process had achieved much, but now needed an overhaul, reports Reuters.

"It is now clear that the COP is no longer fit for purpose. Its current structure simply cannot deliver the change at exponential speed and scale, which is essential to ensure a safe climate landing for humanity," the letter said.



SRI LANKA POLLS President's leftist bloc wins by a landslide

REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanayake's leftist coalition won a thumping victory in a snap general election, gaining power to push through his plans to fight poverty and graft in the island nation recovering from a financial meltdown.

The sweeping mandate, which included surprise backing from the north and east of the country which is home to the minority Tamil people, is an unprecedented vote for change and indicates that Sri Lanka is in sync on moving ahead, analysts said.

While the strong showing will strengthen political stability in the South Asian country, some uncertainty on policy direction remains due to Disanayake's promises to try and tweak terms of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rescue programme that



Disanayake

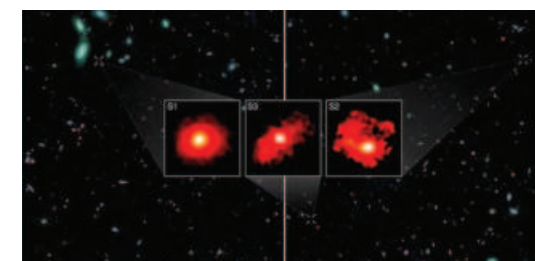
SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Ignoring health regulations, medical waste is being burnt in the open near Tejgaon truck stand in the capital. Such actions pollute the air, contributing to respiratory diseases like asthma, pneumonia, and lung cancer. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Webb discovers 'Red Monster' galaxies in early universe



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A group of international astronomers have discovered three mysterious, ultra-massive galaxies in the early universe.

The galaxies -- systems of stars, gas, dust, and dark matter -- appear in a view from Nasa's James Webb Space Telescope like creepy, blood-red glowing eyes. They get their striking colour from their extreme amount of dust.

Nicknamed "Red Monsters," they are each nearly as massive as the Milky Way, and had assembled within the first billion years after the Big Bang; the event that is believed to have created the universe.

The galaxies indicated to researchers that the formation of stars in the early universe was far more efficient than they had previously thought, challenging current models of galaxy formation.

Until this research, it was believed that all galaxies formed gradually within large halos of dark matter that capture gas into structures bound by gravity.