

7 MURDERS ON SHIP

Water transport workers go on strike

Demand proper probe; unloading, transportation of goods halted

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, *Ctg*

The unloading of cargo at seaports and the transportation of goods on the inland water routes came to a standstill yesterday amid a nationwide indefinite strike was called by water transport workers.

The Bangladesh Water Transport Workers' Federation called the strike demanding a proper investigation into Monday's killing of seven crew members onboard the MV Al-Bakhera in Chandpur.

According to ship handling operators, shipping agents, and sources at Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), the unloading of around 4.44 lakh tonnes of imported cargo from at least 20 mother vessels anchored at Kutubdia and the outer anchorage of Chattogram port has been suspended due to the work abstention since early hours.

Besides, 773 lighterage vessels carrying 10.5 lakh tonnes of goods were either stranded at different locations or waiting to be unloaded at different river ports, according to Bangladesh Water

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Activities at the BIWTA terminal in Narayanganj's Kanchpur remain halted as Bangladesh Launch Labour Association began a nationwide indefinite strike at midnight on Thursday, demanding justice for the brutal killings of seven crew members aboard the bulk carrier MV Al-Bakhera in Chandpur on Monday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SA nations, China must work together to ensure dev
Says foreign adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain

yesterday said China and South Asian nations must work together to ensure peace, stability, and development in the region as responsible neighbours.

"While we celebrate our historical ties and envision a future of shared prosperity, we must address contemporary challenges in a designed manner," he said, adding that geopolitical tensions, climate change, and economic disparities demand collective action.

Hossain was speaking as the chief guest at an international conference on "China-South Asia Civilization and Connectivity: History and Contemporary Issues" at North South University (NSU) in Dhaka.

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PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 28

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:45	4:00	5:27	7:00
JAMAAT 6:05	1:15	4:15	5:30	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Mobs beat 2 suspected robbers to death

STAR REPORT

Villagers beat two men to death after suspecting them of being robbers on Thursday night in Narayanganj and Jamalpur.

In Narayanganj, the victim, Md Billal alias Billal Dakat, 45, was accused in at least nine cases, including ones filed over murder and robbery, said Enayet Hossain, officer-in-charge of Araihaaz police station.

A 25-year-old woman was also injured in the beating and is undergoing treatment at Araihaaz Upazila Health Complex. She was accused of being an accomplice to the robbery gang.

The incident took place in Kahendi village of Highjadi union in Araihaaz upazila around 10:30pm, reports our Narayanganj correspondent.

Quoting the locals, OC Enayet told this newspaper that villagers chased a gang

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Govt to consult with all parties before reforms

Advisers tell dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government will not make unilateral decisions on the reform commissions' reports but will finalise decisions through consultations with all political parties, said Adviser Mahfuj Alam yesterday.

"We have been engaging in consistent discussions with political parties. Once the commissions begin presenting their proposals, which we expect from January, broader consultations will occur involving all stakeholders," Mahfuj said at the concluding session of a dialogue organised by the Forum for Bangladesh Studies at Krishibid Institution Bangladesh in Dhaka.

He explained that the consultations would determine the extent of feasible reforms.

Mahfuj said reforms proposed by the political parties' had been largely integrated into the government's initiatives. "The political parties must now sit with us to finalise what reforms are achievable and necessary."

He emphasised the importance of strengthening state institutions. "The foundation of the state relies on its institutions. Without robust institutions, the unity of the state is meaningless. If we cannot reform institutions like the Election Commission to serve the people, our efforts will be futile."

The adviser stressed that reforms must be consensual.

"We need agreement on how

much reform is possible and whether a legal framework can ensure that future governments continue these initiatives. Political parties must commit to upholding reforms when in power."

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MAHFUJ ALAM

The absence of a democratic transition process led to the recent popular uprising that ousted the previous government. People have shed blood repeatedly, yet this issue remains unresolved.

NAHID ISLAM

Meanwhile, Nahid Islam, adviser to the information and ICT ministries, underscored the need for democratic power transitions

to prevent the recurrence of political unrest.

"The absence of a democratic transition process led to the recent popular uprising that ousted the previous government. The people of Bangladesh have shed blood repeatedly, yet this issue remains unresolved."

He called for a framework to institutionalise peaceful and democratic power transitions.

"Our primary agenda is to prevent the return of vindictive politics. This must be addressed before the elections."

Responding to a query about the government's performance, Nahid said, "The public or those outside power can judge better. We are working within limitations, seeking assistance to advance our goals."

Nahid criticised the bureaucracy's misuse under previous governments.

"Bureaucrats gained undue power under the past regime, which was used to establish fascism. This legacy challenges our administrative effectiveness."

He commended the unity achieved during the mass uprising, saying, "This national unity persists on key issues."

He also called for embedding the essence of the July uprising into a new constitution, warning of future disruptions if this is not achieved.

On foreign policy, Nahid stressed the need for consistency.

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Jatiya Nagorik Committee to shape future leadership

Says Sarjis Alam; 36-member central committee declared

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

The Jatiya Nagorik Committee is not a registered political party but a political force dedicated to shaping future leadership in Bangladesh, said Sarjis Alam, general secretary of the July Shaheed Smrity Foundation, yesterday.

He was addressing a views exchange meeting at the Panchagarh Government Auditorium.

"A registered political party engages directly in politics and elections. In contrast, the Jatiya Nagorik Committee focuses on nurturing leadership in political, organisational, and voluntary spheres for the country's future," said Sarjis.

The meeting brought together representatives from various upazilas in the district to discuss the committee's role in upholding the spirit of recent mass uprisings.

To advance the ideals and demands of these movements, participants — especially those under

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Stop construction of expressway at Panthakunja park

Demand speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts, locals, and green activists yesterday protested the ongoing construction work of additional links for the Dhaka Elevated Expressway at the capital's Panthakunja Park.

They said these additional portions from Sonargaon to Palashi will severely damage both the Hatirjheel and Panthakunja Park, as around 2,000 trees have already been cut down from the park due to the project.

At a programme held at Panthakunja Park as part of an ongoing movement that green activists have been staging for the past two weeks, they urged the government to prioritise environmental preservation over urban development.

At the programme, Prof Adil Mohammed Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, criticised the additional links, saying the expressway should have been a bypass from the airport to Jatrabari as per the Strategic Transport Plan - 2005.

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Ensure equality, religious freedom for all: speakers



DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at an event yesterday emphasised the need for political reform and vigilance to uphold the ideals of the July uprising and ensure justice for all.

They said this at a rally held at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital, organised by the Minority Rights Movement.

The programme brought together voices from different faiths, united in their call for equal citizenship and protection of minority rights.

They called for a Bangladesh where no concept of minorities exists, envisioning a state where all citizens enjoy equal rights and freedom of religious practice.

Speaking at the event, poet and writer Farhad Mazhar said, "There is still oppression of Sanatan religion followers, and this oppression aims to destabilise Bangladesh."

"Those responsible for these actions oppose the state. We cannot ignore the possibility that they may be agents of foreign powers," he added.

Emphasising equality, he said, "We are all citizens of the same country, born on this land. If anyone attempts to separate or divide us —

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HASINA'S FASCIST REGIME

In-depth analysis of the media's role needed

Shafiqul Alam tells event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There should be an in-depth analysis of media's role during former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's fascist regime, rather than just resorting to superficial criticisms, said Shafiqul Alam, the press secretary to the chief adviser, yesterday.

"We need comprehensive books, brilliant journalism, and credible peer reviews that can be published in journals," he said.

He made the remark at a seminar titled "Hasina's Goebbels: Manufacturing Consent for Fascism", held at a city hotel.

The event was organised by the Anti-Fascist Coalition, a collaboration between the Historical Transparency Society and Citizen Initiative.

"Analyse how an editor legitimised fascism through his writings. Take every column they wrote over the last 15 years and analyse each and every word. Publish these analyses in journals — only then will the narrative hold."

Shafiqul suggested conducting in-depth research on the role of media during key incidents such as the abolition of the caretaker government in 2011, enforced disappearances in 2013, the one-sided election of 2014, the surge of fire incidents in 2015, the controversial ICT trials between 2013-16, the "cheerleading" role of

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Makeshift shops on the footpath in the New Market area and cars parked on the road have become common sights in Dhaka. These practices contribute to severe traffic congestion and compel pedestrians to walk on the road, putting their lives at risk. The photo was taken yesterday.