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## JULY PROCLAMATION Students to hold nationwide campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Students Against Discrimination and Jatiya Nagorik Committee will campaign from January 6-11 across the country to listen to what people want so that their hopes and aspirations are reflected in the proclamation on July uprising.

Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the students' platform, announced the programme at a jointly held press conference at the organisation's central office in the capital's Bangla Motor yesterday afternoon.

"We will distribute leaflets, hold rallies, and engage with people from all segments of the society," he said.

Hasnat said the campaign will cover all districts and upazilas.

"The July-August uprising saw participation from all segments of society, from marginalised communities to urban residents. We hope this proclamation will reflect their hopes and aspirations."

The government pledged to issue a proclamation through national consensus, but no visible progress has been made, Hasnat noted.

"Drafting this proclamation is a critical matter. Although we were ready to announce it on December 31, we refrained when the interim government assumed responsibility. Now, we urge the government to act promptly."

Hasnat said the student platform is ready to share its

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A young Palestinian sits beside the bodies of a family at the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital after their home was hit in an Israeli strike in the Shujaiya neighbourhood of Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Santal woman assaulted, her house torched Son files case against UP chairman, 5 others

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A Santal man has filed a case against a local union parishad chairman and five others on allegations of beating the complainant's mother and burning their house in Gaibandha.

The incident occurred at Rajabirat village of Gobindaganj upazila on Friday over a land dispute between the Santals and Rajahar Union Parishad Chairman Rafiqul Islam, a former BNP leader.

The Santal woman, Filimona Hasda, 55, was admitted to Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital for treatment of injuries she received during the assault, her family said.

She was discharged yesterday, said Sub-Inspector Krishna, in charge of the police camp at the hospital.

Bulbul Islam, officer-in-charge of Gobindaganj Police Station, told The Daily Star that Filimona's son Julius Soren, 35, filed the case against Rafiqul, 45, his brother Mezbahul

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## Jamaat holds demo to free arrested AL leader

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Gazipur

About 80 leaders and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday staged a protest procession at the Joydebpur Police Station in Gazipur demanding the release of an Awami League leader who is a suspect in an ongoing case.

Shafiqul Sikder, the organising secretary of an AL ward under Mirzapur in Sadar upazila, was detained around 7:00pm. Yet, Jamaat leaders said he was a member of their organisation and attempted to secure his release, according to police officials.

"I cannot release him as he is a suspect in a case – they can bring their demands, but we will act as per the law and departmental guidance," said Md Abdul Halim, officer-in-charge of the police station.

No misconduct occurred during the protest. "If necessary, I would have called for additional police support, but the situation remained under control. The protesters eventually left peacefully," he added.

"The person held by police is now a member of our organisation," said Abdul Bari, Jamaat nayebe ameer.

# 59 more killed in Gaza

Seven children among 11 members of a family among the dead

AGENCIES

At least 59 people, including seven children of a family, were killed in Israeli air strikes across the Palestinian territory in the past 24 hours, said the enclave's health ministry yesterday.

The civil defence agency said a dawn air strike on the home of the al-Ghoula family in Gaza City killed 11 people of a family, seven of them children.

AFP images from the neighbourhood of Shujaiya combing through smoking rubble. Bodies including those of small children were lined up on the ground, shrouded in white sheets.

Late on Friday Hamas had said indirect negotiations with Israel were to resume in Qatar that same night for a truce and hostage release deal. There has since been no update.

Mediators Qatar, Egypt and the United States have been engaged in months of effort that have failed to end nearly 15 months of war.

A key obstacle to a deal has been Israel's reluctance to agree to a lasting ceasefire.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said he had authorised Israeli negotiators to continue talks in Doha.

In December, Qatar expressed optimism that "momentum" was returning to the talks following the US election of Donald Trump, who takes office in 16 days.

But Hamas and Israel then accused each other of setting new conditions and obstacles.

Gaza City area showed residents

On January 1, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz warned of even more intense retaliatory strikes if rocket fire continued from Gaza and militants did not release hostages they still held.

Such rocket launches had become rare but have intensified since late December as Israel presses a three-month offensive in the north of the territory.

Meanwhile, seven children were among 11 family members killed in an Israeli air strike in northern Gaza City.

According to the civil defence agency, the attack at dawn on the house of the al-Ghoul family killed 11 people and more victims are buried in the debris.

"The home, which housed several displaced people, was completely destroyed," said civil defence spokesman Mahmoud Basal.

"It was a two-storey building and several people are still under the rubble," he added, saying Israeli drones "also fired on ambulance staff" who tried to treat the wounded.

Contacted by AFP, the Israeli army did not immediately comment on the strike.

Elsewhere, the civil defence agency said an Israeli strike killed five security officers tasked with accompanying aid convoys as they drove through the southern city of Khan Yunis.

Bassal accused Israel of having "deliberately targeted" them to "affect the humanitarian supply chain and increase the suffering" of the population.

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## Silver-screen legend Anjana no more

A & E DESK

Veteran actress Anjana Rahman, a beloved figure in Bangladeshi cinema, passed away early yesterday in the capital's Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital. Her passing marks the end of an era, leaving behind a legacy of exceptional contributions to the film industry. The entire entertainment industry mourned her passing, and so did her fans and well-wishers.

Colleagues, fans, and journalists gathered to pay their final respects at the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation at 11:25am. Following the first Namaz-e-Janaza after Zuhr prayer, her body was taken to the Channel i premises for a second Janaza. Later, she was laid to rest at the Banani Cemetery.

STORY ON PAGE 6

## SHOPPING MALL HEIST 159 bhoori gold robbed in seven minutes

STAR REPORT

Burglars made off with gold and diamond ornaments, estimated to be worth around Tk 2.5 crore, from a jewellery shop at a mall in Dhaka.

The burglary of Crown Diamond and Jewellers occurred at Simanta Square in Jigatola on Friday, police said yesterday.

The shop's owner Kazi Akash had filed a case over the stolen 159 bhoori of gold ornaments and some diamond jewellery, said Abdul Alim, inspector (investigation) of Dhanmondi Police Station.

"We have launched an investigation. However, no one was arrested till 8:30pm," he told The Daily Star last night.

After going through CCTV footage, the inspector said the incident occurred when the staff locked and left the shop on the ground floor for Juma prayers. Nine men were seen entering the market.

One of them was seen holding a piece of cloth to cover and guard two others who broke the shop's lock. Then another person entered it at 1:01pm. Their accomplices were seen roaming the area and keeping other shopkeepers busy. Most of the burglars were seen wearing masks.

After just over seven minutes, the man who entered the shop was seen coming out with a bag, the police official said.

In another incident, police recovered 32 bhoori of gold ornaments stolen from a house in Adabar yesterday. Police also arrested two individuals over the theft that occurred between December 28 and 30. The burglars took away 45 bhoori of gold.

SM Jahangir, officer-in-charge of Adabar Police Station, said the two suspects broke into the house while the family was away.

The family filed a case on Friday, prompting the police to launch an investigation.

"The arrested individuals are currently under interrogation, and efforts are underway to recover the rest of the gold," Jahangir said.

He also said one of the arrestees is the complainant's nephew who along with a friend looted the gold ornaments to buy mobile phones and for entertainment purposes.

## POST-COUP MYANMAR

# Junta to release 5,800 prisoners

AFP, Naypyidaw

Myanmar's embattled junta government yesterday said it would release almost 6,000 prisoners as part of an annual amnesty to mark the country's independence day.

The military has arrested thousands of protesters and activists since its February 2021 coup that ended Myanmar's brief democratic experiment and plunged the nation into turmoil.

More than 5,800 prisoners – including 180 foreigners – will be freed, the junta said in a statement on Saturday, when the country marks 77 years of independence from British colonial rule.

Around 600 of those included in the amnesty had been sentenced under Section 505 (a) of the penal code, junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun said in an audio statement to media.

The law prohibits any action deemed to undermine the military and carries a maximum jail term of three years.

He added that "most" of the foreigners pardoned were Thai nationals who had been arrested in casinos on the border.

The military said it ordered the pardons "on humanitarian and compassionate grounds".

The junta also announced that 144 people who had been sentenced to life in prison would have their sentences commuted to 15 years.

Myanmar frequently grants amnesty to thousands of prisoners to commemorate holidays or Buddhist festivals.

Last year, the junta announced the release of more than 9,000 prisoners to mark independence day.



Commuters pass through the dust flying over a broken road in the capital's Shyampur yesterday. Dust pollution is known to intensify significantly during the winter, making people more prone to respiratory diseases.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Businessman abducted at gunpoint, shop robbed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A group of armed assailants robbed a wholesale grocery shop and abducted its owner, Shibu Banik, 65, at gunpoint before making away with Tk 5 lakh in cash.

The incident occurred in Kalaiya Bazar of Patuakhali's Bauphal upazila around 10:00pm on Friday.

Two employees, Shankar, 34, and Taposh, 35, who were at the shop, said 8-10 masked criminals stormed the shop as they were closing up.

They tied up Shibu, Shankar, and Taposh at gunpoint. Then they looted over Tk 5 lakh from the cash register and took Shibu with them.

Shibu's wife, Krishna Roy Banik, filed a case against unidentified individuals over the incident.

"We don't know why he was kidnapped. I'm afraid for my husband. He is ill. I urged the local police to rescue my husband as soon as possible," she told this newspaper.

Contacted, Bauphal Police Station OC Kamal Hossain said the police are trying to rescue Shibu Banik.