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EX-MINISTER JAVED Court freezes his cement company's bank account

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A court in Chattogram has ordered to suspend the bank account of Aramit Cement Ltd, owned by former land minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed, in a case of defaulted loan of Tk 15 crore.

J u d g e M u j a h i d u r R a h m a n o f t h e C h i t t a g o n g F i n a n c i a l D e b t C o u r t i s s a i d t h e c o u r t ' s b e n c h a s s i s t a n t R e z a u l K a r i m.



Javed's wife Rukmila Zaman is the managing director of Aramit Cement, the company accused of defaulting on the loan.

Javed served as the state minister for land from 2014 to 2018 and as its minister from 2019 to 2023.

Before the 2024 parliamentary

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Students of Jagannath University on a hunger strike in front of the Secretariat yesterday to press home their three-point demand. They called off their strike 35 hours after authorities assured them of accepting two of their demands. The photo was taken around 7:00pm just before they withdrew their strike.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

3-POINT DEMAND JnU students lay siege to Secretariat

Call off hunger strike at night; campus shutdown, class boycott to continue

OUR CORRESPONDENT, JnU

Students of Jagannath University (JnU), who went on a hunger strike to press home their three-point demand, called off their protest yesterday evening, 35 hours after authorities assured them of meeting two of their demands.

Their demands include the transfer of the second campus project to the army for timely completion, the provision of temporary accommodation for students, and the arrangement of a housing allowance for at least 70 percent of students until temporary accommodation is available.

The education ministry issued a new notice around 7:00pm yesterday.

This notice provided assurances of accepting the first two demands at the meeting of the steering committee for the second JnU campus project to be held at the Secretariat on Wednesday.

Earlier in the day, protesters gathered in front of the Secretariat since 4:45pm citing the "lack of clarity" in the

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Fossil of world's smallest cat found in China

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have uncovered the fossil remains of a tiny feline species smaller than a house cat from an ancient cave in eastern China.

Researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences say the feline called *Prionailurus kurteni* was an extinct species of leopard cat. It was small enough to fit in the palm of one's hand.



The species was identified from a lower jaw fragment discovered at the Hualongdong cave in eastern China's Anhui province.

Its size is comparable to those of the smallest modern cats like the rusty-spotted *P. rubiginosus* of South Asia and the black-footed *Felis nigripes* of Africa, according to a study published in the journal *Annales Zoologici Fennici*.

P. rubiginosus and *Felis nigripes* are estimated to have a maximum head-and-body length of 48cm and 52cm, respectively.

"This species represents the smallest known fossil member of the family Felidae to date," the study says of the newly discovered cat.

The discovery points to a wide diversity of felines during the late Middle Pleistocene, beginning 300,000 years ago.

Fossils of *P. kurteni* have been rarely found because their small bodies decayed quickly in the forested habitat they preferred. The latest fossil, though, was better preserved in the cave environment, scientists say.

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Journo, father beaten up by pro-BNP men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A local journalist and his father were beaten up allegedly by pro-BNP men over a trifling issue in Patuakhali's Kuakata upazila on Sunday night.

The victims, KM Bachchu, 30, Kuakata correspondent for the *Dainik Desh Rupantor*, and his father Yunus Khalifa, 60, were undergoing treatment at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital, Barishal.

Locals said Bachchu's father Yunus was talking to a person in the intersection area in Kuakata town around 9:00pm. Ali Khandaker, president of the municipal unit Krishak Dal, got into an argument with a peanut vendor over not paying the price of peanuts. Ali rather hurled abuse at the vendor for asking money.

As Yunus protested, Ali attacked him. When Bachchu reached the spot after hearing that his father was being assaulted, 10-12 people led by Jasim Mridha, vice-president of the municipal unit Sramik Dal, and Ali beat him up with sticks

SUPREME COURT

Case disposals nearly halved in July-Sept

Many political, constitutional cases saw resolution after Aug 5

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The rate of case disposals at the Supreme Court in the July-September period last year fell by around 47.4 percent to 7,916 from 15,045 in the previous quarter.

The number of cases pending with the courts across the country stood at over 44.43 lakh as of September 30, up from 43.80 lakh at the end of June and 37.3 lakh on December 31, 2023, latest SC data shows.

Despite the resolution of many significant political and constitutional cases after the uprising, the backlog continues to erode public trust in the judiciary, legal experts say.

The Appellate Division witnessed a sharp decline in disposals, down from 2,004 cases in the April-June quarter to a mere 685 in the subsequent period. Similarly, the High Court's disposal rate dipped from 13,041 to 7,231.

This trend translated into a significant increase in pending cases. The Appellate Division saw its backlog rise from 27,477 to 28,901 in this period, while the High Court's backlog surged from 5,65,619 to 5,77,280.

Lower courts also experienced an increase in pending cases, rising from 37,87,866 to 38,37,329. The SC did not provide data on lower court disposals.

Amid judicial reform efforts and steps like the appointment of new judges to clear the backlog, the growing number of pending cases is adding to the suffering of those seeking justice.

Contacted, Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President AM Mahub Uddin Khokon said recently that judiciary's administrative and judicial have been progressing very slowly in the last few months.

He said the expectations of the people have not been fulfilled with a separate secretariat for the judiciary and a law or rules for recruitment of SC judges are not in place yet.

Khokon, also a BNP joint secretary general, alleged nepotism in the lower courts continued while judges who used to send the people to remand on false charges are still in service.

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed had earlier said the backlog of cases is a major problem in the judiciary and the delay in resolution is causing suffering to litigants.

In an address to the judges from across the country on September 21 last year, he mentioned multiple issues, including a shortage of judges, manpower, and courtrooms as the causes behind the backlog.

Despite the difficulties, only 2,000 judges are settling more than 10 lakh cases in a year,

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The backlog of cases continues to erode public trust in the judiciary, legal experts say.

DHAKA-DELHI TIES Normalcy to return once elected govt is in place

Says Indian army chief

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The India-Bangladesh relations will normalise once an elected government is in place, said Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi yesterday.

"The military relations between the two countries remain perfect. But if you talk about the overall relations between the two countries, I would say that it will be normal once an elected government comes to power," he said in his annual press conference ahead of the Army Day celebrations in New Delhi.

Dwivedi described Bangladesh as a "strategic neighbour" and said any kind of animosity between the two countries is not in the best interest of either nation.

"I take your mind back to when the Bangladesh army chief recently said that India was a strategic neighbour of his country. It is the same vice versa -- Bangladesh is strategically

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Upendra Dwivedi

GAZA CEASEFIRE DEAL Qatar hands Israel, Hamas final draft

Says official briefed on negotiations; 19 more Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes

REUTERS, Doha

Mediators yesterday gave Israel and Hamas a final draft of a deal to end the Israeli offensive in Gaza, an official briefed on the negotiations said, after a midnight "breakthrough" in talks attended by envoys of both Joe Biden and Donald Trump.

The official said the text for a ceasefire and release of hostages was presented by Qatar to both sides at talks in Doha, which included the chiefs of Israel's Mossad and Shin Bet spy agencies and Qatar's prime minister.

The official said Steve Witkoff, who will become US envoy when Trump returns to the US presidency next week, attended the talks. A US source said the outgoing Biden administration's envoy Brett McGurk was also there.

"The next 24 hours will be pivotal to reaching the deal," the official said, characterising the draft as the outcome of a breakthrough reached in the early hours of yesterday.

Israeli far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich warned that he would not support a deal in Gaza that halts the offensive, insisting that Israel should "open all the gates of hell" on the Palestinian territory.

Hamas said that talks over some core issues for a ceasefire deal have made progress, an official in the Palestinian group told Reuters.



A firefighter extinguishes the flames as the Palisades Fire, one of several simultaneous blazes that have ravaged Los Angeles County, burns in Mandeville Canyon, a neighbourhood in Los Angeles, California, USA, on Sunday night.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Los Angeles races to contain fires

Death toll rises to 24

AFP, Los Angeles

Firefighters were battling massive wildfires yesterday that have ravaged Los Angeles and killed at least 24 people, with officials warning of incoming dangerous winds that could whip up the blazes further.

The fires ripped through the United States' second-largest city for the seventh day, reducing whole communities to scorched rubble and leaving thousands without homes.

Massive firefighting efforts have stanchoned the spread of the Palisades Fire, which was looming toward upscale Brentwood and the densely populated San Fernando Valley.

But conditions are set to dramatically worsen, with "extreme fire behavior and life threatening conditions" over the coming days.

Winds up to 70 miles per hour mean a "particularly dangerous situation" will be declared from early today, said National Weather Service meteorologist Rose Schoenfeld.