



## STABBING OF COMPUTER TRADERS Chhatra Dal leader held; supporters ‘attack’ police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five police personnel were injured when supporters of a Chhatra Dal leader allegedly assaulted them at New Market Police Station early yesterday. The assault occurred to free the leader from custody after his arrest over an attack on two computer traders.

Mohammad Hossain, alias Mithun, 35, joint general secretary of Chhatra Dal's central committee, was arrested by police from Purbachal.

At least 30 of Mithun's supporters attempted to block the police vehicle as it entered the New Market Police Station premises around 4:00am.

They then clashed with police officers in an effort to free Mithun, according to DMP Additional Commissioner (Crime and Operations) SN Nazrul Islam.

Tariq Latif, assistant commissioner of police (New Market Zone), was among the injured cops.

A case has been filed for the assault on police officers.

Six individuals were arrested from the scene, including Bashir Islam, Mohammad Hasan, Mohammad Imon, Masum Mahmud, Mohammad Alamin, and Akbar Ali, said Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of DMP.

Mithun's arrest is linked to an attack on two computer shop owners, Wahedul Hasan Dipu and Ehteshamul Haque, on Elephant Road on January 10.

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Novak Djokovic acknowledges the applause as he exits the court after retiring from the semifinal of the Australian Open against Germany's Alexander Zverev in Melbourne on Friday. The 24-time Grand Slam winner, who beat Carlos Alcaraz in a four-set quarterfinal battle, lost the first set against Zverev in tiebreaker before retiring hurt with a muscle tear.

PHOTO: AFP

## Violence in West Bank imperils Gaza truce Warns UN rights office

AGENCIES

Israeli operations in the West Bank have killed at least 12 Palestinians since Tuesday and could threaten the newly agreed ceasefire in Gaza, United Nations Human Rights office spokesperson Thameen Al-Kheetan said yesterday.

Hundreds of Jenin residents fled their homes as the military demolished a number of houses on the third day of a major operation in the West Bank city on Thursday.

The operation was launched within days of the start of a ceasefire in Gaza that saw the first exchange of Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails since a brief truce in November 2023.

A senior Hamas official told AFP that his group provided the names of four Israeli women hostages to be freed today as part of a second release under the ceasefire with Israel.

Israeli officials said the Jenin operation in the West Bank was aimed at what the military said were Iranian-backed groups in the refugee camp adjacent to the city, a major hub for armed Palestinian groups for years.

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## OF CRONIES AND CRIMES

# Bahar: the patron of Cumilla's goons

KHALID BIN NAZRUL

Some people of Cumilla, along with a section of the Awami League, started supporting former Chhatra League leader AKM Bahauddin Bahar in the '80s to usher in a new era of young leadership and counter the influence of late party heavyweight Afzal Khan's family in regional politics. Little did they know what was ahead of them.

Since defeating Afzal in the 1984 municipality chairman polls, Bahar established a group loyal to him – an era marred by murder accusations against Bahar's followers until his ouster along with the Awami League regime last August.

Bahar allegedly used muscle power to take control of the government institutions in Cumilla to build his fortune through irregularities, tender manipulation and extortion in the real estate, transport and other sectors, along with illegal drug dealings.

Former Cumilla-6 MP Bahar's luxurious triplex house in Munselfbari, a 10-storied building housing Cumilla City Awami League office in Ramghatla, and Cumilla Club in the Town Hall premises that Bahar and his people used as their own office were torched during the fall of the AL regime last August. Bahauddin Bahar and his daughter Tahsin Bahar Suchona reportedly fled to India after the political



changeover.

Nizam Uddin Kaiser, former convener of Swechhchasebak Dal's Cumilla City unit, told The Daily Star that Bahar created a sense of panic among the people. "They don't believe that Bahar can't make a comeback because his accomplices in crime are still unharmed and staying in different areas of the city," Nizam said.

### MURDERS

After being elected municipality chairman, Bahar focused on strengthening Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in late '80s, with his supporters' activities centring on Cumilla Victoria College, Cumilla town and Sadar Upazila.

Nearly a decade later, in 1998, BCL leader Jahid Babu was killed allegedly in an infighting between Bahar's followers.

Obaidul Haque Dulal, former general secretary of BCL's Victoria College unit, then left Bahar's group, accusing the Awami League leader of assisting the killers of Jahid.

After three years, Dulal was himself murdered.

His uncle Kabirul Islam Shikder, an Awami League leader and former president of Cumilla District BCL, said, "Bahar's political career is based on the support of my brother Shafiqul Islam Shikder and other family members. But Bahar's men were involved in killing Dulal."

Even before his rise, Bahar was allegedly

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## GRAFT ALLEGATIONS Sri Lanka ‘revokes’ power purchase deal with Adani

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka has revoked a power purchase agreement with Indian conglomerate Adani Group following allegations of corruption, energy ministry sources in Colombo said yesterday.

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's administration opened probes into the company's local projects after billionaire founder Gautam Adani was charged with bribery in the United States late last year.

The administration of his predecessor had agreed in May 2024 to buy electricity at US\$0.0826 per kilowatt from an Adani wind power complex yet to be built in the island nation's northwest.

But a top energy ministry official said Dissanayake's cabinet decided this month not to proceed with the deal.

"The government has revoked the power purchase agreement, but the project is not cancelled. A committee has been appointed to review the entire project," the source told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Several activists had challenged the agreement, arguing that smaller renewable projects were selling electricity at two-thirds the price of Adani.



## US arrests, deports hundreds of migrants

Says White House; Trump admin to appeal judge's decision on ending birthright citizenship

AGENCIES

Hundreds of migrants in the United States were arrested Thursday and others flown out of the country on military aircraft as President Donald Trump's promised mass deportation operation got underway, the White House said.

The crackdown came as Trump yesterday prepared to head to California and North Carolina, where natural disasters have turned into political footballs, in his first trip since his return to office.

And on another whirlwind day in his first week as president, Trump told Fox News he would "rather not" impose tariffs on China, after repeated vows to hit America's biggest economic rival with hefty import levies.

The Republican also said he would reach out to Kim Jong Un again, calling the North Korean leader he previously met three times a "smart guy."

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Trump's administration on Thursday "arrested 538 illegal immigrant criminals," adding "hundreds" were deported by military aircraft.

"The largest massive deportation

operation in history is well underway," she said in a post on social media platform X.

Meanwhile, a federal judge on Thursday blocked Trump's administration from implementing the Republican president's executive order curtailing the right to automatic birthright citizenship in the United States, calling it "blatantly unconstitutional."

Seattle-based US District Judge John Coughenour issued a temporary restraining order at the urging of four Democratic-led states - Washington, Arizona, Illinois and Oregon - preventing the administration from enforcing the order. Trump had signed the order on Monday, his first day back in office.

The judge, an appointee of Republican former president Ronald Reagan, dealt the first legal setback to the headline policies on immigration that are a centerpiece of Trump's second term as president, reports Reuters.

"Obviously we'll appeal," Trump said of Coughenour's ruling.

Trump on Thursday also ordered the declassification of the last secret files on the assassination of president John F Kennedy, a case that still fuels conspiracy theories more than 60 years after his death, reports AFP.

» Trump says he would 'rather not' impose tariffs on China

» Orders release of last JFK, RFK, King assassination files

» Pardons 23 anti-abortion protesters

## Jeweller shot, robbed of 50 bhoori gold

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed muggers shot a jewellery trader and reportedly robbed 50 bhoori of gold and Tk 3.5 lakh from his possession in the capital.

The incident occurred in the Beribadh area of Kamrangirchar around 11:00pm on Thursday.

The injured businessman, Sajal Rajbongshi, 37, is currently admitted to Popular Hospital in Dhanmondi, said police.

Sajal's brother, Joy Rajbongshi, said their family resides in the Jelepura area of Hazaribagh and runs a jewellery store in Kamrangirchar.

On his way home after closing the shop, Sajal, on a motorcycle, was ambushed near the Beribadh area by seven to eight muggers on multiple motorcycles. They shot him on his left knee and snatched a bag containing gold and cash from his shoulder.

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Preparations for Amar Ekushey Book Fair, especially the construction of bookstalls, are underway at Suhrawardy Udyan. Each year in February, the Bangla Academy organises the month-long fair. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Astronomers discover the windiest planet in the universe

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Astronomers have discovered a huge planet with the fastest wind speeds ever observed in the universe.

The gas giant WASP-127b, which is located over 500 light-years away from Earth, has winds that travel around its equator six times faster than the planet's rotation speed.

Observations from the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope recorded wind speeds that reach up to 33,000 kilometres per hour (20,000mph).

"This is something we haven't seen before," said Lisa Nortmann, a scientist at the University of Göttingen, Germany.

"Part of the atmosphere of this planet is moving towards us at a high velocity while another part is moving away from us at the same speed. This signal shows us that there is a very fast, supersonic, jet wind around the planet's equator."

The supersonic winds are more than 60 times faster than the fastest winds ever observed on Earth, which were recorded during an exceptionally powerful F5 tornado in Oklahoma, US, in 1999.

