

## GLOBAL CONFCE IN MOROCCO Bangladesh too walks out during Israeli speech

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh, among other delegations, staged a walk out at a global conference in Morocco, protesting the presence of Israel's transportation minister, Miri Regev, whose visit has reignited tensions over the North African Kingdom's ties with Israel.

"This is to inform that the Bangladesh delegation was also among the countries that walked out. Bangladesh's position on the Palestinian cause and Israeli genocide and other repressions of the Palestinians is well known," said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement yesterday.

The ministry said some quarters have been misinterpreting an instant walkout by some delegates from the speech of the Israeli delegate at the 4th Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety on February 18, 2025 in Marrakesh, Morocco.

"All concerned are requested to refrain from spreading misinformation about this particular situation," the statement added.

According to The New Arab news outlet, Israeli Minister Regev arrived in Marrakesh on February 18 for the conference, after a Moroccan court rejected an appeal by lawyers seeking to bar her from entering the country.

The lawsuit cited her alleged involvement in war crimes against Palestinians.

## July Sangram Parishad launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new platform, July Sangram Parishad (JSP), was launched at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday, aiming to uphold the revolutionary spirit of the July uprising and push for systemic political reforms.

The platform announced a 65-member convening committee, comprising mostly students from public and private universities. Abu Bakar Siddique Prantor, a Dhaka University International Relations student, was named convener, while Jahangirnagar University student Muntasir Rahman was appointed member secretary.

Prantor called for banning the Awami League and enacting laws prohibiting political activities based on the ideals of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Sheikh Hasina.

"A national election before implementing necessary reforms will only restore the same system. We need a new constitution to establish a just framework for governance."

Spokesperson Noful Islam, also a Jatija Nagorik Committee member, said, "Youth-led political power must be supported to ensure the revolution's success."



Winners of "My Dhaka Lens" award pose for a photo with The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam and guests at the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The Dhaka-themed photo contest was organised by The Daily Star's "My Dhaka" section. Out of more than 2,200 submitted photographs, 38 best ones were selected for the exhibition. Among the winners, 12 contestants received certificates while 4 individuals were given crests and certificates.

PHOTO: STAR

## Watermelon boom in Patuakhali

Farmers eye bumper sales

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Patuakhali's watermelon growers are witnessing a bumper harvest this year, with buyers rushing to purchase the fruit directly from the fields.

Favourable weather conditions have contributed to the high yield, said officials. They said watermelon has been cultivated on 27,079 hectares of land this season, nearly 4,000 hectares more than last year. The production target stands at 8.66 lakh tonnes.

A visit to Amkhola village in Galachipa upazila revealed sprawling fields of watermelons in varying sizes.

Farmer Barek Mridha said, "Due to Ramadan, the demand for watermelon is expected to

be high. Wholesale buyers from different parts of the country have already arrived and are providing advance payments."

Mojibur Rahman, a farmer from Rangabali, echoed him.

Farmers said traders from Dhaka and other regions have already provided advance payments to many of them.

Aslam Sheikh, a trader from Dhaka's Kadamtali area, said, "I am currently in Rangabali to purchase watermelons and send them to Dhaka via launches."

Md Nazrul Islam, deputy director of Patuakhali DAE, said, "The fertile soil and favourable climate have contributed to high yields. This year, we expect total sales revenue in the district to surpass Tk 2,000 crore."



## Girl raped 'by neighbour' in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A 10-year-old girl was raped allegedly by her neighbour in Rangpur on Friday.

The girl's father filed a case with Mithapukur Police Station accusing the neighbour, Ruhul Amin, 55, said police.

The incident happened around 6:00am when the fourth-grader went to a nearby garden to collect flowers to place them at a local Shaheed Minar, according to the case.

At one point, Ruhul forcibly took the girl to his house and raped her, said Abu Bakkar Siddique, officer-in-charge of Mithapukur Police Station, citing the case.

When the girl started screaming, locals rushed to the spot and rescued her, he said.

Ruhul managed to flee the scene, said the OC.

Initially, the girl was taken to a health complex. As her condition deteriorated, she was shifted to a Rangpur hospital, said the OC.

Police are trying to arrest the accused, he added.

## Reduce energy use

FROM PAGE 3

Rooftop Solar System: Prospects and Benefits", was organised by the state-owned Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL), which finances renewable energy projects.

Faozul took aim at IDCOL, arguing that its renewable energy targets were insufficient. "IDCOL has lost its way. Its primary responsibility is to serve the people. A target of just 300 megawatts of renewable energy by 2025 is unacceptable. Around the world, organisations are aiming for thousands of megawatts – why settle for just 300? This is an unintelligent target," he said.

He criticised IDCOL's urban-focused approach, saying, "Holding seminars in cities won't solve our renewable energy needs.

IDCOL must return to its mandate and focus on promoting solar energy in rural areas. Profit alone cannot determine its success."

The energy advisor also pointed to the heavy subsidies in the power sector, amounting to Tk 420 billion, with Tk 30 billion per tonne. "This money could have been better spent on education or healthcare, where subsidies are even more crucial," he added.

Meanwhile, Alamgir Morshed, executive director and CEO of IDCOL, defended the organisation's role, saying that it provides low-cost financing, technical support, and capacity development for rooftop solar projects.

Md Shahriar Kader Siddiky, secretary of the Economic Resources Division, also spoke.

## Govt failing

FROM PAGE 3

August 5 have been shattered as violence against women, children, and indigenous communities continues unabated.

Speakers also condemned the adviser to the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, questioning her commitment to feminist ideals after assuming office.

Nuzia Hasina Rasha, Dhaka University unit president of the platform, said, "She was once seen as a feminist activist, but her class allegiance is now clear. Has she gone deaf? Why is she not hearing the cries of oppressed women?"

She challenged the government's inaction, asking, "What concrete steps has this government taken to ensure women's safety, equality, and property rights?"

Rasha also denounced the lack of legal action against religious extremists

who attacked a female footballer, saying, "Instead of prosecuting them, they were merely let off with an apology. An interim government that shelters religious fascists cannot be expected to protect women, indigenous communities, or workers."

Platform president Toyob Islam said despite decades of protests, including movements in 1998, 2013, and 2020, gender-based violence persists due to a culture of impunity. "Without exemplary punishment, such crimes will continue," he said.

Condemning the expulsion of ten female students from Chittagong University and misogynistic remarks by the proctor, platform member Shah Shompurno said, "As long as anti-women figures hold policymaking positions, the state will never ensure women's safety."

## INT'L HOPE SCHOOL Inter-School Bangla Olympiad held

CITY DESK

The fourteenth Inter-School Bangla Olympiad was at International Hope School (IHSB) in Uttara yesterday, said a press release.

In the daylong programme, more than 1,500 students from 80 English medium and English version schools participated in various age-based categories in essay writing, recitation, dance, singing, drawing, quizzes, and public speaking.

IHSB Principal Rokhsana Zarin and Chairman Timothy Donald Fisher spoke on the occasion. Housing, Public Works, and Industry Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan was present as the chief guest at the award distribution ceremony, while Mohammad Azam, director general of Bangla Academy, was also present as special guest.

## AL govt, oppositions used

FROM PAGE 3

ARBITRARY ARRESTS, TORTURE AND FORCED CONFESSIONS

Children were not only victims of gunfire but also faced mass arrests, unlawful detentions, and torture. Many were held in police stations, the Detective Branch headquarters, and prisons alongside adults.

Some were reportedly tortured into making forced confessions.

In Rangpur, a 16-year-old boy was detained for 13 days on what the report describes as false charges related to the police killing of Abu Sayed.

In Dhaka, a 17-year-old was tortured at Jatrabari Police Station for two days to extract a confession for a police officer's murder before being transferred to DB headquarters, where the torture allegedly continued.

Despite his lawyer proving he was a minor, a judge sent him to an adult

prison.

Following media pressure, he was transferred to a juvenile detention centre, where he remained until August 6 -- the day after Sheikh Hasina fled the country.

The report further accuses the DB at Minto Road and CTC of engaging in incommunicado detention, torture, and other ill-treatment of minors.

Thousands of children were reportedly detained through warrantless home invasions, mass roundups, and street detentions, in clear violation of international law.

Meanwhile, the report states that they have received multiple allegations that the opposition paid children to bring them to the protests. However, they did not provide any separate examples to substantiate the claim.

Shahana Huda Ranjana, a senior coordinator at Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), criticised both the authorities and political factions for involving children in the violent uprising.

"The government used all its force to suppress the movement, and the casualty list shows that many of the victims were children," she said.

"But neither the movement to abolish quotas nor the anti-government protests should have involved children. How did they become part of this?" she questioned.

"We saw a large number of street children on the streets, and most were there for money. They were paid, used in a horrifying manner, and suffered the most."

Ranjana said since the fall of the government, many criminals have been released and are now exploiting vulnerable youth.

"We are witnessing an alarming rise in violent teenage gangs. This has become a social disease, and it is deeply concerning," she said.

"There will be more movements in the future, but regardless of who is in power, I plead -- do not use children in political battles. They are our future; do not destroy it in such a way."

## Students

FROM PAGE 5

Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Masud and Pro-Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Shariful Islam.

In the letter, they blamed Chhatra Dal for the attack on students.

The letter was sent via email to the chief adviser's office yesterday, and some students will submit the letter tomorrow at the CA's office.

PRAYER TIMING	
FEBRUARY 23	
Fazr	Zohr
Asr	Maghrib
Esha	
AZAN 5-20	12-45 4-30 6-03 7-30
JAMAAT 5-55	1-15 4-45 6-07 8-00
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION	

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উত্তরা ১১ নং সেক্টরের রোড নং- ৫ ও ১৪ তে, ৫ ও ৩ কাতার উপর নির্মিত ৬ ভলা আবাসিক, এবং মিরপুর ১৩ নং সেকশনে ৮.২৫ কাতার উপরে ৭ ভলা বাসিন্দিক বিভিন্ন বিক্রম হবে।

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