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Hundreds rally demanding end to Gaza genocide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of protesters, including members of several religious groups such as Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh and Khilafat Majlis, staged demonstrations in front of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque yesterday, demanding an end to the Israeli onslaught in Gaza.

The rally took place after the Jumma prayers. Khilafat Majlis staged a protest march and left the mosque premises, while Hefazat-e-Islam leaders and activists continued the demonstration at the site.

Besides, another similar protest was seen on the street in front of Baitul Mukarram under the banner of "Aam Janata" (The Masses).

During the demonstrations, members of the army, Rab, and police were present in a strict security stance with water cannons, a riot vehicle, and two prison vans parked nearby.

Police were seen searching the bags of people entering the mosque. Besides, a large number of plainclothes officers were deployed.

At the gathering held in front of the mosque, Mamunul Haque, secretary

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Protesters in front of the north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque after Juma prayers yesterday, seeking justice of Israel's attacks on the Palestinian people. Israeli strikes killed several hundred Palestinians in recent days.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Israel threatens to annex parts of Gaza

Defence minister says he plans to expand 'buffer zone'

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz yesterday threatened to annex parts of the Gaza Strip unless Hamas released the remaining Israeli hostages held in the war-battered Palestinian territory.

The warning came as Israel stepped up the renewed assault it launched on Tuesday, shattering the relative calm that had reigned in the war-battered territory since a January 19 ceasefire.

Gaza's civil defence agency said Thursday that 504 people had been killed since the bombardment resumed, one of the highest tolls since the war began more than 17 months ago with Hamas's attack on Israel.

"I ordered (the army) to seize more territory in Gaza... The more Hamas refuses to free the hostages, the more territory it will lose, which will be annexed by Israel," Katz said in a statement.

Should Hamas not comply, Katz also threatened "to expand buffer zones around Gaza to protect Israeli

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Oxygen found in distant galaxy

It may provide answers on how ours developed

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have announced the surprising discovery of oxygen and other heavy metals in the most distant known galaxy.

The galaxy, which is known as JADES-GS-z14-0, is 13.4 billion light years away from Earth. It was just found last year using NASA's James Webb Space Telescope.

"I was really surprised by this clear detection of oxygen in JADES-GS-z14-0," Gergő Popping, an astronomer at the European Southern Observatory's ALMA Regional Centre who did not take part in the research, said in a statement. "It suggests galaxies can form more rapidly after the Big Bang than had previously been thought."

The finding was made in two separate studies conducted by two different teams of astronomers. It has allowed scientists to improve distance measurements to the galaxy.

They used the Atacama Large Millimeter/sub-millimeter Array: a group of dozens of radio telescopes in the Chilean desert and the largest astronomical project in existence.

The images show the galaxy as it was when the universe was less than 300 million years old, just about 2 percent of its current age, the researchers noted.



Two dead in clash over establishing supremacy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

A clash between two groups in Narsingdi left two people dead and at least 10 injured.

Two young men were killed and 10 others injured in a clash between two local groups trying to establish dominance in the Chanpur area of Raipura upazila, Narsingdi, yesterday morning.

The deceased are Amin, 23, son of Khorshed Mia, and Bashar, 35, son of Berek Hazi, said Chanpur Union Parishad Chairman Momen Sarkar.

One group is led by Abdus Salam and the other by Shamsu Islam who is a Union Parishad member. The deceased men were Salam's followers, locals said.

According to locals, Salam and his family members have been staying away from the area for several months. When they attempted to enter the village yesterday morning, Shamsu and his men

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JULY UPRISING

Nagorik Committee, student body to be revamped

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Following the emergence of the new political party and a student body, the July uprising activists are going to overhaul the Students Against Discrimination (SAD) and civic platform Jatiya Nagorik Committee.

The two platforms became largely inactive after they floated their political party -- National Citizen Party (NCP) and student body Democratic Student Council -- as the key leaders were included in the NCP.

Also, there have been allegations of controversial activities against several coordinators of the movement that raised concerns and prompted the July uprising leaders to bring changes to the SAD leadership.

Regarding the issue, NCP Convener Nahid Islam recently said that the coordinator post in the platform no longer exists.

However, SAD Spokesperson Umama Fatema in a Facebook post said that no decision was made to dissolve the platform.

Sources inside the two platforms said that the platforms were likely to be re-organised before

Eid and there might be some structural changes.

Requesting to be unnamed, two SAD leaders told this newspaper that the platform might be made a "mass organisation" instead of a student organisation.

Sources inside the two platforms said that the platforms were likely to be re-organised before Eid and there might be some structural changes.

Some proposed removing the word "students" and renaming it to the "Anti-Discrimination Movement".

As per the discussion, the primary goal of the platform will be to uphold the spirit of the July mass uprising. However, leaders have yet to reach a final decision on the issue.

According to sources, SAD Spokesperson Umama, Hasan Inam, the secretary of the special cell on the uprising, Moinul Islam, an executive member of SAD, Sinthia Jahan Ayesha, and Maliha Namla, students of Jahangirnagar University, are being considered for top positions in the next committee.

Umama, Hasan, and Moinul are the front-runners for the roles of convener and member secretary posts.

Meanwhile, the day before the NCP was launched, the Jatiya Nagorik Committee

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BIMSTEC 2025 Yunus-Modi bilateral meeting unlikely

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi are unlikely to hold a meeting on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC summit on April 2-4, putting a damper on the possibility of a thaw in the currently icy bilateral relationship between the two neighbouring countries.

Dhaka and New Delhi were working positively for such a meeting in Bangkok but the latter has yet to tell anything definitely on Dhaka's diplomatic approach, The Daily Star has learnt from people with knowledge of the matter.

"I don't have any update to share at this point in time," said Randhir Jaiswal, spokesman for India's external affairs ministry, during the weekly media briefing when asked about the possibility of Modi-Yunus bilateral meeting in Bangkok, reports our correspondent in New Delhi.

Given the acrimonious bilateral relationship at present, it is unlikely that there will be a meeting between the two countries' heads of government, according to people

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Take action to uphold freedom of expression

Human rights defenders urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International human rights organisations, in a joint statement yesterday, urged the government to uphold freedom of expression and opinion, highlighting alarming incidents of arrests, harassment, and violence against journalists and human rights defenders in recent weeks.

They emphasised that Bangladesh has a long history of suppressing free speech and asserted that breaking from this past is essential to building a rights-respecting future.

Amnesty International, Article 19, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Fortify Rights, Front Line Defenders, Human Rights Watch, PEN America, and the Committee to Protect Journalists issued the statement.

The organisations pointed out that although some recent attacks were not perpetrated by state actors, the government is responsible for ensuring the protection of all individuals exercising their right to free speech. They called for immediate action to safeguard journalists and others from violence and intimidation.

The statement said that February saw a surge in violent attacks against journalists. On February 3, a journalist in Shariatpur was assaulted with hammers and knives after reporting on medical negligence at a private clinic. Three

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The trial run of vehicles on the service lane of the 13km east link road of Jamuna Bridge in Tangail being conducted yesterday. If successful, the 7.3-meter-wide service road is set to open for traffic on March 24, just in time to ease Eid travels to the north.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

Bangladesh football riding the Hamza wave

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Prime Bank



PRAYER TIMING MARCH 22

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:45	12:45	4:45	6:11	7:45
JAMAAT 4:55	1:15	5:00	6:26	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
21	22		6:11
22	23	4:43	6:11
23	24	4:42	6:11