

NEWS

Violence persists in hills

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Among the speakers were Sumitra Chakma, general secretary of the Rangamati District Committee of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Youth Association, and Mranusning Marma, general secretary of the Hill Women's Federation Central Committee.

Similar protests were also held in the capital where protesters brought out a procession in the Shahbagh area.

Police on Wednesday arrested four men in connection with the rape, shortly after the victim's father filed a case against six named individuals with Sadar Police Station, according to Arefin Jewel, superintendent of police in Khagrachhari.

According to the case statement, the girl had been staying at a relative's house after attending a fair on the night of the incident. The six men allegedly broke into the house, tied up the relative, and raped her.

She initially did not tell anyone about the incident out of fear, but on July 12, she attempted to take

her own life. After being hospitalised, she shared the details with her family.

A doctor at the hospital on Thursday said her condition is critical.

MF DEMANDS JUSTICE

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MFJ) yesterday expressed deep outrage, concern, and strong condemnation over the recent rape incident in Khagrachhari.

"While several suspects involved in this brutal and heinous crime have been arrested, ensuring their speedy trial and maximum punishment is now an urgent necessity," MFJ said in a statement.

The organisation said the incident once again proves that the safety of women and children in the country is under severe threat.

According to data from Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, 1,555 women and girls were subjected to violence in the first six months of 2025. Among them, 354 were rape victims, most of whom were minors and adolescents. In June alone, 65 individuals were raped, including 43 children. Three victims died

after being raped, two of whom were children.

Such brutality against women and children is unacceptable under any circumstances, said the rights organisation.

MFJ called upon the interim government to ensure a prompt and fair investigation and trial, with exemplary punishment for the perpetrators.

It also urged the government to provide comprehensive support for the physical and mental rehabilitation of the survivor.

The organisation stressed that there is no time to waste in addressing violence against women and children. It called for immediate action through effective law enforcement, public awareness campaigns, and collective efforts to restore deteriorating family and social values. Without this, more childhoods risk being destroyed.

MFJ firmly believes that only exemplary punishment for this crime can deter future rapists and help establish justice and dignity for women in society.

Govt to blame if 'July Charter'

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Salahuddin told a rally in the capital's Pallabi yesterday.

BNP's Dhaka Metropolitan North unit organised the event.

Salahuddin said it would be unfortunate for the nation if the consensus commission were to base its decisions on the views of individuals who have, at various times, been affiliated with the Awami League.

"Those who are going to the commission, holding discussions, eating, and leaving without making any decision -- who are they? Some are from 13 parties, some from 14 parties, and some belong to other parties.

"But we had objected to calling the parties who have connections with the Awami League."

He said, "We consider this neutral interim government to be a caretaker government. Your only responsibility is to hold a free and fair national election. It is not your duty to conduct

the local government polls."

The Election Commission has no mandate to conduct local government polls. Its mandate is limited to conducting the presidential and the national elections."

Salahuddin said local bodies elections are held only if the local government ministry requests.

Without naming any political party, he said even those who maintained relations with the AL over the last 16 years want the PR system in the national polls.

"Another party engaged in the politics of spreading confusion in Bangladesh has joined them. At one time, they opposed the country's independence, at another, they stood against the people, and at yet another, against public sentiment."

"... this time they are trying to catch fish in the muddy waters."

Salahuddin said that those who are "plotting to bring back fascist Sheikh

Hasina into the politics of Bangladesh" will be identified.

"We must honour the spirit of this student-mass uprising. Their sacrifices must be recognised. We will give constitutional recognition."

PR is an electoral system in which the distribution of seats corresponds with the proportion of the total votes cast for each party.

At another rally in Naya Paltan, Standing Committee member Mirza Abbas called on the government to put an end to its biased attitude. "You should hold the polls soon. If you don't, we will hold you responsible for the situation."

At an event in front of Jatiya Press Club, party leader AZM Zahid Hossain urged all to stay alert, saying those who are conspiring against the restoration of democracy are secretly continuing their evil activities, reports UNB.

Mehedi Hasan, 32, an ambulance driver from Sadarpur, said transporting critical patients to

164 arrested in series

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minimal public presence as he visited key areas in town, including Chourangi intersection, Launch Terminal, Municipal Park, Court premises, and the Sadar Hospital. Except for pharmacies, fruit shops, and eateries, most businesses remained closed.

A 200-member team from Barishal's Armed Police Battalion (APBn) was seen patrolling various streets.

The team, led by Gopalganj Additional Superintendent of Police (Crime and Watch) Ruhul Amin Sardar, was seen checking pedestrians' IDs and allowed them to pass after verification.

However, no army patrols were visible in the area, and only a limited number of police personnel were seen on the streets.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Ruhul Amin said, "The situation in the town is currently under control. We're ensuring that no shops remain open during curfew hours. Legal actions are being taken only against those involved in criminal activities; ordinary citizens are not being harassed."

Later in the morning, a brief relaxation of the curfew allowed some people to venture out for essential shopping, but businesses were forced to close again once the curfew resumed at 2:00pm.

A resident of the town's Chourangi area, wishing to remain unnamed, said, "I have never witnessed such a fearful situation. Stepping outside fills me with anxiety. I don't know when things will return to normal. The way things are going, it feels like our daily lives will be disrupted for quite some time."

Nihar Mridha, an auto-rickshaw driver

from Paikkandi village in Gopalganj Sadar, said he was forced to take his vehicle out during the curfew.

"There are no passengers in town. In two hours, I made only Tk 70. There's no rice at home, no groceries. I have to pay Tk 500 in rental fees for the rickshaw. Whatever remains will be used to buy some rice, lentils, and salt. If I can't manage to take food home, my family will go hungry. I don't know how we'll survive if the curfew isn't lifted."

Alamgir Hossain, a fruit vendor in the Launch Terminal area, said, "Due to the curfew, I couldn't open my shop, and as a result, in just three days, 22 kg of my fruits worth Tk 25,000-30,000 have gone to waste."

In the afternoon, the police launched drives against those violating the curfew, detaining individuals unable to provide valid reasons for being outside. Law enforcers were seen taking people into custody from various parts of town throughout the day.

Around 5:30pm, police set up a barricade at Pachuria intersection where several young men were seen detained inside a police van. Family members rushed to the scene upon hearing of the arrests.

Many pleaded with the authorities for the release of their loved ones. By evening, police had detained at least 75 individuals.

So far, police arrested 164 people in connection to three cases filed with Gopalganj Sadar, Kashiani, and Kotalipara police stations over Wednesday's violence, said Gopalganj Assistant Superintendent of Police (Muksudpur Circle) Abdul Bashed.

[Our Faridpur correspondent contributed to this story.]

She also acknowledged the role of local partners including Felicity IDC and Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited, emphasising that long-term success depends on collaboration between global innovators and national stakeholders.

"The future we are building together," Dreyer concluded, "belongs to every person in Bangladesh who will now have access to the boundless opportunities that connectivity provides."

Following approximately three months of trial operations, Starlink formally started service yesterday.

The company has been granted a 10-year "Satellite Operator Licence" and "Radio Communication Operators Licence" by the Bangladesh

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we shed blood for it. So, the rules must change. But we know the rules haven't changed yet. In Narayanganj, the game is still on. If it doesn't end, then prepare for another mass uprising," Nahid told the gathering.

He added, "The battle must continue until we dismantle the old system and establish a democratic framework by and for the people."

He said fallen fascists are still trying to regain control of Narayanganj.

"We must liberate Narayanganj from dynastic and mafia control. We must build a people's Narayanganj," he added.

Other central leaders — including Hasnat Abdullah, Sarjis Alam, Nasir Uddin Patwari, Tasnim Jara, and Samanta Sharmin — also spoke at the rally held at Chashara intersection.

NCP's chief organiser (south) Hasnat Abdullah

27km stretch of Dhaka-Barishal

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bricks and soil have become exposed, eventually forming potholes.

In front of the Messr Brothers Filling Station in Pukhuria, potholes have merged with muddy water. Near Bhubukdia Thakur Bari, a turning point on the highway has uneven surfaces and potholes as deep as five inches — posing serious risks for vehicles.

The stretch from Dangi Bridge to Bhubukdia Bus Stand is also in a sorry state. In Bakhunda, potholes about two inches deep have formed across the road. From Talma Mot to Jamtoli Bridge and Mohila Road Bazar, large craters dominate the surface.

MdRahmanSheikh, 42, a bus driver operating on the Faridpur Tekherhat route, said, "This 27-kilometre stretch is so bad that it feels life-threatening to drive on it."

Mehedi Hasan, 32, an ambulance driver from Sadarpur, said transporting critical patients to

Won't stop until we dismantle



NCP procession in Narayanganj.

PHOTO: STAR

have begun — we will not stop until it is brought to an end," he said.

He also promised to address local issues in Munshiganj, including illegal sand extraction, worsening river erosion, poor roads, and fragile healthcare and education systems.

Following the Narayanganj rally, the NCP motorcade left for Chattogram, party sources said.

"The war we have declared against Mujibism through the mass uprising, the anti-fascist struggle we

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Starlink officially launches

FROM PAGE 12

"While many nations deliberate, Bangladesh acted," Dreyer said. "By embracing connectivity as a foundation for human potential, you have positioned your nation as a model for others to follow."

She highlighted the speed and decisiveness of the government, noting that within just a few months of initial dialogue, Starlink service had moved from discussion to deployment. Approvals were finalised by May 2025, and the first Bangladeshi customers were online shortly thereafter.

"This is not just about satellites," Dreyer said. "We are launching opportunities — opportunities for remote learning, telemedicine, digital entrepreneurship, and inclusive growth."

The team, led by

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The case sparked

conspiracy theories, especially among Trump's far-right voters, about an alleged international cabal of wealthy pedophiles. Epstein's death — declared a suicide — before he could face trial supercharged the narrative.

Even if such material were made public, it was also unclear whether it would shed much, if any, light on the main questions raised in the conspiracy theories — particularly the existence and possible grand jury testimony.

The Wall Street Journal

reported that Trump had wished

Epstein a happy 50th

birthday in 2003 with a letter featuring a hand-drawn naked woman and referring to their "secrets."

The letter was reportedly

among a slew of well-

wishes from other rich and

well-known figures for a

birthday album.

A furious Trump said

on Truth Social that the

purported letter was a

"Scam" and "Fake."

Trump also said that

the Journal's chief editor,

Emma Tucker, had been told

the letter was fake and that

she shouldn't publish it.

Trump was friends with

Epstein and the two were

photographed and videoed

together at parties over the

years, although there has

never been evidence shown

of wrongdoing.

The Wall Street Journal

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