



Adult beginner dancers from diverse professions -- including students, teachers, and corporate officials -- perform at Bokultola of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University, yesterday. Titled "Ghonghota", the production was staged by Arthy Ahmed Dance Academy. The event was organised with an aim to create a safe space for adults to pursue their lifelong dream of learning Bharatanatyam and other dance forms.

PHOTO: COURTESY/BISHWAJIT GOSWAMI

## TUHIN MURDER

### Grieving family seeks justice for slain journalist



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

"Bring back my son alive, my heart, my beloved one," cried 90-year-old Hasan Jamal, father of slain journalist Asaduzzaman Tuhin, 40, as relatives and neighbours gathered around him.

Tuhin was brutally killed in front of a crowded market in Chandana Chowrasta of Gazipur around 8:00pm on Thursday night.

He had worked as a staff reporter for the Mymensingh-based daily *Pratidin* for about five years.

Family sources said Tuhin, father of two sons -- eight-year-old Takir Ahmed and three-year-old Fahim Ahmed -- lived in a rented house in Chandana Chowrasta.

Alongside journalism, he was engaged in medicine and clinic business and had been living in Gazipur for over 15 years.

Nothing could stop the sobbing of Hasan Jamal, father of seven children -- five sons and two daughters -- with Tuhin being the youngest. Speaking to this correspondent at his village home in Phulbaria Bhatipara, Jamal said he last spoke to his son over the phone on Wednesday about family matters and his illness.

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### JP to hold its 10th council today

#### It will resolve the party's long-standing factional rifts, says a faction's chair Anisul Islam

##### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today's national council of the Jatiya Party will resolve the party's long-standing divisions and open a new chapter of unity, said Anisul Islam Mahmud, acting chairman of a JP faction, yesterday.

Speaking at a press conference in the capital's Gulshan, he said the council will pave the way for a fresh journey towards fulfilling the dream of party founder HM Ershad.

Anisul said several thousand councillors and delegates from across the country are expected to attend.

"Some are saying this party has split. But I want to state firmly that we have organised this council in accordance with the court order and the party's constitution. We have informed the Election Commission and invited their representatives to attend," he said.

"Through this council, we want to restore democracy within the Jatiya Party. Afterwards, we will abolish the controversial provisions of the party's constitution. The party will no longer be run under a single leadership, but under collective leadership," Anisul added.

In a written statement, JP Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnu said the party's 10th council will be held today (August 9) in Gulshan.

He said a lower court in Dhaka issued a temporary injunction against the party chairman from engaging in organisational activities. As a result, the party's



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## SURGE IN DENGUE

### DMCH overrun with patients from outside Dhaka

Experts urge better district-level healthcare

#### HELEMUL ALAM

Three days ago, 37-year-old Mohammad Hanif was admitted to the Bhedarganj Upazila Health Complex in Shariatpur. As his condition worsened, doctors referred him to Dhaka Medical

to 20,000, prompting the referral. "The number of dengue cases in our upazila is quite high," he added.

Mohammad Alamgir, 61, a resident of Bhola's Monpura, said he was infected at his workplace in Baful about five days ago and initially took treatment at home.

**Critically ill patients are often referred from local hospitals to major city hospitals. By the time they arrive, their condition is often already severe.**

DR HM NAZMUL AHSEN  
Associate professor, Suhrawardy Hospital

College Hospital (DMCH) on Thursday.

"I have been undergoing treatment in the dengue ward at DMCH since Thursday night after being referred from the Upazila Health Complex," said Hanif.

He said his platelet count dropped

"As my condition deteriorated, the doctor advised me to get admitted to DMCH. I've been under treatment here for the past three days," said Alamgir.

Like Hanif and Alamgir, many dengue patients are arriving at DMCH from

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## SADARGHAT LAUNCH TERMINAL

### Once a thriving riverport now barely afloat

#### RAKIB MADBER

Once the lifeline to Bangladesh's southern districts, Sadarghat Launch Terminal is now a shadow of its former self. With the rise of modern highways and faster road travel, the once-bustling river port is witnessing a sharp drop in passenger traffic.

As travellers increasingly opt for road-based transport, the future of the country's historic inland waterway network and its century-old launch industry hangs in the balance.

According to the Bangladesh Inland

down to two. Patuakhali and Barguna have seen similar nosedives.

For the operators, it's a financial freefall.

"Since the inauguration of the Padma Bridge, the number of passengers has dropped significantly. The severe traffic congestion from Gulistan to Sadarghat and the rise in fuel prices have put this sector at serious risk," said Md Altaf Hossain, master of the launch

The impact ripples beyond launch decks to those on the shore. Porters, once part of the vibrant chaos of Sadarghat, now sit idle for hours.

"We used to earn 1,500 to 2,000 takas a day. Now, it's hard to make even 500-700 takas," said

Padma Bridge's opening. Mohammad Hannan Khan, treasurer of the Launch Owners' Association, said the industry is no longer sustainable. "Before the

Padma Bridge, each launch operated 14 to 15 trips monthly. Now, it's down to four or five. Our monthly income has dropped from 40-50 lakh takas to just 15-20 lakh takas. Around 40 launches have already been scrapped."

With no other options, many workers are abandoning river transport altogether, shifting to other vessel types such as oil tankers, sand carriers, or even auto-rickshaws in search of stable income.

Beyond the bridge, other factors have worsened the crisis. Skyrocketing fuel prices are eating into whatever revenue remains. Launch operators say it costs between Tk 8.5 lakh and Tk 9 lakh to make a single trip to Barishal -- costs that are rarely recovered now.

Even infrastructure is working against them. The Gulistan-Sadarghat road is plagued with severe congestion, further discouraging passengers from opting for water travel.

Mahbubur Rahman, assistant director of BIWTA, emphasised the importance of fuel regulation and long-term sustainability.

"We must look into alternative energy. India has already started using solar-powered launches on some routes. Bangladesh could consider similar technology."

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

#### Sundarban-16.

"On July 6, we went to Barishal with only 175 passengers, incurring a loss of over 2 lakh takas. This is how things are going. On average, we're losing around 10 lakh takas every month. This is supposed to be an off season, but it feels like a shutdown. Since the bridge opened, things have slowed to a crawl. If this trend continues, we may not last five more years."

Shamim, a porter who has worked at Sadarghat for over a decade.

"Passengers and goods both are gone. Most of the day, we just sit and wait."

The downturn is stark even during peak travel periods. This year's Eid-ul-Azha rush saw 139 launches depart from Sadarghat on June 5, noticeably fewer than the 158 departures recorded during the same festival before the

