

Mother, daughter found dead at home in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A woman and her daughter have been found dead with their throats slit at their home in a remote area of Ramgarh upazila in Khagrachhari.

The deceased have been identified as Amena Begum, 95, and Rahena Begum, 42.

Police said locals broke into the house at Purbo Bagantila yesterday after noticing an unusual silence. They discovered the bodies on beds in two adjacent rooms.

After being notified, police rushed to the scene.

Md Moin Uddin, acting officer-in-charge of Ramgarh Police Station, said the bodies were sent to Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital.

Amena had five sons and two daughters. Two of her sons live abroad.

According to a neighbour, Amena had an ongoing dispute over land with her sons who live in the country.



Tom Andrews, the UN special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, meets Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: PTD

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Rising extremism

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“We must abandon such politics. Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Christians – everyone must unite to build a prosperous Bangladesh based on truth, justice, and human values.”

Fakhrul said Bangladesh belongs to all its citizens. “In times of crisis, people must be treated as human beings. That is why we must rise above ethnic, religious, and political divisions and stand united. If we uphold this call for unity under Tarique Rahman’s leadership, our struggle to safeguard independence will succeed.”

Among others, BNP standing committee members Abdul Moyeen Khan, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, AZM Zahid Hossain, Vice Chairman Nitai Roy Chowdhury, and Subrata Chowdhury, acting president of Gano Forum and vice president of the Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Welfare Front, spoke at the event.

462 candidates cleared for Ducsu, 1,108 for hall polls

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Umama Fatema announced her full panel in front of Aparajeyo Bangla.

In the panel “Swatantra Shikharthi Oikya”, she will run for VP, while Al Sadi Bhuiyan, a former president of Dhaka University Journalists’ Association, will run for GS. Sociology student Zahed Ahmed has been nominated for AGS.

Nine panels have been announced for the Ducsu election, while many candidates are running independently.

HALL CANDIDATES

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall has the highest number of VP candidates – nine. For GS, the highest number, also nine, came from Dr Muhammad Shahidullah Hall.

In other halls, the numbers range between three and eight.

Five halls nominated eight candidates each for AGS.

Across all hall union posts, the highest number of candidates – 81 each – came from Shahid Sergeant Zahurul Huq Hall and Amar Ekushey Hall, followed by Surja Sen Hall with 79.

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The lowest number was from Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall with 31, while other halls ranged between 36 and 78.

Only one faulty nomination was found among those submitted for the hall polls.

UNOFFICIAL CAMPAIGNS

A directive signed by Chief Returning Officer Prof Dr Zashim Uddin yesterday said candidates and panels are prohibited from offering gifts, distributing items, hosting feasts, providing financial assistance, or engaging in service-related activities on campus.

“The university administration will treat such acts as violations of the Ducsu electoral code of conduct until September 10.”

Though campaigning is not officially allowed till August 26, many candidates have been finding indirect ways to reach voters.

History rewritten with record number

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held in 2019 and 1990.

In addition, at least 54 women are running for other posts in the polls slated for September 9.

This surge in female candidacy reflects a broader awakening among students demanding more inclusive representation.

Meanwhile, at least 48 percent of the 39,775 voters in this year’s Ducsu polls are women.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Mohammed Hannan, author of several books on the history of student-led movements, said, “This is unprecedented. This is the first time two [later increased to five] women are contesting for the vice-president post, with another vying for the general secretary post.”

He noted that women’s active participation in the July mass uprising was remarkable, and the surge in female candidates in the upcoming Ducsu election reflects that.

“It’s important to note that these women candidates are not here because of sympathy or tokenism. Many of them are formidable contenders who have earned their place through dedication and meaningful contributions.”

Asked why many leading student organisations rarely include women in their electoral panels, Hannan said, “These organisations simply lack women in their leadership ranks. That absence is reflected in their candidate selections.”

THE WOMEN CANDIDATES

At least 35 women are in nine panels contesting this year’s Ducsu polls, with many others vying independently.

Former Student Against Discrimination spokesperson Umama Fatema is contesting for the VP post from the independent “Swatantra Shikharthi Oikya” panel, which has five more female candidates.

Sheikh Tasnim Afroz Emi is vying for the same position from the Gonotantrik Chhatra Jote’s “Pratirodh Parshad” panel, which nominated 11 women – the highest in this election.

Chhatra Odhikar Parishad’s panel “Ducsu for Change” nominated Sabina Yasmin as GS, the panel’s lone female candidate.

“Boishommo Birodhi Shikharthi Sangsad”, a panel of Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad, nominated Ashrefa Khatun for the

AGS post, with five other women running for other posts in the panel.

Independent platform “DU First” nominated Fateha Sharmin Anne for AGS. Two other women are contesting from the panel.

In the last Ducsu election in 2019, one independent female candidate contested for the VP post, while two women ran for the GS post.

That year, two women each from Chhatra Dal and Islami Chhatra Andolan panels, and four from Islami Chattra Shibir’s panel also contested.

In contrast, none of the 21 panels in

WOMEN IN DUCSU

➔ **1962: Matia Chowdhury elected as Ducsu general secretary (GS)**

➔ **1966: Mahfuja Khanom elected as Ducsu vice president (VP)**

➔ **1990: No women candidate fielded for top two posts from any panel**

➔ **2019: One independent woman ran for VP, two women for GS**

➔ **2025: 5 women vying for VP, 1 for GS, 4 for AGS; at least 54 contesting for other posts.**

the 1990 election fielded any women candidates for the top two positions, according to “Bangladesher Chhatra Andolner Itiha: Ershader Somoykal” written by Hannan.

Earlier in 1962, Matia Chowdhury was elected Ducsu GS, and in 1966, Mahfuja Khanom was elected VP.

VOICES OF CHANGE

Speaking about this historic participation of women, VP candidate Umama Fatema said it was the July uprising that gave them the courage to contest.

“Women came forward [during the movement] with all their courage. I have joined the polls with that same

confidence.”

She said that if elected, she will work against partisan politics. “I’ll work for a politically conscious and academically sound campus.”

Among her other pledges were introducing a teachers’ evaluation by students, redesigning the syllabus, and increasing classroom facilities.

Sheikh Tasnim Afroz Emi, running for VP from Pratirodh Parshad, said, women have been neglected since the foundation of the university.

“I fought for women from the very first day I came to the campus. When the provost of female dormitories decided not to give seats to married students, I raised my voice against it. I worked till the provosts of five female dormitories were bound to cancel the order. It is with the same rigor that I will fight for the rights of all female students.

“Though each panel has men and women contesting, it’s us females that face the social media trial and bullying.”

Adity Islam, who is running for AGS from the leftist alliance panel “Aparajeyo Ekattor-Adommo Chobbish,” said as a woman, she felt a responsibility to fight for others.

She added, “After so many years, women are contesting for vital posts. This time we’re ready to face anything that comes our way – we will not move from our places This is a proud moment for us women. After the uprising, we’re proving our abilities again. We don’t need sympathy or tokenism. We are capable. I’ll work to make this campus a free space for women again.

“In this male-dominated society, we have to fight for everything. But through this election, I want to prove that even a fair candidate without political backing can serve their fellow students. I will work to increase the research budget and help make every student in this university an asset to the nation.”

Ducsu for Change’s Sabina Yasmin, who is running for GS, said the July uprising was her source of inspiration. “This July movement has given us courage; we’re no longer afraid.”

Her pledges include ensuring nutritious food on campus and tackling the accommodation crisis. “I’ll introduce a one-seat and one-table per student system.”

She also promised to work to increase research budgets.

aggravated officers who earlier protested against perceived discrimination should be engaged to ensure inclusive ownership of the reform before the new draft is placed for enactment as an Ordinance,” he added.

While the changes largely reflect earlier taskforce recommendations and are an improvement over the previous draft, the government could have been more flexible, said Towfiqul Islam, senior research fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

Restricting top posts to government officials limits the pool of expertise, whereas including qualified professionals from outside the bureaucracy, similar to practices at the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, could bring broader technical experience and help craft policies impartially alongside senior officials.

Another concern is the lack of broad-based discussion during the reform process, with key stakeholders, particularly political parties, inadequately consulted, he said.

“Their engagement is vital as revenue board reforms directly affect development finance and macroeconomic capacity, and without it, the reforms risk being undermined.”

Jamaat, NCP deny involvement in Sylhet stone looting

New DC joins, vows stern action

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Jamaat-e-Islami and NCP yesterday denied allegations that their leaders were involved in Sylhet’s stone looting incident.

In separate press conferences, both parties expressed anger over the Anti-Corruption Commission’s report on the incident, naming administrative officials and 46 people, including political leaders.

Earlier, BNP had also rejected the allegations.

Terming all media reports attributing the ACC probe to be “deliberate attempts to mislead the public,” Sylhet city Jamaat Ameer Md Fakhrul Islam said, “Jamaat has always taken a firm stand against all forms of looting, and our position regarding Sada Pathor remains unchanged.

“The ACC report on the stone looting did not mention any Jamaat leaders or activists. Yet, certain newspapers have published false and motivated stories. We verified with the ACC and found no trace of the report implicating us.”

At NCP’s press conference, the party Chief Coordinator (Sylhet district) Nazim Uddin said, “Putting our names on the ACC report without any evidence is a one-sided, misinformed and politically motivated move. This report is a way to hide the main culprits behind the stone looting.

“The ACC and media, who cited the ACC report, must prove our involvement with evidence. Otherwise, we’ll be forced to take legal action as per existing laws.”

9 NBFIs staring at liquidation

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contained in the Companies Act.

“We are moving forward with this only to protect the depositors,” he said, adding that returning the NBFIs’ customers’ deposits will be the priority.

| BAD LOANS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LOANS | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| FAS FINANCE | 99.93% |
| BIFC | 97.30% |
| PREMIER LEASING | 75.20% |
| FAREAST FINANCE | 98.13% |
| GSP FINANCE | 58.49% |
| PRIME FINANCE | 77.71% |
| AVIVA FINANCE | 82.64% |
| PEOPLE’S LEASING | 95% |
| INT’L LEASING | 95.97% |

The liquidation will take place through legal procedures and the central bank will appoint liquidators, Mansur said, adding that more than nine NBFIs may be liquidated

eventually.

As much as 73.5 percent of the sector’s bad loans at the end of last year are concentrated among 12 NBFIs, BB data shows.

Earlier in January, the banking regulator identified 20 NBFIs with ailing financial health, including high defaulted loans, and placed them in the ‘red’ category.

The 20 NBFIs are: CVC Finance, Bay Leasing, Islamic Finance, Meridian Finance, GSP Finance, Hajj Finance, National Finance, IIDFC, Premier Leasing, Prime Finance, Uttara Finance, Aviva Finance, Phoenix Finance, People’s Leasing, First Finance, Union Capital, International Leasing, BIFC, Fareast Finance and FAS Finance.

The BB wrote to the 20 NBFIs asking them to explain why their licences should not be cancelled within 15 working days.

Of the 20 NBFIs, nine have been initially selected for liquidation as their response were found to be unsatisfactory.

“Not all of their plans were acceptable,” said Mansur, also a former economist of the International Monetary Fund.

The Daily Star could not reach the NBFIs as most are running without managing directors or chief executive officers and some are run by independent directors.

Defying outcry

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displaced multiple times in the nearly two-year-long war.

Gaza civil defence agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said air strikes and artillery fire overnight targeted areas to the northwest and southeast of Gaza City.

Late yesterday, the Israeli military detailed a range of operations across the Gaza Strip in recent weeks.

It said the manoeuvres and strikes “created the conditions” for the military to intensify pressure on Hamas and lay the groundwork for the next stages of the campaign.

The military yesterday said it had informed medical personnel and aid groups in northern Gaza to start making evacuation plans ahead of a military offensive to seize the area.

The UN humanitarian agency has warned that the Israeli plan to expand military operations in Gaza City would have “a horrific humanitarian impact” on the already exhausted population.

“Forcing hundreds of thousands to move south is a recipe for further disaster and could amount to forcible transfer,” OCHA said.

The UN Human Rights office in the Palestinian territories also voiced concern.

“Hundreds of families have been forced to flee, including many children, persons with disabilities, and older people, with nowhere safe to go,” it said.

Meanwhile, UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini yesterday warned that severely malnourished children in the Gaza Strip will be “certainly condemned to death” unless aid gets to them quickly.

Lazzarini said an evaluation on how famine has evolved in the Gaza Strip was due to be published soon, adding UNRWA health centres had seen a six-

fold increase in the number of severely malnourished children since March.

Rights group Amnesty International earlier this week accused Israel of enacting a “deliberate policy” of starvation in Gaza.

Without naming Israel, Lazzarini labelled it a “manufactured famine” and said food had been used “as a weapon of war.”

The UNRWA commissioner-general warned that a weakened, hungry population would struggle to withstand a new military operation in the city.

“If this scenario were to unfold, even if we talk about the evacuation of people from Gaza to the south, many will no longer even have the strength to move.”

Since October 7, 2023, Israel’s offensive has killed at least 62,122 Palestinians, most of them civilians, according to figures from the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza, which the United Nations considers reliable.

Meanwhile, spokesperson for the British Foreign Office yesterday said Israeli Ambassador to the UK Tzipi Hotovely has been summoned over Israel’s approval of an illegal settlement expansion plan.

Israel on Wednesday approved the construction of about 3,400 additional settlement units in the so-called E1 corridor between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim, a major settlement in the occupied West Bank.

The latest announcement also drew condemnation from world leaders, including UN chief Antonio Guterres.

Guterres repeated a call for Israel to “immediately halt all settlement activity”, warning that the E1 project would be “an existential threat to the two-State solution”, his spokesperson said.