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## ‘Hasina had clear intent to kill protesters’

Tajul tells ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina had a “clear and deliberate intention” to kill protesters during the July uprising by locating them with drones, opening fire from helicopters, and using lethal weapons, Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday.

Tajul made the claim while placing closing arguments for the fourth consecutive day in a case against Hasina, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and ex-IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun, who has turned approver.

Citing Hasina’s phone calls with then Dhaka South City Corporation mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu, and then Dhaka University VC Prof

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Leaders of ousted Awami League regime being put inside a prison van after they were produced before International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## GLOBAL PASSPORT RANKING 2025

# Bangladesh 100th out of 106

## Shares spot with North Korea

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh has ranked 100th out of 106 in the global passport rankings 2025, published by the UK-based Henley & Partners on Tuesday.

According to this ranking, Bangladeshis now hold the 7th weakest passport globally.

Earlier rankings placed Bangladesh 100th in January 2025, 97th in 2024, and 101st in 2023.

According to the latest Henley Passport Index, a Bangladeshi passport allows visa free or visa-on-arrival access to 38 destinations, placing the country alongside North Korea in the ranking.

In South Asia, Maldives holds the highest position, ranking 56th with visa-free access to 94 destinations. It is followed by India, which ranks 85th with access to 57 countries, Bhutan at 92nd with 50 destinations, and Sri Lanka at 98th with 41. Nepal and Pakistan are placed below Bangladesh, at 101st and 103rd, with visa-free access to 36 and 31 countries respectively.

At the top of the global list, Singapore retains its lead, granting visa-free access to 193 destinations, followed

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Rakib Hasan (1950-2025)

## The man behind ‘Tin Goyenda’ passes away

NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

Renowned author Rakib Hasan, the mind behind the beloved teen detective series “Tin Goyenda”, passed away yesterday. He was 74.

He had been battling kidney complications for a while and required regular dialysis. Rakib breathed his last at Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital in Dhanmondi after he was taken there for dialysis in the afternoon. His son, Rahid Hasan, told Prothom Alo that his father died shortly after the procedure.

Rakib’s namaz-e-janaza was held after Esha prayers at Basabo Mohashorok

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# Aid trucks roll into Gaza

## Rafah border crossing set to reopen despite row over hostage bodies

AGENCIES

Aid trucks rolled into Gaza yesterday and Israel resumed preparations to open the main Rafah crossing after a dispute over the return of the bodies of dead hostages that had threatened to derail the fragile ceasefire deal with Hamas.

Israel had threatened to keep Rafah shut and reduce aid supplies because Hamas was returning bodies too slowly, showing the risks to a truce that has stopped two years of devastating warfare in Gaza and freed all living hostages held by Hamas.

However, the militant group returned more Israeli bodies overnight, and an Israeli security official yesterday said preparations were underway to open Rafah to Gazan citizens, while a second official said that 600 aid trucks would go in.

Hamas returned four bodies confirmed as dead hostages on Monday and another four bodies late on Tuesday, though Israeli authorities said one of

those bodies was not that of a hostage.

The dispute over the return of bodies still has the potential to upset the ceasefire deal along with other major issues that are yet to be resolved.

According to Al Jazeera, the Israeli army continued sporadic attacks on Palestinians despite the ceasefire, killing at least three people in Gaza.

Later phases of the truce call for Hamas to disarm and cede power, which it has so far refused to do. It has launched a security crackdown, parading its power in Gaza through public executions and clashes with local clans.

Longer-term elements of the ceasefire plan, including how Gaza will be governed, the make-up of an international force to take over there and moves towards the creation of a Palestinian state have yet to emerge.

Twenty-one bodies of hostages remain in Gaza, though some may be hard to find or recover because of destruction during the conflict. An international task force is

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» Three more killed in Gaza despite ceasefire

» Bodies of dozens of Palestinians received from Israel: Red Cross

» Netanyahu in court for graft trial appearance

## Mirpur factory not part of BGMEA

### Says trade body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shah Ali Washing, whose warehouse in Mirpur saw an explosion that claimed 16 lives, was not a member of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

The units where the fire originated is not part of the formal, export-oriented readymade garment industry in Bangladesh, it said in a statement yesterday.

Shah Ali Washing is not a member of the BGMEA, nor affiliated with any recognised industry association, nor covered under the RMG Sustainability Council.

It requested the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments and other relevant government agencies to ensure the highest level of compliance and to take enforcement measures for running the washing unit with illegal facilities.

“We urge the government to take firm enforcement measures to ensure that no illegal facilities or warehouses operate outside regulatory oversight.”

## PAK-AFGHAN BORDER TENSIONS

# Truce called after clashes kill dozens

## More than hundred injured; blasts heard in Kabul, Kandahar



AFP, Spin Boldak

Dozens of troops and civilians were killed in a fresh round of border skirmishes between Pakistan and Afghanistan yesterday, officials on both sides of the frontier said, hours before Islamabad said the two sides had agreed to a 48-hour ceasefire.

The ceasefire was announced by Pakistan’s foreign ministry after a week of violence between the two neighbours that flared after explosions in Kabul

and elsewhere in Afghanistan that were blamed on Pakistan.

The Taliban government in Kabul launched an offensive along parts of its southern border in retaliation, prompting Islamabad to vow a strong response of its own.

Islamabad has accused Afghanistan of harbouring militant groups led by the Pakistani Taliban (TTP) on its soil, a claim Kabul denies.

With both countries on edge, plumes

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# Most ‘pristine’ star in universe discovered

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Astronomers have observed a primeval star that they believe to be the most “pristine” object in the universe.

A team led by Alexander Ji at the University of Chicago said the star, named SDSS J0715-7334, offers a glimpse into the first stars that emerged shortly after the Big Bang.

The star originates from a dwarf galaxy called the Large Magellanic Cloud, which is around 163,000 light years away from the Milky Way. It has since migrated to the Milky Way’s halo, making it a “galactic immigrant”, according to the researchers.

What makes it so pristine is that it is unpolluted by elements that are heavier than hydrogen and helium.

It contains just 0.8 parts per million of heavy elements, which makes it around 20,000 times purer than the Sun.

This composition means it is a likely candidate for one of the earliest stars in the universe, with astronomers previously theorising that such stars had long since exploded due to a lack of heavier elements.



Red Cross vehicles escort trucks carrying the bodies of Palestinians returned by Israel under a ceasefire deal, in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## US will ‘impose costs’ on Russia if Ukraine war doesn’t end

Says US defence secy

REUTERS, Brussels

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth yesterday warned Moscow that the United States and its allies would “impose costs on Russia for its continued aggression” if the war in Ukraine does not come to an end.

“If we must take this step, the US War Department stands ready to do our part in ways that only the United States can do,” Hegseth said at a meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group of Kyiv’s allies at Nato headquarters.

Hegseth did not elaborate. His comments came as US President Donald Trump’s administration is considering a request by Ukraine for long-range Tomahawk missiles.

“Now is the time to end this tragic war, stop the needless bloodshed, and come to the peace table,” Hegseth said.