

MUNSHIGANJ-3

BNP supporters block bridge for change in nomination

UNB, Munshiganj

Supporters of Mahiuddin Ahmed, member-secretary of the Munshiganj district BNP, blocked the Mukterpur Bridge for an hour and a half yesterday, demanding a change in the party's nomination for the Munshiganj-3 (Sadar-Ghazaria) constituency.

The BNP has nominated Kamruzzaman Ratan, the party's central social welfare secretary, for the constituency, sparking widespread protests among local party activists.

From around 3:30pm, demonstrators set fire to tyres and staged a sit-in on the bridge, chanting slogans against the nomination. Traffic on the Mukterpur Bridge came to a complete halt, forcing passengers to cross on foot. Long tailbacks formed on both sides, with ambulances facing severe difficulties.

After blocking road links between Munshiganj, Dhaka, and Narayanganj for 90 minutes, the protesters withdrew around 5:00pm, issuing a 48-hour ultimatum to reconsider the nomination. They warned of nonstop programmes on river and road routes if Mahiuddin Ahmed is not selected as the candidate.

The tension grew a day earlier after BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir formally announced Kamruzzaman Ratan's nomination at a press briefing at the party chairperson's office in Gulshan. Soon after, protests erupted in Munshiganj town, where party activists burned effigies of Fakhrul and Ratan and held demonstrations.

Driver found dead in canal

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenaidah

Police recovered the body of a human haulier driver from a canal in Jhenaidah's Kaliganj upazila yesterday.

The body of Omar Ali Sheikh, 40, of Hatbelat village, was found in the canal adjacent to Mobarakganj Sugar Mill, said Kaliganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Shafiqul Islam.

Locals said Omar had left home with his vehicle on Thursday.

The OC said the body was sent to Jhenaidah Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

The inquest report revealed a sharp-weapon injury to the victim's throat, along with multiple injury marks on other body parts, said the OC.

Police suspect that the killers murdered him to snatch his vehicle.



PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Visitors enjoy a boat ride amid blooming red water lilies in Dibir Haor (Shapla Beel) of Jaintapur upazila, Sylhet. Each winter, the haor attracts tourists as thousands of lilies cover the water against a backdrop of surrounding hills. The photo was taken recently.

BARGUNA LIBERATION WAR MUSEUM

Looted and left in ruins for over a year

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The Barguna Liberation War Museum, which was vandalised and looted on August 5 last year following the ouster of the Awami League government, now stands abandoned, empty and padlocked.

The museum once housed a collection of over 300 rare historical photographs, books and memorabilia from the Liberation War, including rifles, clothing, cooking pots and various wartime items used by freedom fighters.

It also displayed archaeological pieces from the centuries-old Shahi Mosque in Betagi, the historic Majidbaria Mosque in Mirzaganj, Patuakhali, and relics from the temple built by Parbati Ranjan Mukhopadhyay in Betagi's Kaunia area, as well as old radios and televisions. Among the museum's notable exhibits was a 48-foot-long whale skeleton recovered from Joyalbhanga in Taltali in 1990 and nearly a thousand metal and paper currencies from different countries.

Many of these items are still missing.

According to museum records, the war photographs were collected by local organisers since 1995 and displayed at various district-level national events. In 2013, a Liberation War gallery was set up in a room on the ground floor of Barguna District Shilpakala Academy. The gallery



formally became an institution in 2018, and on November 30, 2019, it was upgraded to a full-fledged museum, attracting regular visits from students and visitors on national days.

Chittaranjan Shil, trustee of the museum, journalist and cultural activist, said the initiative traces back to 1985-86, when local journalists and cultural activists began collecting photographs of the

Liberation War and organising exhibitions. "Over time, journalists, intellectuals, civil society groups, the local administration, Rover Scouts and Red Crescent volunteers supported the effort."

The attack on August 5 last year was described as "systematic vandalism" by an eyewitness who wished to remain anonymous. "The attackers smashed every glass-covered table and display unit, looted many artefacts and tore apart books and documents outside the building. Whatever remained, people took away as they wished," the eyewitness said.

Three days after the attack, members of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement visited the site in an attempt to salvage what was left.

Despite repeated calls from museum trustees and local civic groups, none of the stolen items have been returned.

Yousuf Mridha, convener of Barguna District Muktiyoddha Sangsad, has also urged the district administration to restore the museum and recover the stolen items.

Taslima Akter, deputy commissioner of Barguna, could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts via phone and WhatsApp.



BUTTERFLY FAIR

A day of colours at JU

STAR REPORT

The Zahir Raihan Auditorium premises at Jahangirnagar University turned vibrant yesterday as a daylong Butterfly Fair brought together hundreds of butterflies, vivid photographs, and nature enthusiasts.

By midday, the fairground was buzzing with excitement as visitors, especially children, marvelled at the fluttering wings around them.

"I didn't know butterflies could be so colourful. Seeing them all together feels magical," said Arshaad, a class III student at JU School and College.

Around 35 butterfly species, including the Striped Pierrot, Blue Tiger, and Painted Lady, were on display on the auditorium premises, JU Butterfly Park, and the Botanical Garden.

The event was organised by the university's Department of Zoology, with Cute as the title sponsor, under the theme "Urle Akashe Projapati, Prokriti Paye Notun Goti".

"In 2013, JU recorded 110 butterfly species. Today that number stands at 70," said Prof Monwar Hossain, convener of the fair.

Rapid urban development around the campus has destroyed many of their habitats, he said.

Conservationist Auritro Sattar noted that the decline in butterfly and moth populations signals broader ecological distress.

"Shrubs and bushes that butterflies rely on are disappearing. These species are also extremely sensitive to particulate matter like PM10 and PM2.5 -- making their loss an indicator of severe air pollution," he said.

This year, wildlife expert Dr Ali Reza Khan received the Butterfly Award for his contributions to conservation. The Butterfly Young Enthusiast Award was jointly awarded to JU Zoology students Sabbir Ahmed Shahariar, Rabbi Tannoy, and Nure Afari.

Speaking at the programme, JU Vice Chancellor Prof Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan reflected on the irony of human interaction with nature. "The same people who appreciate and marvel at butterflies are also destroying their habitats. Every creature has the right to live, and butterflies remind us of our duty to protect nature," he added. The fair -- starting at 9:00am and closing at 4:00pm -- also featured puppetry, art competitions, quizzes, kite flying, photography, debates, and a butterfly identification contest, drawing enthusiastic participation from visitors of all ages.

Bangladesh will never

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Dhaka's Pikhana -- then the BDR headquarters -- they began their celebration of killing by murdering 57 patriotic, promising, skilled military officers over two days. And in 2024, they left heaps of bodies..."

He added, "It is a matter of pain that they even tried to use our proud armed forces. They tried to use the police officers and members, who are the protectors of people's lives, property, honour, and dignity -- in these misdeeds. They also tried to use the Border Guard. They did not allow a single institution of the state to stand properly. They destroyed the judiciary, kept the Anti-Corruption

Commission under their control."

"We are not seeking the victory of any particular party; we are not seeking the victory of the 8 party alliance. We want the victory of the ambitions of 18 crore people of Bangladesh, and that aspiration will be realised through the rule of the holy Qur'an. And the trumpet of that victory will sound from here (Chattogram)," he added.

Ameer of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, Mamunul Haque, said, "Our clear statement is that Bangladesh will no longer run on a system where landlords take the shares and common people get the leftovers."



Supporters of eight like-minded parties, including Jamaat-e-Islami, gather at a divisional rally at Laldighi Maidan in Chattogram city yesterday. The parties are campaigning for their five-point demands, including implementing the July Charter and holding a referendum.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Lebanon urges UN delegation to press Israel to respect truce

AFP, Beirut

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun yesterday urged a United Nations Security Council delegation to pressure Israel to respect a year-old ceasefire and to support his army's efforts to disarm Hezbollah.

Despite a November 2024 ceasefire that was supposed to end more than a year of hostilities between Israel and the Iran-backed militant group, Israel has kept up strikes on Lebanon and has also maintained troops in five south Lebanon areas it deems strategic.

Aoun "stressed the need to pressure the Israeli side to implement the ceasefire and withdraw, and expressed his hope for pressure from the delegation", according to a statement from the presidency.

He also noted "Lebanon's commitment to implementing international resolutions" and asked the envoys to support the Lebanese army's efforts to disarm non-government groups.

US committee scraps recommendation for hepatitis B shot in newborns

REUTERS

A group of vaccine advisers on Friday scrapped a long-standing recommendation that all US children receive the hepatitis B shot at birth, a major policy win for health secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr that disease experts say will reverse decades of public health gains.

The committee voted to keep the birth dose only for infants whose mothers test positive for the virus, replacing the 1991 universal recommendation that has protected all children from hepatitis B infections, which can lead to serious liver disease.

For infants of mothers who test negative, the panel recommended that parents, in consultation with a

healthcare provider, should decide when or if their child will begin the vaccine series. Under the scrapped recommendation, the birth dose is followed by two more vaccines, at 1 to 2 months and 6 to 18 months.

The committee recommended parents offer the first dose no sooner than two months of age.

Public health experts decried the move, saying that a decision to shift to shared clinical decision-making would create obstacles to the use of vaccines, and that parents already have control over the care of their children.

The committee advises the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on which public health recommendations to adopt. The recommendations affect US health insurance coverage and play a key

role in assisting physicians who are choosing appropriate vaccines for patients.

Kennedy, who founded the anti-vaccine group Children's Health Defense, in June fired the previous 17 independent experts and replaced them with a group that largely supports his views.

During the two-day meeting, two members of the committee argued vociferously against the change, saying there was no data to support it and that there were decades of information on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine.

Many committee members, a group that no longer includes any immunologists, argued that there was no data that showed the vaccine is safe and said that the US was out of step with its peer countries.

One probe after

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teachers, officers, and staff remain unfinished even after a year.

JU Registrar ABM Azizur Rahman, member secretary of the committee investigating the 19 teachers, said they would need "three to four more months" to complete the report.

He said the committee probing staff members has submitted its primary report, which now awaits a syndicate decision, while the committee, which is investigating university officers, has yet to finish its work.

OVER TK 39 LAKH SPENT Each probe committee member receives Tk 1,000 per meeting. Documents from the JU comptroller's office show that Tk 39,01,346 has been spent on sitting allowances for probe committees between September last year and this November.

Of this, Tk 11,92,041 was spent on committees investigating the involvement of teachers, students, officers and staff in the July attacks.

The documents also show that 21 of the 39 committees -- many of which have not submitted their reports -- have already received sitting allowances. Students allege the university frequently forms probe bodies only to delay or bury investigations without taking meaningful action.

Jucus General Secretary Mazharul Islam said reports involving teachers are often delayed because many committee members "lack the intent to investigate

properly", and some teachers sit on multiple committees, slowing the process further.

He said Jucus has been pushing for the submission of pending reports, especially those involving teachers and officials accused of abetting the violence during July uprising.

Jucus Vice President Abdur Rashid Jitu said probe bodies must be held accountable for delays.

Contacted, noted economist and former JU faculty member Prof Anu Muhammad said the administration must ensure the timely submission of probe reports. "The investigations must be transparent, and actions should follow accordingly," he said.

JU VC Prof Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan said after the fall of the previous government, the university received an unusually high number of complaints covering irregularities of the past 54 years.

"We formed probe committees to address them, but the sheer volume has made it difficult for teachers to submit reports on time," he said.

Looted heavy

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2025, the adviser said, "Laws are made to serve the people. This law was enacted to ensure that the public can receive services."

"If there are any concerns [from the police], they may submit recommendations, and the home ministry will review those," he added.