

Inqilab Moncho resumes blockade at Shahbagh

DU CORRESPONDENT

Inqilab Moncho yesterday resumed its blockade at Shahbagh, demanding a speedy trial over the killing of its slain spokesperson Sharif Osman Bin Hadi.

Ahead of Juma prayers, the platform called on mosques across the country to offer special prayers seeking justice for Hadi's murder.

After the prayers, protesters brought out a procession from the Dhaka University Central Mosque before occupying the Shahbagh intersection.

Addressing a rally at Shahbagh, Abdullah Al Jaber, member secretary of Inqilab Moncho, warned that the platform would launch a movement demanding the government's resignation if the trial is not completed within the stipulated timeframe.

He said Inqilab Moncho had set a 30-working-day deadline for the government, with 22 days remaining.

"If the state fails to maintain law and order and its intelligence agencies cannot act, we do not want such a helpless authority ruling the country," he said.

He further demanded that by the seventh of the month, the killers and those behind the murder be identified and a charge sheet submitted.

Jaber also announced that once the trial formally begins, Inqilab Moncho will launch

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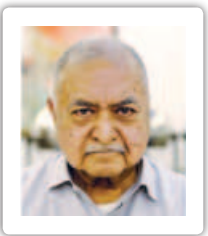
Inqilab Moncho resumed its blockade at Dhaka's Shahbagh yesterday, demanding a swift trial over the killing of its slain spokesperson and July frontliner Sharif Osman Bin Hadi.

PHOTO: STAR

Kamal Hossain hospitalised after falling ill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Kamal Hossain, a key architect of the constitution of Bangladesh and emeritus president of Gonoforum, was admitted to Square Hospital in Dhaka yesterday after falling ill.



According to a party press release, the 88-year-old veteran politician is suffering from lung-related complications.

Gonoforum General Secretary Mizanur Rahman has urged people across the country to pray for Dr Kamal's recovery.

The press release referred to an incident from last Wednesday, when Dr Kamal attended the funeral of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia. It said his name was not included on the official guest list, which resulted in the Special Security Force (SSF) denying his vehicle access through the designated VIP route.

As a result, Dr Kamal had to travel a considerable distance through a dense crowd in a wheelchair, the release said, adding that he fell ill afterwards.

In October 2023, Dr Kamal was elected as Gono Forum's emeritus president after he resigned from the post of party president.

Khaleda, a daughter of Dinaipur

Residents share stories of her formative years



MD QUAMRUL ISLAM
RUBAIYAT, from Dinaipur

Residents of Dinaipur reflected on the childhood and adolescent years of former prime minister and BNP chairperson Begum Khaleida Zia, as news of her demise spread across the country.

Born to Iskandar Majumder and Taiyaba Majumder, Khaleida Zia spent her formative years in Dinaipur before marrying the late president and BNP founder Ziaur Rahman.

Locals recalled her early life in the district with a sense of personal loss and pride, remembering her as a warm and respectful figure long before she rose to national prominence.

Khaleida Zia began her education at a missionary school and later enrolled at Dinaipur Government Girls'

High School, where she completed her matriculation examinations.

Her father, a businessman who migrated to Dinaipur from Jalpaiguri following the Partition, resided at Taiyaba Villa in the Balubari area. He served as president of the Dinaipur Chamber of Commerce and Industries from 1975 to 1984. Her mother, Taiyaba Majumder, widely known for her social work in the district, lived in the family home until her demise.

Following the announcement of Khaleida Zia's passing, BNP leaders and activists gathered at the party's local office in Jail Intersection. Recitations of the Holy Quran were organised there, as well as at her parents' residence, with supporters offering prayers for her departed soul.

Advocate Shamim Bin

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Country gets first comprehensive urban policy

Govt approves Nat'l Urban Development Policy-2025 to build liveable, climate-resilient cities

BAHRAM KHAN and HELEMUL ALAM

After decades of delays, the National Urban Development Policy 2025 has finally been approved, which aims to guide the country's rapid urbanisation in a more planned and sustainable manner.

The interim government believes it will help build climate-resilient, inclusive, and liveable cities.

Although nearly five crore people, or 32 percent of the population, live in urban areas, Bangladesh previously had no comprehensive urban development policy. After a delay of 21 years, the policy has finally come into effect.

Through decentralisation of cities and towns and the promotion of sustainable development, the policy seeks to ensure overall social and economic prosperity for urban residents.

The policy was approved on Thursday at an Advisory Council meeting at the Chief Adviser's Office, chaired by Prof Muhammad Yunus. Later, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam briefed the media at the Foreign Service

Academy in Dhaka.

Under the policy, a National Urban Development Council will be formed, with the Local Government Division acting as its secretariat.

The policy classifies cities into four categories --

AT A GLANCE

Policy focuses on decentralisation of cities and towns

National Urban Development Council to be formed

Cities classified into four categories by population

Industrial growth discouraged in megacities

Investment encouraged in metropolitan and smaller towns

Policy to guide housing, transport, waste management, urban planning

megacities (population of one crore and above), metropolitan cities (population of 5,00,000 to one crore), medium or district towns (50,000 to 5,00,000), and upazila or small towns (20,000 to 50,000).

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NEIR rollout triggers network issues, NID mismatches

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Many mobile phone users were unable to connect their handsets to mobile networks following the launch of the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) system on Thursday.

At the same time, numerous users reported that an unusually high number of handsets were shown as registered against their NIDs, according to mobile operators and users.

Sujon Saha of Kurigram yesterday said he had been unable to use his handset since Thursday morning, despite receiving an SMS earlier confirming its registration in the NEIR database. He bought the handset on November 8 last year.



"I am currently using my SIM in another phone," he said.

Mobile operators said thousands of customers are facing similar problems.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Chairman Major General (retd) Md Emdad ul Bari said the commission has so far received a limited number of complaints and a technical team is working to resolve the issues.

He said the disruptions were mainly caused by two factors. First, December 31 was the deadline for deregistering SIMs held by users with more than 10 connections. Of the 90 lakh SIMs identified under such users, around 80 lakh have already

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Trader found murdered at Savar home

UNB, Savar

A man was murdered by miscreants at his residence in Savar, said police yesterday.

The victim -- Delwar Hossain -- was a shoe trader by profession.

Police recovered his body last evening from his house at Baradeshi Uttarpara in Aminbazar, Savar.

Police said the miscreants gouged out Delwar's eyes and severed his genital.

In the afternoon, locals noticed his body lying inside the house and informed police.

The body was sent to the morgue of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital in Dhaka for autopsy.

Police said Delwar used to buy shoes from different places and sell them to various shops. Savar Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge Arman Ali said police are investigating the incident to identify those involved in the killing.

Access to safe drinking water a basic right: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court, in the full text of a verdict, has directed the state to provide free safe drinking water to all citizens of Bangladesh within the next 10 years.

"It is, hereby, declared that access to safe drinking water free of charge is a fundamental right of every citizen as per Article 32 of the Constitution. The state is therefore obligated to provide free, potable and safe water to every citizen and must take consistent, continuous and progressive measures to meet such obligations," the HC bench of Justice Md Ashraf Kamal and Justice Kazi Waliul Islam observed in the full text, which was released recently.

The bench delivered the verdict on February 27 last year after hearing a suo motu (voluntary) rule issued in 2020 in this regard.

The HC bench directed the authorities concerned to take all necessary measures to protect all water reservoirs and safeguard all surface water and groundwater sources from pollution and destruction.

"The state is directed to undertake an assessment of the impact and risks of privatisation of water in Bangladesh, to undertake necessary measures to prevent further privatisation of water in Bangladesh, and, where possible, restore public ownership of water, water infrastructure and water management services," the court said.

Noting that it is not financially and institutionally possible for the state to provide safe drinking water to everyone at the initial stage, the court instructed the government to gradually provide access to safe

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Boatmen sit idle on their empty boats as people stay indoors amid biting cold. The ghat on a channel of the Buriganga in Kamrangirchar, usually used for commuting to Keraniganj, saw little activity. The photo was taken in Kamrangirchar, Dhaka, yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS