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28th death anniv of Shazneen Rahman today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 28th death anniversary of Shazneen Tasnim Rahman.



On this day in 1998, 15-year-old Shazneen was brutally raped and murdered in a premeditated attack at her home in Gulshan. At the time, she was a ninth-grade student at Scholastica school.

She was the daughter of late Latifur Rahman, former chairman of Transcom Group, and Shahnaz Rahman, current chairman of the group. Shazneen was the youngest among four siblings. Her elder sister Simeen Rahman is the chief executive officer of Transcom.

More than 19 years after the incident, the convict in the Shazneen rape and murder case, Shahidul Islam, alias Shahid, was hanged at Kashimpur High Security Prison in Gazipur in 2017.

A Special Tribunal for Prevention
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A young boy lays out dyed leather sheets at a tannery in the capital's Hazaribagh, highlighting the persistence of child labour in hazardous conditions. Although tannery factories were relocated from Dhaka to Savar's Hemayetpur due to environmental concerns, smaller operations, warehouses, and leather processing activities continue in Hazaribagh, including dyeing, drying, chemical use, and storage. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Tarique flags measles test kit shortage

Tells JS vaccines weren't imported for years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday told parliament that the country is facing a shortage of measles testing kits and that vaccine imports had been halted for years under previous governments.



He said measles vaccines for children had not been imported for several years under the Sheikh Hasina-led autocratic government and the interim administration headed by Prof Muhammad Yunus.

During the question answer hour in parliament, the PM said some kits have arrived and steps are being taken to release those currently held at customs.

The Leader of the House made the remarks while responding to a supplementary question from Salah Uddin, Jamaat-e-Islami MP from Gazipur-4.

In his question, Salah Uddin said the issue is now a "crucial question" for the health sector. He said in Chattogram, the country's only infectious disease treatment centre and specialised institute, as well as most

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Lost for 27yrs, home at last

Missing migrant returns from Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladeshi migrant worker who had been missing for 27 years in Malaysia returned home yesterday, bringing an end to a decades-long wait for his family.

Amir Hossain Talukdar, 62, from Naria upazila of Shariatpur, reached



Dhaka around midnight on a Batik Air flight, according to a press release from BRAC.

BRAC arranged his return to Shariatpur and said it would take necessary steps to ensure his treatment and support, given his physical and mental condition.

Amir travelled to Malaysia in 1996 in search of work.

He found work as a painter, and for the first three years, he remained in regular contact with his family and sent money home. Then, without warning, communication stopped, according to the press release.

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Govt eyeing \$2b in emergency aid from IMF

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh is eyeing \$2 billion in emergency aid from the IMF's Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI) window to cushion the economic shock stemming from the Middle East war.

The RFI provides rapid, low-access financial assistance to countries facing urgent balance of payments needs that, if not addressed, would result in an immediate and severe economic disruption.

The Middle East war is an external shock to the Bangladesh economy, raising the import bill for fuel/LNG, fertiliser and food and increasing the subsidy and social protection pressures in real time.

As a result, there is an additional subsidy requirement of Tk 38,542 billion (about \$3.2 billion) for March-June, risks of rapid reserve drawdown and tighter external financing conditions.

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Funds under the RFI would provide bridge liquidity to preserve reserves while sustaining essential fuel, LNG, fertiliser and food imports; create fiscal space for targeted and time-bound support; and reduce the risk of disorderly adjustment.

In so doing, it would protect macroeconomic stability.

The Bangladesh delegation led by Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury discussed availing the RFI during the International Monetary Fund-World Bank Spring Meetings in Washington DC last weeks. The Daily Star has learnt from finance minister officials involved with the proceedings.

The formal request for funds under RFI, whose disbursement takes

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13 top police officials forced into retirement

Over 60 retired under Public Service Act since August 5, 2024

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has sent 13 top Bangladesh Police officials, including 11 deputy inspector generals and two additional DIGs, on forced retirement.

The decision was announced yesterday in a notification issued by the Police-1 branch of the home ministry.

According to the notification, the decision was taken under section 45 of the Public Service Act, 2018, which allows the government to retire any public servant who has completed 25 years of service without providing any justification.

The officers are: AFM Masum Rabbani, DIG at Police Staff College, Dhaka; Sakhawat Hossain, additional DIG of Tourist Police; Ashrafuzzaman, commandant of Rangpur PTC; AZM Nafiu Islam, DIG of Anti-Terrorism Unit; Abul Foyez, DIG of Naval Police; Monirul Islam, DIG of Anti-Terrorism Unit; Mahfuzur Rahman, DIG at Police Headquarters; Munibur Rahman, DIG at APBn Headquarters; Iqbal Hossain, additional DIG attached to Rangpur Range office; Shamima Begum, DIG at Police Headquarters; Abu Kalam Siddique, DIG of Industrial Police; Aminul Islam, DIG of Police Telecom; and Salma Begum, DIG of APBn.

The notification further said the

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West Bengal goes to polls amid SIR row

First phase of voting today; surveys predict TMC to retain power, BJP to gain ground

AGENCIES

The Indian state of West Bengal goes to the polls today after a controversial electoral revision that critics say has stripped millions of their voting rights.

The BJP, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is hoping to seize power from the Trinamool Congress (TMC) led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

The BJP has never governed the state of roughly 100 million people and has mounted an all-out push to wrest control.

While the contest is expected to be close, the TMC, in power since 2011, is projected to retain control for a fourth term. Several opinion polls show the party maintaining an edge.

Ahead of the first round of polling, the deletion of 9.1 million names, more than 10 percent of the electorate, has drawn sharp criticism from political parties and rights groups.

The revision process, known as the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), has been carried out across states and territories, with the Modi government saying it aims to prevent "infiltrators", a pejorative term largely referring to illegal Muslim immigrants, from voting.

Experts and organisations say Muslims and other religious minorities have been disproportionately removed from the rolls in West Bengal, prompting allegations of deliberate targeting and persecution.

While the BJP has established dominance in many Indian states, analysts say, it has struggled to gain a foothold in West Bengal, in part because it lacks support among the state's sizeable Muslim population.

In some Muslim-majority constituencies, nearly half the voters have been removed, including those with documents showing they are Indian citizens by birth and that they or their parents were listed on the 2002 voter roll, the cut-off for eligibility.

A Vote Tracker survey by VoteVibe, released on CNN-News18, projects

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Experts say Muslims and other religious minorities have been disproportionately removed from the rolls in West Bengal.

Breaking out of 'phone jail'

Young Americans try digital detox

AFP, Washington

Getting around without Google Maps. No longer scrolling Instagram at the bus stop. Ditching your headphones to hear the birds sing.

In March, a group of 20- and 30-somethings in the US capital swapped their smartphones for basic flip phones and embarked on a one-month digital detox, part of an emerging movement of young Americans seeking to break free from the harmful effects of social media.

"I was waiting for a bus, and I didn't know when it would come," recalled Jay West, 29, who took part in the Month Offline challenge organised by a small startup with support from a local community group.

Old habits die hard, and West, who works as a data analyst for Washington's metro system, said he would often find himself reaching into his pocket for his cell phone, only to realise there was nothing on it.

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A mobile food vendor selling guava to people waiting in long queues for fuel in the capital's Nilkhet, turning the crowd into a temporary market. Vendors say they are earning Tk 2,500-3,000 a day with modest profits, but worry the business will disappear once the queues ease.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Baby's life gone in moments

2-month-old crushed under reversing bus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A life that had just begun was lost under the wheels of a bus driven by a helper in Dinajpur.

The incident took place in the Nalabari Bazar area of Birol upazila Tuesday evening. Two-and-a-half-month-old Chinia Aktar was the daughter of Md Shamim of Sajurghat Chaulliapotti in Dinajpur municipality.

The baby was taken to her maternal uncle's home at Nalabari Bazar with her mother, Irin Akhter, 25, a few days ago, said the family.

On that evening, there was loadshedding in the area. To get fresh air, Irin along with her mother, Dulali, 40, and sister Shimu, 18, came out of the house and sat under a

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