

A graffiti portrait of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore on the boundary wall of Khulna Railway Station has been defaced with black ink. The portrait was part of a series of murals commissioned by Khulna City Corporation ahead of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's visit to the city on Thursday. The artworks, depicting eminent personalities and the region's cultural heritage, line the road from Shibbari to the railway station. The defacement came to light yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

IN FOCUS

Fascist forces behind RMG unrest

Salahuddin Ahmed says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday alleged that fascist forces were behind attempts to create unrest in the garment sector, urging those staging movements to engage in constructive criticism instead.

He said some were trying to pave the way for the return of fascist forces, but people remained united against the political activities of those responsible for mass killings.

Ruling out the possibility of the Awami League's return to politics, the minister said people would never again allow the party, which he described as oppressive, autocratic, fascist and murderous, to engage in politics.

"Those who shed people's blood to establish fascism, oppressed the people and committed genocide will have no place in the country's politics again," he said while addressing an event at Al-Jamiatul Islamiah Azizul Uloom Babunagar in Fatikchhari, Chattogram.

Salahuddin said it had taken 16-17 years to free the country from an autocratic regime, during which nearly 3,000 people were victims of enforced disappearance and around 7,000 were killed or subjected to torture and persecution.

Citing UN estimates, he said around 1,400 people were killed during the July-August uprising. Yet, those responsible for mass killings and repression had not expressed regret or remorse, he added.

He went for a job, ended up in a scam compound

3,364 Bangladeshis deported from Cambodia since 2023; 852 linked to online scams

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Around 2:30am one night, a brief power outage gave Tofail Ahmed a chance to escape a Chinese-run online scam compound in Cambodia, where he had been held for one month and 27 days.

"I climbed over an 11-foot wall, got injured, but kept running for about 3.5 kilometres barefoot before sheltering under a tree," he recalled.

Tofail had paid Tk 7.70 lakh to recruiters in Bangladesh for a promised data entry job. Instead, they sold him to the compound for around $2,000, he alleged.

His ordeal reflects a wider problem. According to Cambodia's Ministry of Interior, 3,364 Bangladeshis were deported between September 1, 2023, and September 13 this year, including 852 identified as linked to online scams.

However, the ministry did not specify how many of them were trafficking victims forced into criminal activity.

Tofail travelled to Cambodia on April 30 this year after obtaining a Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) smart card. Although promised a data entry job, his recruitment invitation letter mentioned construction work.

Upon arrival, he was taken at night to a compound around 300km away, where he discovered an online scam operation.

"I told the people who sent me that I would not work in a scam centre. But they said I had no choice and must continue working," he said.

He was allegedly told to pay $2,000 for his release and forced to work from 10:00pm to 10:00am.

"They tortured us physically and mentally. We were given electric shocks and denied food when we failed to meet their targets," he said.

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A slip of the tongue cracks 5-year-old murder mystery

Victim's son's account of an altercation helps CID identify alleged killers

SHARIFUL ISLAM

A slip of the tongue during a cannabis-smoking session has finally cracked a nearly five-year-old murder mystery in Magura, exposing an alleged hit squad hired by none other than the victim's elder brother.

The breakthrough came after one of the alleged killers got into a heated argument with Ashon Lal, son of victim Manik Lal Dom, at the district's Sweeper Colony.

Losing his temper during an altercation, Mehedi Hasan Akash, 30, a local fish market worker, blurted out a chilling threat -- "I will do to you exactly what I did to your father."

Akash made the threat while the two were consuming cannabis, providing a crucial lead for the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and helping unravel a case that had baffled local police and the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) for years.

The investigation revealed that Manik Lal, 35, a morgue assistant, was allegedly killed by four men hired by his elder brother, Hira Lal Dom, 50, following a bitter family feud.

On the night of June 29, 2021, Manik went to sleep beside his younger son, Sun Babu, then nine, at their home in Magura's Sweeper Colony.

Around 4:00am the next day, the boy woke up to a horrifying sight. His father was lying on the floor in a pool of blood, with his throat slit.

Manik's wife, Asha Rani, filed a murder case with Magura Sadar Police Station the following day.

Local police initially investigated the case before transferring it to the PBI on January 12, 2022. However, after nearly three and a half years, the PBI failed to identify the killers.

In May 2025, the PBI submitted a final report to the district court, effectively closing the investigation without naming any suspects.

The court rejected the report and, in October that year, directed the CID's Magura unit to reinvestigate the murder. Sub-Inspector Anisur Rahman was assigned to lead the investigation.

After taking charge, SI Anisur questioned Ashon, 21, about his father's murder. During the conversation, Ashon recalled the threat Akash had made during their altercation at the colony.

SI Anisur decided to pursue the lead. Akash was detained in Magura's Old Fish Market area on April 26 this year.

"Akash's remark raised my

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Losing his temper during an altercation, Mehedi Hasan Akash, 30, a local fish market worker, blurted out a chilling threat -- "I will do to you exactly what I did to your father."



Prices ease at kitchen markets, yet sales remain low

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of vegetables, eggs, broiler chicken, potatoes and onions have edged down in the capital's kitchen markets, yet traders say the seasonal decline has failed to boost sales as shrinking purchasing power forces low- and fixed-income households to cut spending.

While winter supplies usually draw larger crowds as prices ease, visits to kitchen markets in Mirpur-1, Mirpur-7, Mirpur-11, Ibrahimpur, Shewrapara, Kazipara and Karwan Bazar on Thursday and yesterday painted a different picture.

Buyers said slight price drops for a few items offer little relief, while overall living costs remain high.

Most vegetable prices fell over the past week, with pointed gourd, yardlong beans, ridge gourd, sponge gourd, brinjal, snake gourd and country beans selling at Tk 40–60 per kg. Green, local and imported Indian tomatoes are retailed at Tk 60–140 per kg, depending on quality.

Potato and onion prices dropped by Tk 2–5 per kg from last week, selling at Tk 20–30 and Tk 40–50, respectively. However, imported garlic and ginger prices rose by Tk 10 per kg, reaching Tk 180–200 for garlic and Tk 150–160 for Chinese ginger.

Karwan Bazar vegetable vendor Mosharraf Hossain said prices had been falling for two weeks, but sales were not picking up as they usually did in previous years.

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'We just want one last glimpse of him'

Family seeks govt assistance to bring Anisur's body home from Taiwan

SHAHRIAR HOSSAIN

Jummie Rahman and her younger brother Zarif are waiting for their father's body to return home. Their father, Md Anisur Rahman, 52, died in Taiwan on October 31, but his body remains at a hospital there as the family struggles to arrange its repatriation.

The family from Ratil village in Kashiani upazila of Gopalganj has one desperate wish: to see Anisur's face one last time. But they cannot afford the cost of bringing his body home.

Anisur went to Taiwan on a tourist visa on June 22 this year, hoping to repay his debts and support his family. Although his visa expired, he stayed on in search of work.



MD ANISUR RAHMAN

He fell ill on October 31 and was admitted to a hospital, where he died around 12:15pm while undergoing treatment.

Back home, his wife Shila Akter and their two children are now facing an uncertain future.

"After hearing the news of my father's death, we returned home. I am a second-year student at Mirpur Girls' Ideal College, while my younger brother studies in class six at Monipur High School and College. I do not know how we will continue our studies or what lies ahead," Jummie told The Daily Star.

Shila said she first learnt about her husband's illness on October 28. On the morning of October 31, his roommate informed her that Anisur had been admitted to hospital and placed in the ICU. About an hour later, she learnt of his death.

Anisur had suffered heavy business losses since the Covid-19 pandemic and went to Taiwan to support his children's education and meet family expenses, she said.

On November 2, Shila sought assistance from the foreign affairs and expatriates' welfare ministries and the Wage Earners' Welfare Board to bring her husband's body home.

Anisur's elder brother Azizur Rahman said he had been involved in a contracting business

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Students of Government College of Applied Human Science, formerly Home Economics College, continue their protest for a second consecutive day yesterday in the capital's Nilkhet, demanding Principal Prof Meherun Nessa's resignation and justice over an alleged police attack, among other demands. The protest began after Meherun Nessa cancelled two students' residential hall seats over an event that overran its allotted time. When they sought reinstatement, she demanded Tk 12,600 to cover one night's air-conditioning and electricity costs. PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN